

OTHER WORLDS, OTHER
VALUES: ALTERNATIVE VALUE
PRACTICES IN THE EUROPEAN
ANTICAPITALIST MOVEMENT

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Submitted for the degree of DPhil

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Statement

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....

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SUMMARY

“Other worlds are possible” was the slogan of the alterglobalisation movement when it was storming global summits a few years ago. This thesis, written from within the European anticapitalist wing of this movement, is an investigation into the possibilities of an effective and sustainable anticapitalist practice in Europe, under conditions of neoliberal accumulation, proceeding in three parts. The first two chapters offer an introduction into the politics, and more generally the ethico-political field of contemporary European anticapitalism emerging in the context of a the global rise of a networked, neoliberal capitalism. In the theoretical core chapter and second part of the thesis I locate my work in strategic discussions within our movement, asking how neoliberal capital can best be fought. I argue that the power of neoliberal capital rests on enclosure, that is the extension of the direct rule of capitalist value form ever deeper into social life, thus creating a hegemony based on habituation and the shrinking of social spaces governed by alternative value logics. In turn, the possibilities for a counterhegemonic anticapitalist practice will be shown to lie in the struggle against this value form, in the creation, defence, and extension of the domain of alternative value practices. The third part consists of an investigation into the effectiveness of two ‘alternative value practices’ emerging out of the summit movement, where I will argue that the political meaning and counterhegemonic potential of a given alternative value practice is never fully contained within itself, that it is indeterminate, arising from within its connections to other such practices. In conclusion, I open up avenues for new political and research questions around the question of how to connect alternative value practices so that they may form an expansive network of practices to rival those of capital.

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Writing a thesis is, like all knowledge-production, necessarily a collective process. It is even more so when the thesis aspires, as this does, to be written *from within*, rather than *about*, a social movement. The multiplicity of ‘sources’ that came to constitute the final product would exceed any bibliography, however conscientiously assembled, and the conversations that shaped the thoughts that are expressed in this text were far too many to be acknowledged here individually. Thus I thank all my friends and comrades, named and unnamed, that stood (or ran) with me in the streets, with whom I discussed tactics and strategies late into the night in squats in Paris or Barcelona, social forum meetings in Florence or Porto Alegre, subcultural cafes in Stockholm or Berlin, or anywhere else our movement gathers. We will never stop looking for the beach.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION: OF MOVEMENT, MEASURE, AND HOPE



(Graffiti in downtown Seattle, 1/12/1999. source: http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no9/seattle_chronology.html)

(i) Movement: European anticapitalism after the summits

We are winning. Or at least we were. Or at least it seemed like we were: this slogan, spray-painted on a wall during the protests against the Third Ministerial of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Seattle in the winter of 1999, captured an excitement that had long been lost on the radical left. On that day, anarchists joined communists, environmentalists joined trade unionists, and catholic nuns joined queer activists in defying the cold, rain, and thousands of well-armed riot police to shut down the summit (Whitney 2004). On that day, we emerged seemingly out of nowhere, from the depths of a history that was supposed to have ended, showing that there was a collective *we* which resisted the ever-faster encroachment of neoliberal discipline on our lives. For the first time in years, it felt like we might, in fact, be winning. Other worlds had become possible again.

Throughout most of the 1990s, neoliberal capital seemed nearly unstoppable in its drive to create a world, *one* world, safe for capital. A world where, of course, difference would continue to exist, but a difference that would exist only as subordinate to the global sameness of the commodity, of the capitalist value form; a world where social spaces, *worlds*, alternative to that created by capital would become fewer and fewer, until – and this was the real threat made by Fukuyama (1989) when he declared history to be over – there was only one world left, a world in which nothing that could not be expressed in monetary values could have any value. This was the fear that Naomi Klein (2000) so effectively captured in *No Logo*. And this was the threat to which we responded in the streets of Seattle. The events of Seattle were special not only insofar as they took the struggle to one of the centres of contemporary neoliberal power, the WTO, but also because in Seattle we almost instantly understood our diverse struggles as singular elements of a global movement struggling *against* neoliberal capital's drive to enclose, commodify, subordinate, and *for* other worlds, *for* other values. A struggle that, for the first time in many years, seemed capable of turning the tide. Hence: *We are winning*.

From Seattle there developed a cycle of struggle that saw the alterglobalisation movement organise ever larger, and ever more militant demonstrations. More movement, more militancy, more media spectacle. Alas, if it only had been that easy: after a string of relative successes in the streets throughout 2000 and early 2001, the summer of that year saw a hardening of European policing strategies, and an escalation of the violence faced by demonstrators. Politically, too, our critiques, like our 'swarm' tactics at demonstrations, were increasingly anticipated and thus controlled: debt reduction, anyone? And when, at the EU summit in Gothenburg in June 2001, three demonstrators were shot with live ammunition, and one of them almost died, when nearly 1000 of us were detained within 3 days, the tone had changed. The writing on the wall did not speak of present or even imminent victory anymore. Now it said: "...But in the end, we will win."

Thus ended "the time when we were winning"¹:

"According to some, the last time the slogan ['we are winning'] was seen, [it] was sprayed on the side of a burning police van as the G8 met in Genoa in July 2001. [...] For many, whilst Seattle had marked the beginning of a cycle of struggles [...], Genoa marked the end. Or at least, the beginning of the end.

¹ Rodrigo Nunes, personal conversation.

Two months later, September 11th happened, and with it, the onset of an apparently open-ended global war and a permanent state of exception." (Trott 2006)

But what does it mean when a social movement disappears from the headlines, is momentarily repressed, has to change tack because of changes in the wider political arena? Does it mean the death of the movement? Did 'we', the European anticapitalist movement, understood as one current within the wider alterglobalisation movement, simply die when mainstream media outlets decided that after 9-11, we had ceased to be front-page material?

To answer this question we need to define what this constantly invoked 'movement' actually is. After all, the majority of us tend to encounter social movements, if at all, during their 'heroic' moments, on the streets, in pitched battles with the forces of order (or repression, depending on perspective), in massive demonstrations of their size and power. A mass demonstration, or even better, a massive riot not only makes better copy than a story about activists sitting at home until three in the morning, writing a monthly newsletter; these heroic moments, what some have called "moments of excess", are also significant moments of social transformation. (The Free Association 2004)

But much like the visible part of the iceberg is only a fraction of the whole, most of what constitutes a social movement lies far below the radar screen of mainstream media inquiry. What, then, is a social movement, beyond the headlines, the moments of excess? Within the alterglobalisation movement, debate continues to this day about whether we should understand ourselves as *a* movement, a *movement of movements*, as a network, a/the multitude, or whether there is in fact not enough common ground that could be found between, say, the militant Indian *Karnataka State Farmers' Association*, and *Christian Aid* to even think of one movement. While many have adopted Naomi Klein's (2004) inspired attempt to fudge the question by referring to a 'movement of movements' (e.g. Mertes 2004), analytically speaking we are thus not a single step further. Agamben (2005) succinctly summarises this ongoing confusion in his formula that "when the movement is there pretend it is not there and when it's not there pretend it is".

What is this movement that I am talking about, that disappeared from the headlines after Genoa and 9-11? Analysing the Italian *Autonomia* movement after its ostensible defeat by the state in the anti-terrorist campaign of the late 1970s, Alberto Melucci argued that social movements, rather than consisting of 'social movement organisations' and exhausting their range of practices in protests, lobbying, or other publicly visible activities, are constituted by "networks submerged in everyday life", wherein people live and practise social codes and frameworks alternative to those dominant in society. It is only at particular points of conflict that these submerged networks explode into the visible forms of conflict that we generally take to be the defining feature of movement practice (Melucci 1988, 248; 1989).

Applied to contemporary European anticapitalism, these 'submerged networks' consist of the occupied houses, social centres, communication tools (newsletters, internet sites, radio stations, journals), and other social spaces that allow us to produce and sustain alternative sets of practices, or habitus. Such spaces, in turn, are embedded in what Dagnino (1998, 46-7) has called an "ethico-political field", that is, a distinctive way of approaching reality which is characterised by a plurality of internal positions, and is oppositional with respect to dominant political fields. More expansive than the submerged networks of autonomous anticapitalist practice analysed by Melucci, these fields reach far beyond immediate participants in social movement action and extend into NGOs, churches, trade unions, potentially even government departments (Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar 1998, 15-6).

We thus understand that the alterglobalisation movement did not simply wither and die because demonstrations became smaller and scored fewer headlines. The networks and fields that sustained and generated these spikes of activity in fact had grown throughout the spectacular mobilisations, as more and more people engaged with alterglobalist and anticapitalist critique and praxis. Thus, 'after the summits', the networks sought to reorient themselves towards ways to actually build the 'other worlds', or in less poetic terms, social spaces governed by logics other than that of capital, that suddenly seemed possible again. Genoa and 9-11 did not mark the end of a movement, only that of a cycle of struggle – and where one ended, another began.

But how was this 'constitutive' cycle of struggle to be fought – and 'won'? If winning did not (anymore) mean simply organising bigger and bigger, ever more militant

demonstrations (Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar 1998, 16), how was effective anticapitalist action to be conceptualised and, more importantly, practised? In other words, whereas early in the 'Seattle' cycle of struggle we might have thought that 'we were winning', that short-lived faith was lost in the short space of two years not only because we started 'losing' on the streets – but also because we suddenly realised that we were not even sure: what would it actually *mean* to win? If our spectacular protests had contributed to making other worlds possible (again) – how could they now be made real?

(ii) Strategy, Networks and Intellectuals

From 'we are winning', to 'are we winning?', and then to 'what does it mean to win?' This process of strategic inquiry opens up a number of difficult questions for left-libertarian political practice: on the role of strategic thinking in a relatively decentralised, networked movement, and on the role of the 'intellectual' in the production of such strategic thought.

First, to strategy. Any attempt to answer the question of what it means to 'win' must necessarily imply some kind of 'goal' of the movement in question. This in turn presents a challenge when referring to networked social movements, in particular to a *movement of movements* whose defining feature is precisely the lack of unity that would allow anyone to define what *the* goal of the movement is. There is no one in the place where Lenin and his Bolsheviki stood. The very place does not exist.

But it would be wrong to conclude from this lack of a politbureau-decreed strategic doctrine that the alterglobalisation movement has no goals. We could not in fact speak of a 'movement' if there were no shared values or codes that could tie together groups as diverse as the indigenous Zapatistas, Indian farmers, Brazilian landless, and European anarchists (Melucci 1989; also Castells 1996, 470). And what is shared among these diverse movements, what in fact makes us a *movement of movements*, is diversity itself, a respect for diversity: a belief that other worlds are not only possible, but desirable. That the forward march of neoliberal capital tends towards obliterating the different worlds that each of these movements desires to create for itself – and that we must therefore link up across movements, across borders, to create a world, as the

Zapatistas put it, into which many worlds fit. The reason why the poetic slogans of the Zapatistas became so widely adopted throughout the world was that they captured precisely this tension, between the world that was being created by neoliberal capital – thin diversity under the dictatorship of the value form – and the desire for a real, thick multiplicity of worlds not coded by a single axiom, which brought together this movement (Tormey 2005, 395): ‘One no, many yeses’; ‘Other worlds are possible’; ‘A world into which many worlds fit’.

But this definition must remain somewhat unspecific, intended as it is to provide a broad frame of reference which can refer to the global social democratic aspirations of the more moderate wing of the movement, the localist ‘food security’ position of many Indian farmers, and the ‘global revolution’ project of the Socialist sectors of the movement. This thesis, however, comes at and into this movement of movements from a specific location, the *Western European anticapitalist movement*, which is characterised by a *libertarian anticapitalism*. Its politics concern themselves first and foremost with contesting the growing power of capital to shape – and destroy – the world; and with doing so in a manner that remains relatively autonomous from, or extends the movement’s autonomy vis-à-vis, states and political parties, *and* which does not subsume the movement’s internal diversity and autonomy of subject positions within it. One No. Many Yeses.

While the *goal* of our movement(s) may thus be rather broadly defined, we still do not know how *strategy* is produced within such a movement, what kinds of ‘intermediate’ concepts and practices are developed to contribute to the more general goal of, in the now famous words of John Holloway (2002), “chang[ing] the world without taking power.” We know, broadly, that this is what we want to do, and Holloway’s book received significant attention in activist circuits for phrasing this fact eloquently and powerfully – but De Angelis (2005) sums up the challenge faced by our movement, and strategic thought within it when he replies to Holloway’s book by simply asking: ‘How?’² Thus, while there is nobody in the position to write a *What Is To Be Done?* (Lenin 1961), that does not mean that the question has gone away.

To understand better how strategy and theory production functions in the alterglobalisation, and, more specifically, the European anticapitalist movement, we

² An example of this intra-movement questioning is Trott (2005b, 216).

can juxtapose two ideal-typical forms of political organisation: the party, and the network. Ideal-typical, because no really existing political movement will of course perfectly conform to either stereotype: as Deleuze and Guattari (2004b, 16) point out, every tree (read: party) has its rhizomatic (read: network) elements, and every rhizome has tendencies towards arborescence. With that qualifier in mind, then, an ideal-typical centralised party-movement is capable of responding to emerging challenges by formulating and adopting a strategic response in a small committee (the politbureau, for example), and then feeding that decision downwards through the hierarchy until every party cell/local organisation moves in unison.³

The inverse of this organisational structure can be said to be the network: networks consist of interconnected nodes, and as such “are open structures, able to expand without limits, integrating new nodes as long as they are able to communicate within the network, namely as long they share the same communication codes (for example, values or performance goals). A network-based social structure is a highly dynamic, open system, susceptible to innovating without threatening its balance.” (Castells (1996, 470) While networks are of course characterised by differential power relations between nodes, in an ideal-typical network no single node, or even group of nodes, would have the organisational capacity to impose a particular strategic decision on the rest of the network. In less abstract terms: our movements of course have their intellectual and political superstars, be they individuals (Subcommandante Marcos, Toni Negri, Susan George, Vandana Shiva), or groups/networks (*attac*, the Northern Italian network of social centres), who produce a steady stream of practical and theoretical innovations and developments, but there exists no structure through which they could ensure that these innovations are adopted by every other part of the network.

It is this very decentralised quality that makes networks substantially more resilient to external attacks than the party form: to once again imprison Toni Negri would be much less of a blow to our movement than the imprisonment of Antonio Gramsci was to the Italian Communist Party. However, as a result of this structure, networks also “present the intrinsic problem of a tendency towards differentiation and drift that threatens to turn the open network into an archipelago of disconnected and isolated

³ Two classic works on the dynamics and possibilities of the party form are Michels (1989), and Gramsci (1971).

islands." (Terranova 2004, 57) Collective strategic considerations, the renewal of the shared "performance goals" (Castells 1996, 470), are therefore necessary to counter this sense of 'drift' currently pervading our movement, which in turn raises the question: how are innovations produced and implemented in networks? The way this happens differs from the one which obtains in (ideal-typical) parties, since innovations are 'implemented' only insofar as the nodes of the network select a particular idea or practice for adaptation. And while innovations are generated in a variety of ways, this question does return us to the (for progressive academics) perennial question of the role of 'intellectuals' in the production of strategic thought within the alterglobalisation, and anticapitalist movement(s).

The traditional Socialist formulation of the relationship between intellectuals and strategy comes of course from Antonio Gramsci (1971, 3-14), who identified two distinct kinds of people whose social function it was to be an 'intellectual': those who were relatively independent from a particular class (project); and those who were "organic" with relation to a particular class (project), whose function it was to act back onto that class, give it "homogeneity" and self-awareness, allowing it to pursue the struggle for hegemony. The Leninist party - whose task (since Lenin (1961) 'identified' the impossibility of the working class by itself attaining anything other than "trade union consciousness") was to move the class's consciousness beyond what Gramsci (1971, 181-2) called the "economic-corporate level", to allow it to become hegemonic - and the intellectual, are folded into one.

This conception is considered outdated today on the left in all but the most obstinate Stalinist sects, and "it is almost impossible to find radical intellectuals who seriously believe that their role should be to determine the correct historical analysis of the world situation, so as to lead the masses along in the one true revolutionary direction." (Graeber, 2004a, 330) Since, therefore, there is no politbureau run or advised by academics, what is the role of 'radical academics' in social movements? The question is not a general or an abstract one: it is an attempt to justify the existence of this thesis in terms external to those of the acquisition of cultural capital in the academy (Bourdieu 1988).

David Graeber (2004b, 12) outlines a research agenda that has emerged within our movement since Seattle: rather than conducting a bird's eye survey of a strategic

conjuncture, and then feeding this analysis back into the party/network, those trained in academic analysis should engage directly with movement practices, in order to “try to figure out what might be the larger implications of what [the activists] are (already) doing, and then offer those ideas back, not as prescriptions, but as contributions, possibilities”.⁴ This agenda, in turn, arises directly from the changed conception of revolution that exists within the ethico-political field of contemporary anticapitalism and alterglobalisation: not as a one-off cataclysmic event, but as the construction of other worlds, or “a world into which many worlds fit.” (Marcos 2001, 80)

Which is where this thesis comes into the picture: emerging from several years of critical engagement with(in) the European anticapitalist current of the alterglobalisation movement, it seeks to understand the possibilities created by, and the effects of some of our political practices. I understand my work here as part of a body of analysis emerging from a variety of locations, some of them in academia, some of them outside, but all organically connected to the movement, that seeks to move beyond the awed representation and celebration of diversity that characterised initial analyses of alterglobalisation and contemporary anticapitalism, towards asking more critically strategic questions: how does what we do actually change anything? Are we really able to construct ‘other worlds’?⁵

Such a research agenda also has certain implications for style and presentation: academics working in social movements must make their work accessible *and* interesting to people in these movements if they want to avoid producing knowledge only for the select few, purely for academic consumption. As a result, this thesis is written in a style that is both very personal and story-like: it is not a disinterested piece of research, but a piece of work that takes as its starting point questions generated and discussed far beyond academia; and it is told as a story because the line of thought and inquiry follows the thoughts and practices of the movement from which I write. And while, of course, many of the resources I draw on to answer my questions are produced in academia, I have striven to write in ways that, as far as possible in the given framework, are accessible and interesting to non-academic readers. If there is to

⁴ Cf. also Juris (forthcoming); Pickerill and Chatterton (2005); and Osterweil and Chesters (forthcoming).

⁵ A more interesting generation of writings on our movement has since attempted to move away from simply highlighting the diversity of the movement towards placing that diversity in a strategic context. Cf. Mertes (2004); Notes from Nowhere Collective, (2003); Abramsky (2001); Starhawk (2002); Harvie et al. (2005); Callinicos (2003); and Drainville (2005).

be any hope of offering the knowledge produced here back to social movements and activists, the style of presentation must fit that goal.⁶

(iii) Hope

'We are winning'; 'other worlds are possible'; even the slightly more dejected 'but in the end, we will win' on the wall of the recently stormed Gothenburg school, they all reveal a driving force at the bottom of contemporary alterglobalist and anticapitalist activism: hope. Hope despite the advances of the far right in Europe, whether in government or outside of it; hope despite Peak Oil and global warming; despite the growth of mega-slums in mega-cities; despite the advancing precarity of labour and feminisation of poverty; hope despite war, whether in Iraq, on terror, on the poor in general. In the face of the awesome power of capital to co-opt, articulate (and, failing that, of the state to repress), to change its form and structure, to push the limits that the Socialist left had, since Marx, argued were inherent in its expansive drive,⁷ there cannot be an anticapitalist politics without hope: Rosa Luxemburg was "high on life, in spite of it all" (Laschitzka 1996). And Antonio Gramsci (1971, 175) famously formulated his maxim as "pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will."

Optimism and hope, alas: during the 1990s there was so little of it. It was the decade of neoliberal triumph, of the "end of history", of Thatcher's TINA doctrine ("There Is No Alternative"). And on the left? Had we not gone through the death of god, the end of 'grand narratives', the demise of the traditional Socialist belief in the inescapability of the revolution? Our hopes were dashed after WWI, again after WWII, and then again at the end of the 1960s. As a result, according to some, 'radical' theory abandoned the hope for revolution, abandoned the hope that capital could be overcome: 'human emancipation' became the many *Emancipations* of multiple subject positions (Nederveen Pieterse 1992), Socialism became 'radical democracy' (Laclau and Mouffe 2001), Lyotard's (1984) most radical proposal was to "open the databanks", while one

⁶ In this context it should probably be pointed out that at certain 'movement' events, like social fora, a large proportion of participants has been involved in higher education, as a survey of participants at the 2005 World Social Forum shows (IBASE 2005, 18): some two thirds of all surveyed participants had had access to higher education.

⁷ The classic formulation of this drive in Marx and Engels (1978, 473-83). Cf. also Harvey (1982); Luxemburg (1963); and Lenin (1939). Most recently, the question of the 'external' limits of capital has been discussed, and dismissed, in Hardt and Negri (2000, 221-239).

of Foucault's (1986) most immediately political texts, "Of Other Spaces", remains, from a strategic perspective, all too abstract.⁸ Allthwhile the gatekeepers of official Marxism attacked the perceived *Retreat from Class* (Wood 1986) and even those more sympathetic to non-class social movements, like David Harvey (1989), expressed their dismay at the lack of a radical class politics, of projects for human emancipation from capital. The movements of the left in Europe and North America seemed caught between a number of unappealing alternatives: fuzzily postmodern 'identity politics' on one side, a "politics of the first person", to use a German expression, that cannot overcome its isolation as incommensurable subject position; the impossible escalation of armed struggle by the *Weathermen* in the US, *Action Directe* in France, the *Brigate Rosse* in Italy, the *Rote Armee Fraktion* in Germany; and the uninspiring and rapidly shrinking (or dividing) groupuscules of the Leninist parties.

In this situation, the theorists of cynicism sought to explain why traditional Socialist politics, which hoped to *enlighten* the masses about the evils of capitalism, would have to fail in these postmodern times.⁹ Sloterdijk (1983, 12) argued that today, our ability to work and reproduce society in fact rested on the universalisation of a "cynical reason", an "enlightened false consciousness" that has always-already internalised the well-meaning critiques of activists: "'yes, but...'" says the master cynic to his [sic] critic, 'your ideals are great, but there is no other way.'"¹⁰ Žižek (2000a) in turn suggested that we continue to function socially after the death of grand narratives by creating our own personalised fetishes, *objets petits a*, which, once again, are immune to the traditional Socialist weapon of *Ideologiekritik*. To present people with a model for a better society will then always fail because contemporary cynical consciousness has reflexively buffered its falseness, as Sloterdijk (1983, 12) argues: utopian Socialism has come to an end.

This 'cynical' position has a long tradition in Socialist politics, beginning with Marx' and Engels' (1978, 497-9) attacks on the Utopian Socialists in the *Manifesto*, and continuing with the conception of the commodity fetish outlined in *Das Kapital*: the trick about the fetish is that it is not simply a mistaken understanding of the world. It is in fact *necessary* false consciousness, that is, a misconception of the real relations

⁸ Cf. the critique of Foucault in Harvey (2000a, 184-5).

⁹ Against, for example, Habermas' (1973) assumption that contemporary capitalism would tend to produce 'motivational crises'.

¹⁰ Unless indicated otherwise, all translations from non-English sources are my own.

between human beings that arises necessarily from the peculiar social relations of capitalist production and exchange (Marx 1971, 85-98).¹¹

But against this kind of cynicism, against the famous injunction not to write recipes for the cook-shops of the future (Marx 1971, 25), there continues to exist a more utopistic strand of Socialist (and Marxist) politics. For Ernst Bloch (cited in Kolakowski 1979, 471), “[e]xpectation, hope, intention towards as-yet unrealised possibilities: all this is not only a fundamental aspect of human consciousness, but [...] a fundamental determinant within objective reality as a whole.” The function of utopia in Bloch’s conception of hope was to provide some form of outside, even if only an imagined, future outside, from which an assault on the present could be launched and legitimated (Tormey 2005, 397).¹²

But how can ‘utopias’ become concrete enough to be something other, something more than the traditional ‘pie-in-the-sky’ of the great, cataclysmic communist revolution? How can other worlds be built? To understand the possibility of a politics that is not always-already fully under the sway of capital, we first have to realise that not all social relations in a ‘capitalist society’ are in fact ‘capitalist’. From a structuralist/institutionalist, as well as feminist perspective, capital necessarily relies on the existence of non-capitalist fields of social life for its own reproduction, fields that, in spite of reproducing the conditions for capital accumulation, retain their relatively autonomous logics of functioning (Jessop 1997; Hodgson 1996; Poulantzas 1978; Dalla Costa and James 1975). A Gramscian would argue that no single project, no single set of social relations can ever fully colonise the historically constituted, multi-layered and internally contradictory popular “common sense”, and that as a result there are always discursive reserves from which to launch and legitimate an anticapitalist project (Gramsci 1971, 323-332; Rupert 2000, 11). And the vitalism characteristic of Italian *Operaismo*, as well as the work of Deleuze and Guattari, would suggest that life, living labour, desire always produces social relations other than capital, which act as a constantly emergent outside to capital, constantly creating new social spaces (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b; De Angelis forthcoming).

¹¹ On the necessary character of the fetish see also Rubin (1990, 7-12) and Heinrich (2004). For a non-Marxist critique of such ‘cynicism’, see Graeber (2001, 227).

¹² Cf. also Wallerstein (1998).

Or, to put the matter in much simpler terms: we constantly practice and experience life as being other-than-capital (Jensen 2000). Whether in our friendship circles, where we exchange ‘goods and services’ without expecting a specific reward; in relationships with lovers, family, even with co-workers, when we cooperate to solve a problem that the logic of competition could not have solved. Of course, these emergent ‘outsides’ to capital are not only necessarily antagonistic to capital, they are in fact very often useful to and necessary for capital, driving innovation, compensating for ‘market failures’, allowing it to overcome its own limits. Still, these moments and spaces of our lives that are not fully under the sway of capital: they are the source of concrete hope.

The contribution of academic inquiry to such a politics of hope can be to investigate these moments and spaces where we remember that capital is not natural, where we attempt to defend, create, and/or extend “alternative value practices” (De Angelis forthcoming). To tease out the logics of these alternative practices, and to understand wherein their transformative potential might lie. Whether they must necessarily turn into particularly advanced aspects of new marketing and accumulation strategies, or whether they can come to form parts of an expanding network of non-capitalist social spaces – whether they can be concrete utopias.

And how can we conceptualise such a politics of hope? In this search for the transformative potential of alternative value practices in the contemporary European anticapitalist movement, I will draw on a theoretical field demarcated largely by concepts developed by two theorists who provide, on my reading, the most exciting resources to think a politics of hope, of contingency, of emergence and difference against the powers of both capital and the state: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. “Not to mention the fact that Deleuze [and Guattari] more and more serve [...] as the theoretical foundation of today’s anti-globalist Left and its resistance to capitalism.” (Biek 2003, xi)

Like most groundbreaking theorists, Deleuze and Guattari are multiple, and no single reading can satisfactorily represent the immense learning and complexity of thought that their collaborative two-volume magnum opus, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* contains. Thus, they remark in the opening pages of *A Thousand Plateaus* that “the two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. And since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd.” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 3) Who from this crowd, then, is joining

us on our journey? The Deleuze and Guattari we will encounter in the pages below are what one might call ‘activist philosophers’, theorists whose work is invested by the energies that escaped capture by the Gaullist state and the French Communist Party (PCF) in the legendary events of ‘Paris 1968’ (Foucault 2004, xiii; Deleuze 1995, 171; Lecercle 2005; Holland 1999, vii-ix). They come into this work on a trajectory of Western European libertarian anticapitalism and a particular reading of Marx – shared to some extent by currents within the Italian theories of (post)-*Operaismo* (Hardt and Negri 2000) – that also inform this text. They are philosophers of contingency against historical determinism (Beasley-Murray undated; Read 2003b), of escape from capture, of an ontologically anarchic desire (Lecercle 2005). Against *being* they bring to bear a constant becoming and change, against the majority a “minoritarian politics”, against identity they assert difference, against ontologies of stability they posit an ontology of flows: *Panta rei* – all is flux.

That is of course something of a reduction: their concepts are not easily folded back into one framework, given that their precise definition varies not only between books but also between chapters, depending on what sort of ‘assemblage’ (structure) they are inserted into. But, arguably, when they talk about “rhizomatic” vs. “arborescent”, tree-like structures, they are (also) contrasting the network with the party (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 3-28). Their notion of the “apparatus of capture”, equally applied to state *and* party, emerges from the lessons the French movement of ‘68 drew from the ignominiously conservative role played by the PCF in the drama of that year (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 468-522; Holland 1999, ix). The “line of flight”, in turn, is their way of saying goodbye, as many contemporary European anticapitalists have done, to the notion of revolution as a single, cataclysmic event, and to recognise the possibility of social change emerging from a multiplicity of locations, in an infinite number of yet-to-be-encountered ways (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 229-255). It is their way of thinking, against the closure of the social field implied by theories positing the always-already total subsumption of life under capital (e.g. Althusser 1971; Arthur 2002), the possibility of change, openness – of hope, not as the possibility of change in the future, but as the possibility and the reality of change that happens in the here and now, everywhere, all the time. Hope as the belief in the possibility of a coming-together, a “connection” of lines of flight, deviant flows in spaces outside of the codes of the state and the axiomatic of capital: coming together in making other worlds.

The two basic building blocks of their theories are on the one hand, *desire*, and on the other, *territorialisation*. The former can be understood as an ontologically prior, vitalistic energy that is constantly in flux, although never existing outside of a concrete assemblage which it powers and by which it is organised (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 237, 253). It is crucial to understand that this desire, while always-already articulated in a given assemblage, is an energy in flux, as a result of which it always has the potential to overflow the disciplinary limits of the assemblage, to break out, to draw lines of flight that stretch the limits of the possible: things are never fixed in one place, they are always becoming. Territorialisation, on the other hand, refers to all processes of *organisation* of social flows (of desire): and it is an article of faith for Deleuze and Guattari ((2004b, 60) that every *de-territorialisation* (a process of breaking up existing social arrangements and organisation) of flows is necessarily *accompanied by* a simultaneous *re-territorialisation*, a fixing into new social arrangements.

And lest we believe that as libertarian philosophers (Lecerclé 2005, 146; Newman 2001), our French comrades would necessarily understand *de-territorialisation* as a positive development, and *re-territorialisation* as negative: they understand capital to be the most powerful machine of *de-territorialisation* ever to exist (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 35; cf. Marx and Engels 1978, 473-83). The crux of the matter is not necessarily how to simply *de-territorialise* the static flows of social life, this being a concern more appropriate to the 1970s' *New Left* critiquing the over-regulation of social life under Fordist capitalism. The trick is the indeterminacy of *de-territorialised* flows with respect to what I call their *mode of re-territorialisation*: whether *coded* by the state, *conjugated* by capital, or *connected* in a non-hierarchical manner to other flows so that they may create spaces beyond state or capital (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 243).

(iv) *Caminamos Preguntando*

Caminamos preguntando – we walk while questioning. Once again a slogan taken from the revolutionary poetry of the Zapatistas, that captures the spirit of the contemporary, 'postmodern' anticapitalist rebellion, the changing ideas of revolution underpinning it (Marcos 2001; Carrigan 2001, 417-444; Burbach 2001, 105-115). Unlike in the Socialist movements of old, we do not precisely know, nor do we claim to know, what the 'correct' revolutionary means and ends are (Holloway 2005). Every step we take we

take with a question mark above it, and every little answer that we give only opens new questions. All of us in this movement want to answer the big question: how do we fight, and win, against capital, *without* becoming captured by the state? And each of us contributes small parts of specific, localised answers to the question: 'see, this is how we do it here, where we live.' In turn, others pick up this answer, modify it, and produce yet new answers, and therefore yet new questions.

This thesis aims to be a step in this process of *caminar preguntando*, walking while questioning. Its question is not a primarily academic, but a political, a movement question: how can we in the European anticapitalist movement effectively fight neoliberal capital? By investigating the effectiveness and limitations of a select set of movement practices and projects, I aim to contribute to strategic discussions currently going on in our movement, as well as in critical and engaged sectors of academia, about where we go as anticapitalists, or, more generally, 'alterglobalists', after Seattle, after 9/11. We declared in Seattle, at the World Social Fora and elsewhere that 'other worlds are possible'. The question underlying this thesis is: how can we *make* these other worlds? Where are capital's frontlines? And, if they exist at all: where are its weak points?

Drawing on what has been termed the 'spatial turn' in (critical) social theory (Thrift 2006, 139; Foucault 1986; Harvey 1989; Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a; 2004b), I will organise my argument about anticapitalist politics around the notion of 'space': how capital encloses and configures space, and how anticapitalist projects may open, reclaim and create alternative spaces. Beginning with an inquiry into the effectiveness of militant summit protests, I will argue that such "moments of effervescence" potentially *open up* political and discursive space by drawing "lines of flight", against the discursive closure of such space that results from the "sedimentation" of social relations of domination, the state and capital in general. I will then trace the emergence of the ethico-political field of the contemporary European anticapitalist movement as set against the particular *enclosures* of social space on which neoliberal capital crucially relies. I will argue that this neoliberal closure of space proceeds via the subjugation of that space to the capitalist value form, or, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, the "capitalist axiomatic". This in turn leads to a conception of anticapitalist practice which sees the creation, defence, and extension of social spaces governed by value logics alternative to that of capital ('other worlds') as a crucial frontline of our struggles. Chs.

V and VI are attempts to investigate empirically how anticapitalist projects emerging in the space created by the summit protests attempt to *fill* this space, to move from the mere possibility of other worlds to their creation. As with the spaces created by riots, I conclude that these spaces governed by alternative value logics remain politically indeterminate, that is, their political meaning arises not from within themselves, but from their connection to other spaces and practices. Thus, in the concluding chapter I begin to articulate the question opened up by this thesis, this exercise in *caminar preguntando*: if it really is ‘the connections, stupid’, then what kind of ways of connecting alternative value practices can we imagine that would allow us to create an expanding network of such practices to rival the network of spaces enclosed and dominated by capital.

Or, more succinctly: I am looking here at space, to steal phrases from David Harvey (2001; 2000a), ‘spaces of capital’, and ‘spaces of hope’. Our militant summit protests *opened* political space, whereas social relations of domination in general, and neoliberal capital in particular, rely on (*en*)closing it. Anticapitalist projects emerging after the summit protests attempt to *fill* the space opened by our protests, but given the political indeterminacy of these spaces when understood in isolation from others, the challenge that arises at the current conjuncture of anticapitalist practice in Europe, is to *connect* them. The thesis will thus end how it began: with more open questions.

And if the underlying metaphor of this study is that of space, there is a set of key concepts that will recur throughout the investigation, each of which relates to how social spaces are (dis)organised: the “line of flight” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b) opens up new social spaces; whereas capital in general, and neoliberal capital in particular, tends towards the “enclosure” of space (Harvey 2003; De Angelis forthcoming). “Value”, in turn, will refer to a social logic of practice governing social interaction in a given space, and effecting the integration of individual practice with social reproduction (Graeber 2001). As sub-species of ‘value’, the “capitalist value form” (Marx 1971; Heinrich 2004) will refer to a particular value logic that subordinates difference (use-value) to sameness (exchange value), the extension of which into ever-wider social spaces (enclosure) will be argued to be at the heart of neoliberal accumulation; while I will use “alternative value practices” (De Angelis forthcoming) to denote value logics alternative to that of capital, which entail a respect for diversity and difference: which may potentially be combined to create a world into which many

world fit. Finally, the notion of “indeterminacy”, suggesting that the political meaning and potential of each alternative value practices lies primarily in its connection with other such practices.

A note on the particular examples of anticapitalist practice I investigate below. This inquiry arises from strategic discussions within a social movement. As a result, I selected for investigation practices that, in each case, relate to important strategic debates going on within our movement(s): what possibilities do they open, how do they help us in creating ‘other worlds’? First, the summit riot: European anticapitalists (particularly those in countries hosting important summits, such as the UK G8 summit in 2005, or the upcoming G8 summit in Germany, 2007) continue to invest a lot of energy into organising such gatherings. And in each case the debate arises again: has the militant, mass summit protest run its course, or does it still make sense to pour so many resources into an action that must necessarily end up as a somewhat ephemeral spectacle? (e.g. Harvie et al 2005; Interventionistische Linke 2006)

Both of the subsequent ‘case studies’ investigate projects that arose out of the desire to attempt to challenge the power of capital in a more sustainable way than merely attacking its symbolic representation and management at major summits. The Stockholm-based faredodging insurance *planka.nu* emerged in the context of a debate within the European autonomous left about the politics of the ‘free appropriation of use value’, circling around ‘for free behaviour’ such as filesharing, faredodging, or shoplifting (Stuetzle and van Dyk 2004; Brand 2005, 210-211). The crucial question here is that of the (value) ‘logic of practice’. Second, the collective *Escanda*, set up by an international group of activists in Northern Spain, emerged in the context of a European debate about the politics of setting up ‘social centres’ after the summit protests: is there really greater openness towards such anticapitalist places in areas in crisis, the backyards of capital? (cf. Pickerill and Chatterton 2005) What is their political potential?

Before I proceed with the investigation into contemporary strategies of the European anticapitalist movement, let me lay out the argument in more detail. We will begin our journey in chapter II at one of those spectacular moments that were so important in the emergence of this movement: the militant summit protest. These moments of confrontation and militancy were crucial in the movement’s early years, and yet the

questions were always there: are these demonstrations effective? Do they simply reproduce militant habitus, further marginalising the movement, or do they actually change things for the better? And what are their limits?

Drawing on a tradition of French (post-)structuralism that allows us to theorise elements of both continuity and rupture in such explosive moments, specifically on the work of Durkheim (1995), Bourdieu (1977), Zolberg (1972) and Deleuze and Guattari (2004b); and on observant participation at a number of militant summit protests in Europe, I will argue that while some anticapitalist riots are merely reproductive of radical habitus, others are transformative moments of effervescence and madness, stretching the limits of the possible and opening new spaces by drawing “lines of flight.” I will show that militant protests played a crucial role in our emerging anticapitalist politics not only in transforming the subjectivities of those immediately involved, but also by opening up political and discursive space, whilst state and capital rely on the legitimating closure of that space through sedimentation.

This very effectiveness of spectacular, event-based politics will in turn be shown to also constitute its limits: while space may be opened by a riot, it cannot be filled without reference to a wider ethico-political project on the one hand, and to practical alternatives to that which is being criticised in the riot on the other. Ultimately, the space created by riots is politically indeterminate, its meaning only constituted through ‘connecting’ the lines drawn there to wider movement discourses and practices.

From an analysis of the riotous politics that catapulted the anticapitalist movement onto global TV-screens, we turn, in chapter III, to a genealogy of this movement: if Seattle was the movement’s “coming out party” (Klein 2004), in this chapter I seek to explain what it was that was hiding in the closet. Rather than providing an in-depth analysis of any particular group or discourse within the movement, the analysis moves from Paris ’68, to the Italian *Autonomia* movement of the 1970s, and finally to the German *Autonome* of the 1980s in order to outline a ‘tableau’ of the political and conceptual sensibilities that define the ‘submerged networks’ and ethico-political field of European autonomous anticapitalism. In a constant interchange between political practice and theory, drawing on French Situationism, Italian *Operaismo*, and once again Deleuze and Guattari, I trace the emergence of an anti-capitalist, anti-state and anti-

party movement that carries on its banners notions like 'autonomy', 'desire', and 'everyday life'.

In a second part, I relate the emergence of this networked movement struggling against the enclosure of private spaces, of our everyday lives, to the emergence of a networked, neoliberal capitalism. I will understand this emerging capitalism, drawing on the work of David Harvey and that 'autonomist' school of Marxism which has highlighted the increased importance of 'enclosure' in neoliberal accumulation, as an extensive accumulation strategy resting on "accumulation by dispossession", that is, the direct subjugation of social spaces to the dictatorship of capitalist value (Midnight Notes Collective 1990; Harvey 2003, 137-179). I will argue that the struggles of contemporary anticapitalism emerge primarily in and around sites of such accumulation by dispossession, superseding in importance the workplace-based struggles of Fordism.

Having thus traced the emergence of our movement, marvelled at the spectacular power of the summit riots, but also recognised their limits, chapter IV begins in the period of questioning that we collectively entered into after Genoa and 9-11. We had opened up space to fight capital and the state – but how could we fill it? How could we construct those other worlds? How could we fight capital in everyday life, rather than in its spectacular manifestations at the summits of the powerful? And to answer this question, we needed to understand how its power functions, and how it elicits our consent to our own subjugation: how it tends towards hegemony.

Drawing on two distinct theoretical traditions, a (post)structuralist one from Gramsci to Althusser, Bourdieu and Deleuze and Guattari on the one hand, and value-form analysis from Marx to Rubin and Heinrich on the other, I argue that the hegemonising tendencies of neoliberal capital, in contrast to the disciplinary hegemony of Fordist capital, rest on our constant (re)enactment of a 'market habitus' as a result of the ever-increasing enclosure and 'value-forming' of formerly non-market spaces, their subsumption under the logic of capital – their conjugation to the capitalist axiomatic.

This process of imposition of a market habitus, of our interpellation as capitalist subjectivities, will then be shown to be contested by drawing on recent work by Graeber (2001) and De Angelis (forthcoming): life everywhere produces "alternative value practices", social spaces governed by logics other than that of capital. To be sure,

such practices are, once again, politically indeterminate, insofar as they may very well end up articulated to capital – but they may also serve as loci of anticapitalist struggle. Whether we will be able to defend existing, create new, and expansively network alternative value practices – this will determine the counterhegemonic potential of our movement.

Chapters V and VI will then consist of two case studies of projects in the European anticapitalist movement that emerged at the end of the cycle of militant summit protest, both of which based on 3-months periods of multi-sited fieldwork and what Juris (forthcoming) has called “militant ethnography”. In each of these ‘case studies’, I aim to tell strategically *useful*, rather than ethnographic *complete* stories about the respective project.

In chapter V, I will follow the movement in its climbdown from the summits and the spectacular into the everyday and sustained process of fighting neoliberal enclosure. Locating the faredodging insurance set up by a group of autonomous activists in Stockholm (*planka.nu*) in the moral economy of a hegemonic Swedish social democracy (Thompson 1971, 108, 112; Ryner 2002), I will read the privatisation of the Stockholm public transport system as a simultaneous de- and re-territorialisation of flows of people and value by capital with the aid of the Swedish (competition) state; and then attempt to understand the challenge to that reterritorialisation constituted by rising numbers of faredodgers. Faredodging, understood as a relatively deterritorialised flow, or alternative value practice, with respect to the process of privatisation, will be shown to be disruptive of the process of enclosure, while its wider political impact, I will argue, depends on the articulation of this, once again, politically indeterminate practice to wider practico-discursive movement networks.

Chapter VI will move from this campaign engaging capital at one of the frontlines of its contemporary offensive, privatisation, to a collective (*Escanda*) self-consciously set up by activists in capital’s ‘backyard’, in the deindustrialising region of Asturias, Spain. After locating my discussion of this anticapitalist project in an emerging strand of critical geography focussing on ‘multi-scalar’ resistance to neoliberalism, I move on to locate the project itself in the political and moral economy of the area. As a region in crisis, I will argue, there exists in Asturias a substantial openness towards

experimentation with alternative value practices – towards *placed* strategies of creating alternative ways of living.

At the same time, however, partly because of an overlap between the ‘deterritorialising’ strategies of both *Escanda* and European Union-institutions funding the collective, this openness also implies a high potential for rearticulation of *Escanda*’s projects seeking to create new, horizontal, non-monetarised social connections to potential post-Fordist accumulation strategies. Insofar as *Escanda* and other social actors share an interest in deterritorialisation, the means used in that deterritorialisation will once again be shown to be relatively indeterminate with respect to their mode of reterritorialisation.

For all their difference, then, all three case studies yield one particular conclusion, namely that the political effects of all these ‘anticapitalist’ practices depends on their articulation into wider networks of practices. Whether we can be counterhegemonic vis-à-vis the expansive tendencies of the value form, whether we can create networks of spaces governed by alternative value logics, protect them from conjugation by the value form, and thus create, maintain and expand habitus other than that of the capitalist market – all that depends on how we manage to articulate, to network these spaces. The conclusion will therefore be an open-ended discussion of the potential for the creation of such counterhegemonic networks of alternative value practices in the face of the awesome expansive powers of capital.

The thesis will thus end as it began: walking on, questioning. *Caminamos preguntando*. Every answer leads to more questions, every action, every struggle, even when effective – or even ‘victorious’ – only points to the even greater challenges that lie beyond. This, then, is *a* (not *the*) story of contemporary anticapitalist practice in Europe, of its hopes, its failures, and its successes. Without further ado, then, to the place where, for myself as for many other ‘activists’ disillusioned after the 1990s, so much of it began: into the streets!

Chapter II

“WILL THE DESTRUCTION BE CONSTRUCTIVE?”



(Graffiti on a wall of the Aristotle University, occupied by militant protesters during the EU-summit in Thessaloniki, 6/2003. Source: private collection)

(i) Introduction: do radicals dream of flying stones?

There is a dream etched deeply into the modern radical imaginary: the dream of revolution as rupture, as violent confrontation, as the storming of the Bastille, the Winter Palace. Sergei Eisenstein’s movie *October* captures the immense power of this moment of collective overcoming: of actual *revolution*. The hope; the fear in the face of repression; and the final victory, achieving the impossible. This is what Žižek (2002, 81) calls the ‘Leninist gesture’: on the attack, and then we’ll see. In short: the revolution as salvation, with all the religious baggage attached. Whether in the Marxist dialectic (Kolakowski 1978; Žižek 2003), or in the apocalyptic dreams of ecological collapse of contemporary ‘anarcho-primitivists’ (Fulano 2005), this dream unites radicals across otherwise deep political divides.

Not that revolutions sometimes don't happen that way, as a grand gesture of mass rejection/affirmation, culminating in the storming of something, someplace. But what worked in Petersburg, 1917, did not work in Berlin, 1918; nor in Paris, nor in London, nor Rome. Hence Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony, animated by this question: why could the Italian Communist Party (PCI), vastly bigger than Lenin's small group of Bolsheviks, riding the crest of a powerful movement of factory occupations and councils (Levy 1999), not storm their own Winter Palace, not bring the whole shaky edifice of Italian capitalism crashing down on itself? Once power was thought of as lying in the capillary institutions and practices of everyday life, revolutionary practice also had to change, from stockpiling weapons for the one last confrontation to building a counterhegemonic bloc of social forces that would slowly undermine the fortresses and earthworks of bourgeois power (Gramsci 1971).

But where the strategy of revolution as rupture had failed, the idea of revolution as the slow process of gaining control of civil society was not much more successful. After the demise of European Fascism, the allied powers did their best to prevent Italy 'going Communist', and the next time the chance for 'revolution' came around, in the late 1960s, the nominally 'Gramscian' PCI had turned from an agent of radical change into a pillar of liberal capitalist democracy (Katsiaficas 1997; Wright 2002), along with the remaining Communist Parties of Western Europe. And thus the dream returned, forced its way from the radical imaginary onto the streets, exploded into the events of Paris, May 1968. It had never gone away. And to this day, the radical left wonders: what would have happened if the French Communist Party had not been so fearful of losing control (Johnson 1972)? Could even *bigger*, even more *militant* clashes with the police have toppled Gaullism? The French Republic? Italy, German, European capitalism itself?

Thus the dream returned from where it had been lying in wait, haunting late-night meetings of eager radicals, where the dream of revolution-as-rupture resurfaced in the figure of the rioter. "Under the cobblestones, the beach" - thus the revolutionaries of 1968 wrote on the walls of Paris. Did they ever find the beach? Or was the sand just another desert? Whatever they found, their dream remains with us. And some 30 years later, the dream would once again return, yet another movement would pick up the cobblestones to see what lay below: the alterglobalisation movement. From the momentous events of Seattle, to the protests in Prague, Gothenburg, Genoa and

Gleneagles, the image of the hooded rioter has captivated the attention of the movement and the media. But why? What is it in the riot act that fascinates political radicals? Its potential, I suggest, to rupture 'normal' political space and time – to achieve something that *everyday* political practice cannot. As I write this, activists all across Europe are beginning to pour energies into mobilising for the G8 summit in Germany in 2007 – and once again, the debate has erupted: what is the point of this kind of politics? (Interventionistische Linke 2006)

This chapter seeks to analyse the riotous summit protest as an enactment of this dream of revolution as rupture, asking what the possibilities and limits are of such an event-focused political practice. Below, I will argue that riots, while at times appearing as merely rote, habitual repetition, sometimes do produce social ruptures and open new political spaces. The main theoretical reference point will be the work of Deleuze and Guattari, whose concepts of the 'war machine' and 'line of flight' will be used to analyse the political potential of 'irrational' and 'effervescent' political events – and ultimately to push beyond such a politics. I will show that the political spaces opened by spectacular protests, by riots, can never also be filled by such politics. Therein, I will argue, lie both the promise, and the limitations of the radical dream of revolution as rupture.

(ii) A tale of two riots

Annemasse

"Without any warning, the police attacked our totally peaceful demonstration with massive volleys of teargas. [...]. Even though for most of us this was the first time in such a situation, we never panicked [...]. Soon one felt how fear was overcome and washed away by courage. [...] While in the front some people held the police at bay by throwing stones and others extinguished the gas grenades right in front of the police lines, the Attac-campus groups supplied the barricade with wood for protection from gas. In the midst of all this, a large group of 'Pink & Silver' danced and sang carnival-rhythms." (Engelmann et al. 2003)

Nothing was *supposed* to happen at the blockade in Annemasse, thus what *did* happen became so much more exciting. The attempt to blockade one of the highways leading to the conference centre hosting the 2003 G8-summit in Evian, France, had been organised by the *Village Intergalactique*, which was made up largely of groups within the relatively moderate alterglobalist *Attac*-network (Cassen 2003), not known for

'kicking off' against the police. I joined the blockade, but did not expect any confrontation with the police, at least not the type of confrontations where the protesters fight back. Also, prior to the action most of the groups and individuals on the march had been to non-violence training sessions, and Attac has a clear non-violence policy in order to be able to distinguish itself politically from what are often called 'violent troublemakers' at demonstrations.

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

This 'stand-off' continued for several hours, after which the march returned to the camp: intriguingly, although we had not achieved our goal to block the road as we had planned to, the generally feeling was one of victory. At an evaluation meeting in Berlin some days after the action, several of the speakers invoked what had become known among the march's participants as 'the spirit of Evian', in order to argue for the creation of a 'Direct Action Network' in Berlin. In spite of criticism from other sections of Attac, as well as left-liberal German media (Pelizzari 2003; Schmidt 2003), for breaking the network's line or discrediting the movement in the eyes of the 'wider public', many of those who had participated in the blockade that had turned into a riot felt that something had changed politically: for them, the riot changed what they could think and do.

Thessaloniki

"Smashing shops ...is a lot of fun. I also don't really mind it. But this blabla about 'struggle' is a little over the top... these types of planned riots are fun. That's all."

"When I read these reports it's always the same game of cat-and-mouse. Throwing stones and Molotov cocktails, running away from the cops, and what remains - nothing, absolutely nothing!"

"Violence can be meaningful or meaningless, but it is definitely not just great because it leaves those who exercise it with a good feeling afterwards."

"What the black bloc did that day was pretty much the sorriest display of militancy that I ever encountered." (Anonymi 2003)

The protests at the 2003 EU-summit in Thessaloniki were different. Everyone I spoke to during the 10 days prior to and after the demonstrations had come there expecting a riot, a massive one in fact: almost a year before, Greek activists had already been mobilising at large European radical gatherings, urging those who wanted to have a fight with the police to come to Thessaloniki, and pointing out that in Greece, that's what Anarchist do, they fight with the police; in their public meetings, the Anti-Authoritarians - one of the anarchist factions occupying the campus of Thessaloniki's university - were openly planning the biggest riots ever seen in the city; and some German activists had sprayed on a wall: "See Thessaloniki - as long as it's still standing!"¹³

So the stage was set, and nobody's expectations were disappointed: the demonstration on the 20th of June, which was supposed to lead to the EU-conference centre, saw the first (fairly limited) instances of rioting. But the 'real' confrontation was planned for the 21st, Saturday, and activists had been stockpiling Molotov cocktails, building reinforced slingshots, and assembling protective gear, from helmets to shields. Almost as soon as the march left the university campus the first flares were being fired at journalists on rooftops, and it was obvious that the faction which had advocated refraining from 'kicking off' before some 'good targets' had been reached had lost the debate.

Soon, windows were being smashed left and right, and when, down a side street, the first group of riot police came into view, some 20-50 firebombs were thrown in their direction. Some blocks further on, the police attacked the march with tear gas, splitting the militant 'black bloc' down the middle. The group I was with ended up on a wide-open square, unable to find new 'ammunition': there were no stones to break up. The police attacked the square, and I found myself returning, with a large group of

¹³ Other telling examples of such nihilist graffiti included "Destroy Everything Now", "Smash, Burn, Destroy", "Chaos in the City: Destroy", and my favourite, "Viva Nihilism". For a more in-depth analysis of the processes surrounding the riots in Thessaloniki, cf. Sullivan (2005), drawing on Bourgois (2001).

protesters, to the safe haven of the university after running from the police. Back there, many conversations revolved around the fact that the riot, which had been billed as a re-run of, or revenge for, the massive riots at the G8-summit in Genoa two years before, where activist Carlo Giuliani had been killed by paramilitary *Carabinieri*, had been much smaller than anticipated. Many participants felt that the whole event had been staged: everyone knew there would be a riot; the riot happened, some shops had been burnt, some people had gotten arrested. Nothing new, especially not in Greece. Nothing much had changed.

(iii) Reading the riot act: (ir)rational, habitual and effervescent riots

Rational and Irrational Crowds

Attempting to gain a coherent understanding of riots and their political meaning is a bit like trying to get a coherent picture from looking into a kaleidoscope: what appears radical and anarchic when seen from an anticapitalist perspective, might appear thoroughly reactionary from a feminist perspective. Reading riot acts, then, is necessarily an immensely political business, and the history of Western academic analysis of riots and riotous crowds reflects this fact. The first such investigation, conducted by Gustave Le Bon (1952), focused on the irrationality of such events and their perpetrators. This French conservative argued that *The Crowd* transcended the motives, habits, and goals of each individual participant, a process he perceived as fundamentally frightening: the crowd tends to become chaotic, violent, and destructive; it loses its capacity to make 'reasoned' and conscious choices; the crowd is likely to fall under the sway of some demagogic leader, and show heightened intolerance towards The Other; and finally, the crowd is likely to be composed only of the 'lower orders' of society, of the rabble, the lumpen.¹⁴

Against this conservative view of crowds arose a radical line of inquiry that debunked every one of these claims. First, it was pointed out that it was not generally the poorest and most destitute that were to be found in riotous crowds, but rather those who were relatively well integrated into their local communities (Rudé 1964, 201-6; Hobsbawm 1959, 112). Second, far from being randomly destructive, rioting crowds chose their

¹⁴ Cf. also the pessimistic view of 'the mass' in Canetti (1994), inspired by the experience of crowds in Nazi-Germany.

targets with surprising care and consistency (Rudé 1964, 253-4; Thompson 1971, 108, 112). Third, and crucially, it was argued that in almost every crowd action (in this case in the 18th and early 19th century) “the men and women in the crowd were informed by the belief that they were defending traditional rights or customs”, which in turn entailed “a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties in the community.” Thompson (1971, 78-9) refers to this as the ‘moral economy’ of the poor.

In this type of analysis, the riotous crowd, far from breaking or transcending the moral norms of the community, for better or worse, in fact is an enforcer of such norms: its actions are almost fully contained within communal traditions - only Rudé (1964, 242) makes an allowance for riots not being “entirely readily made” - and proceed, to cite another great historian of the riot, “in terms of the roles and patterns of behaviour allowed by [the rioters’] culture.” (Farge and Revel 1991, 52) The riot thus appears as a purposeful and rational act (albeit a rationality that is historically contextualised and particular) and arises out of a given community’s discourses, habits, and traditions. At the time of its formulation, this conclusion was a salutary and necessary counter to the conservative representation of rioting crowds as a bunch of destitute, violent crazies.

However, in responding to the reactionary implications of focussing on the irrationality of the crowd, these analyses swung the pendulum too far back. Rudé’s half-hearted admission notwithstanding, the collective experience does not seem to transform anything at all: it is merely a collective acting out its previously constituted expectations and norms. The account from Annemasse, however, points us towards the suggestion that, first, participation in a riot does change *something* - in this sense, crowd psychology is right: what happens in a riot transforms the elements that enter into it, and whereas Thompson et al. focus on the social analysis of the crowd, it is important not to ignore its dynamics (Drury, Reicher and Stott 2003).

The position from which this investigation therefore proceeds is this: theories which focus on the ‘rational’ aspects of rioting find it difficult to acknowledge, let alone theorise, the ‘emergent’ element that sometimes occurs within riots. In turn, crowd psychology, even when purged of its reactionary elements does not sufficiently analyse the habitual, routine elements of rioting; beyond that, its conceptualisation of the emergent element of riots needs clarification.

Pierre Bourdieu and the habitual riot

The riots in Thessaloniki were extraordinarily intense (for European standards). Afterwards, however, an uncanny – if sometimes relieved – feeling of anti-climax seemed to prevail among many of the participants. What was it that made the riots in Thessaloniki, so intense in terms of raw levels of violence, so tepid in terms of their political implications, compared to those in Evian? The answer lies in the fact that the riots in Thessaloniki were expected by everyone; planned in advance; and enacted according to a well-rehearsed script. They were *habitual* riots, where, following Bourdieu (1977, 78), we have to understand habitus as “the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations [...]” The habitus is the historically generated ability to, in a more embodied than conscious way, recognise, in a given social field, what is right and wrong, what has to be done and said in a given moment, what is and what is not ‘for the likes of us’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 130). This ‘generative principle’ at work in these riots “produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of [this] generative principle” – they tend reproduce, in other words, the very social relations and hierarchies that gave rise to them.

Jamie Cross (2003) has applied parts of Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptual machinery to riots at a EU-summit in Barcelona, 2002.¹⁵ He argues that, contrary to romanticised conceptions of ‘resistance’ which obtain both among activists and progressive academics, the practices of ostensibly ‘resisting’ activists a) are themselves a product of power: they are not merely negative, ‘against’ something, but rather positive, in the sense of being expressive of social relations, ‘stakes’, and habits of militant activists; and specifically, b) embody hegemonic masculinities: the practices of rioting anarchists are produced within a specific habitus that valorises violent, masculine confrontations with the police and reproduces the group’s cohesion through those confrontations.

The implication of talking about a militant habitus is that there must be a relatively autonomous *field* of militant activism (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 97, 127), with its own logics, and crucially, its own stakes for which actors in this field compete. Activists “are constantly forced to compare or measure how they act against seemingly

¹⁵ For another analysis of social movements’ practices using the notion of habitus, see Crossley (2003).

established [masculine] norms” (Cross 2003). And the performance of an accepted kind of dominant masculinity in the context of violent, militant activism is one of the strategies which ensures the accumulation of socially desired resources, which in turn determine the structure of power relations within a field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 98-9). Thus, “the contemporary protests of militant anticapitalists are not, on reflection, quite as anarchic as they first appear” (Cross 2003; Sullivan 2005), insofar as they do not manage to open up political space, but simply reproduce the boundaries around existing spaces, or fields.

As a result of the dominance in Thessaloniki of the particular masculine militant habitus described here, the riot ended up being fully ‘normalised’, it was ‘hegemonic’ in some sense: no one asked *whether* or *why* to riot - that question seemed to have been answered many, many times before, and now didn’t need to be asked anymore. In spite of all the nihilist graffiti and radical posturing on the squatted campus, all that happened was a mere (re-)enactment and reproduction of traditions, habitus, rituals, and power structures.

Emile Durkheim and the Effervescent Crowd

From the perspective of a left-libertarian politics, the riots in Barcelona and Thessaloniki were thoroughly discouraging events, their merely habitual character of playing for the stakes of the militant subculture an indictment of many of the self-described radicals who haunt the global summits with their masked presence. But can we generalise from these two riots to the general nature of riots and spectacular politics in the alterglobalist movement? Both my own research and the well-documented experiences of participants at other riotous events in this movement suggest that we cannot: one riot is not like another, they may vary both in their impacts and their acceptability across time and space (Anonymous 2001; The Free Association 2004; Drury, Reicher and Stott 2003). A riot in a society where no one ever throws stones at the police is likely to have a very different meaning than one where this happens all the time. Below, I will therefore draw on the work of Emile Durkheim to demonstrate that there have indeed been riots in this movement that have opened up political space by changing what can be thought and done, the limits of the possible – sometimes ‘only’ for their participants, sometimes within a wider social context.

Writing in the 'ruptural' tradition of French social theory whose view of social transformation is forever influenced by the events of 1789, Durkheim (1995, 211-2) suggests that "[i]n the midst of an assembly that becomes worked up, we become capable of feelings and conduct of which we are incapable when left to our individual resources". Sometimes this means that mass gatherings reaffirm a social collective's underlying principles as transcending each single individual, in socially integrative events that are often characterised by repetition and routine rituals; and sometimes it means that the very principles of a collective are transformed, that a new society is born, new social and political spaces are opened, in a moment of what Durkheim called creative or "collective effervescence". Finding himself and his time – *fin de siècle* France – in a "state of uncertainty and confused anxiety", he hoped that "[a] day will come when our societies once again will know hours of creative effervescence during which new ideals will again spring forth and new formulas emerge to guide humanity for a time" (Durkheim 1995, 429).

Since, argues Durkheim (1995, 208), the religious idea of the sacred, the totem, lies at the bottom of all societies, as the reified image of society itself, any change in conceptions of the sacred would indicate a change in the nature of the society itself. Which begs the question: how do societies generate, or change, their sense of the sacred? His analysis takes as its starting point the ecstatic nature of the mass event itself: the coming together for ritual purposes of a normally dispersed group of people (a description which clearly applies to contemporary European alterglobalist activists) disrupts what he took to be their normally monotonous everyday lives, and produces events where "a sort of electricity is generated, [which] quickly launches [the participants] to an extraordinary height of exaltation." This effervescence generates "passions so heated and so free from control' that it often leads to generally 'outlandish behaviour". It is in such moments, in this "world of sacred things", argues Durkheim, that "the religious idea seems to have been born", in other words, that societies (or movements) are born (1995, 218-9; cf. The Free Association 2004).

It is because the temporary, fleeting moment of ecstasy generated at such events can, potentially, transform the very basis of the society within which the event occurred that the effervescence Durkheim analyses goes beyond that found, for example, at raves, or football matches, or other such mass events:

Apart from these passing or intermittent states, there are more lasting ones [...]. Under the influence of some great collective shock in certain historical periods, social interactions become much more frequent and active [...]. The result is the general effervescence that is characteristic of revolutionary or creative epochs. [...] People live differently and more intensely than in normal times. The changes are not simply of nuance and degree; man [sic] becomes something other than what he was (1995, 212-3).

So how is it that riots can produce such sudden and ruptural changes in established habitus and open new political spaces? My argument here rests on three specific claims. The first is that riots can allow participants to stretch the boundaries of social morality: Farge and Revel (1991), in their study of a set of riots in mid-18th century Paris, find that the bourgeois involved in the street fighting temporarily broke the boundaries of their class and their morality. With this, however, we are still stuck with the possibility that 'effervescence' refers to little else than the temporary, fleeting 'bubbling over' of a bottle of soda - which can only turn flat afterwards. Space is opened only to collapse immediately afterwards.

The second claim, therefore, is that the changes in habitus induced by riots, the opening of space, can last beyond the mere event. Here, an elaboration of Durkheim's original concept of effervescence might be useful, for Durkheim had in fact been analysing two separate types of effervescent events without properly distinguishing them: those that are merely recreative, which produce a certain intensity of feelings that in turn reconstitutes group cohesion (the 'habitual' riots in Barcelona and Thessaloniki might stand as such events), where no lasting transformation of participants' sense of the possible occurs; and genuinely creative events, where, "for some reason, these collective interactions become extraordinarily powerful and intense" (Lockwood 1992, 34; Némedi 1998, 163). Such events - for Durkheim, once again, the French revolution stands as the archetypal example of such transformation - induce lasting transformations in a way that everyday, run-of-the mill rituals do not.

The final claim about such effervescent riots is that their effects are not limited to the circle of immediate participants, that the spaces opened there are not merely inhabited by 'activists', those who, as a critic of contemporary subcultural activism put it, consider themselves "specialists in social change." (Anonymous 2000) Here, Aristide Zolberg's analysis of 'moments of madness' is helpful, suggesting four ways in which such events may translate their suspension of disbelief in the impossible into a lasting

pushing back of the limits of the possible for a wider circle than merely the immediate participants: first, moments of madness are intensive learning processes, where new ideas spread to larger publics; second, these ideas become institutionally located in the networks of social relations established during the moments; third, with respect to traditional politics, he suggests that the slogan-like formulations of the moment later often become “irreversible goals which are institutionalised in the not-very-distant future” – the crucial aspect being that the moments of madness greatly reduce the distance between the present and the future; and lastly, he argues that the aggregate experiences of individuals matter (Zolberg 1972, 206-7; The Free Association 2004).

(iv) Re-reading the riot act: in search of lost radicalism

Evian/Annemasse: Attac bubbles over

The question now becomes: were the alterglobalist riots I am looking at such effervescent ‘moments of madness’? Was space really opened there in a way that survived the event as such? Once more, then, into the streets... to the events of Evian/Annemasse, to illustrate that this riot, small and relatively insignificant though it was in the ‘bigger picture’, contained elements of creative effervescence, its own little bit of madness.

Recall the account of the Annemasse protest given above: contrary to behaviour expected from Attac-activists, the participants of the march responded to the police’s assault not by either retreat, or a non-violent sit-down, but by drawing on a repertoire of protest (Tilly 1995) – the burning of a barricade – which was by and large new and alien to them. Although it was the non-Attac protesters at the front who started building the barricade, and throwing stones at the police from the front lines, others quickly became caught up in the dynamic of the event, and felt empowered to confront the police. What matters here is not so much the diffusion of the repertoire of protest, but the question of how the participants themselves viewed the events, and how and whether they felt that certain things that were not ‘possible’ prior to the riot had now become possible. In Annemasse, I witnessed the participation of a group of activists in militant action that had never before engaged in such practices.

The confrontation with the police was crucial in this transformation of the activists’

common sense' (cf. Drury, Reicher and Stott 2003). And while this effect was only limited to the participants, I endeavoured to prove nothing more with this example. This was, after all, again in the words of the evaluation written by members of Attac after Annemasse (Engelmann et al. 2003), "the summit with the interior effect". The echo of the protests did not carry far beyond its participants, was not discussed much in mainstream media – but for many of those who were there, it opened up new political spaces of contestation, changed their sense of what is politically possible. It was this changed sense of the limits of the possible that became the basis for evocations of "the spirit of Evian", which allowed the participants to break the long-established non-violence guidelines of Attac; to form a Direct Action Network in Berlin after the event; to (symbolically) occupy a building in Berlin; and finally, to begin to form linkages with other militant anti-capitalists in Berlin, creating networks which are today active in the mobilisation for the G8 summit in 2007. Attac-activists from Leipzig felt similarly empowered by the event, and were afterwards more inclined to confront the police, as well as engage in other forms of direct action.¹⁶ These new political spaces of contestation would not have been opened without the mini-riot of Annemasse.

Gothenburg: smashing the windows of the people's home

If Evian/Annemasse was only a little mad, the riots at the EU summit in Gothenburg, in June 2001, were, for standards prevailing in Sweden at the time, full-fledged insanity. And if the Evian protests became the summit whose effects were felt internally, in the movement, then the effects of the Gothenburg riots reverberated much further: from their immediate participants, to the very top of Swedish society.

To begin with, most of us – I use 'us' here, because I was at the time living in Sweden and involved in the organisation of the protests – were aware of the fact that a riot was likely to occur. A Swedish activist is quoted in an article written after the events with the words that "something had to happen in order to break through the consensus" (Kjöller 2001), in other words, to open political space where the long-term hegemony of Swedish social democracy (Ryner 2002, 55-61) had effectively closed off spaces for contestation. The riots that in fact occurred were, however, not planned in any sense. The police's unprovoked pre-emptive attack on our 'convergence centre' in a high school, and the subsequent jailing of several hundred activists completely disrupted

¹⁶ Interview with Lucas Bender, 12/3/2005.

lines of communication and any plans which existed prior to the attack. As a result, the riots were fairly spontaneous, and particularly vicious for Swedish standards: for the first time in the history of the alterglobalisation movement in Europe, and for the first time in Sweden since 1931, live ammunition was used against protesters, three were injured, one almost fatally; many shops on Gothenburg's main shopping street were partly destroyed; finally, the situation got so out of hand that Gothenburg's police commander called in the national SWAT-team in order to storm a school where he claimed an "armed German terrorist" was hiding. Afterwards, while the mass media reflected on the "rape of Gothenburg" by rioters, among many activists the events left a legacy of hate and distrust of the state and its institutions (Joseffson and Quistbergh 2001; Wijk 2002; Gassilewski 2006).

The events of Gothenburg were, in other words, characterised by an intensity that did not obtain in Thessaloniki. In what way, however, did they change what could be thought and done, open up new political spaces? Drawing again on Zolberg (1972, 198), there are several aspects of the riots in Gothenburg that allow me to characterise them as a "moment of madness", as an effervescent hyperritual. First, Zolberg suggests that such moments are often linked to the entrance of a previously excluded group into the political realm, which in the case of Paris in 1968 was a group generally classified as 'youth' – the same obtained in Gothenburg: the rioters were overwhelmingly youth, and much of the discussion after the fact revolved around the issue of youth participation in politics, why they felt excluded, why some had chosen to throw stones to make their way onto the political arena. Also, the riots provided an avenue into the public sphere for disenfranchised immigrant youth in the suburbs of Gothenburg, who participated heavily in the rioting (Joseffson and Quistbergh 2001, 63).

We can follow Zolberg's (1972, 199) analysis further here, when he suggests that one of the reasons for the entry – en masse, and somewhat violently – of youth onto the political scene was "the dullness of routinised Gaullism", in turn linked to the absence of real political dissent between different factions of the ruling elites. Such an analysis neatly fits the Swedish case, where the dullness of routinised social democracy, and the absence of real dissent between all major parliamentary parties on key issues of neoliberal policy (Ryner 2002) create a situation likely to produce precisely these types of 'mad' outbursts.

Again, it may be asked here where the *lasting* effects of such events are, and how wide-ranging these effects can be? Crucial in showing that the impacts of such events are both wide-reaching *and* lasting is an emerging post-Gothenburg representation of Swedish society, which claims that “the summer of 2001 involved the cracking of the [dominant] picture of Gothenburg” and Sweden as a peaceful, consensual society (Sernhede 2002). Several authors suggest that “[s]omething fundamental had happened during those days in Gothenburg. The country wasn’t itself anymore” (Löfgren and Vatankhah 2002, 7); and that “[t]he events during the EU [summit] in Gothenburg constitute a traumatic challenge to the Swedish nation” (Weibull 2003). For while the riots in Gothenburg were indeed, as Zolberg predicts of moments of madness, followed by repression as well as “the restoration of boredom”, they also did spread the ideas of the militant left in Sweden to a larger public, by making them a constant subject of discussion, and, by challenging the dominant representation of Swedish political culture, contributed to an opening of political space which defies its short-term closure in the immediate aftermath of the riots (Mueller 2004).¹⁷

Radicalism Regained...?

Some preliminary conclusions, then, as to the potential of alterglobalist riots to open new political spaces: first, as potential moments of effervescence they are capable of inducing an intensity of interaction and feeling that enables the transformation of participants’ common sense of what is possible and politically acceptable. This became particularly clear from the analysis of the events in Annemasse. There we saw how the participation, for the first time, of a group of people in militant action, allowed them to transcend their established political common sense, to go beyond legal protest both at the event and in their subsequent political activism. They extended their own boundaries of the political, of that which can be questioned and challenged, to include areas which are, by and large, off-limits to political discussion: in this case, the question of the state’s monopoly over the legitimate use of violence, a question that arises in the context of a challenge to the basic notions of liberal capitalist democracies, namely that elected leaders ought to be able to take decisions that affect all of us. It was, after all, the desire to shut down a perfectly legal, democratically legitimised (if only through

¹⁷ The Gothenburg riots have been extensively analysed in Sweden, spawning many newspaper articles, academic monographs and edited collections, and recently a novel. Cf. Björk and Peterson (2002); Wijk (2002); Löfgren and Vatankhah (2002); Liliequist and Lundälv (2002); and Gassilewski (2006).

national representative elections) politico-economic summit that prompted the activists to challenge the police.

The riots in Gothenburg went even further than those in Annemasse, because, by not only fighting with the police but also wreaking havoc on Gothenburg's main shopping street their symbolic challenge went beyond the state's monopoly of violence, attacking the sanctity of private (commercial) property, as well as capital's contemporary enclosure of public space (Klein 2000). Spectacular militant politics, then, at their best are capable of extending the boundaries of the political to encompass those relations of domination that are the object of challenge of the political movement in question; in the case of militant alterglobalist politics, this refers primarily, but not exclusively, to the state and globalising capital, and therefore to the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence; the liberal state's monopoly on political decision-making; and the sanctity of private property, respectively.

My argument here rests on Laclau's (1990, 32-4) claim that the normalisation of every social relation of domination entails an act of forgetting and masking its origins in *political* operations of power and violence, in the suppression of attempted alternatives: on the closure, in other words, of discursive and political space. The spectacular events analysed here can challenge this social forgetfulness, bringing to the fore the antagonisms and struggles at the bottom of normalised social relations, showing that the police's monopoly of violence, or the sanctity of private property are not natural, but political.¹⁸ Riots are events that can create a space of intensity where such social myths are more easily revealed and challenged than in relatively routine moments of everyday interaction. And by creating these momentary spaces of intensity, they in turn open up wider political spaces where challenges to these sedimented relations of domination can be articulated.

(v) Running riot with Deleuze and Guattari

Be realistic, demand the impossible: drawing lines of flight...

So spectacular, event-based politics are capable of opening spaces where we can

¹⁸ Cf. the literature on enclosure on the violence underpinning the creation of capitalist social relations (Federici 2004; De Angelis forthcoming; Midnight Notes 1990; Harvey 2003).

challenge some of the social relations upon which structures and relations of domination such as capital and the state crucially rest; and riots are one way of generating the effervescence necessary to begin to articulate such a challenge. This, however, is not enough to answer the question as to the transformative potential of alterglobalist riots: the concept of effervescence, as suggestive as it may be, simply imagines the transformation of such social relations as total and immediate in and through the moment of effervescence. Translated into the riot-context: it is as though, once a riot challenges the state's monopoly of violence and the sanctity of private property, entirely new social relations appear on earth fully formed, in what ultimately is a concept describing a quasi-religious transcendence, where the new comes like manna from the sky, and is in its totality revealed to the new believers.

Durkheim reveals here his theoretical shortcomings as a result of his grounding in a tradition of thought that imagines 'the revolution' to occur in one fell swoop. In today's anti-capitalist movement, this notion of 'revolution' has been problematised and replaced with a conception of building 'other worlds' in a long, drawn-out process of social change - and yet, we do not want to abandon the hope to be 'radical' and 'ruptural'. How, then, can we theoretically conceive of this type of social change? By using some of the tools provided for us by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, who combine a subtle understanding of social change as both ruptural *and* piecemeal with that rarest of academic qualities: revolutionary optimism.

The basis for their optimism lies in the world that Deleuze and Guattari encounter: it is in principle disorderly, a world of becoming, not of being, of nomadic movement on smooth spaces: it is a world of multiplicity and difference, irreducible and indivisible. Here, unity and stability can only ever result from the operations of power, capture, *territorialisation* (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 9), and order is not the almost unchangeable status quo, but rather a tenuous construct which at all points has to be re-established. As a result, the state as the archetypal "apparatus of capture" is always vulnerable to resistance, for the 'overcoding', the hierarchical structuration it seeks to effect on the multiplicity of lines and flows is never complete.

In this world, becoming, *uninhibited* movement, *absolute* speed are all qualities essentially extrinsic to the state, which organises all flows and movements within its territory under one centre. "It is not at all that the state knows nothing of speed; but it

requires that movement, even the fastest, cease to be the absolute speed of a moving body occupying a smooth space, to become the relative characteristic of a 'moved body' going from one point to another in a striated space" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 426).

Drawing on the work of mythologist Dumézil, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the state is made up of two poles: one is the rational-legal aspect of authority, the other the religious-charismatic one. However, a third function often associated with the state, that of war-making, is missing here: the pure principle of war, which is not so much that of physical violence but of "a pure and immeasurable multiplicity, the pack, and irruption of the ephemeral and the power of metamorphosis", is one that is exterior to the state. This is the *war machine*: it "brings a *furor* to bear against sovereignty, a celerity against gravity, secrecy against the public, a power (*puissance*) against sovereignty, a machine against the apparatus" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 388). The war machine, however, while its origin is not within the state, does not strictly speaking exist *outside* of the state. Rather, while the state continually seeks to appropriate it, to *normalise* the flows of the war machine, this appropriation always leaves a remainder, an irreducible element of becoming "that can potentially be directed against the sovereign form" (Reid 2003, 65).

So the war machine is not a tangible institution, but the irrepressible desire for nomadic movement, for becoming. It is present only in its metamorphoses (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 397-8), in moments of invention and creation.

And each time there is an operation against the State – insubordination, rioting, guerrilla warfare, or revolution as act – it can be said that a war machine has revived, that a new nomadic potential has appeared, accompanied by the reconstitution of a smooth space or a manner of being in space as though it were smooth. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 426)

But not each and every riot generates flashes of the war machine, 'smooth' space is not being created every time a roving band of (mostly) guys in hooded sweaters lobs some rocks at the police: the riots in Thessaloniki were plainly not an instantiation of the 'war machine' – there was little, if any, "invention and creation", just rote repetition. And presumably, Deleuze and Guattari would not think so either, for the destruction and 'violence' they advocate is not simply a "nihilistic form [...] of physical destruction", but rather a creative, generative (Nitzschean) form of destruction (Reid

2003, 69).

How do we know, then, that an imputed act of political radicalism is in fact transformative – that a particular riot, in this case, is indeed a flash of the war machine, and not merely the reproduction of yet more ‘striated’ space? The answer must lie in the notion of becoming: we must ask whether a political intervention indeed draws a *line of flight*. Imagine the striated space of the state, where all movement is relative to, and overcoded by, the centre – and then an instance where the war machine flashes up, where one of the regularised and segmented lines of movement within state space suddenly turns into a line of flight, which escapes from the overcoding machine of the state and effects “a deterritorialisation, through a movement which interrupts or suspends familiar, confining, formal possibilities and their prescribed organic and social requirements...a movement out of which the participating bodies are drawn along new vectors in experimental ways” (Hughes 1997, 46, in Reid 2003, 69). The drawing of a line of flight, then, creates new possibilities, opens up new political spaces.

This specifies the question, but does not answer it: we know now that radical political transformation entails the drawing of a line of flight – but we do not yet know how lines of flight are drawn. Back then to the concept of the war machine: we have already seen that the ‘war’ of the war machine is not so much actual, physical warfare, but rather a specific mode of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari (2004b, 463-4) draw here on Clausewitz’ conception of the ‘absolute war’, of the pure idea of war, which is distinguished from ‘real war’ by the fact that the violence of the absolute war is not submitted to the dictates of political reason.

Thus, the war machine is one which precisely “*does not have war as its object* and that only entertains a potential or supplementary synthetic relationship with war” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 464 – emphasis in the original). The object of Deleuze and Guattari’s war machine is ‘the drawing of a creative line of flight’ – and in turn, the line of flight is “a war one risks coming back from defeated, destroyed, after having destroyed everything one could” (2004b, 466, 253). A line of flight is drawn by the war machine when it does not subordinate its creative violence to political reason, takes risks and chances, makes moves the outcome of which it cannot itself predict.

Politics for Deleuze and Guattari thus cease to be radical when they become fully subordinated to political rationality. They see here mostly the political rationality of the state-type as the threat – but by opening up their concept of reason to include what we might call ‘habitual reason’, we arrive at a fuller understanding of the radically transformative potential of spectacular politics: when such events become a matter of habit, that is, of habitual reason, they become incorporated, reproductive merely of the ‘striated space’ of pre-existing possibilities. Lines of flight are those that make new connections between elements hitherto unconnected – thus Deleuze and Guattari (2004b, 465) warn that “we have seen [the state] put its counter guerrilla elements into place, so that it can be caught by surprise once, but not twice.” Riots such as those in Thessaloniki that merely reproduce the stagnant, territorialised, striated space of the state or other (e.g. patriarchal) relations of domination, and entail no real element of chance and risk, are to be distinguished from those that draw genuine lines of flight, that are productive of difference and transformation.

Lines of flight, lines of abolition: of the limits of events

I have argued here that the political significance of riots for the anticapitalist movement lies in the spaces of intensity and effervescence they create, where a challenge to sedimented, forgotten operations of power can be issued – where, in other words, the normalisation of the violence underpinning bases of social relations of domination can be uncovered and challenged.

However: in making these claims, I have also used one particular sleight-of hand that the careful reader may have noticed. I have suggested that militant alterglobalist riots, by challenging the state’s monopoly of violence, issue a challenge to the hidden, sedimented basis of the state’s power. The trick lies in this: Max Weber (1964, 453) tells us that the state is not founded simply on the monopoly of the use of violence, but that of the *legitimate* use of violence.

And here the endorsement of event-based, ruptural politics comes up to its limits: the argument about the impossibility of subordinating a radical political intervention to the demands of political rationality – consistent with some of the rampant ‘actionism’ on the radical wing of the movement, where even the term ‘political’ can sometimes have negative connotations – can only be sustained if one assumes the meaning of the

riot to be fully contained within itself. Since the basis of the state, however, lies as much in its control of the means of violence as in the legitimacy accorded it by its citizens, any effective attack on the state must also issue a practico-discursive challenge to the bases of its legitimacy. Discursive – in the narrow sense – insofar as the meaning of a particular political intervention such as a riot cannot be simply given in the act and has to be constructed as part of a wider ethico-political project that seeks to establish competing legitimating discourses; practical, because the state’s legitimacy is based also on the practical functions it performs in citizens’ lives (Habermas 1973; Narr and Offe 1975).

This suggests that while anyone (militant fascists, hooligans, etc.) can challenge the state’s monopoly of the use of violence in a riot or otherwise, such an act becomes a progressive one only through its embedding in a wider political project, for the meaning of the riot act is effectively underdetermined if it is a mere attempt at reappropriation of the means of violence – which is precisely why alterglobalist riots occasionally appear as nihilistic violence, as violence without a purpose. Or *with* a purpose, just not one that we on the radical left would appreciate – an anticapitalist riot may very well develop into a fascist pogrom, a racist rampage: the (in)famous New York City draft riots in 1863, for example, started out as an event many anticapitalist militants would presumably applaud (targets were the military, police, and rich people), but soon turned into a collective hunt on black workers, many of whom were burnt in their houses (Lader 1978).

In other words, the riotous event implies dangers far beyond it merely turning ‘stale’ or repetitive: the lines of flight that such events can generate can easily turn into lines of destruction. And the event itself can never provide enough meaning to exclude this possibility. Deleuze and Guattari are aware of this potential challenge, and suggest that the danger of a line of flight is that it may fail to connect with other lines and become pure destruction. This type of ‘war’ is in fact the failure of the war machine, when war remains “the only object left for the war machine after it has lost its power to change.” In this case, the war machine ceases to draw lines of flight, and is reduced to drawing “a pure, cold line of abolition.” This, they suggest, is the origin of fascism: the drawing of intense lines of abolition, a collective madness that becomes murderous, genocidal

(2004b, 253).¹⁹

This distinction between a genuine line of flight and a line of abolition, its ability, or lack thereof, to *connect* with other lines in intensities, spaces beyond the striated and hierarchically organised space of state or capital, is crucial to developing an effective conception of a deleuzoguattarian ‘micropolitics’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 24), as well as the possibilities and dangers of a spectacular, militant anticapitalist politics. Deleuze and Guattari maintain throughout their work that every de-territorialisation (including that effected by lines of flight) immediately also implies a re-territorialisation – that the pure, deterritorialized line is an impossibility – where deterritorialized elements “recombine and enter into new relations in the construction of a new assemblage or the modification of the old.” “Deterritorialisation [...] is always relative, and has reterritorialisation as its flipside or complement.” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 60; also Patton 2000, 101-2) Whether this process, this search for alternative *modes of territorialisation*, contributes to the construction of those ‘other worlds’ that our movement so loudly proclaimed were possible will depend on whether the process of deterritorialisation, of drawing lines of flight, “construct[s] *revolutionary connections* in opposition to the *conjugations of the [capitalist] axiomatic*.” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 522 – emphasis in the original)

If riots, then, are events where lines of flight may be drawn, where flows may become deterritorialized, then their political potential cannot be judged merely by looking at the event itself: the event itself is politically *indeterminate*, that is, its meaning is not, cannot be, fully contained within itself. Spaces are opened, but the riot cannot provide enough political meaning to then fill these spaces. We therefore need to evaluate whether *connections* are made, whether the flows deterritorialized in the event “enter into mutually reinforcing interactions which lead to the formation of new territorialities” (Patton 2000, 136), of new worlds, of other forms of society: of *full* spaces. Or, bearing in mind the slogan made famous in the alterglobalist movement by the Zapatista uprising in Mexico: if the riot, *the event* constitutes the ‘No’ of radical political practice, then it is in the connections that are made that live beyond the event, in the processes that take place in the space created by the events, that we can find the ‘many Yeses’ without which our politics would ultimately be meaningless.

¹⁹ But see Žižek’s (2003) critique of this ‘Reichian’ theory of fascism.

Where does this leave us then? How do we know whether the lines connect, or whether they destroy? And if they join other lines, do they become *conjugated* by the capitalist axiomatic, or genuinely *connected*? Even more importantly, speaking from the position of the political activist rather than the disinterested analyst, how do we *make* them connect, how do we *avoid* them becoming conjugated? Toni Negri wonders as much when he asks Deleuze “[h]ow minority becoming [can] be powerful? How can resistance become an insurrection? [...] Is there, then, a way for the oppressed to become powerful?” (Deleuze 1995, 173) In response, Deleuze can do little but refer to artistic practices, to “subjectification [as] an artistic activity distinct from, and lying outside, knowledge and power,” through which “individuals and groups constitute themselves as subjects”. And what of these subjects’ political effectiveness? That matters only in the short term, for “[e]ven if they in turn engender new forms of power or become assimilated into new forms of knowledge ... [f]or a while, though, they have a real rebellious spontaneity.” Their politics are about events, and moments (Deleuze 1995, 114, 173-6).

It is of course always difficult for libertarian movements or thinkers to conceptualise the moment of construction, of permanence (or at least, sustainability), of – dare we think it? – hegemony in their politics (Mueller 2003). And the interview cited here, where the philosopher Deleuze (without his ‘activist’ friend Guattari) is confronted with the need to make explicit the politics of his theoretical work, is an example of this shying away, of retreating into aestheticism in order to avoid having to conceptualise the routine day-to-day work of constructing ‘alternative worlds’ beyond mere events and moments – of constructing alternative ‘modes of reterritorialisation’.

But maybe I am asking too much of them? Deleuze and Guattari themselves were inspired by the processes, the emergence of new subjectivities and the spreading of struggles into new zones that they witnessed in France in the late 1960s (Foucault 2004). They did not *invent* ‘deterritorialisation’ or ‘becoming’, although they might have coined the terms; they were not the ones to give to the world “unadulterated desire and a will to change” (Patton 2000, 6) – it was, rather, the new movements and subjectivities which influenced them that allowed them to think these concepts. Deleuze tells Negri that it was in the events of May ‘68 in Paris that he first witnessed “a becoming in its pure state” (Deleuze 1995, 171) – reminding us, and forgive the somewhat tired reference here, that Deleuze and Guattari have only interpreted the

world differently, but that it is not through their theories that we will change it. It is the task of social movement(s) to find out how lines of flight can connect with others without being recuperated by state or capital, or turn into fascist lines of destruction. Social theory can help in this process – but it cannot replace it, or furnish any ‘final’ answers.

(vi) Open ends

We have come a long way. In the course of this intellectual and political journey, we have ripped up the pavements of Annemasse and Gothenburg, of Barcelona and Thessaloniki. And having arrived where we are now – what, finally, of that famous beach? The answer must remain open: it is as if we have ripped up the cobblestones to find sand – and then realised that we still do not know whether it really is the beach, or just another desert. It is ultimately only in the processes within which spectacular events are embedded that their political meaning is constituted.

The dream of revolution as a singular, one-off rupture has been discarded. But the idea of ruptural politics has not, and for good reason. I have shown here that riots can be events that rupture ‘normal’ political time and space, that speed up history, and open new political spaces for contesting otherwise normalised, ‘sedimented’ social relations of domination. They can generate an effervescence that can create new collective solidarities, in other words, they can create ‘movements’ where before there was only relatively isolated groups – this much we learn from Durkheim. They can create ‘militants’ where before there were activists unable to challenge the power of the police. Speaking strategically, then: there is good reasons to be critical of an exclusive focus on organising protests, and every reason to attempt to build movement links beyond a one-off event. But there are no reasons whatsoever to stop organising towards moments of excess, of madness, of effervescence. Radical politics cannot live without the intensity created in such moments: it is those moments that make other worlds possible.

At the same time, we have understood the limits of such space-opening effervescent politics, namely that they cannot fill the space thus opened. The meaning of the newly opened political space is generated by the connections made within it, but also by the

wider networks of practices into which these events are embedded. Other worlds may have become possible, but possibility is not reality. To understand therefore the political meaning of the summit riots from a perspective that looks beyond merely the event itself, to understand what gave and gives them meaning, we need to understand the networks, the “ethico-political field” (Dagnino 1998) in which they are embedded, which produced them. If this chapter started by invoking a ‘dream’ haunting the radical European imaginary, the following chapter will seek to answer this question: who is it that’s dreaming, and what are they dreaming of beyond simply fighting the police?

Chapter III

CONTEMPORARY ANTICAPITALISM: SEATTLE TO PARIS AND BACK AGAIN



(Under the cobblestones, the beach. Graffiti, Paris, 1968. Source: unknown)

(i) Introduction: turning back the clock

Who dreams of flying stones? Who is the subject of this tale of radical politics, full of sound, fury, and molotov-cocktails? Above, I argued that spectacular, militant protest can be ruptural, open political spaces in a situation where these spaces had effectively been closed off. I also suggested that these newly opened spaces remain politically indeterminate insofar as their political meaning is constructed only by their articulation to wider networks of discourses and practices, to ethico-political fields, to movements. The first objective of the chapter below, then, is to trace the emergence of the ethico-political field that is constitutive of the contemporary anticapitalist movement in Europe, that gives meaning to the ruptural politics discussed above. It is not intended to provide a complete 'history' of the movement, but rather present a tableau of those left-libertarian *sensibilities* defining it.

The second part of the chapter returns us to struggles about space that serve as the organising metaphor for my investigation. Having traced the emergence of an ethico-political field that valorises networked, non-hierarchical anticapitalist politics reclaiming spaces of autonomy from the onslaught of capital, I ask how the emergence of such a politics relates to the transformations in the global political economy understood as the rise of the network form, and the rise of neoliberal capital. I argue that contemporary libertarian anticapitalism, the network form, and neoliberalism arise in response to the particular rigidities of Fordist accumulation, and that neoliberalism must be understood as an extensive accumulation strategy, relying, after the crisis of profitability of the early 1970s, on the particular “spatial fix” of “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 1989; 2003). Where neoliberal capital encloses space, I will argue that contemporary anticapitalism seeks to create spaces not subject to the economic rationality of capital accumulation.

We will then return to the by now familiar stories of the emergence of a global anticapitalist movement (Notes from Nowhere Collective 2003): to Chiapas, the mobilisation against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) – and finally, we will attend the movement’s grandiose coming out party in Seattle, in all its madness, its excess, its effervescence...

(ii) Emergence: tracing the European autonomous movement

Every movement, every society tells stories about where it came from: they are never ‘true’ representations, only ever myths that seek to give meaning to the disparate practices constituting the society or movement in question. Below, I will tell a story that both grounds the ruptural politics discussed above in a discursive or ‘ethico-political’ field which gives them meaning, and explains the desires which animate our attempts to create ‘other worlds’. I will do this by tracing three key conceptual movements that came to constitute cornerstones of our politics: in France, towards a politics of *desire*; in Italy, towards a politics of *autonomy*; and in Germany, towards a politics seeking to create *spaces in everyday life* autonomous from the logics of capital and the state.

Stories

November 30., 1999. When tracing the emergence of a movement, there is always one impossible question to answer: when and where does the first act start? With respect to contemporary European anticapitalism, there are the obvious and easy choices. A first one would begin with the alterglobalist movement's 'coming out party' (Klein 2004) at the anti-WTO protests in Seattle. Not an unreasonable place to start, for the effervescence of Seattle was very important not only for those on the outside of the movement that supposedly 'came out' there, but also in the very constitution of that movement. But Naomi Klein's use of the 'coming out' metaphor is instructive: that which comes out of the closet, steps onto the stage and announces its existence, must at least partly pre-exist the moment of its coming out even if the actual process of coming out inserts it into different assemblages and processes of becoming.

January 1., 1994. A second fairly well rehearsed version of the story of our movement takes the audience far away from the well-trodden streets of Seattle, Prague, or Genoa, into the Lacandón jungle of Chiapas, Mexico. From there, on the day the North American Free Trade Agreement came into effect, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) stormed onto the world's stage. Much has been written about the Zapatistas and the inspirational power of their 'postmodern' rebellion (Holloway and Pelaez 1998; Cleaver 1999; Ross 2000; Mentinis 2006): of that army that hardly ever fought a battle; that instead of the staid pamphlets and revolutionary platitudes of traditional Marxist-Leninist guerrillas sent poetic emails from the jungle; that struggled for autonomy rather than state power; that talked of 'dignity' rather than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat; that organised the 'intercontinental encounters for humanity and against neoliberalism' (*encuentros*) out of which would later emerge the global days of action that would shake the summits of the powerful (Neill 2001). Their emphasis on *autonomy*, and their attempts to work towards networked, horizontal (non-hierarchical) forms of decision-making, coupled with an uncompromising rejection of capitalism, made them uniquely inspiring for radical left groups and subcultures in Europe and America. But this explanation, too, leaves unexplained what must be explained: who was it who desired autonomy more than state power, and why? Who was it that was so inspired by the Zapatistas?

*June 1., 1989.*²⁰ And then there is the place where nearly every progressive story about the 1990s starts: “[a] chapter (and book) of this sort [about contemporary anticapitalism] almost inevitably begins with Francis Fukuyama’s predictions of the ‘end of history’.” (Moreland and Carter 2004, 1) From setting up this argument as a useful foil, most accounts that take the late 1980s/early 1990s as their starting point go on to describe the 1990s as a decade of neoliberal triumphalism, “a period of pessimism” for the left (Moreland and Carter 2004, 3), our enemies seemingly unchallenged, the neoliberal juggernaut rolling unstopably onwards, until... yes, until ‘history’ begins to strike back, raising its ever-becoming head in the anti-IMF riots that tend to accompany neoliberal structural adjustment programmes (Walton and Seddon 1994; Caffentzis and Federici 2001), in Chiapas, Asia, the successful mobilisation against the MAI, culminating in Seattle and beyond. Where ‘they’ declared history closed by the beginning of the decade, by its end ‘we’ had forced its doors open again. Or at least, so we tend to argue in a story that, for all its usefulness (we become in it the bearers of history once again), is flawed by taking as its starting point a bird’s eye perspective: even if history may have seemed to come to its end when viewed from within the US state department, history never looks over from the perspective of those whose lives are destroyed by neoliberal capitalism’s “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 2003, 137-179), its wars, its financial crises.

In the end, history never seems to have a first act, there are always already conditions not of our own choosing within which we operate (Marx and Engels 1978, 595). And yet, every story must have a beginning, and that beginning tends to emerge from the question: what is the story supposed to do? The stories about Seattle were intended to point out to mystified audiences that we had not simply come out of nowhere, “that it was [not] some sort of miracle that came out of the blue, and accidentally succeeded due to the element of surprise, which can never be replicated. [N]othing came from out of the blue - we organized, and it paid off” (Whitney 2004, 22). The stories about Chiapas and the Zapatistas are meant to show some political humility, and subordinate the spectacular events unfolding in the North to a prior inspiration from the global South. And the stories about the dearth of progressive politics in the 1990s reflect the experiences of those on the left who grew up or were active during the decade of ‘TINA’ (Thatcher’s famous dictum that ‘There Is No Alternative’). The story below, on the other hand, is meant to locate ‘Seattle’ and the militant protests discussed above in

²⁰ This date marks the official publication of Fukuyama’s (1989) article ‘The end of history?’.

a longer duration of activist time, to chart some of the key coordinates of the ethico-political field constituting the movement that subsequently came out of the closet. Thus, we now turn to...

Paris: desire and the crisis of vanguardism

... May 1968. Yes of course: it is only a myth, a story in which all the relevant actors of the left-libertarian drama are lined up in their existential oppositions: in the blue corner, the French state; in the red Corner, the Communist Party of France (PCF); and in a new corner, the new desirous subjectivities that would emerge onto the stage in the struggles of those days. Daddy, tell me the story of May '68 again... The choice to start in France is somewhat arbitrary, the emergence of the contemporary European autonomous left could be traced from other places too: Italy, which has often acted as a unique "laboratory for experimentation in new forms of political thinking" (Hardt 1996, 1); Germany, whose autonomous movement bloomed later but powerfully, developing high levels of theoretical reflection and practical militancy (A.G. Grauwacke 2004; Geronimo 1995; Katsiaficas 1997); or Holland, with its powerful squatters' movement (ADILKNO 1990). But as Sorel (1999) pointed out long ago, myths matter in movements. And since one of the key theoretical reference points of the present thesis, the work of Deleuze and Guattari, "undoubtedly smacks of the atmosphere of May 1968 and the anti-authoritarian revolt" (Lecerclé 2005, 146), it seems that France is a good place to start.

The stage is set by the events of the 'Prague Spring' earlier the same year. Pushed by a powerful popular movement, the Czechoslovak government of Alexander Dubček had begun to introduce reforms weakening the power of the Communist Party. Fearing the spread of such 'radicalism' to other satellite states, the Soviet Union sent tanks rolling onto the streets of Prague. This had a profound impact on the Western left: "It was the final collapse of the now vain idea that the Soviet Union could be a force for good in the world; that somehow it represented the hope for a better world." And with the revolutionary prestige of the USSR crashed that of the parties still beholden to it, the Western European communist parties (Tormey 2004, 50).

At the same time, radical thought in France and elsewhere had begun to shift away from the monolithic dominance of Communist Party intellectuals: two books that

remain widely read in anticapitalist circles to this day had been published in 1967, Guy Debord's (1983) *Society of the Spectacle*, and Raoul Vaneigem's (1994) *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, articulating a combined critique of the commodity- and party-form as inimical to life, desire, to revolution. New political subjectivities began to emerge onto the political scene traditionally dominated by the "molar", large-scale oppositions between blocs and classes (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 237-8). Vaneigem (1994) predicted that "the struggle between subjectivity and everything that corrupts it is about to widen the terrain of the old class struggle."

Into this world-historical ferment (Katsiaficas 1997, 1; Wallerstein 2004, 266) of the late 1960s erupt the events of May 1968 in France. At the Parisian university of Nanterre, students and a small group of tutors and intellectuals begin protesting against the structure of higher education. After months of conflict, the administration moves to shut down Nanterre University, sparking off protests at Paris' prestigious Sorbonne. From there, "the protests quickly radicalised and generalised into an outright rejection of the French political and cultural establishment, and even more generally into a rejection of the materialist values and way of life that seemed to have stultified French life." (Tormey 2004, 52) And as the familiar story goes on, the protests did not remain confined to the student body: the unrest spread, leading, within a few days, to a paralysis of Parisian life as students on the street were joined by workers on strike from their factories, and

"for a brief moment, something like a re-enactment of the of the 1871 Paris Commune seemed possible, together with a complete breakdown of the French state. De Gaulle and the French elites [including the Communist Party] were caught completely unawares, with the result that the strikes spread like wildfire, paralysing French economic and political life for a matter of weeks. It seemed for a fleeting moment that literally anything had become possible, including the 'impossible'." (Tormey 2004, 52)

That the government would violently repress protest was expected. But what of the bearers of world revolution, the vanguard of the proletariat, the hope of the wretched of the Earth: the Communist Party? Since it was the party itself that held the monopoly on conscious and organised struggle (good), everything not under the control of, or initiated by the party was necessarily bad (Johnson 1972, 110-9). If they could not be the vanguard, there could not be a movement. In short, the communist party played a role similar to that of a state, leading Deleuze and Guattari (2004b, 238) later to theorise

both state and party as “apparatuses of capture” relative to the deterritorialised flows of desire and becoming that were constitutive of the May uprising.

The Paris uprising left a strong legacy in what would become Europe’s autonomous left. Whereas the field of left political practice had previously been dominated by parties and trade unions, the eruption of new desires had created new spaces that were populated by a diversity of subjects rather than the ghostly unity of the party form. It was not so much the working class as a potentially revolutionary agent that died on the streets of Paris that year, but the idea of The Party as the representation of the revolutionary desires of that class (Johnson 1972, 87). Paris 1968 marked the crisis of representative politics, of politics in the name of one or another group made out to be the wretched of the earth (Katsiaficas 1997, 4).

While it is impossible to make general claims as to the politics of the entirety of the Paris uprising, it can be argued that it was the very form of the struggle rather than the ideologies of the groups fighting it that was constitutive of this practical critique of the party form.²¹ The fact that the struggle ‘jumped’ directly from the students to the workers *without* first being routed through the party, was constitutive of a networked politics where one node can influence another without recourse to a centre.²² With the networked form of the struggle also necessarily came ideological openness: there was simply no one who was in a position to furnish *the* guiding ideology of the struggle, whether they would want to or not.

The final, and possibly most important entrants onto the political scene of those years, however, were joy, play, desire as potentially revolutionary forces. Vaneigem (1994, 26) declared that “[p]eople who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints - such people have a corpse in their mouths.” A number of dichotomies are implied in this comment, and unpacking them will fruitfully lead us onwards from Paris to Torino, and from there to Berlin.

²¹ Similarly, during the organisation of the 2004 European Social Forum in London, the ‘horizontal’ opposition to the centralising strategy of the Greater London Authority and Socialist Workers’ Party also included ‘democratic centralist’ groups such as the Communist Party of Great Britain (Dowling 2005, 206-7).

²² Arguably it is this quality of networked struggle, the ability of nodes to directly communicate with each other, that informed Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004b, 7) notion of the ‘Rhizome’: “any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be.”

The addressee of Vaneigem's criticism is obvious: the communist party in particular, and traditional Socialist politics in general. Vaneigem (1994, 48-9), and with him many in the new movements argued that solidarity, "what binds me to others must grow out of what binds me to the most exuberant and demanding part of my will to live, not the other way round." This rather innocuous sentence in fact constitutes a radical rejection of some of the basic tenets of traditional Socialist politics, where solidarity between workers was traditionally held to grow out of a shared structural position vis-à-vis capital; where the figure of the Socialist martyr implied that the struggle of and for the working class was one of the denial of ones immediate (immanent) desires in favour of a (transcendent) revolution that was increasingly seen by the movements and subjectivities emerging at the time as performing the same function as the Christian 'pie-in-the-sky' ('wait until the revolution, then your desires will be satisfied...'); and where means were always subordinated to ends, tactics to strategy (de Certeau 1984), and concrete love to abstract solidarity.

The revolutionary force behind the "becoming in its pure state" (Deleuze 1995, 171) that was May 1968 in France was therefore seen to be *desire* by many of those who cared to theorise the moment. Not the enlightened leadership and strategy of the party lifting the sleeping masses out of their 'trade union consciousness' (Lenin 1999); not the developing contradiction between the forces and relations of production; but the productive, generative force of desire:

"The rejection of work, sacrifice, guilt, separation, exchange, survival, so easily co-optable by an intellectual discourse, drew nourishment on this occasion from a lucidity that went far beyond contestation (or perhaps rather stopped far short of it) by hewing to the quest for a honing of *desire*, by remaining beholden to the everyday childhood of a life locked in combat with everything that sought to exhaust and destroy it." (Vaneigem 1994, 12, my emphasis)

Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy follows in this vein, of the relocation of revolution onto a plane of total immanence, of a desire that never becomes transcendent, whether in the figure of the party, the state, or the revolutionary leader (2004b, 170-1). Here, there is no agent or force standing above (transcending) social processes, willing revolution (or the lack thereof), be that god, the despot, the Communist Party or the

development of the contradiction between the forces and relations of production: only the ceaselessly becoming force of desire.²³

What is this 'desire', then, that is said to have swept onto the world stage in the late 1960s in Europe, and thenceforth transformed radical left politics? Deleuze and Guattari (2004b, 170-1) define desire as "a process of production without reference to any exterior agency, whether it be a lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it." This 'process of production' is what drives 'becoming', which is linked to *puissance*, power-to (2004b, 117-8). The rejection of 'lack', 'pleasure', of any 'exterior agency' or prior causal factor in turn serves to assert the total immanence of this desire, its irreducibility to anything prior to or outside of it.

While desire is thus "the basis of every society", it never exists "as an undifferentiated instinctual energy": "desire is always assembled, it is what the assemblage determines it to be" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 241, 237, 253), yet it always threatens to overflow and exceed each assemblage. But before we loose ourselves in the finer points of attempting to tease out the respective legacies of Lacan, Foucault and Marx in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of desire (cf. Holland 1999), what does this excursus into the realms of philosophy matter in a discussion of the 'new' forms of anticapitalist movements emerging in the late 1960s? This short discussion of desire intends to achieve two things. First, to elucidate the move of radical left practice and theory away from an economism that reduced society to a mere 'superstructure' of the economy, towards a perspective that understands *life itself* as productive. On this reading, against Althusser's (1971) rather pessimistic notion of the life being always-already inserted into disciplinary institutions, desire is a force that, while indeed always-already assembled, is also always potentially excessive, always has the potential to break free, to refuse discipline.

Second, to provide a segue, back to Vaneigem's iconic statement of the revolution of 1968, and from there to another strong movement current that will later flow into today's anticapitalist movement, the Italian *Autonomia* movement. If Paris 1968 is one of our founding myths as a movement, and the place and time when desire and becoming entered the left scene, then the struggles of *Autonomia* in the 1970s and

²³ It is on this plane of immanence that Hardt and Negri (2000, 326) will later encounter Deleuze and Guattari.

beyond are the laboratory where new tactics, strategies, and theories could be developed and tested (Hardt and Virno 1996).

Italy: desire and the power of refusal

Thus we follow the flows that will take us from desirous becoming on the streets of Paris to autonomous refusal in the cities of Northern Italy, in order to elucidate the meaning of the second dichotomy implied in Vaneigem's (1994, 26) statement: "what is positive in the refusal of constraints"? There has been quite a bit of Communist Party-bashing in the pages above, and Deleuze and Guattari would surely be amongst the first to join the chorus. But, as the tradition of ultra-left critique since Rosa Luxemburg shows, there is no need to abandon Marx in order to attack Communist party politics. *Au contraire*, Deleuze and Guattari, in particular the various aspects of the two that together wrote the *Anti-Oedipus*, are certainly some breed of Marxist: "Everything is production", they proclaim (2004a, 4). But on the very next page, things get more confusing: production, we learn, has an 'immanent principle': that of desire (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 5). This would seem politically challenging when viewed from the vantage point of the Marx of the Second International, but not too far away from the reformulation that the orthodox Marxism of Europe's Communist Parties had been experiencing at the hands of the emerging school of '*Operaismo*', or 'workerism', later to develop into today's 'autonomous Marxism', and 'Post-Operaismo'. And it is the latter Marx who will accompany us in the pages below.

The Marx of the Second International, of the established Socialist and Communist parties, was very much a structuralist, and a 'revolutionary attentist'. For him, Communism would become possible as the result of the contradictions of capital reaching maturity, a breaking point at which either a one-off push by the working class, or, even better, parliamentary elections could usher in the revolution. Historical agency in this reading lay mostly with capital, the working class bowing ever deeper before the whip of the foreman. In the meantime, the Communist and Socialist parties would build discipline amongst the rank and file, to lie in wait until the magical moment of revolution.

Labour, however, would occasionally prove to be somewhat less pliant - whether from the point of view of capital, or the party. During the 1950s and early 60s, as Italy's post-

war economic miracle was gathering speed, Northern Italy's industries had to increasingly import labour from the country's South. These young migrant workers were not accustomed to the repetitive discipline of the Fordist factory that their older colleagues had grown up with, which in turn resulted in the emergence of new forms of resistance, refusal of discipline, and a need for capital to develop new modes of labour control (Wright 2002).

As this restructuring of the labour-capital relation reverberated throughout Italian Communist politics, a group of activists and intellectuals began to break with the traditional Marxism of the Italian Communist Party. In 1964, Mario Tronti published an essay that set out for the first time "the most scandalous novelty of the new workerist ideology - the reversal of primacy between capital and labour" (Wright 2002, 63). Picking up on Marx' (1971, 247) image of capital as the vampire of dead labour, Tronti argued that capital survived only by sucking the creative energy out of living labour. Capital "is thus understood as a force that reacts to the struggles and subjectivity of labour, both by trying to disrupt its material basis (that is to disrupt 'class composition' - the politicisation of the relations of production), and by co-opting the creativity that comes from below." (De Angelis 2004a) Consequently, every attempt by capital to restructure itself would be understood first and foremost "as a response to the movement of the working class" (Wright 2002, 64).

This is where Marx meets Deleuze and Guattari, in a notion of desire that can be read as an anti-economistic extension of Marx' notion of living labour as the creative energy constitutive of all things, even though it can never be assumed to exist in an unarticulated form. Similarly, it is impossible to think living labour outside a social context, outside of a particular set of relations of production - or assemblages, in deleuzoguattarian terms.²⁴ It is the fundamental similarity between the deleuzoguattarian notion of desire, and the autonomist understanding of living labour that would later allow Hardt and Negri (2000) their close articulation in *Empire*, where living labour becomes *potentia*, or power-to.

Thus we are presented with an image of a force that invests various assemblages or relations of production, but that constantly overflows and exceeds these assemblages,

²⁴ For an analysis of the relationship between Deleuze and Marx, see Read (2003a; 2003b); and Thoburn (2003).

in particular the apparatuses of capture that seek to rein it in, to suck its lifeblood: the energy/labour of the 'undisciplined' Southern workers was inserted into an assemblage (the given organisation and relations of production), which they in turn threatened to exceed, prompting the development of yet more sophisticated mechanisms of control. "There is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organisations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 238).

Both Deleuze and Guattari, and Operaismo paint a picture in which capital constantly seeks to (re)impose its control over labour, and yet there always remains a residue that cannot be controlled – an *excess* of uncontrollable energy, or alternatively, a *refusal* of discipline. 'What is positive about refusal', therefore, is that it can constitute a moment of rejection of the discipline of capital, of the subordination of life to capital, and of the reduction of life to work. De Angelis (2004a) thus goes on to argue that the second core of the workerist position is, somewhat paradoxically, a refusal of work, of capital's reduction of life to work.

The break with traditional socialist politics hardly needs pointing out: from an affirmation of working class identity as exploited by capital, an affirmation of *work* as a sphere of human activity that *ought not* to be subordinated by capital, to a refusal of work and an affirmation of a much broader range of powers-to, of *potentia*. Gone the traditional trade unions' references to the 'dignity' of the worker, and *his* needless subjection to capital, the new slogans were about the *indignity* of work itself.

The terrain of the struggle now shifts: from macro-revolution to micro-refusal, without, however, abandoning the overcoming of capital as a goal. Initially, the workerists remained focused on the factory as the crucial terrain of struggle, concentrating their inquiries and activism on workers' practices of refusing the discipline of capital at the workplace: from go-slows, to absenteeism, to stealing from the job (Tronti 1965). These developments of and within *Operaismo* of course did not occur within a theoretical and organisational vacuum, but followed the circulation of struggles as they coursed through Italy. During the Italian *biennio rosso* ('two red years') of 1968-69, the factory workers at the major sites of Fordist production – most famously at the massive Mirafiori FIAT plant in Torino – were at the centre of struggles in which students and militant workers joined together (Wright 2002, 89-104). During these years, the

communist party sided with the state apparatus against this new militancy, not only because they were not in control of the struggles, but also because the “[w]orkers wanted more than the communists aimed for (the material benefits of consumerism).” (Katsiaficas 1997, 25)

Over the course of the 1970s, struggles spread beyond the factory gates into what many of the *Operaistas* were increasingly characterising as the “social factory”, a society entirely integrated into circuits of capital valorisation, even those parts of it not directly involved in wage labour, where shop floor antagonism “now invested all forms of social interaction” (Hardt 1996, 2; Aufheben 2003; Wright 2002, 38). At the same time, ‘new social subjects’ came to the fore in the struggles of women, squatters, and unemployed, where tactical innovations were made, and theoretical concepts were reformed in the crucible of struggle. The Communist Party once again did not support these struggles, but, in the belief that adhering to legality and remaining within the Fordist frameworks of established and accomodatable demands (primarily wage increases) would make them respectable, formed a “part of the forces of order.” (Katsiaficas 1997, 41-2)

The Italian struggles between the late 1960s, and before the final crushing of the movement at the end of the 1970s, partly through massive state repression and the famous ‘strategy of tension’, partly through a global restructuring of capital, had a vast richness and diversity that cannot be captured in this short overview.²⁵ I hope, however, to have made clear the essential theoretical and practical continuity between the French struggles and thoughts of 1968, and those of the Italian radical left in the 1960s and 70s. Thus, when Hardt (1996, 5-7) summarises the key elements of Italian autonomist thought, we find much of what we already encountered in France: a communist politics made *against* the state and political organisations; a rejection of hierarchies; a focus on constituent power *outside* the state; a focus on the power of labour, understood as “the entire creative potential of our practical capacities”; and finally, a joyful, not ascetic, communist politics.

Germany: spaces for autonomy

²⁵ For histories of Italian Autonomia see Wright (2002); Hardt and Virmo (1996); Aufheben (2003); Katsiaficas (1997, 23-54); and Cleaver (2002).

Onto the last leg – for now – of this journey, at the end of which there should emerge a tapestry of flows that will allow us, much as an intricate tapestry reveals its meaning only when looked at from further away, to understand this emerging mode of desirous politics as the force that will later come to animate the contemporary European anticapitalist movement.

But for now, we are still in Italy, where the workerists' move away from work, from the factories, coincides with the (re)emergence of struggles of women, unemployed, urban youth. Thus shifts the meaning of 'autonomy', the term that had been so defining for the Italian movements. Autonomy was originally understood as *autonomia operaia*, worker's autonomy, suggesting that, first, "class struggle [had] made itself autonomous of the circulation of capital", and second, that "the class struggle was not led by the traditional organisations of the left." (Katsiaficas 1997, 7) As the struggles spread into the "social factory", other determinations of autonomy were added to these: under the pressure of autonomous feminist movements (Dalla Costa and James 1975), the mostly male-intellectual and factory-worker dominated movement had to accept the autonomy of different subject positions *within* the struggle. Thus began a move to a much greater emphasis on internal decentralisation, flat hierarchies, and non-representative organisation.²⁶

Thus, by the time the Italian network of *Autonomia* would largely be defeated in the 1970s, the term 'autonomy' had undergone a set of important redefinitions. First, as Laclau (1990, 37) reminds us, autonomy can never be understood as total, or an end-state that can be achieved. Rather, it must be seen as always relational and relative, it is always autonomy from something, and to some extent. Second, the original 'autonomy' from capital and the party had become the autonomy of various subject positions in struggle from others, and from there a wider autonomy of a diversity of social logics vis-à-vis the unifying logics of the political and the economic. This is not in contradiction to the notion of the 'social factory' invoked above. If, following Laclau, autonomy can only be seen as a process, then 'real subsumption', the determination of the totality of social processes, directly or indirectly, by the logic of capital accumulation, must also be understood as a process, a move on a continuum at whose

²⁶ For an extended analysis of the importance of feminist movements in the emergence of European autonomous movements, both in Italy and Germany, see Katsiaficas (1997). Other historians of *Autonomia*, such as Wright (2002) and Cleaver (2002), tend to pay insufficient attention to the feminist movement.

ideal-typical (hence impossible) end-points we find, on one side, total autonomy, on the other, total subsumption. To invoke the autonomy of a diversity of social logics is therefore precisely the attempt to retain or create spaces not yet directly coded by the logic of capital and the state. Thus we arrive at an image of autonomy-as-process vs. subsumption-as-process, the latter driven by capital and its auxiliary state apparatuses.

The Italian movements were still in full swing when in Germany the movement of 1968, or what remained of it, was largely defeated in the anti-terrorist craze of the 'German autumn' of 1977 (Aust 1985). But in the shadows of the movement of 1968, another, more diverse movement began to grow during the 1970s, initially developing around local conflicts and struggles, often revolving around planning policies and living conditions: in particular in Berlin, the autonomous movements emerged very much from the everyday contestation of neoliberal urban redevelopment (A.G. Grauwacke 2004, 10; Geronimo 1995). While there can thus not be said to be a direct organisational continuity between the '68ers in Germany and the new autonomous movements emerging in the 1970s and early 1980s, they nonetheless shared their "anti-authoritarianism, independence from existing political parties, decentralised organisational forms, emphasis on direct action, and a combination of culture and politics as a means for the creation of a new person and new forms of living through the transformation of everyday life." (Katsiaficas 1997, 3) In other words, the new German movements shared the ethico-political field that was created by the movements of 1968, shared some of the key coordinates that defined those movements, and that define our movement today: the creation of spaces free (as much as possible) from determination by the logic of capital accumulation, and relatively independent from the machinations of the state.²⁷

But ethico-political fields do not exist beyond the practices that constitute them, so what were the flows that would later converge in the space that would become the German autonomous movement? Within Germany, the second half of the 1970s saw the convergence of a number of struggles that had hitherto remained relatively separate: autonomous feminism, the squatters, the alternative movement (Huber 1980), and the anti-nuclear movement (Katsiaficas 1997, 66). It was during the anti-nuclear mobilisations at Brokdorf that the first indications of a transcendence of "single-issue

²⁷ But cf. the literature on urban social movements in the 1980s and their potential articulation to urban redevelopment strategies (Huber 1980; Mayer 2003).

struggles" could be glimpsed (Geronimo 1995, 98-115), in part inspired by the development of autonomous thought and practice in Italy: "The 'Autonomia' in Italy 1977, and the struggles around the autonomous youth centre in Zurich bring a fresh movement-wind from the South. London and Copenhagen are buzzing with activity, and the Amsterdam squatters have achieved almost legendary status." (A.G. Grauwacke 2004, 3)

Thus emerged *Die Autonomen*. Their autonomy is not that of workers from capital, but in keeping with the emerging realities of postfordist/neoliberal labour relations and accumulation (of which more below), and inspired by the Italians, their conflicts tend to revolve less around the workplace, and more around the creation of 'free' or 'autonomous spaces' in their everyday lives against the process of urban redevelopment in the cities of Germany. This third and final conceptual move towards the creation of networks of autonomous spaces in everyday life, which will continue to animate anticapitalist politics in Europe to this day, occurs against the movement of the factory, of the logic of capitalist value into the rest of society characteristic of neoliberalism. Which is where we return, finally, to the last dichotomy hinted at by Vaneigem: those "who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life [...] have corpses in their mouths." (Vaneigem 1994, 26)²⁸ 'Everyday life' is invoked here as a sphere not (yet?) fully organised by the demands of capital accumulation, or other forms of administrative rationalities. It is invoked as a place where life is 'thick', where it brims with the multiple, overlapping, contradictory richness that Gramsci (1971, 419-425; also Crehan 2002, 98-127; Hall 1996, 431) understood as "common sense". In line with the movement from the factory into society, and with the refusal of work as opposed to the celebration of work, 'everyday life' is where we live, while work is where life is sucked dry by the vampires. And in turn, the creeping advance of 'real subsumption' is precisely the process of levelling out the richness of everyday life, replacing it with the false diversity of life under postfordist capital, the diversity that only counts if money can be made from it.

The politics of autonomy in 1980s Germany, just as those that emerged many other parts of Europe at the time, were therefore increasingly a politics of creating diverse spaces of autonomy vis-à-vis the unifying logics of capital and the state. A politics that Katsiaficas (1997, 256-7), drawing on his background in late Frankfurt school analysis,

²⁸ The 'everyday' was also invoked by De Certeau (1984).

views as rejecting “the colonisation of everyday life”²⁹ effected by neoliberal capital by creating free spaces in the squats of Berlin, and the spaces of the alternative movement. Whether viewed as ‘de-colonisation’; or as the creation of “social forms and structures of value that were relatively autonomous from and posed an effective alternative to capitalist circuits of valorisation. [This] self-valorisation was thought of as the building block for constructing a new society” (Hardt 1996, 3); or finally as a ‘prefigurative’ “politics of escape attempts from capital” (Notes from Nowhere 2003, 107; Graeber 2002, 62), the essence, expressed in terms of today’s struggles, remains the same. They are attempts to create other worlds beyond state and capital, and to do so in a way that respects the autonomy of the subjectivities involved in the struggle.

The political vocabulary will change between then and now: self-valorisation will become the construction of commons, decentralisation turns into horizontality, refusal will become disobedience. And in Germany and Italy, autonomous politics are transformed into ‘post-autonomous’ politics as the former are seen as threatening the social isolation (*auto-marginalizzazione*) of the movement. But the impetus underlying these politics, the desires that animate them will remain the same, the ethico-political field relatively stable. This is the stuff contemporary anticapitalist politics are made of, and these are the sensibilities that give political meaning to the opening of space that occurs in the effervescence of the summit riot.

(iii) Meanwhile, in a galaxy far away (and yet so close): conditions of possibility

Above, I told the story of how openness, horizontality, and autonomy have become central in the political practice of today’s anticapitalist movement. I have tried to trace a history of movements that takes them and their desires seriously, that sees them as makers of their own histories. But, since we do not make history under conditions of our own choosing, it is surely impossible to tell the story of Europe’s anticapitalist left without any analysis of capital, or more generally, the wider social currents that constitute ‘life’.

²⁹ Cf. also Melucci (1988), who views Italian autonomous movements as fighting for the ‘democratisation of everyday life’.

Below, I will sketch two trends constituting the conditions of possibility of the emergence of these political forms. First, the growing importance of the network form in the global political economy; second, the rise of the neoliberal project and its particular extensive accumulation strategy. The following section is not intended to be a full-blown, or even abridged, history of the global political economy since 1968, of 'neoliberal globalisation' – many such have already been written (Harvey 2005; Hardt and Negri 2000; Silver 2003; van der Pijl 1998) – but rather an outline of those specific transformations that made possible the rise of the contemporary anticapitalist movement.

Networks...³⁰

In an insightful essay on horizontality in contemporary anticapitalist mobilisations, Nunes (2005, 300) suggests that the growing disappointment with really existing Socialism, and the lessons learnt from 1968 cannot fully explain the wholesale move, at least on paper and in official pronouncements,³¹ that contemporary anticapitalist politics have made towards horizontality, networks, and openness. For Nunes (2005, 300), "the ideology [of horizontality] as such only exists because it has become [...] materially possible on a large scale." The explanation for the power of the network form as an organisational ideal thus "has to lie in a material process." The implication of this argument is that the ethico-political field of networked and horizontal movement practices I have been describing above is part of a wider emerging field of networked practices that structures fields as diverse as industrial production, military organisation, or telecommunication. Manuel Castells (1996, 469) was the first to theorise this putative 'becoming-hegemonic' of the network form:

"As a historical trend, dominant functions and processes in the information age are increasingly organised around networks. Networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies [...]. While the networking form has existed in other times and spaces, the new information technology paradigm provides the material basis for its pervasive expansion throughout the entire social structure."

There exists a broad homology between changes in the field of anticapitalist practice, from parties and hierarchical trade unions to 'networks and netwars'; changes in the

³⁰ This section draws heavily on Trott (2005a).

³¹ The World Social Forum, far from being a particularly open process, and indeed initiated by organisations not part of the libertarian left, has a wonderfully horizontal platform and understands itself, in very contemporary jargon, as an 'open space' rather than a platform or organisation. Cf. Patomäki and Teivainen (2005), and Keraghel and Sen (2004).

organisation of production, from the assembly line to the production network; and the suggested existence of a shift from 'Fordist' to 'postfordist' accumulation and regulation (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001; Hardt and Negri 2000, 295; Amin 1996; Lipietz 1997; Jessop 1990). Hardt and Negri (2004, 142) thus suggest that networks are increasingly becoming the "common form" of all spheres of social life. Following Castells, Nunes (2005) argues that the large-scale spread of multipolar, 'many-to-many' media like the internet "is the chief material cause behind the 'renaissance' of openness and horizontality. It is only within the horizon of a social life that has become networked that a politics of networking as such can appear. And it is only in a politics of networking that openness and horizontality can appear as a goal." (cf. Cleaver 1999).

There are of course critiques of this 'network paradigm'. Moody (1997), for example, suggests that in most areas of production, we are seeing business-as-usual, discounting the few standard examples of 'Toyotism', Volvo's factory in Kalmar, or other staples of the sociology of postfordism, as mere aberrations in what he understands as simple, intensified Taylorism. But in drawing on the network paradigm in order to understand the global emergence of contemporary networked forms of anticapitalist practice, it is not necessary to argue that *all* of society is being structured by networked processes and logics, or that there is a determinism and teleology in the emergence of networks. All I am suggesting is that the social terrain on which we struggle, the space that we occupy in the global uneven geographical development of capital accumulation, appears as networked. Other terrains, of course, do exist. Lipietz (1997, 10-12) already argued that post-Fordism in the highly- or post-industrialised countries coincided with the rise of 'bloody Taylorism' in others.

The networked terrain of contemporary anticapitalist/alterglobalisation struggles has been widely documented (Cleaver 1998; Klein 2004; Notes from Nowhere 2003, 63-73; Stammers and Eschle 2005). From the initial Zapatista *encuentros* (Neill 2001), to the Peoples' Global Action (PGA) Network (De Marcellus 2001), to the local, national, regional and world social fora, networked information and social technologies have played a major role in the development of contemporary anticapitalism.

This homology between the rise of flexible accumulation (Harvey 1989), what might also be called 'networked capitalism', and the increasingly networked structure of anticapitalist practice of course raises the question of the causal relationship between

these processes. Do networked forms of social organisation arise out of 'postfordist' restructurings of capital as a response to the 'rigidities' of fordism (Harvey 1989)? Or, as Hardt and Negri (2000) would argue, from a workerist perspective, because it was living labour that developed networked forms in response to the fetters of fordism (cf. Silver 2003)? Between those two polar opposites, I am inclined to follow Deleuze and Guattari and Paolo Virno in proposing a 'hybrid thesis', where creative, transformative agency is located with both labour *and* capital (and beyond), and is distributed (albeit unevenly) across social fields invested by creative flows of desire (Lothringer 2004, 11-2). The network form spreads across social fields as the result of a number of interlocking processes that cannot be reduced to a single causal factor, unless that single causal factor is taken to be the ontological creativity of desire as such.

...Neoliberalism...

If the rise of the network form to social centrality has been one of the defining features of global capitalism since the late 1960s, the emergence of neoliberalism has been another. Outlining the form taken by global capitalism under the guidance of this strategy will not only serve to further specify the conditions of possibility for the emergence of our movement, it will also further specify the relationship between our movements and traditional 'working class' and trade union politics.

In 1971, Richard Nixon exclaimed that 'we're all Keynesians now'. But as Nixon was uttering these words, he had already responded to the crisis of the international economic system by abandoning the gold-dollar-standard, thus ending the Bretton Woods system that was one of the pillars of the Keynesian mode of regulation (Ruggie 1982). The crisis of the international currency regime was part of the fundamental crisis of Fordist capitalism in the 1960s and 70s, where a complex interplay between the rigidities of Fordism, entrenched trade union power, international instabilities (declining US-power), the fiscal and legitimisation crises experienced by many states, and the 1960s' value shift, at least in Western countries, against the stifling orthodoxy and bureaucracy of the welfare state (Harvey 1989, 141-2, 171), were both a cause and an effect of an extended period of global social upheaval. The 1970s were thus a decade that can be described as a Gramscian 'organic crisis', where regimes of accumulation as well as modes of regulation enter into crisis, become disarticulated, cease being mutually stabilising and reproductive (Boyer 1984; Gramsci 1971, 210-8). The decade

that saw the growth of the autonomous movements in Italy, Germany and elsewhere, was also a period of non-hegemony, of ruling-class disarray, and of openness (Gill 1990, 3). Whether it was, at the global level, the proposal for a *New International Economic Order*, or, at the national level, the Swedish trade unions' proposal for wage-earner funds intended to progressively nationalise the economy (Ryner 2002), or the Italian feminists' proposal for wages for housework (Dalla Costa and James 1975), there was no shortage of progressive challenges to the power of capital.

But the outcome of the crisis was another, namely the victory of the neoliberal project, which by the early 1990s had become the new orthodoxy. At that point, Bill Clinton could well have proclaimed 'we're all neoliberals now' (Harvey 2005, 13). The processes that led to this striking reversal, over a period of some twenty years, were legion, but here I aim to highlight only those of its aspects that laid the groundwork on which would arise the contemporary European anticapitalist movement.

Fordism, the supposedly 'golden' period of relatively steady post-war growth that came to its end in the early 1970s, was an intensive regime of accumulation (Aglietta 1987). Drawing on Marx' (1971, 531-41) distinction between absolute and relative surplus production, where the former results from lengthening the working day/week, and the latter from increased productivity, an intensive regime of accumulation is characterised by surplus production based on productivity growth and the developments of internal markets for mass consumption. This regime of accumulation rested on a mode of regulation, or in Gramscian terms, a hegemonic bloc, in which productive capital led allied fractions of capital and the organised industrial working class (under the leadership and control of trade unions) in a class compromise regulated and stabilised by a relatively autonomous national state (Rupert 1995). In turn, this class compromise relied and made possible an ever-expanding productivity, which allowed for both profits and wages to rise (Harvey 1989, 134-5).

This model began to run aground and met with increased labour resistance in the late 1960s, as profit rates extracted from Taylorist labour processes bottomed out and the underlying class compromise began fraying at the edges (Boyer 1984; Anonymous 1999, 42-3). The neoliberal project was based on a very different constellation of class forces and regime of accumulation - as a result, the struggles and antagonisms

defining it also differed from those that had dominated the Fordist period. Dumenil and Levy (2004, 1-2) thus define neoliberalism as

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

This reassertion of power occurred vis-à-vis both labour, for example in the battles Reagan and Thatcher fought and won against the air traffic controllers, and miners respectively, as well as other fractions of capital, such as productive capital (Dumenil and Levy 2004; cf. Gill 1990). Beyond cleavages between finance and production, van der Pijl (1998) argues that neoliberalism is the project of the transnational fraction of the capitalist class, with its base in the ‘Lockean’ heartlands of capitalism, the US and the UK. The regime of accumulation underpinning and emerging out of this new class project was an extensive one, characterised by the extension of markets and absolute surplus extraction. To understand this shift from one regime to another, we need to better understand the crisis of Fordism, as well as the mechanisms for its (temporary) resolution.

Capitalism, the Marxist tradition argues, tends towards periodic crises. But disagreement reigns about what precisely triggers these crises, and what form they take. We know of crises of overproduction, underconsumption, and the (putative) tendency of the rate of profit to fall (cf. Bell and Cleaver 1982); more politically, we speak of organic crises (Gramsci 1971), fiscal crises (O’Connor 1973), legitimation and motivational crises (Habermas 1973); and the autonomists have produced a reinterpretation of Marx’ crisis theory as a theory of struggle, wherein all crises of capital are ultimately political, are caused by the circulation of social struggles (Negri 1991, 85-104; Bell and Cleaver 1982; Cleaver 2002; Silver 2003). Below, I draw on David Harvey’s (1989) theory of capitalist crises as crises of overaccumulation to understand the crisis of Fordism – without, however, entirely discarding the autonomist perspective on crisis.

Capitalism, argues Harvey (1989), is a highly dynamic system on account of its two primary driving engines, class struggle, and competition. This very dynamic, however, generates periodic “crises of overaccumulation”, where “idle capital and idle labour supply [...] exist side by side with no apparent way to bring” them together (Harvey

1989, 180). The tendency to push down wages on the one hand, and produce ever more commodities on the other, can spark a vicious cycle in which low wages mean no purchasing power, hence no sale, hence no profit, hence no investment – and hence fewer jobs and lower wages. Towards the end of the 1960s, as productivity increases in the West ground to a halt, the basis of the Fordist class compromise crumbled. As profits fell, powerful trade unions tended to stem the fall of wages, leading to an accelerated drop in profits, making productive investment increasingly difficult. A crisis of overaccumulation had begun.

Since such crises are, according to Harvey (1989), endemic to capital, mechanisms must necessarily exist to suppress, contain, or absorb them. The most sustainable mechanism, from the perspective of capital, is to absorb the overaccumulated capital in geographical, or more broadly, spatial expansion. He calls this the “spatial fix”, “the production of new spaces within which capitalist production can proceed” – a highly *political* process in which, just as in the enclosures of old (Marx 1971; Polanyi 1957), the state is a crucial actor (Harvey 1989, 180-83).

Understanding the particular, neoliberal ‘spatial fix’ that delivered capital from the rigidities and low profit rates of Fordism, then, will not only allow us to grasp the reality of neoliberal capital as a continuous process of political and frequently violent ‘enclosure’. It will also allow us to reconnect with the concerns of contemporary anticapitalist movements, and to understand how they came to rival traditional labour struggles at the point of production as the focus of left political practice.

Neoliberal accumulation, I suggested above, relies less on productivity increases at the point of production, than on the societal equivalent of a lengthening of the working day: on what autonomists have called the “new enclosures” (Midnight Notes Collective 1990; De Angelis 2001; forthcoming), and Harvey (2003, 137-179) “accumulation by dispossession” – each concept in turn derived from Marx’ discussion of “primitive” or “original accumulation”. Marx (1971, 741-91) had deployed this somewhat ironic term in order to argue, against classical economists’ claims that capital was a naturally emergent property of human life (Shilliam 2004, 64-5), that the capital relation could only be the result of a violent, *political* (qua state) process of creating a proletariat and freeing resources for productive investment, drawing on the example of the British ‘enclosure movement’ (Midnight Notes 1990; Polanyi 1957, 33-7).

Any invocation of capital as a force that ‘encloses’ or relies on the state to enclose is thus a reference to the violent and *political* character of capital. The (intra-Marxist) theoretical debate surrounding this term now centres on the role of violence and politics in the expanded reproduction of capital, a debate in which De Angelis (2001) identifies two basic positions. The ‘historical’ position would tend to confine “primitive accumulation”, which we may here simply understand as the violent separation of the producers from their means of (re)production, to the *pre*-history of capital, arguing that such a process was necessary to establish the very possibility of capitalist social relations, which, once established, function as impersonal, economic relations of exploitation. Note that it is not necessary for this position to argue that this process is therefore confined to the *past*: as Shilliam (2004) argues, given the uneven character of global capitalist development, processes of primitive accumulation remain and must remain a feature of capital, but analytically he confines this violence to the *ex-novo* press-ganging of peasants into capitalist social relations (cf. Zarembka 2002).

Understood thus, primitive accumulation occurs at and displaces the limits of capital in places where capitalist sociality has not (yet) fully developed. Contrary to this perspective, De Angelis (2001) traces a second position through the history of Marxist thought, which he identifies as the “inherent-continuous” view of primitive accumulation. In this understanding, primitive accumulation does indeed occur at the limits to capital – but these limits are not merely constituted passively as that which capital has not yet fully penetrated: they are limits also constituted by struggles, limits that have been raised by social movements “by opening up a space of entitlements and commons disconnected from market logic” (De Angelis 2004b). Primitive accumulation, or enclosure, is then the political process of transforming these “commons” into spaces directly subject to the logic of capital accumulation – which dovetails neatly with Harvey’s (2003, 146, 149) definition of “accumulation by dispossession” as the “appropriation and cooptation of pre-existing cultural social achievements”, both violent and consensual, but invariably political.³² This in turn solves problems of overaccumulation by releasing assets like land or labour power at very low cost onto the market, which overaccumulated or surplus capital can in turn seize and put to profitable use.

³² But see De Angelis’ (forthcoming) critique of Harvey’s concept.

Which is where, finally, we return to Fordism's crisis of overaccumulation. If we understand the Fordist welfare regime not merely as a convenient way for capital to deal with the problem of labour control and shifting mass-produced goods, but as an outcome of significant victories by labour, then we see that what Harvey calls the "rigidities" of Fordism are at least in part such internal limits raised against capital by social struggles. Thus, the Fordist crisis of overaccumulation was solved by the transformation, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, of these rigidities, these limits into new frontiers of accumulation, in what some have called "the largest Enclosure of the worldly Common in history" (Midnight Notes 1990): from the privatisation of public services all the way to the patenting of the human genome.

Thus, when Harvey (2003, 159-66) outlines the main features and processes of 'accumulation by dispossession', we encounter a list of unsavoury practices that could be lifted straight from an alterglobalist manifesto. Neoliberal accumulation by dispossession, he argues, is based on four elements. First, on "the privatisation and commodification of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations, [as well as] the conversion of various forms of property rights (common, collective, state, etc.) into exclusive private property rights." Second, on financialisation; third, on the management and manipulation of crises; and lastly, on state redistribution of wealth from the lower to the upper classes.

This leaves us with the following conceptualisation of struggles around and against capital accumulation under Fordism and neoliberalism. In Fordism, intensive capital accumulation occurred largely as the result of productivity increases at the point of production. The crucial struggles at the time thus also occurred around the point of production (of surplus value), conducted by organisations and employing organisational forms that were in conformity with their location in the struggle, by trade unions organising in the place of production. It also made sense, in this setup, to address demands frequently to the state as key stabiliser of the underlying class compromise. Under neoliberalism, however, the site of dispossession becomes a new key site of struggle: at stake is its future as a 'space of capital' (Harvey 2001), or a 'commons' (De Angelis forthcoming). This puts into context the shifts in the ethico-political field of radical left activism: from the workplace into 'society', and from the

trade union to diverse networks of forms of resistance.³³ We also begin to understand the shift away from making demands on the (national) state, which comes to be seen less as an agent of redistribution from capital to labour, but rather the other way round: they turn into “competition states” (Jessop 1993; Hirsch 1998). Thus, if the global spread of the network form constituted the condition of possibility for networked struggles to take place and centre stage, the global spread of neoliberalism shifted the site of struggle onto new spaces. Spaces that would soon come to be occupied by the emerging anticapitalist movement (cf. De Angelis 2004b).

...and no end to history!

But we’re not there yet. The paragraphs above constitute at most a synchronic description of neoliberalism, where it replaces Fordism in one fell swoop. But neoliberalism of course changed, evolved from its humble origins in the Mont Pelerin Society, via Chile where the neoliberal ‘Chicago Boys’ orchestrated the first – and not by accident dictatorial – deep structural adjustment of an economy; moved from a strategy to first put down the geopolitical and economic challenge articulated by countries from the global South through Paul Volcker’s interest rate shock, triggering the 1980s’ debt crisis, to being a strategy to combat domestic working classes under Thatcher and Reagan. Until, in June 1989, as the Eastern Bloc was already crumbling, the *National Interest* published Francis Fukuyama’s (1989) article that declared that history had come to an end.³⁴

Coming from a US-establishment intellectual like Fukuyama, this ‘thesis’ should be seen as both expressing the political triumph of a particular project for world order, as well as an attempt to bring about that very triumph – as speaking not *about* the end of history, but *in order to* make it end. On the left, the thesis is cited as the expression of two facts: first, that an absolute nadir had been reached in the global strength of the left after the end of the cold war; but second, as a moment of rebirth for radical left practice, released from the shackles of the confrontation between “the two great molar

³³ I am not implying here that trade unions or workplaces have become irrelevant as foci of radical left practice, or that all accumulation under neoliberalism is ‘accumulation by dispossession’. I am, however, privileging this form of accumulation as one of the crucial tendencies of contemporary capitalism, one that is intimately connected to the emergence of our movement.

³⁴ For an excellent reading of the transformations of neoliberalism, from ‘roll-back’ to ‘roll-out’ neoliberalism, see Peck and Tickell (2002).

aggregates of the East and West” and their politically totalising powers (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 238).

What happened when the wall fell and the curtain was lifted? Rosenberg (2005, 6, 47) evokes the enormous “socio-political vacuum [...] generated by the Soviet collapse and its effects”: “ideologically, the collapse of the second world dealt a death blow to the idea of the third world [...] by discrediting the whole notion of viable alternatives to, or even within, a capitalist developmental agenda.” Thus, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the neoliberal project had already dispatched two of its main enemies: organised working classes in the global North and potential challengers in the global South, through tactics of enforced austerity. It was the end of the Eastern Bloc that finally cleared the field and created a vacuum which the powerful neoliberal offensive filled both ideologically and politically. Thus, hard on the heels of the proclamations of the end of history and the rise of a ‘New World Order’,³⁵ there followed a period of global restructuring so deep and rapid that “[n]ot since the Age of Imperialism – and probably not even then – had the capitalist world economy witnessed such a sudden and geographically vast ‘opening up’ of societies to its operations”: Germany is ‘unified’ under a conservative government; India tilts West; China embraces markets in its constitution; the Washington consensus is formulated; and Mexico’s statist road to development is terminated when NAFTA comes into force in 1994 (Rosenberg 2005, 48-50). And global workers’ bargaining power is weakened, at least temporarily, when billions of workers from China, India, and the Eastern Bloc suddenly become available to capitalist exploitation on global labour markets.³⁶

At this point in the early 1990s, the global neoliberal offensive had thus managed to consign every potential challenge to its global ascendancy to the scrap yard of history, whether from the left, or from a ‘Hobbesian contender state’ (van der Pijl 1998). The so-called ‘new social movements’ still existed, but were incapable or unwilling to issue a direct challenge to the power of capital through what came to be derisively called their ‘single-issue politics’ (Katsiaficas 1997, 262). There was thus no force that would reconstitute a hegemonic left project, in Laclau and Mouffe’s (2001) sense, creating a ‘chain of equivalences’, a contingent unity that would be able to challenge capital.

³⁵ Announced by Bush the Elder in a speech after the 2nd gulf war in March 1991.

³⁶ But see the counter-arguments to this proposition in Silver (2003).

Not that there was no resistance – but networks and structures of resistance had been decomposed and disarticulated by years of pressure during the neoliberal offensive. And yet, to take up a somewhat tired metaphor: neoliberalism, at the same time as it was wiping out its remaining enemies, was busily creating its own gravediggers, or at least, its next challengers. As argued above, two key frontline strategies of the neoliberal offensive were accumulation by dispossession, or “the commodification of everything”; and the rearticulation of states into ‘competition states’, agents of upward redistribution of wealth, and international economic institutions into agencies of structural adjustment.

It was at these frontlines that new networks and forms of resistance began to grow. Although it appeared impossible, for a while, to conceive of an organised challenge to the neoliberal offensive at a global level, the everyday practices of movements attempting to create ‘autonomous spaces’ or alternative economies, their networks of social centres, bookshops, collectives, publications, and co-ops did in fact engage the neoliberal offensive at its very frontline of accumulation by dispossession, by attempting to constitute alternative value practices as against the spread of capitalist commodity and market relations (De Angelis forthcoming). In Latin America, the Zapatista rebellion and the activities of the Brazilian *Movimento Sem Terra* aimed to create autonomous places against the extension of capitalist social relations, against accumulation by dispossession. Also, trade unions of course did not cease to struggle, but some of their key fights and successes moved outside of the workplace, into the streets and into a challenge to the changing role of the state. Thus the French public sector strikes in 1995 and 1996, and the Korean general strike of 1997, each of which played an important role in re-creating global awareness of resistance against neoliberalism, were not strictly speaking workplace strikes, but political ones, resisting the neoliberal rearticulation of state structures. The successful mobilisation against the MAI in 1998, too, was engaging neoliberalism directly, which had always relied on multilateral economic institutions as enforcers of structural adjustment. North-American anti-corporate struggles, so evocatively documented by Naomi Klein (2000), display a similar logic of challenging neoliberalism at its frontline of enclosure of public space, the privatisation and corporatisation of everyday life.

In the first half of the 1990s, these and many more diverse struggles existed relatively separately from each other: by and large, they were not perceived, nor did they

generally perceive themselves, as being linked in a global movement against neoliberalism. This was the essence of the 'end of history' as a Deleuzian 'mot d'ordre':³⁷ it tried to cement the decomposition of antineoliberal practices into separate compartments, unable to communicate with other struggles, as the networks along which struggles were communicated, and the spaces that they collectively occupied, had been decomposed and enclosed by the neoliberal offensive. In turn, it was towards the second half of the 1990s that these isolated and separate struggles started tentatively linking up with each other. Still operating below the radar screens of global media outlets and political elites, 'off-stage' (Scott 1990), connections between hitherto unconnected elements began coalescing into networks in the Zapatista *encuentros*; the *Euromarches* of the unemployed; the anti-MAI campaign; and the early summit protests in Cologne 1997; and around the 1999 G8 summit, which saw, in the events of *J18* the first major antisummit riots in the global North since the Berlin summit of the IMF and the World Bank in 1988.

Thus began the emergence of the 'contemporary anticapitalist movement', in turn part of a wider alterglobalist movement. It linked autonomous struggles and movements in Europe to a global multiplicity of other struggles against neoliberalism - in particular to those who opposed its key mechanism of accumulation by dispossession. Against the neoliberal closure of political space culminating in the 'end of history', this 'movement of movements' (Klein 2004, 220) asserted the possibility of a counterhegemonic practice that did not, like the new social movements seemingly had, abandon the possibility of challenging neoliberalism in particular, and capital in general, while at the same time retaining internal diversity and (relative) horizontality and flat hierarchies (Day 2005, 8). Against the neoliberal enclosure of space, this movement sought to defend, create, and extend spaces governed by logics other than that of capital accumulation. Therein lay the promise of the alterglobalist and contemporary anticapitalist movements: to constitute a counterhegemonic field that would resist the subsumption of internal diversity, and yet be able to face a common enemy effectively and sustainably (Laclau and Mouffe 2001) - a diversity that arose, like the unity that formed that basis of the struggles of factory workers, out of the concrete conditions of their encounter with the power of neoliberal capital (Harvey 2005, 178). Thus the alterglobalisation movement took up the ethico-political promises of the autonomous movements that emerged in the late 1960s and early 70s, and

³⁷ Simply put, a statement that is constitutive of social facts (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 87).

rearticulated them in a movement that was to shatter the archetypal neoliberal myth of TINA with its famous battle cry that 'Other worlds are possible'.

(iv) Finale: Seattle

We have thus come full circle: from clawing our way back from the 'coming out' moment of the alterglobalisation movement that was 'the Battle of Seattle', all the way to the beaches of Paris, beginning a journey that would take us to the factories of Northern Italy and the squats of Berlin, and beyond, to explain the ethico-political field constitutive of our movement. We saw the rise of neoliberalism and of networked capitalism – and the rise of the movement that would come to challenge it. 'Seattle' was the outcome of this process of recomposition of networks of resistance, and of the slow and patient carving out and creation of spaces where connections between diverse flows of resistance could be made.

The story of Seattle itself, of those effervescent days, this moment of madness and excess: of the clouds of teargas, of the lock-ons, the terrifying robocops, has been told many times, and need not be repeated in detail here (cf. Whitney 2004). All we need to do here is to understand the specific significance of Seattle, what made it so special that it became 'our' coming out party – although, to stay in the metaphor, we had never really stopped going to queer parties anyway. One of the constitutive elements of neoliberalism, I argued above, was its rearticulation of state structures at all levels – national, local, global – from being an organiser of class compromise to being an agent of redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich. In order to effect this rearticulation, state structures had to effectively be stripped of their relative autonomy (Poulantzas 1978). In other words, the power of neoliberalism rested on the closure of political space, or, which is another way of saying the same thing, on the end of history as politics, on the disguising of the politics of enclosure as objective economics (Teivainen 2002). Seattle, by exploding onto the global public stage the spectacle of resistance, of non-compliance, of the possibility of alternatives, repoliticised the global sphere, opened up history again, made oppositional politics possible again.

Oppositional politics had of course not disappeared. But in Seattle the rest of the world "was made aware of the sheer scope and extensiveness of the network[s]" of resistance

(Tormey 2004, 68). Prior to Seattle, the practices composing those networks could be said to have been the global equivalent of Scott's (1990) 'weapons of the weak', of isolated acts of foot-dragging, sabotage, non-compliance that express a 'hidden transcript' of dissent bubbling below the surface, but do not challenge the 'public transcript', the official story of general compliance with the system.

Such hidden transcripts, however, do not always remain hidden: there are rare moments when they burst onto the public stage. Seattle was such a moment. Following this initial public declaration, it is as if a dam were broken: as people who hear of the act recognise the speaking of a familiar hidden transcript, a spread of acts of insubordination may occur, reaching as far as the hidden transcript has meaning. And indeed, similar 'acts of insubordination' followed Seattle, as the transcript of dissatisfaction with neoliberal globalisation seemed to hold meaning from Seattle to Prague, from Quebec City to Chiang Mai, and as we saw in chapter two, to Gothenburg, Evian, and Thessaloniki. It was the time when we were winning. It was a time, to paraphrase Durkheim (1995, 429) "when our societies once again [knew] hours of creative effervescence during which new ideals [sprung] forth and new formulas [seemed to] emerge to guide humanity for a time."

But what were these 'ideals' that would guide, if not humanity, then at least movement strategy for a while? Having thus outlined what I have called the ethico-political field of contemporary anticapitalism; shown how its emergence relates to transformations in the global political economy; and finally, demonstrated how our ruptural politics opened space for contestation in a situation where that space had effectively been closed off, we were faced as a movement with the question of how to use that space. How, beyond the ephemerality of ruptural protest, could we sustainably formulate challenges to the power of capital, construct other worlds? And in turn, this question implies that we understand better the power of our protean foe: the power of capital - so that we may also understand what we hope to enact in its place.

Chapter IV

DR. STRANGEVALUE, OR: HOW WE (UN)LEARN TO LOVE CAPITAL



(graffiti. Source: unknown)

(i) After the summits: hegemony strikes back

So much for madness, excess, and effervescence, and for radical politics as ruptural politics. But what about politics as hegemony – what about Gramsci? There has been a lot of radical “optimism of the will” animating the previous chapters, from ‘we are winning’, to the idea that our riotous protests opened political space where neoliberal capital and the competition state relied on the closure of that space. At this point, a good dose of “pessimism of the intellect” seems appropriate to temper what Hardt and Negri (2000, 431) so evocatively called “the irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist”. After all, we may have scored some victories, some of the institutional support mechanisms of the neoliberal offensive were stalled or suffering crises of legitimacy, like the WTO or the IMF (De Marcellus 2006; Sachs 2006; Giles 2006). We may have also shifted the coordinates of global political discourse around a bit so that

old-school neoliberal globalisers now need to talk about a new and improved “globalisation with a human face”, as seen in the UK-government’s claims to want to “make poverty history”. And our actions opened spaces for the contestation of the neoliberal globalist project, as well as generating an intensity that was important in the emergence of our movement.

But it was also clear to all of us in and around the summit protest movement that fighting with the police on the streets of Seattle, Prague and Genoa did very little to halt the molecular advance of the “new enclosures” (Midnight Notes Collective 1990), of “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 2003). We may have won a few battles, but we had clearly failed to turn the table in what the Zapatistas call the “fourth world war” of neoliberal capital against ‘humanity’, against life (Midnight Notes Collective 2001). At the same time, although critiques of neoliberalism multiplied around the world, the very lack of practical alternatives to these processes seemed to cement the fundamental hegemony of capital even more deeply. Although we had opened spaces for critique, in Europe at least we were far from convincing people that alternatives to life under capital were *practically* possible.

Combined with the drastically reduced room for tactical manoeuvre that resulted from the increasingly effective tactics of European policing after Gothenburg and Genoa, and the permanent state of exception (Agamben 2004; Skrimshire 2005) imposed after 9/11, these two strategic shortcomings of a focus on organising big, spectacular events prompted a period of reflection in our movement: “So-called ‘summit-hopping’ has been much criticised. After all, G8 summits are of course only a symbolic concentration of capitalist domination [*Herrschaft*] – but not the centre of globalised capitalism, which simply does not have a localisable and personifiable centre in that sense.” (Interventionistische Linke 2006)

Enter Gramsci. For if, as I suggested at the beginning of our inquiry into the politics of militant summit protests, the strategy behind these events shares at least a family resemblance with that which underpinned the storming of the Winter Palace, of revolution as radical rupture, then we return here to a point where Gramsci had already arrived long ago. Namely, given the fact that capitalist social relations lack an identifiable institutional centre; and given the fact that in the wealthier capitalist countries, any anticapitalist strategy is likely to come up against the fortresses and

earthworks (Gramsci 1971, 238) of a common sense that views capitalist social relations as indeed common-sensical, as normal – how could this apparently de-centred, hegemonising social force be effectively challenged (Crehan 2002, 101-4)?

Emerging from strategic discussions and a period of questioning that our movement entered into after the high time of the summit protests,³⁸ below I seek to analyse the contemporary form taken by the power of capital, in order to understand how this power can be challenged. I will depart to some extent from the concepts of autonomism and their emphasis on *struggle* at the heart of all efforts to impose capitalist social relations, to seek to understand how, particularly in the extensive and therefore violent and political neoliberal regime of accumulation, capital is capable of generating our *consent* to its social power. This question, in turn, is based on the assumption, shared by Weber (1964) and Gramsci (1971), that social relations of domination cannot be solely based on coercion. Rather than focus once more on the violent *process* of accumulation by dispossession, I will therefore focus on the *effects* of the process, suggesting that neoliberalism *qua* enclosures extends the unifying logic of the capitalist “value form” (Marx 1971; Rubin 1990; Arthur 2002; Heinrich 2004) ever more deeply into the spaces of everyday life. Following an analysis of the dynamics of this value form, or, in Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004a) terms, the capitalist axiomatic, as precisely the placeless ‘centre’ of capital which ‘organises’ the networks of globalised capital, I will argue that this extension in turn has two effects. First, the gradual (though never total) disappearance of social spaces in which we practice alternative value logics. Where we want to see other worlds, the capitalist value form tends towards creating one world in the image of capital, one in which singularity and difference continues to exist only as subordinate to unity and sameness, a hierarchical articulation that occurs in the capitalist ‘value form’. Second, I will argue that our efforts to counteract the spread of this value form come up against the creeping hegemony of capitalist value logic based on our increasing *habitation* and therefore consent to the logic of capital which we enact in ever more situations of everyday life (Gramsci 1971; Althusser 1971; Bourdieu 1977): we learn to love capital because we increasingly live lives mediated by capital. Finally, I will argue that other, diverse worlds are possible only insofar as we manage to create, defend, and extend social

³⁸ Examples of such strategic inquiry emerging after the high-time of summit-hopping are Kolinko (2002); Glocal Group Hanau (2005); Trott (2005b); and Interventionistische Linke (2006).

spaces governed by alternative value logics (Graeber 2001; De Angelis forthcoming), where alternatives, transcripts of resistance can be articulated.

(ii) The hegemony of capitalist value

After our victories. We had taken the shine off the summits, pushed them back into the wilderness, from the Canadian Rocky Mountains, to repressive sheikdoms. But as we realised that we had done fairly little to halt the deeper penetration of capitalist social relations into our everyday lives, we were, like Gramsci long before us, once again faced with two aspects of the awesome power of capital that begged explanation. First, wherein does this power lie? That is, how is neoliberal capital able to survive the delegitimation of institutions (De Marcellus 2006) that were thought crucial for the extension of its power and still continue to organise ever longer, deeper, more extensive networks of flows of social production (Hardt and Negri 2000; Castells 1996)? Second, how does it continue to generate consent to itself as a social relation of domination and exploitation, in particular after the destruction of the Fordist class compromise and its attendant disciplinary institutions: why is there no much more widespread ‘crisis of legitimacy’ or ‘motivational crisis’ (Habermas 1973) – how do people *still* learn to love capital, neoliberal capital in particular? The two questions seem at the outset to be rather different ones: one refers to capital’s ability to organise particularly long networks of flows and link them to each other in and through the mechanism of exchange, while the other refers to mechanisms of generating consent that we know, at least since Antonio Gramsci (1971, 328), to be located not merely in markets or state institutions in the narrow sense, but rather in the famous ‘fortresses and earthworks’ of civil society. Below, however, I hope to show that under conditions of neoliberal accumulation, these two increasingly converge, as indeed does the question reserved for the end of this chapter, the question of alternatives: it all comes down to the old-fashioned question of value...

Deleuzoguattarian capital

“[T]he fundamental problem of political philosophy is still precisely the one that Spinoza saw so clearly, and that Wilhelm Reich rediscovered: ‘Why do men fight *for* their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?’

[...] after centuries of exploitation, why do people still tolerate being humiliated and enslaved, to such a point, indeed, that they *actually want* humiliation and slavery not only for others but for themselves?" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 31 – emphasis in the original)

This question is the one that animates Deleuze and Guattari in their *Anti-Oedipus*. In this, their much more Marxist work (Holland 1999), they develop an innovative understanding of the power of capital that proceeds from and develops Marx' seminal insight that only under conditions of capitalist accumulation does surplus appropriation occur through 'economic' means, that is, without the help of 'ideological' or directly coercive, i.e. 'political' means.³⁹ In other words, even if the very construction of the political and economic as separate spheres, through accumulation by dispossession leading to marketisation, is premised on constant struggle and hence politics (Cleaver 2002; Negri 1991; De Angelis forthcoming), the dynamics of subsequently marketised spheres are characterised by an economic and direct mode of articulation of flows that is unique to capital.

The capitalist axiomatic

Deleuze and Guattari (2004a) maintain a positive relationship to traditional Marxist notions of history as a succession of "modes of production" (Read 2003b), arguing that with the advent of capitalist social relations, the "form of organization for flows of matter and energy" changes: from a symbolic and qualitative one based on "codes", to an economic and quantitative one based on the "capitalist axiomatic" (Holland 1999, 64). Making explicit reference to Althusser's work on modes of production, they argue that in non-capitalist forms of social organisation, the flows of social production and surplus are organised by diverse symbolic logics, whereas capitalist social production functions on the basis of a universalising and expansive economic logic of equivalence.

Deleuze and Guattari (2004a, 260-84) understand codes to be spatially limited symbolic logics that establish indirect qualitative relations between the flows of social production. First, in coded social structures, relations between flows are *indirect*: for example, flows of goods cannot be directly related to flows of labour power, since there exists no universal medium in which to express their equivalence – they must be linked through an instance (for example law or religion) that stands above them. In capitalist exchange, however, an hour of human labour power, or indeed any commodity, can be

³⁹ Indeed, the point has been convincingly argued that it is only with the advent of capitalist accumulation that it makes sense to speak of 'economic' and 'political' practices as separate (Wood 1995).

expressed as *quanta* of any other commodity through the capitalist logic of universal equivalence (Marx 1971, 49-98). Second, and linked to this, coded flows remain *qualitative*: the surplus labour producing the serf's tribute to the lord is determined by "all the resources of discourse and symbolic culture (notably those of religion)" to be qualitatively distinct from that which produces the serf's own subsistence (Holland 1999, 67) – while any flow organised by capital can and must take on a quantitative form. And finally, the reach of a code is limited. Whereas capital melts *all* that is solid into air, and profanes *all* that is holy (Marx and Engels 1978, 476), codes only apply, and seek to apply to nothing more than, a particular, circumscribed area. Codes, in short, organise and determine "material flows by linking them with determinate meanings." (Protevi 2001, 194)

Capital, then, works on a very different principle: that which Deleuze and Guattari call its 'quantifying axiomatic'. In non-capitalist modes of social production, flows are coded, brought to a relative standstill, made to move only if and when the 'code' allows them to do so, making it appear as though it 'willed' their movement (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 156; Read 2003b). Against such codes, capital is the radical decoding of flows, the subordination and/or destruction of alternative modes of organisation (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 266) – of *other worlds*. Imagine the organisation of labour in a European feudal setting, where the flows of labour power are neatly territorialised; or the flows of commerce that are kept safely within the bounds of highly regulated medieval cities – and then capital sweeping through, releasing these flows from their bonds: '*Stadtluft macht frei!*'

But the liberation of flows effected by capital is a highly ambiguous one: for the flows decoded by capital are not the absolutely decoded flows of desire, the schizo-flows celebrated by Deleuze and Guattari (2004a, 36-7). Capital "substitutes for the codes an extremely rigorous axiomatic that maintains the energy of the flows in a bound state on the body of capital" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 267). Decoding here is not simply liberation, and we hear distinct echoes of Marx' notion of the 'double freedom' of labour under capital when they suggest that capital's axiomatic, its engineering and mobilising of flows, is, if nothing, "even more oppressive" than the social forms that preceded it (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 192).

The axiomatic is a principle that is “immanent to the social field” (Patton 2000, 7), unlike the transcendence of religion or the feudal despot; establishes quantitative and direct relations between singular elements, setting them as equivalent; and that has in principle no limit (other than the total deterritorialisation of the flows it decodes). Or more simply put: capital works by commodifying everything in its path, commodities are qualitatively different and yet quantitatively equivalent, and there is nothing that cannot, in principle, be commodified. But its greatest trick is the fact that this ‘axiomatic’ does not have “any need of belief, and the capitalist is merely striking a pose when he [sic] bemoans the fact that nowadays no one believes in anything anymore.” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 270-2)⁴⁰ Although structures of meaning do of course exist in capitalism, for Deleuze and Guattari “capitalist meaning is always a local tactic, merely providing subjective motivation for producers and consumers.” (Protevi 2001, 194) Capitalist social relations, on this reading, function whether or not they are ‘believed’, and they require no other sphere, such as law or religion, for their justification. Capitalist exchange, in other words, does rely on systems of meaning, as all human action does – but the universal system of capitalist exchange does not require a *particular* system of meaning for its functioning, but rather articulates multiple, diverse meanings through its universalising axiomatic.

Deleuze and Guattari are of course not so foolish as to suggest that capital can from within itself, *qua* axiomatic, generate its own conditions of survival: writing in an intellectual field strongly influenced by the structuralist Marxism of Althusser, they envisage the state playing a substantial role in the reproduction and maintenance of capitalist social relations. “[T]he conjunction of the decoded flows [...] requires a whole apparatus of regulation whose principal organ is the state”, which they take as having been demoted from its previously (in the ‘despotic machine’) dominant position, now acting “as a regulator of the decoded and axiomatized flows”. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 273, 241) And, given that Deleuze and Guattari have in mind here primarily the “decommodifying” (Esping-Andersen 1990) and stabilising welfare state of the Fordist era, we might add, as the crucial agent of the *enclosures* that de-code and de-territorialise flows, only to be conjugated and territorialised by the capitalist axiomatic. Enclosure, in other words, is the cutting edge of neoliberal deterritorialisation and

⁴⁰ It is for this reason that, according to Read (2003b), capitalism is an “age of cynicism”. Cf. the work on cynicism by Sloterdijk (1983); also Žižek (2000a).

decoding, it is the destruction of relatively autonomous 'other worlds', allowing for their subsequent subordinate re-articulation into the one world of capital.

For to cite a deleuzoguattarian mantra: every deterritorialisation necessarily implies a reterritorialisation (2004b, 60). Which raises the question: as a social space is enclosed and thus, somewhat counterintuitively, deterritorialised and de-coded, how are the flows criss-crossing that space *reterritorialised*? How does capital function as this 'axiomatic' with the amazing power to 'conjugate' infinite quantities of qualitatively different flows; and second, how does it do so irrespective of agents' particular beliefs and ideas?

Money, markets, and the integration of desire

The capitalist axiomatic, Deleuze and Guattari (2004a, 36, 244) argue, emerges from the contingent encounter of two flows, one of decoded money cum capital, one of decoded desire turned into labour (Read 2003b). Once it emerges, it works through the media of "money and the market, capitalism's true police", they are what ties it all together, they are what allows capital, in spite of the unprecedented size of the networks it organises, of the unprecedented flexibility it allows flows, to maintain its power over us (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 259). Within a capitalist *market*, any flow can be directly linked to any other by being quantified and that quantity being expressed as *money-value*, setting the two equivalent - for example, a bunch of bananas and an hour of human labour - while at the same time retaining their qualitative difference as use values.

Recall here Deleuze and Guattari's fundamental anticapitalist question: how come people desire their subjection to capital? The trick is that the capitalist axiomatic conjugates not only flows of commodities to each other. Money effects the integration of *desire* into the reproduction of the capitalist axiomatic. Thus, in coded systems, desires are made functional to the reproduction of society through the imposition of a code or structure of meaning, suggesting that the main threat to any mode of production would be the failure "to reproduce the subjective desires necessary for its reproduction" (Read 2003b). Capital, on the other hand, can do without such a link of desire to reproduction via code.

Money, in this scheme, has two functions: first, as wages it is the means of consumption; second, it can become credit. That is: in capitalist markets, when we

desire something, we have to buy it with money, increasingly so as commodification progresses.⁴¹ The money thus spent in consumption in order to satisfy specific desires, the very same pound, baht or rand, at the same time becomes something else when it hits the bank: credit. As such, it becomes investment into the production of commodities (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 248-51), and the link from consumption to credit ensures that desires are channelled into the capitalist machine, increasingly so as enclosure and commodification progress. Money from consumption becomes money for investment, investment becomes production, production circulates, is consumed, and the cycle starts again.⁴² The link in the chain is effected by the channelling of desires into a consumable form, that is: we desire use values, which at the same time are exchange values, which closes the cycle of capital valorisation. Thus capital can sustain de-coded/de-territorialised flows of desire, the flexibility and length of these flows, while at the same being a repressive form of social organisation: by making deterritorialised desire into the basis of the very reproduction of that social organisation.

It is this link between consumption and credit, this convertibility that effects “the integration of the dominated classes”, that suffices “to ensure that the Desire of the most disadvantaged creature will invest with all its strength, irrespective of any economic understanding or lack of it, the capitalist social field as a whole.” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 249-50) It is in this *direct* link between desire and social reproduction, rather than the indirect link effected by codes, that capital’s strength and novelty with respect to other social formations lies: “It is at the level of flows, the monetary flows included, and not at the level of ideology, that the integration of desire is achieved.” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 260)

We have thus come closer to answering the first of our two questions. First, we have developed a deeper understanding of how capital is able to organise and integrate ever-growing networks of flows resulting from the ongoing processes of commodification and enclosure, namely by adding them to what is essentially an open-ended equation of equivalent quantities of flows, the ‘axiomatic’, which in turn functions through money and the market. Second, we are beginning to see that, unlike in pre- or non-capitalist social formations, ‘consent’ is organised at a level more basic

⁴¹ Assuming that ‘real subsumption’ exists as an horizon of possibility.

⁴² This does ignore the possibility of creating credit through ‘fictive capital’ (Marx 1964, 413-28).

than a 'dominant ideology', namely through the direct link in consumption between desire and capital. However, both of these 'answers' remain somewhat underspecified. First, it remains unclear how exactly this axiomatic effects this setting-as-quantitatively-equivalent of qualitatively different flows: surely, the 'axiomatic' itself can never act. The question therefore becomes, how and why do *we* effect the axiomatic?

Second, while it may be the case that we as producers and consumers reproduce capitalist social relations whether or not we 'agree' with them, the direct linking of desire to the reproduction of social relations seems to blank out the specific ideological effects that the "interpellation" of individual subjectivities into commodity circuits generates, namely the transformation of concrete individuals into acquisitive capitalist subjectivities (Althusser 1971, 174). I will engage with this second question at greater length below. In the next section, I hope to elaborate and deepen our insights into capital's 'axiomatic', its ability to 'manage' the new elements that neoliberal processes of enclosure and commodification require it add to its chain of equivalents – and our own complicity in these processes.

Marx and the secret of the value form

To answer this question, I turn to Marx' (1971, 49-98) analysis of the commodity and value form developed in the first few chapters of *Das Kapital* – more specifically, to the interpretation of those chapters developed by the 'value-form' school of Marxism (Rubin 1990; Backhaus 1997; Heinrich 2004; Reichelt 2001; Arthur 2002). But before we delve into the mysteries of the commodity, a quick note of explanation for the shift in theoretical frameworks from the 'immanent' philosophies of Deleuze and Guattari (2004a; 2004b) and the autonomists conception of constant struggle at the heart of capital (Clever 200), to the more or less 'dialectical' 'value-form' approach. Given that the autonomist tradition has a lot to say about 'value' (De Angelis forthcoming; Cleaver 2002; Negri 1991; Harvie 2005): why look at the value form through this particular lens?

The reason to deviate from the autonomist framework employed above is that the story I aim to tell below is supposed to *do* something different than most autonomist stories

about value. The latter seek to emphasise struggle at the heart of the imposition of capitalist value on living labour, in order to point – as the stories about enclosure already sought to do – to the fact that, rather than progressing smoothly and ‘economically’, capitalist social relations are in fact based on constant violence, and are constantly resisted (Cleaver 2002; De Angelis forthcoming). While politically salutary when set against the always-already captured Marxism of the Communist parties, as well as against the big story of the 1990s of a near-total absence of resistance to the forward march of capital, it may be argued that the autonomist positing of excess, refusal and resistance as ontologically prior has led some to indulge in what Abu-Lughod (1991) called the *romance of resistance*, a tendency to find resistance absolutely everywhere.⁴³ The effect of this romanticism of constant, everyday struggle is a simultaneously theoretical and empirical blindness to instances of cooptation, hegemonic integration, quietism – and simple defeat (Aufheben 2003; Ortner 1995; Brown 1996). Where Deleuze and Guattari ask how we come to desire our own subjection, autonomism simply posits that we never do: the problematic of hegemony is thus never effectively opened by this tradition.

This critique of autonomism is not meant to imply wholesale rejection – only to explain why in this section, which seeks to understand our complicity in, rather than constant struggle against, the conjugations effected by the axiomatic, it has to take a back-seat. This is a story of what happens *once enclosure has been effective*, after the initial wave of struggles usually triggered by enclosures and accumulation by dispossession (Walton and Seddon 1994; Caffentzis and Federici 2001) has subsided. The question to be answered here, to remind the reader, is how capital manages to constantly add new elements to its equation – and how we as agents effect this process. And since, as Graeber (2001, 76) argues, the integration of individual practices and social reproduction (in this case, of capitalist society) occurs through systems of *value*, I turn my eyes here to the tendency that has in most depth analysed these questions: value-form Marxism.

The question, once again: how can capital assemble incredibly long and complex networks of flows without a visible centre? Answer: by setting as equivalent and quantifiable qualitatively different flows. In turn, how do *we* effect this setting-as-equivalent? By buying and selling commodities: for it is only in market exchange that

⁴³ A similar critique is advanced against Hardt and Negri (2000) by Žižek (2003, 201).

the qualitative sameness of commodities is finally enacted, when we compare one to the other and trade them as qualitatively similar. It is therefore to the origins and the dynamics of the commodity that we now turn. To retrace Marx' (1971) argument: capitalist society is one where socially isolated producers produce goods and services for exchange on the market. But how can all these unique, singular products be related to each other? Answer: by virtue of being commodities.

The commodity

The commodity is the social form taken, in capitalist social relations, by human wealth, and is a unique thing that is both endowed with use value – that is, it is a concrete something that can satisfy a concrete desire – *and* exchange value. In turn, this dual nature of the commodity is the result of the double character of the labour that produces these commodities, they “possess the same, two-fold nature” (Marx 1971, 56): while on the one hand, *qualitatively different* ‘concrete’ labour produces qualitatively different use values; the eventual product is exchanged with others on the market as *qualitatively equal* (hence only quantitatively different) values – implying that the labour that produced them is also qualitatively equal. This ‘abstract labour’ that produces such abstract things – commodities – is nothing that ‘really’ exists (and can thus be measured with a clock), but a ‘real-abstraction’ that is mediated (*vermittelt*) when, in the act of exchange, we abstract from the concrete use value and labour that produced a product, and equalise the goods as values (Heinrich 2004).⁴⁴

While it is therefore in the act of exchange, on the market and through the use of money, that flows of commodities are ‘conjugated’ by the axiomatic, it is insufficient to suggest, as Deleuze and Guattari (2004a, 259) do, that it is the properties of money, or the market, that are the basis of the conjugation. Money takes the form of the ‘universal equivalent’ only *because* the majority of goods and services “are the products of the labour of private individuals or groups of individuals who carry on their work independently of each other” (Marx 1971; 87),⁴⁵ and who are separated from access to the means of subsistence through processes of enclosure – and therefore *have* to be exchanged on a market. For this generalised exchange to function a relatively stable system of market exchange is needed to guard against arbitrage opportunities – and in

⁴⁴ Arthur (2002, 96), on the other hand, is adamant that exchange both serves as the expression, and is constitutive, of value.

⁴⁵ But see Holland (1999, 65-6), who suggests that for Deleuze and Guattari, money as the “universal equivalent” arises from a tributary relationship to the despot.

turn, value needs to be expressed in stable money as the general equivalent (Heinrich 2004).

The market, in turn, is again necessary for the realisation of value, but is not determinant either: the need to exchange the majority of the social product arises only if and when the majority of producers have been separated from the means of subsistence, and have to acquire theirs on the market. It is in this situation that products acquire the value form as universal exchangeability. In turn, value does not so much adhere to each product, as it is being realised in each act of exchange as a relation between products, and the labour that produced them. The reduction of concrete labours to abstract, general human labour, occurs only in exchange, which really sets as equivalent the products of human labour: “whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it.” (Marx 1971, 88)

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This allows us to answer the question of how capital manages to organise such gigantically long network of deterritorialised, incommensurable flows, how it makes them exchangeable: through the value form. “[T]he entire *system of value* is based on a grandiose system of spontaneous social accounting and comparison of the products of labour of various types and performed by different individuals” (Rubin 1990, 120 – emphasis in the original). In other words, every time we buy and sell something, we take part in and become a part of capital’s system of social accounting. We translate all these flows into the general equivalent (money), thus constituting the reality of exchange value in comparing and equalising these products, making them part of the network of capital. Far more powerful than any institutional centre, than the despot of the state machine, or, somewhat more concretely, multilateral economic institutions or multinational corporations, the value form is the *placeless centre* whose dominance over, and ability to conjugate flows is enacted by every agent who buys and sells something on a capitalist market.⁴⁶ It is not simply ‘capital’ as a disciplinary force external to ourselves, as the autonomist interpretation seems to suggest, that is creating this ‘one world’ safe for capital, one world in its image: it is we who make that world, we who set as equivalent what is different in the pursuit of the satisfaction of our consumptive

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⁴⁶ De Angelis (forthcoming) arrives at a similar conclusion with respect to the placeless or “*parametric centre* [of capital], the value-norms emerging from the playing of market relations.” These value-norms constitute “a centre of gravity of capital’s homeostatic reproduction.” (Emphasis in the original)”

desires. While neoliberal capital and the state force us into these commodity relations through enclosure and accumulation by dispossession, force us into enacting the unifying logic of capitalist value, once the process has been relatively successful, we enact the logic ourselves.

Capitalist value and the colonisation of life

I hope to have thus concretised the mechanisms by which our microeconomic rationality becomes functional in the spontaneous system of social accounting for the reproduction of capital, and how this occurs independently of any particular beliefs, or 'codes': how we are creating the one world of capital ourselves. However, in this rendering, the power of the value form remains rather disembodied: if, as Arthur (2002, 153, 160) argues, "[c]apitalism is marked by the subjection of the material process of production and circulation to the ghostly objectivity of value", how exactly does this subjection take place? After all, in asking how the capitalist axiomatic is able to conjugate ever more extensive networks of flows, I am not only inquiring as to its ability to commodify any flow that it encounters, I am also talking about the process of 'real subsumption', "the tendency of capital to impose its logic not just over the workplace, but over all areas of life" (Dyer-Witheford 1999, 188).

But maybe Arthur is too easy a foil: his work has been extensively criticised for, amongst other reasons, focussing too little on the actual dynamics of production and the *politics* of capital (Kincaid 2005). It seems, however, that any 'value-form' analysis, or, as a more politicised branch of this form of Marxist theorising is known in Germany, *Wertkritik* (Critique of Value), suffers from this defect. In the otherwise brilliant work of Heinrich (2004), it is never made clear exactly how the power of the value-form 'trickles down' from the moment of exchange which 'mediates' capitalist value to increasingly structure all of society.

Similarly, the value critics of the German *KRISIS* group argue that the entire process of production in capitalist social relations is, if not totally subsumed to the dictates of value, irrevocably bound up with the production of capitalist value, and thus can not serve as a useful base for anticapitalist practice (Kurz and Lohoff 1998). While the explicit rejection by this tendency of what is derisively referred to as *Arbeiterbewegungsmarxismus* ('workers' movement Marxism') may sound similar to some of the positions taken by the non-workerist, autonomist sections of the

anticapitalist movement, the lack of specificity of this analysis should give us pause. For insofar as Arthur, Heinrich, and the value critics are describing *general* or structural features of 'life under capitalism', it seems impossible in this framework to analyse *changes* in the mode of capitalist accumulation, and thus to identify emergent locations of struggle against the expanding power of neoliberal capital. In fact, the very notion of capital's power as expanding would be non-sensical in this approach, since capital's power over society is already virtually total once the majority of production occurs for exchange, once the majority of producers has been divorced from the means of (re)production.⁴⁷ Below, I therefore hope to embed the insights of value-form analysts in an analysis and critique of the increasingly direct subjection of our lives to the logic of capital which is specific to neoliberalism as an extensive regime of accumulation.

What is the mechanism by which the capitalist value form imposes its dictates over, and 'subsumes' society under conditions of neoliberal accumulation by dispossession? Contra theorists like Hardt and Negri (2000), and Lazzarato (1996), who argue that with the rise of 'immaterial' (and thus immeasurable) labour to a position of centrality within capitalist circuits of accumulation, 'value' has ceased being a useful category for understanding capital's power over our lives, De Angelis (forthcoming) argues that capitalist value should be understood as a *process*. Although coming from a very different theoretical perspective than the value-form analysis developed above, his analysis is precisely the piece that we need to complete the puzzle of how capital extends its domination over our lives ever deeper.

De Angelis (forthcoming) argues that markets, those institutions in which value-form analysis suggests we enact over and over again capital's "spontaneous system of social accounting", are essentially disciplinary and normalising institutions distributing rewards and punishments, forcing individual market participants to respond in order to meet or beat the market benchmark, to the extent that they depend on these markets for their livelihoods. Viewed from within the crumbling welfare states of Western Europe, this implies that we become increasingly subject to the disciplinary pressures of the market to the extent that neoliberal accumulation by dispossession (Harvey 2003) succeeds in enclosing more and more parts of formerly "decommodifying" (Esping-Andersen 1990) welfare systems, or other forms of collective property relations

⁴⁷ See for example the critique of Heinrich's work by Reitter (2004); and the critique of the value critics in Anonymous (2002).

that allowed for a degree of independence from capitalist markets, such as health care systems, or collective land rights.

To understand how this disciplinary process works, recall that Marx and the value-form theorists argue that the value of a product in relation to another is determined by the “socially necessary labour time” (at a given level of productivity) required for its production (Marx 1971, 53), but that this ‘quantity’ of value is realised and is perceptible *only* in the moment of exchange. De Angelis (forthcoming), too, starts with the moment of exchange in the market, where one producer encounters another in comparison and thus competition. Unlike the value-form theorists, however, he does not stop there.

Once capitalist value is realised in the moment of exchange, the cumulative effect of a vast number of comparisons of products as equivalents generates as a social fact the ‘law of value’, which appears to a market participant as a benchmark to meet or beat, and thus as an external compulsion to organise the productive process in such a way that would allow her to beat her competitor (De Angelis, forthcoming). Capitalist value thus feeds back into social production as a continuous process of rationalisation and imposition of a particular form of value practice, of measure, on our life activities, whether we work in private companies, or in state companies that are increasingly subject to simulated markets so that they, too, become subject to the direct pressures of capitalist accumulation (De Angelis, forthcoming). A paper by David Harvie and De Angelis (2006) analyses the process of neoliberal rationalisation currently affecting higher education institutions, where processes of measuring and rationalisation (such as the infamous *Research Assessment Exercise*) are increasingly generating something like a ‘socially necessary labour time’ in academia, that is, a standard universally applicable to higher education institutions as to how productive the average hour of academic labour should be.

In short: the ‘spontaneous system of social accounting’ that effects value *qua* setting as equivalent qualitatively different objects, feeds back onto the activities of producers through the process of measuring and control that management constantly seeks to impose, in order that they may ‘meet or beat’ the market average set cumulatively by market actors’ behaviours. In turn, this process feeds back into the rest of (non-waged) society through attempts to mobilise the whole social body in the service of capital

accumulation that is so well analysed in the literature on the 'competition state' (Hirsch 1998; Palan 2000; Jessop 1993), and hinted at in autonomist analyses of the 'social factory' and 'real subsumption' (Hardt and Negri 2000).

To sum up this excursus into value-form theory then: neoliberal enclosure makes us increasingly dependent on capitalist markets by separating us from alternative means of reproduction, thus extending the areas of life under the domination of the capitalist value form. When interacting in capitalist markets, it is we ourselves who effect the unlimited economic quantification, the setting-as-equivalent that is unique to capitalist social relations. The social form that makes this operation possible I initially referred to as the capitalist axiomatic, and subsequently as the capitalist value form. As we reproduce the capitalist value form, then, in the pursuit of reproduction, the emergent outcome of our distributed interactions constitutes a disciplinary 'benchmark' against which we are measured and which feeds backwards into society to create the tendency towards 'real subsumption'. Crucially, though, and far from constantly *struggling* against the imposition of capitalist value in social spaces, once a space has been enclosed we ourselves become agents of the process I have investigated here: namely, capital's conjugation of ever longer flows and networks without an institutional centre. Far from that centre being the transnational summit, capital's placeless centre lies in the value form, which we reproduce every time we interact in capitalist markets – and the more neoliberal enclosures succeed in separating us from our autonomous means of subsistence, the more we will become agents in the (re)production of capital.

The habitual hegemony of capital

Thus we have arrived at an understanding of how we come to reproduce capital – but that still leaves our second question unanswered: namely how we learn to stop worrying and love capital in the process of reproducing it? Or in more analytical terms, how the frequently forceful integration (*qua* enclosure) into capitalist circuits of commodity production and consumption "interpellates" (Althusser 1971) us as 'obviously' liberal, acquisitive individuals. How capital becomes hegemonic. After all, radical political practice cannot remain content with an analysis that does not take seriously the *beliefs* of individual bodies, as it is these bodies and their subjectivities that we encounter in our day-to-day political practice.

But before I launch into this discussion, a quick point of clarification: why hegemony? In the more autonomous sections of Europe's contemporary anticapitalist movement, neither the theory nor practice of 'hegemony' are particularly popular these days. They seem to conflict with cherished notions of horizontality, networked political practice, and smack of a desire to (re)elevate a particular class or class fraction (or a party representing the revolutionary desires of that class) from a privileged role from which it had been banished since the end of the 1960s.⁴⁸ Autonomist Marxism saw itself as decidedly post-Gramscian (Wright 2002), and Deleuze and Guattari's (2004b, 117) commitment to a "minoritarian" politics that never seeks "to acquire the majority" suggests a strong opposition to a politics of 'counterhegemony'. And in spite of similarities between the Zapatistas' 'One no, many Yeses' and Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) conception of counterhegemonic politics as the construction of 'chains of equivalence', the latter's attachment to a Gramscian concept and practice of hegemony seems to have placed them far outside the bounds of political discourse in contemporary libertarian anticapitalism (cf. Day 2005).

So why persist in using the term then? The trick is to understand hegemony neither as a specific concept, for example, 'hegemony denotes a power relation in which consent outweighs coercion'; nor a specific political practice, as in this or that party or class must acquire a position of ethico-political leadership vis-à-vis subaltern social forces. I follow Crehan's (2002, 101-4) suggestion that the greatest populariser of 'hegemony', Antonio Gramsci, never used a fixed definition of the term, viewing it rather as an open *problematic*. Which is where we return to Deleuze and Guattari, who would formulate Gramsci's problematic as 'how do people come to desire their own subjection (to capital)?' *Hegemony* in this reading denotes the perennial problematic of anticapitalism, of those who struggle against a social relation that, as we have seen, exercises its power through means much more subtle than other social formations or 'coded' assemblages: starting from the basic anticapitalist animus that the capital relation is indeed a relation, in Weber's (1964, 151-67) terms, of *Herrschaft*, of domination, it asks how it seems to retain and constantly reproduce its legitimacy. Therefore, any analysis of capital's hegemony is always shooting at a moving target, rather than having to fix forever a stable definition of the term - for capital is nothing if not protean in its workings. This is even more so the case since 'hegemony' can never

⁴⁸ But see Nunes (2005) and Mueller (2003) for critiques of the fetishisation of horizontality and openness in contemporary libertarian anticapitalism.

denote a state of affairs, but only a process: something tends towards, or strives for hegemony – it is hegemonising, never hegemonic (Laclau and Mouffe 2001).

With these caveats in mind, the basic thesis I want to defend in this section is the following: neoliberal capital, as argued above, tends towards imposing its power on the flows of our lives by ‘value-forming’ them, either through direct commodification and enclosure, or through the imposition on a variety of social flows of a logic deriving from the imperatives of ‘meeting or beating’ the market benchmark, that is, the imposition of the logic of capitalist value. Through this process, it tends towards becoming a hegemonic social force, ‘interpellating’ us as rational, benefit-maximising individuals. I will argue below that the interpellation into such circuits, coupled with the increasing disappearance of social spaces in which we practice alternative value logics, has specific ideological effects that arise from our *habitation* to the logic of capital: by enacting its logic over and over again in our everyday lives, we not only create a world in the image of capital – we create ourselves in its image.

Neoliberal capital comes to define the effective ‘limits of the possible’ for us, insofar as we become increasingly dependent on markets for the reproduction of our livelihoods, and are decreasingly accustomed to social interaction following rules other than the market. Thus we become less and less able to imagine ourselves being something other than what or who we are in our everyday lives if these lives increasingly take on market-form. This form of hegemony-through-habitation, I will argue, is a tendency relatively distinct from the production of hegemony under conditions of Fordist accumulation, which tended to produce pliant subjectivities in the coded institutions that Althusser (1971) analysed as ‘ideological state apparatuses’ – which have themselves become the subject of enclosure in the current neoliberal offensive.

This thesis is of course rather general, and a number of objections immediately spring to mind. In the discussion below I will seek to elaborate my thesis through engaging with some of these objections, arriving, hopefully, at a conception of capital’s hegemonising power that not only explains some of the difficulties of contemporary anticapitalism, but also allows us to think and work towards another kind of political practice, one more constructive than spectacular summit protest. A politics that, invoking the notion, originating in feminist and anarchist movements, of ‘prefigurative politics’, seeks to create, at least in germinal form, “the future in the present” (James

1977) by creating spaces in which “alternative value practices” (Graeber 2001; De Angelis forthcoming) are possible. Other values, other worlds.

1st objection

The first objection to my thesis arises not so much from gripes with its substantive proposition, but from a somewhat incredulous: who cares? Given that one of the crucial points made above about the uniqueness of the power of capital has been that capital can weave its dark magic *irrespective* of our beliefs and ideas, why would we need to ask ourselves whether and how it tends towards hegemonising social space? For the answer I suggested above, that political practice necessarily needs to concern itself with beliefs and ideas, since these are stuff of politics, then becomes inconsequential: if capital reproduces itself *without* necessary recourse to political beliefs and ideas (other than ‘private moralities’ or personal ‘fetishes’), then a politics that seeks to impact these beliefs would necessarily remain inconsequential.

But recall that capital appears as this apolitical ‘relation between things’ only in the moment of exchange, in the market, in this

“very Eden of the innate rights of man. There alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, say of labour-power, are constrained only by their own free will. [...] Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each disposes only of what is his own. And Bentham, because each looks only to himself.” (Marx 1971, 189-90)

But the story doesn’t stop in this sphere of freedom, equality, property and Bentham. As we descend into the “hidden abode of production”, we recognise the whip of the foreman, the punching clock, and the Taylorist appropriators of workers’ knowledge. With Marx (1971, 741-69), Polanyi (1957, 33-37), and more recent analysts of enclosure, or ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (De Angelis forthcoming; Harvey 2003; Federici 2004) we recognise that capital is dependent on the political (*qua* violence and state power) enforcement of markets not only in its infancy, as the term ‘primitive accumulation’ might have suggested to Marxists of an earlier generation, but constantly, and more so in its current, neoliberal regime of accumulation. With Gramsci and other analysts of Fordism we understand that in order to reproduce itself, capital relies on the production of subjectivities willing to submit to its rule (Gramsci 1971, 277-318; Rupert 1995) – and with the Italian autonomists we realise how brittle capital’s ‘non-political’ power really is when it fails to reproduce those kinds of pliant

subjectivities (Hardt 1996, 2). Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of the continued (if, according to them, necessarily somewhat "archaic") relevance of 'codes' in the organisation and reproduction of the capitalist axiomatic, as well as the German theorists of the welfare state's role in capitalism and its subsequent financial, legitimisation, and motivational crises, remind us that capital can never reproduce itself without recourse to the state (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 279; Habermas 1973; Narr and Offe 1975; O'Connor 1973). Finally, the dependence of capital for its reproduction on the state is the whole story told by (French) structuralist Marxism (Althusser 1971; Poulantzas 1978; Boyer 1984; Aglietta 1987).

Thus, while the extension of the power of capital, of 'market-formed' relations, may initially appear as a widening of the sphere of freedom and all the good stuff, we very quickly realise that it is at the same time the political expansion of a social relation of authority and domination. And from Max Weber (1964, 146, 151) we know that every social relation of authority (*Herrschaft*) is in need of *legitimation*, that is, authority only acquires a stable character if and when the subordinates *subjectively* view this relationship as binding for themselves. This point is strengthened when we include into our analysis the insights of anthropologists who remind us that, at least in the medium- to longer-run, people can only function if they are able to make sense of their daily practices in the context of larger frames of meaning: any action, argues Graeber (2001, 30), "only becomes meaningful [...] by being integrated into some larger system of action." Thus, even if the axiomatic of capitalist value can function and be reproduced without meaning, it cannot be but people who reproduce it (Callinicos 2005, 54-6; Holloway 1995). And people, even while wearing the character masks of capital, cannot function without meaning. Thus, the inquiry into the problematic of hegemony remains politically relevant.

2nd objection

A second objection would inquire as to whether the argument that neoliberal capital generates its hegemonising tendencies from within itself, through increasingly 'value-forming' social relations, does not represent a falling back behind the insights of Gramsci (1971), Althusser (1971) and Foucault (1995), who point to the role of the 'extended state', or civil society; of 'ideological state apparatuses'; and of disciplinary dispositifs in creating pliant subjectivities functional for capital accumulation. This

forces me to specify my contention, adapting it to the changing dynamics of capital accumulation and social control that obtain, first, in the Fordist regime of accumulation; and second, in its contemporary neoliberal phase.

Under conditions of Fordist accumulation, what Deleuze, following Foucault, discusses as a 'disciplinary society', a wide range of institutions played crucial roles in the production of capitalist subjectivities – or 'subjects', as Althusser refers to them, drawing on the double meaning of the term as both implying an active, constitutive liberal subject, and the 'subjected' individual (Althusser 1971, 183). In his seminal essay on 'ideological state apparatuses' (ISAs), Althusser (1971, 150-54) argues that it is these ISAs that "largely secure the reproduction [...] of the relations of production behind a 'shield' provided by the RSA [repressive state apparatus]". In Fordist capitalism, the dominant ISA according to Althusser is the "educational state apparatus", "[t]he school-family couple [having] replaced the Church-family couple" as the crucial institution reproducing pliant subjects (cf. Jensen 2004). In this disciplinary society, "[t]he individual never ceases passing from one closed environment to another, each having its own laws: first the family; then the school ('you are no longer in your family'); then the barracks ('you are no longer at school'); then the factory; from time to time the hospital; possibly the prison, the pre-eminent instance of the enclosed environment." (Deleuze 1992)

The reproduction of capitalist social relations in Fordism, in other words, relied on a set of relatively autonomous institutions, or ISAs, *not directly subjected* to the logic of capitalist value, but that would produce subjectivities that could be made functional to processes of accumulation. The Deleuze quote above highlights the often pointed-out similarity of Fordist disciplinary structures, from the school to the barracks to the prison to the factory. We are reminded that in schools, far from primarily learning particular skills or knowledges (like maths, languages, music),

"Children at school also learn the 'rules' of good behaviour, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he [sic] is 'destined' for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination. They also learn to 'speak proper French', to 'handle' the workers correctly, i.e. actually (for the future capitalists and their servants) to 'order them about' properly, i.e. (ideally) to 'speak to them' in the right way, etc." (Althusser 1971, 132)

In terms of the analysis developed above, schools are one of the many social assemblages that reintroduce necessary bits of 'code' into social life, in order to guard against the 'absolute deterritorialisation' of flows that always threatens capital as its schizo-limit, drawing boundaries around and reterritorialising the flows that capital earlier had wrested out of their coded certainties. Not too subtly I here fold the analyses of Gramsci, Althusser, Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari into one hypothesis, namely that Fordist capital relied for its reproduction, stabilisation, and 'hegemonising' of social life on 'non-economic' functions variously referred to as 'codes', 'ideology', 'civil society', 'ISAs', or disciplinary institutions.

In turn, this allows me to formulate a more specific hypothesis about modes of social control and the reproduction of pliant 'subjects' under conditions of neoliberal accumulation: neoliberalism relies on the imposition of, in Deleuze's terms, a 'society of control', organised by the axiomatic of capitalist value, which in turn generates what I will call a 'market habitus'.

As argued above, capital emerged from the organic crisis of the 1960s and 70s, which was also, in Harvey's (1989) terms, a crisis of overaccumulation, with a new accumulation strategy, one that has been variously described as the "new enclosures" (Midnight Notes 1990; De Angelis 2004b) or "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey 2003). A crucial frontline in the struggles around this strategy have since then been the institutions of the welfare state, previously functional to, but not directly organised by, the logic of capitalist commodity production: such as public transport, healthcare, and of course, education (cf. Dickhaus and Dietz 2004). At the same time as the economic pressures of accumulation pushed capital to enclose ever greater areas of social life, the welfare state's mode of regulation was itself undergoing a crisis of control, expressed at the time in various crisis tendencies unique to the welfare state: the 'fiscal crisis' of the state (O'Connor 1973); in German terms, the legitimisation or motivational crisis (Habermas 1975), which in turn expressed itself (in Italian terms) as a growing tendency towards the 'refusal of work' (Tronti 1965); or, from a more conservative perspective, the 'crisis of democracy' (Crozier et al. 1975).

This is of course a rather stylised description of the modalities of social reproduction in Fordist capitalism, and the emerging new 'society of control', but what I aim to provide here is nothing more than a synchronic analysis of emerging forms of social control

under neoliberal conditions of accumulation. Thus, the following has to be read with two caveats in mind. First, that the transition was of course not particularly smooth, but punctuated by crises and social struggles; second, that there was never any central driving force behind the emergence of this new mode of control (even if there may have been central thinkers, texts, and concepts) but that the new regime of accumulation and mode of regulation arose as the emergent and contingent outcome of a multiplicity of smaller and larger struggles over control and accumulation (Boyer 1984).

Back to school, then, that institution we (especially as academics) know so well, and that Althusser described as the central disciplinary institution of Fordist capitalism. Schools play an important role in shaping the 'characters' or roles children will come to play in their future lives: the prospective boss learns how to be a boss (at Eton, Oxbridge, and the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration*), the prospective worker learns how to be a worker, etc. In Bourdieu's (1977) terms, they are brought up into a particular *habitus*, a *savoir faire*, a knowledge, which is not merely intellectual but also subconscious and embodied, of what to do and how to be and act in a given situation, a given field (in this case, capitalist markets): a "sense of the game" not unlike that of a champion football player, who responds to a changing situation on the pitch *not* via conscious deliberation, but through a seemingly instinctive, but in fact historically and habitually constituted knowledge of what to do (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 120-1).

However, as schools and universities are increasingly privatised, there emerges a contradiction in the educational system, as a result of which, schools are no longer as effective in instilling the pliant class habitus they were supposed to, in ensuring, in Deleuze and Guattari's (2004a, 267) words, the rule of slave over slave. That is because the increasing 'market-forming' of disciplinary institutions such as schools and universities introduces into their day-to-day running a 'logic of practice' that is contrary to the disciplining role they have been fulfilling so far: as capitals force their way into schools and universities in the new enclosure movement, they bring with them the rationality of capital, which for the student expresses itself necessarily as the logic of the consumer, always comparing, setting as equivalent qualitatively different objects, and invariably hunting for the maximisation of benefits (cf. Harvie 2006).

In other words, whereas Fordism relied on schools and other state apparatuses to reintroduce codes to reterritorialise the flows released in their encounter with the capitalist axiomatic, now the axiomatic is extending its reach, destroying even these codes that had previously provided relative stability to the accumulation processes:

The factory constituted individuals as a single body [...] but the corporation constantly presents the brashest rivalry as a healthy form of emulation, an excellent motivational force that opposes individuals against one another and runs through each, dividing each within. The modulating principle of "salary according to merit" has not failed to tempt national education itself. Indeed, just as the corporation replaces the factory, *perpetual training* tends to replace the *school*, and continuous control to replace the examination. Which is the surest way of delivering the school over to the corporation. (Deleuze 1992)

In short, neoliberalism's new enclosures, pushed through by the competition state, force capital's axiomatic ever deeper into all areas of social life, and thus we are forced to enact, more and more, the rationality of capital. How many academics have not in recent years encountered ever growing numbers of students who, rather than understanding (which was maybe at any rate a bourgeois delusion) their time at university as a time of growth, self-production, and some serious slacking, confront their teachers with demands for more value for their money? These students are not ideologically blinded: they are simply acting out the rationality of the consumer, a rationality that "is always already a rationality bound within the frameworks of commodity production." (Heinrich 2004)

This is the crux of my argument about the hegemony of neoliberal capital arising out of the marketisation of the social relations of our everyday lives: even if the axiomatic of capitalist value functions, in the short term, irrespective of agents' actual intentions and beliefs, over the medium and longer run subjects that are interpellated into market relations will come to believe the gospel of the commodity, come to be unable to resist its ideological siren call *to the extent* that there remain fewer and fewer social spaces constituted by flows not directly conjugated by the axiomatic. Ideology, writes Althusser (1971, 168), has a material existence in apparatuses that reproduce material practices and rituals which in turn generate ideological effects. He paraphrases here the advice given long ago to unbelievers by Blaise Pascal, suggesting that belief can be *generated* by kneeling down, moving ones lips in prayer, and thus we come to believe. Or, applied to the market: buy, sell, and you will believe that you are nothing but a solitary, rational, benefit-maximising individual. The argument is completed by

recalling that neoliberal accumulation, unlike Fordist accumulation, is *extensive* in nature, that is, surplus production occurs to a much greater extent than under Fordism through the enclosure of social spaces, through accumulation by dispossession. The rapid extension of this market habitus is therefore a feature, if not unique in the history of capital, then at least substantially different from the organisation of social reproduction under Fordism.

We return here to De Angelis' notion of the market as a disciplinary institution dispensing rewards and punishments, rewarding 'properly' maximising, market-rational behaviour, sanctioning behaviours guided by other rationalities, thus interpellating us as the individuals of liberal mythology. As a highly expansive social field constituted by a unique set of practices, rituals, and rationality, the market comes to constitute its own *savoir-faire* (know-how), its own know-how-to-compare, know-how-to-buy, know-how-to-sell, which we constantly enact and to which we therefore become habituated. Hence 'market habitus'. The process of accumulation by dispossession that is characteristic of neoliberal capital, means that capital effectively comes to set the limits of the possible in social fields and interactions conjugated by the axiomatic. Thus, to the extent that social spaces governed by different logics are disappearing under the onslaught of neoliberal capital, and to the extent that we become ever more dependant on capitalist markets for the reproduction of our livelihoods, we more and more become 'capitalist' subjects, are interpellated into market relations. Our *consent* to capitalist social relations is thus generated by the extension of the capitalist value form into our everyday lives insofar as we become less and able to conceptualise other ways of being and relating to each other, since we more and more are and relate to each in and through social fields structured by market logic.

3rd objection

Admittedly, this thesis could easily be taken for simple behaviourism, reading people's beliefs and intentions off their visible actions. Scott (1990, 1) counters such 'thin' versions of what he calls the 'dominant ideology hypothesis' by citing an Ethiopian proverb: "When the great lord passes the wise peasant bows deeply and silently farts." In his study of hidden forms of resistance in societies characterised by the encounter between capitalist and pre-capitalist social forms, Scott (1990; 1985) argues that the subaltern develop what he calls 'hidden transcripts of resistance', suggesting that visible compliance with dominant social codes says little or nothing about people's

actual beliefs, which are frequently articulated in 'off-stage' discourses and practices of resistance.

However, rather than undermining the thesis developed above, Scott's observations actually strengthen it, focussing our attention precisely on the 'off-stage' (that is, hidden from the eyes of the powerful) spaces where such transcripts are articulated. Scott's research was conducted in societies far from what here has been referred to as 'real subsumption', that is: there continued to exist in the Malaysian peasant communities studied by Scott a vast array of social spaces structured by logics other than the one(s) dominant social forces sought to impose. The meaning of the silent fart is constructed in those spaces. That is to say that the very possibility of resistance to dominant codes – or, in our case, the capitalist axiomatic – is contingent on the existence of social spaces not (yet) subject to the dictates of capitalist value. Neoliberalism tends towards becoming hegemonic by compelling our active consent to, and participation in, the further colonisation of our lives by the capitalist value form by increasingly closing off social spaces where we can act according to other logics, thus enforcing effective limits of the possible that in turn tend to constituting the limits of the imagination. What good, then, to give 'all power to the imagination' as the Situationist slogan demanded in 1968, if the imagination is already in the hands of capital?

(iii) Conclusion: alternative value practices and counterhegemony

I hope to have thus provided satisfactory answers to the two questions raised at the outset of the chapter. First, I have argued that capital's ability to organise networks of such awesome length and complexity results from its having a 'placeless centre' in the value form. This centre we reproduce every time we effect the 'spontaneous system of social accounting' through exchange in capitalist markets. In turn, I showed how the cumulative effect of this multiplicity of distributed decisions is to constitute a market 'benchmark', which then feeds back into ever wider areas of society as rationalisation pressures to 'meet or beat' the benchmark. Second, this imposition of the market's *savoir-faire* on social life in turn 'interpellates' us as rational, benefit-maximising individuals. And to the extent that our lives are dependent on this market for their reproduction, as they increasingly are under neoliberal extensive accumulation, and to

the extent that spaces *not* dominated by this rationality are disappearing, we ever more *become* these liberal individuals through the inescapable habituation to the market's 'logic of practice'. The capitalist value form thus establishes its hegemony by setting for us very real limits of the possible, making it increasingly difficult to imagine 'alternatives', to really believe that 'other worlds are possible'.

But all that appears a little too gloomy. Individuals inescapably interpellated into market relations, unable, over the longer run, to resist the specific ideological effects of this interpellation. Capitalist social relations that we reproduce, wittingly or unwittingly, every time we go to the market to reproduce our livelihoods. A value form that constantly adds new elements to its chain, digging ever deeper into the recesses of our lives, obliterating the 'off-stage' spaces where we maybe used to sit together, scribbling down our 'hidden transcripts'. If things really did look this bleak, there would indeed be *no alternative* to the politically and morally gruelling perspective of hoping to "push through Empire [or neoliberalism, or post-fordism, or late capitalism] to come out the other side", as Hardt and Negri (2000, 206, 218) suggest we need to do, with all the unsavoury social and ecological consequences that such really existing real subsumption would have.

Luckily, things do not actually have to look as bleak, if we only know where to look for sources of optimism, for sources and bases of a life other-than-capital, for an 'outside to capital'. Contra those who argue that any 'outside' to capital has already been subsumed; and contra those who argue that resistance always begins with 'negation',⁴⁹ there is a tradition of Deleuzoguattarian/autonomist thought that affirms that life, in all its complexity, multiplicity, and *potentia*: constitutive, generative power constantly creates practices and ways of being that are 'other than capital', which capital then seeks to conjugate to its axiomatic, or failing that, the state seeks to crush (De Angelis 2005; Deleuze 1995, 114, 173-6; McMurtry 2002; Jensen 2000). We constantly (re)produce social relations that are governed by logics other than that of capital, that are, relative to the measuring practices of capitalist value, *alternative value practices* (De Angelis forthcoming). Above, I discussed the logic of capitalist value as one that creates a peculiar hierarchical articulation between singularity and sameness, one in which difference continues to exist but always subordinate to the abstract equivalence

⁴⁹ Thus Holloway (2002, 1-10) opens his influential book by locating resistance not in an affirmation, but in the 'scream' of 'No', of negation.

of exchange value: hence, as a unifying logic that tends towards creating one world in the image of capital. Against this expansive, unifying logic of capitalist value, I propose here a 'thin' definition of 'alternative value practices', one that does not make any claims as to the content of these practices,⁵⁰ as those value practices respectful of difference, whose mere presence does not tend towards the subordinate articulation or destruction of other value practices.

This of course implies a shift in my use of the term 'value', one already hinted at above when I suggested, following Graeber (2001) that 'value' should be understood as a social logic integrating individual action and social reproduction. On this reading, 'value' is an anthropological category applicable to *all* social relations, rather than a category specific to capitalist social relations (cf. also McMurtry 2002; Nancy 2005; De Angelis forthcoming), where "the value of an object, or a person, is the meaning they take on by being assigned a place in some larger system of categories." (Graeber 2001, 41) People, argues Graeber (2001, 76, fn 28 p. 270), do not, as a rule, consciously reproduce society, rather, they pursue *values*. Society thus becomes "the total process through which all this activity is coordinated", "a process that [...] tends to have emergent properties not entirely comprehensible to the actors involved." In this process, 'value' is the way that actors make meaningful their own social activity, it is the link between the individual subjectivity (individual production) and social reproduction: a social value system will tend to reward practices contributing to social reproduction, and punish those that adversely affect reproduction (Graeber 2001, 75-6; De Angelis forthcoming).

This implies that different value practices will reproduce different societies, where value practices are understood to be "those actions and processes as well as correspondent webs of relations that are both predicated on a given value system, and in turn (re)produce it." (De Angelis forthcoming) Which in turn suggests that "[t]he ultimate stakes of politics [...] is not even the struggle to appropriate value; it is the struggle to establish what value *is*. Similarly, the ultimate freedom is not the freedom to create or accumulate value, but the freedom to decide (collectively or individually) what it is that makes life worth living." (Graeber 2001, 88; The Free Association 2006)

⁵⁰ It is here I break to some extent with De Angelis' (forthcoming) use of the term 'commons' to denote alternative value practices, insofar as the term 'commons' is a politically and historically loaded one, necessarily carrying with it 'thick', normative echoes of free association and equal access.

The politics of neoliberal capital, then, are a politics that tend to impose a particular value system on all forms of social practice. *Outside* of the value practices of capital, however, there exist a multiplicity of value systems and practices (Graeber 2001, 56), as the historically constituted (common sense) and/or constantly emergent (*potentia*) result of a multiplicity of human practices. These alternative value practices therefore constitute limits to capital, which it must subsume or articulate in its hegemonising drive.

Viewed from another perspective, they can be loci of transformative, and potentially counterhegemonic practices.⁵¹ They remind us that capitalist market relations are not facts of life, but historically contingent and specific practices that can be contested and maybe even overturned, one (particularly powerful and expansive) value practice in conflict with others. The politics that emerge from this perspective would therefore aim to establish what De Angelis (forthcoming), reformulating Bey's (1996) concept of the 'Temporary Autonomous Zone' (TAZ) calls 'temporary space-time commons', that is, social spaces where, at least temporarily, value practices other than those of capital are the rule. We need to constitute these spaces as outsides to capital so that we can step into them in order to view capital from the outside, view it as contingent. But these spaces of alternative value practices are not only other-than-capital, not only an outside to something, they are productive, constitutive, ideally, of new social relations, they can be spaces of experimentation and constitutive power. *To the extent* that we can use autonomous spaces to break our collective dependence on capitalist markets for the reproduction of our livelihoods, and *to the extent* that they allow us to practice and imagine a life other-than-capital, alternative value practices existing in autonomous spaces are capable of breaking the specific ideological effects of our interpellation into capitalist market relations described above. Therein lies their counterhegemonic potential.

This is of course not a new proposal: to create autonomous spaces has been the strategy of the much of the European autonomous, libertarian left for at least a few decades. There is nothing in here that would explain, answering Harvey's (1989, 238-9) challenge, how such spaces could resist their re-articulation into the capitalist axiomatic, resist succumbing to capital's control of *spaces* above and against our *places*. "Unless the different value practices posited by these movements are able to weave

⁵¹ A summary of discussions surrounding this life-other-than-capital can be found in Caffentzis (2002).

themselves into self-sustaining social feedback processes that are alternative to the parametric centre of capital's value mechanism and correspondent mode of relations, these struggles risk to be either repressed or assimilated into capitalist evolving forms." (De Angelis forthcoming) In their own idiosyncratic terms, Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of different modes of social production similarly expresses this traditional, left-libertarian dream. Recall that for them, the crucial question that must be answered to understand a given social formation is: what is the "form of organization for flows of matter and energy" (Holland 1999, 64), or what I call their 'mode of territorialisation'? Feudal societies, they argue, function on the basis of *codes*, where *one centre* (the "body of the despot") both organises and appears as the cause of all "flows of matter and energy". Capital, however, *conjugates* flows through the axiomatic acting as its *placeless centre*, which, being enacted by all of us every time we buy and sell something, is ubiquitous and thus all the more powerful. Finally, however, they imagine another mode of territorialisation, one which they call "connection". Whereas the 'conjugation' effected by the axiomatic is less restrictive than the codes of feudal society, it nonetheless "indicates their [flows'] relative stoppage, like a point of accumulation that plugs or seals the lines of flight". "Connection", on the other hand, "indicates the way in which decoded and deterritorialized flows boost one another, accelerate their shared escape, and augment or stoke their quanta." (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 243). From one centre, to a placeless centre in one axiom - to a society of multiple axioms? A world into which many worlds fit?

This hope remains abstract, but at the general level, not much more can be said: yes, struggles must circulate and coagulate, navigating between the Scylla of cooptation, and the Charybdis of repression. They must develop what may be called 'Clastrian machines', "sets of mechanisms which oppose the emergence of domination", and, it may be added, prevent the articulation of these spaces to capitalist social relations (Graeber 2004b; Clastres 1977). But the question of what such machines might look like today, in the multiplicity of spaces produced within the uneven geographical development of capital (Harvey 2000a), cannot be answered by theoretical fiat, by the development of a general revolutionary programme. Spaces of what I have called here 'alternative value practices' are in principle politically *indeterminate*, much like the political spaces opened up by spectacular protests: it is not within themselves that we find the answer to whether they will be rearticulated/subsumed into capitalist circuits

of valorisation (since capital draws much of its dynamism precisely from the integration of alternative, new social practices emerging *outside* the realms of commodity production), or whether they will become part of a generalised challenge to capital. Whether they manage to avoid conjugation and achieve connection, weave themselves into self-sustaining social feedback processes: it is in the manner in which they connect with other such spaces that their potential lies.

This is where engaged intellectual inquiry can play a role: not in furnishing a guiding programme for the revolution, but by “looking at those who are creating viable alternatives, [and trying] to figure out what might be the larger implications of what they are (already) doing” (Graeber 2004a). In setting out such a research agenda against the vague and ultimately apocalyptic theses of advocates of the ‘pushing through Empire’ approach, Graeber draws on the legacy of the lifelong Socialist Marcel Mauss to chart a path between the cynicism much of the Marxist tradition displayed vis-à-vis attempts to create ‘The Future in the Present’, and the naiveté of an approach that tends to romanticise practices that appear, on first sight, as other-than-capital (Graeber 2001, 157, 163, 227). This, in short, is what the next two chapters intend to do: a reading of two concrete anti-capitalist projects that is conscious of their problems – their susceptibility to repression, and rearticulation – but that understands them in terms of their potentialities, views them through the lens of what Graeber (2001, 227) terms “a kind of pragmatic optimism”. They are investigations into practices that emerged to fill the space opened by the summit protests of a few years ago, investigations into the transformative potential of two projects that, at least in part, claim to constitute an outside to capital.

Chapter V

FAREDODGE.NOW: CAPTURE, REFUSAL, INDETERMINACY



('Hoppagubben', the planka.nu campaign's logo. Source: <http://www.planka.nu/download/f2cb2cdd61>)

(i) Introduction: from the abstract to the concrete

The analysis developed above seems to have yielded a (relatively) straightforward picture of the power of neoliberal capital, and the strategic possibilities for resistance. Through its key mechanism of 'enclosure', neoliberal capital extends its direct power ever more deeply into social spaces previously governed by alternative value logics, effecting - with the help of the 'competition state' - a simultaneous de- and reterritorialisation of flows, seeking to 'conjugate' them by the capitalist axiomatic. This, I argued in turn, was the basis of the hegemonising tendencies of neoliberalism, insofar as the disappearance of social spaces governed by alternative value logics implied our increasing 'habituation' to capitalist market transactions, to the market's *savoir-faire*, creating consent to the extension of capitalist social relations ever more deeply into our lives. The strategic conclusions drawn from this analysis were that anticapitalist practice ought to therefore concern itself with the creation, defence, and

extension (connection) of everyday social spaces governed by alternative value logics, beyond the spectacular events of the summit protests.

The following chapter is an attempt to ground this theorisation of the relationship between neoliberal capital and anticapitalist practice, between 'codes', the 'axiomatic', and 'alternative value logics' in a concrete case study. I investigate an anticapitalist campaign in Stockholm (*planka.nu*) organised around the widespread, everyday practice of faredodging on the recently privatised/enclosed subways in Stockholm, arguing that the campaign's fundamental political struggle is to politicise and articulate, or connect, this 'politically indeterminate' instance of refusal.

The argument will proceed in three steps. The first section will locate the emergence of the campaign in the ethico-political field of autonomous European anticapitalism, and in the space created by the effervescence of the summit protests. I describe the politics of the campaign, and their uneasy straddling of two antagonistic discourses: a social democratic one about 'rights'; and an autonomist story about the 'free appropriation of use value'. The second section places the campaign in its local/national context, describing the contested transition of Sweden from a society strongly based on the social democratic code of *folkhemmet* (the people's home), to one where the financial crisis of 1992 triggers the transformation of the Swedish welfare state to a neoliberal 'competition state', an agent of enclosure and privatisation. Analysing the privatisation of public transport in Stockholm, I will show that the *deterritorialisation* of social flows implicit in this example of a neoliberal 'new enclosure' is, in this case, followed by an incomplete *reterritorialisation* of these flows, as acts of faredodging multiply.

The chapter's key argument in the third section will revolve around the politics of these uncaptured flows or potential 'lines of flight'. Having demonstrated that Stockholmers faredodge not because of economic need, but rather because they do not anymore feel bound by the codes of the people's home, I will argue that the *deterritorialised* flows of faredodgers are an instance of a politically *indeterminate* alternative value practice, which the *planka.nu* campaign is trying to politicise and articulate to discourses involving political alternatives.

(ii) Planka.nu**From the barricades to the turnstiles: planka.nu and the antisummit movement**

In what follows, I will trace the emergence of planka.nu in the ‘ethico-political field’ of European autonomous anticapitalism that is the subject of this thesis; and second, show that the campaign indeed emerged from the strategic debates occurring in the space opened by the effervescence of our militant summit protests. Although the links between the summit protests and planka.nu are not direct and immediate, it is possible to trace the genealogy of planka fairly directly to the European autonomous movements and the summit protests of the late 1990s in which they became involved. Drawing on interviews conducted with activists involved in the extraparliamentary Swedish left,⁵² we can trace the many flows that would later converge to form *planka.nu*, coming together in the cauldron of European anti-capitalist summit protest of the late 1990s.

But before we arrive in Sweden, we return once more, to Italy, where the story of the Stockholm faredodging campaign begins when,

[o]ne morning in August 1974, workers in Pinerolo, just outside the Italian industrial city of Torino, were told about the decision to raise prices on the busses that took them from home to work by thirty percent. That was the final straw. The workers refused to accept the price hike and began to print their own tickets, which they then sold at the original price. [...] This form of resistance, which came to be called ‘self-reduction’ (*autoriduzione*), became the spark that made the brittle trust in the authorities and corporations go up in smoke. A whole movement of self-reduction spread over Northern Italy. [...] What began with a relatively modest increase in bus prices ended in a wave of self-management that made companies and authorities think twice before committing another such mistake. (Morris 2003)⁵³

Thus *autoriduzione* had entered the repertoire of workers’ protest in Italy, but it took many years and complicated paths for the practice to re-emerge, in altered form, in Stockholm in the early years of this decade, for not until the early 1990s was Italian autonomist thought introduced into Sweden, by activists connected to *AFA* (*Anti-Fascist Action*). At the same time as these thoughts were imported into Sweden, the Stockholm radical left was becoming increasingly connected to the budding anti-

⁵² For more detailed histories see Stahre (2004) and Peterson (2001).

⁵³ For a description of the radical everyday culture of factory workers in Northern Italy, the best reference remains Dario Fo’s farce *We can’t pay? We won’t pay!* (1978).

capitalist movement in Europe. In 1997, activists travelled from Stockholm to Amsterdam to participate in protests against an EU-summit and in 1999, some of the same people went to Cologne to participate in a mobilisation against the G8 summit there, where they first encountered the Northern Italian activists descendants of the 1970s' *Autonomia* movement.

Also in the second half of the 90s, the radical ecologist and anticapitalist *SocialEkologisk Aktion* was developing close links to the British radical scene through their contacts with the network *Earth First!*, introducing them to autonomist Marxism via the journal *Aufheben*. In turn, *Earth First!* was the driving force behind the mobilisation for a massive anti-capitalist protest on June the 18th 1999 in the financial district of London, which became known as *J18*. Together, Amsterdam 1997, the Cologne G8 summit in 1999, and J18 constitute some of the defining moments of the European wing of the movement that would have its coming-out party in Seattle. The connections made during these mobilisations and events were further strengthened during the protests against an IMF-World Bank summit in Prague in September 2000.

It was in the context of this combined ferment of theoretical discovery and practical anti-capitalist activity that *Stockholms Autonoma Marxister* was formed, a reading group that began to systematically translate and apply radical Italian thought and practice to the Swedish situation. Its beginnings coincided with an intensification of connections and flows of thought and practice throughout Europe and beyond that can only be explained by the wave of militant summit protests in the late 1990s. From here, it is only a short step to the establishment of *planka.nu*. Rasmus Fleischer, one of the campaign's key initiators, joined the autonomist reading group in search of new ideas and practices. Through the many texts this group tackled between autumn 2000 and summer 2001, he became aware of the practice of *autoriduzione*.

In June 2001, the Swedish radical left was shaken by the traumatic events of Gothenburg, where 3 activists were shot with live ammunition, and many languished in jail afterwards. In this context, Rasmus tells us, there was a strong desire "to do something constructive. So many people sat in jail, and a lot of activity was focussed only on *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* [dealing with the past]". It was thus on a post-Gothenburg holiday in Hungary, when Rasmus and a friend were faredodging on the tram in Budapest, discussing Autonomism and *autoriduzione*, that the idea for

planka.nu was born. Rasmus describes the campaign as “an attempt to move on, to not just gather for demonstrations, but to do something about how we live and do in the everyday”.

En/Insuring free movement: as right, and as fact

Thus, in the autumn of 2001, just at the end of ‘the time when we were winning’, a campaign was started in Stockholm that, on the face of it, seemed somewhat atypical for a left-libertarian project: an insurance fund for people caught faredodging on the city’s fully privatised subways. Subscribers to the fund (*p-kassan*) pay a monthly premium of 150 Swedish crowns (SEK.) – roughly £11 – substantially less than the cost of a monthly subway pass, standing at 600 SEK. If caught faredodging and thus fined 800 SEK, a member of *p-kassan* is asked to pay 100 SEK excess, while the fund covers the remaining 700 SEK.⁵⁴ The idea was to facilitate faredodging for those not able or willing to play the games many young people play with controllers to avoid being caught.

But planka.nu is only partly an insurance fund: although *p-kassan* may be said to be the core around which the campaign is organised, managing the fund actually takes up only a fairly small amount of the time that the activists invest into the project. A lot of energy is invested in devising publicity campaigns, organising seminars about public transport, writing newspaper articles or letters to the editor, designing and handing out flyers or putting up posters. While the fund is crucial for the existence and the functioning of the campaign, which almost certainly would not have generated as much attention without the cheeky idea of insuring near-criminal behaviour, the majority of its political impact is the result of the activists’ constant interventions in political discussions around transport and privatisation, to counter publicity campaigns launched by *SL* or *Connex* (the companies, one public, one private, in charge of the subway system in Stockholm), or to simply extol the virtues of faredodging. Another occasional activity organised by the group has been ‘mass-faredodges’, where groups of people from 20-100, mostly drawn from the autonomous subculture, gather to stage a media-friendly publicity stunt where they jump the turnstiles *en masse*. And while, as Anna, one of the members of the group, points out, their activities have been

⁵⁴ Numbers from 12/2005.

mostly local and practical, they have also tried to spread awareness of their project in fora such as the 2004 *European Social Forum* (ESF) in London, on websites, and email discussion lists.

Beyond attending to the campaign's 'core business', of agitating for and insuring free movement in Stockholm, planka.nu's character as an insurance fund has propelled it to a rather unique position in Stockholm's autonomous subculture. As the fund ironically began to run up profits, its members realised that they were suddenly in a position to fund other projects in the scene. Spending only some of the profit on their own propaganda, they cooperated with the migrant support group *Ingen Människa är Illegal* (No One is Illegal) to pay for monthly subway passes for paperless migrants who could not legally afford to get caught faredodging; with the autonomist publishing group Roh-Nin to finance the publication of a book on filesharing (Piratbyrån 2005); and a variety of other radical projects in and around Stockholm.

While the group's activities are thus relatively easily described, their politics are somewhat harder to sum up. At the surface level, the campaign opposes the privatisation of public transport, supporting a fully tax-financed public transport free at the point of consumption, "owned by all and run by those that work there." (Planka.nu undated) The politico-economic rationale is this: since the local economy depends on workers and consumers using public transport, increasing faredodging will not lead to infinitely higher prices, but will force the local government to increasingly finance public transport out of taxes, thus ultimately reversing the recent privatisation. On its website, planka.nu supplies detailed materials and calculations as to the feasibility of such a fully tax-finance system, within which, according to their figures, only those who earn more than SEK 40,000 (ca. GBP 2,900) per month would lose out (Quistbergh 1997).

Along similar, fairly traditional social-democratic lines, planka frequently argues that the need for free public transport arises out of the socio-spatial segregation of Stockholm,⁵⁵ where poorer people tend to live in relatively far-off suburbs, tend not to have access to cars and are therefore reliant on public transport to get to work: freedom of movement is here implicitly described as a right that derives from ones position in

⁵⁵ Privatisation of public transport, as a recent study argues, does indeed contribute to "socio-spatial polarisation" (Dickhaus and Dietz 2004, 40).

the productive machine that is Stockholm. A recent campaign involves showing images of board members of *SL* and *Connex*, demonstrating how much less than an 'average Stockholmer' they would pay as a percentage of their salary if they were to buy a monthly pass. Thus, on this reading, the planka-campaign seeks to achieve fully tax-financed public transport, using faredodging as a tool to push profits towards zero in a sector characterised by low profit margins.⁵⁶

As various informants agreed, planka.nu has been one of the most successful projects on the Swedish radical left in the past few years. Since its inception in Stockholm, nearly or totally identical sister projects have emerged in Gothenburg, Östgötaland (Sweden), and Helsinki. Beyond Scandinavia, interest has been generated in Berlin, Hamburg, and London. Finally, their workshop at the 2004 ESF generated substantial amounts of interest from alterglobalists around Europe. Can this excitement really have been generated by a call for more state financing of public transport? Hardly, for as much as there exists a recognition among the anti-statist radical left that the institutions of the welfare state, while functional for capital accumulation during the Fordist era, could be written off as mere instruments of cooptation only from a highly privileged speaking position, there remains substantial suspicion towards an "appellative politics" that refers primarily to the state as granter and guarantor of rights (Stuetzle and van Dyk 2004, 2-3). Rasmus thus explains why he got involved in the project: "I'm not too interested in talking about tax-financed public transport. Public transport actually *is* free for us, we just want to make it easier [to faredodge]. We want to make the subway [a public place like] the street."

Which is where a tension in the politics of *planka.nu* becomes visible: between a more 'statist', appellative social democratic practice, and one that seeks to facilitate and politically articulate individual and collective acts of "appropriation from below" by people who take what they need without referring back to the state, in order to satisfy their needs and desires (Brand 2005, 210). Alongside the social democratic alterglobalism of *Attac* et al., an alternative strategic discourse focussing precisely on such instances of the "free appropriation of use value" to counter the contemporary "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey 2003), or "appropriation from above" (Brand 2005, 210) of the global neoliberal offensive has been developing in the more

⁵⁶ Interview with Peter Åsberg, *Connex*' manager for one of Stockholm's subway lines, 01/08/05, and Dickhaus and Dietz (2004, 41). During my research, I was unable to get *Connex* to send me their annual reports to further substantiate this point, in spite of repeated requests to do so.

autonomist current of the movement. Taking as its starting point “the multiple, everyday forms of refusal and appropriation” such as faredodging, shoplifting or files sharing, that people everywhere engage in, this emerging strategy attempts to translate these individual “subversive-rebellious” acts of appropriation into “socio-politically relevant processes” of what Hauer (2004, 19-22) calls “collective-communistic” appropriation (Brand 2005, 211; Stuetzle and van Dyk 2004, 10-13). In the context of the debate about the value form and commodification developed above, the goal of politicising these everyday acts of free appropriation is to not only interrupt the closure of the cycle of capital valorisation, but also to politicise issues of property relations and contemporary ‘accumulation by dispossession’, extend the limits of the possible set by the encroachment of the capitalist value form into ever more areas of life, and embed these practices in wider critical discourses pointing to alternative forms of production and circulation (Stuetzle and van Dyk 2004, 13-16).

Following this line of politics, Alex from planka.nu suggests that one of the goals of the campaign has been to “put a name and political angle to something that has always been going on. A way to scare politicians and intellectuals by organising isolated individual, often microeconomic protest into something bigger – with social change as its goal.” And given that one of the crucial elements of this “free appropriation” strategy has been to go beyond the ghetto of radical left ‘activism’ by focussing on practices that exist far beyond this scene, Anna argues that “faredodging is no subcultural phenomenon, we don’t just want punks and kids with Palestine-scarves to wear planka-buttons on their jackets.”

(iii) Sweden: the crumbling of the people’s home

Thus, two souls are lodg’d within the breast of planka.nu, two seemingly incommensurable readings of the campaign are possible. And neither of the two readings is wrong: *planka.nu* is a project that is located in the particularly Social Democratic “moral economy” of Stockholm, and Sweden (Thompson 1971, 78-9), and from that position opposes the privatisation of public transport as a public good. But it is also a campaign that, inspired by the ideological ferment of autonomist thought in Europe, tries to relate radical left practice to everyday processes of free and spontaneous appropriation of use value (Stuetzle and van Dyk 2004; Brand 2005, 110-

1). In other words, it is a project that arises at the intersection of two sets of flows, one relatively local/national, one relatively transnational – as much as the politico-economic situation around them is configured by the path-dependency of local social structures, and their encounter with the flows of transnational capital (cf. Palan, Abbot and Evans 1999).

These transnational processes, from the emergence of the ‘movement of movements’ and a particular European autonomous anticapitalism; to the neoliberal offensive and its frontline strategy of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ have been discussed at some length above. And given that, “although most opponents of globalization around the world share some basic strategic, organizational, and ideational features, [...] the axis around which political struggles crystallize varies across countries” (Ancelovici 2002, 119), below I outline the hegemonic ‘moral economy’ or class compromise of the Swedish ‘people’s home’; demonstrate how it began to crumble under the pressure of the neoliberal offensive, which turned the Swedish state into a privatising competition state selling off public assets, for example the public transport system; and how the result of the resulting non-fulfilment of obligations under the terms of the people’s home was an increase in what I call ‘defections’ from this class compromise, which will return us to the question of faredodging.

Faredodging in the people’s home

Two souls then. When dressed in the garb of the good social democratic Swede, plankas relationship to faredodging is ultimately somewhat ambivalent: faredodging is seen merely as a tool that is used as a temporary solution to acute economic problems, as well as a form of political protest, and the ‘we won’t pay’ borrowed from the Italian *autoriduzione* campaigns is augmented by a mollifying ‘but we want to pay’ (through taxes). From the perspective of the hegemonic moral economy of Swedish social democracy (Svallfors 1994), plankanu’s arguments have a lot going for them: since the beginning of the marketisation at the end of 1980s and subsequent privatisation of public transport in Stockholm at the end of the 1990s, nominal prices have risen by 300%, while service is not seen to have improved (Malm 2005, 17). *Connex*, the company now in nearly full control of the subway system in Stockholm, has generated very negative press, and has a bad reputation both as an employer and a

service provider (Caesar 2003). Also, their argument that the social segregation of Stockholm exacerbates the impacts of rising prices – since poor people living in the suburbs depend more on public transport than the rich people in the centre – tends to fall on fertile ground (Chahboun 2004, 20). All of this, then, can easily be accommodated in this moral economy: in fact, the insurance fund's name, *p-kassan*, is a direct reference to the widely accepted, solidaristic model of the Swedish unemployment insurance, *a-kassan* (Chahboun 2004, 1).

However, while the *goals* of this public face of *planka.nu* might easily be accommodated in mainstream political discourse, the method used to achieve this goal – fare-dodging – conflicts with a crucial Swedish moral concept: *att man ska göra rätt för sig*. This concept refers to the obligation of all inhabitants of *folkhemmet* to 'pull their weight' in society, to repay the debt that they constantly accumulate by enjoying the benefits of living in Sweden (Ekdahl 2005). Living in Sweden is represented here as a boon, a gift – and with the rights come obligations.

Att göra rätt för sig: pay your debts, act in a solidaristic manner, work, don't steal... And there's the rub: for fare-dodging can of course be construed as stealing. Rather than use the generally accepted colloquialism for fare-dodging, *att planka*, *planka.nu*'s opponents tend to use the term *tjuvåkning* ('stealing rides') to describe the practice, and have unsuccessfully tried several times to arraign *planka.nu* for incitement to criminal behaviour. The most powerful weapon in their armoury has been to describe fare-dodging as *osolidarisk* (unsolidaristic) (SL 2005; Malm 2005; Chahboun 2004, 10-13) – an accusation that weighs heavily in Swedish political discourse.

The political force of these accusations has to be understood in the context of a 'common sense' in Sweden where social control traditionally occurs primarily through the internalisation of codes, or social norms, and their mutual enforcement by members of the community upon each other. The ideological basis of this mode of control can be found in the Social Democratic concept, for a long time hegemonic, of *folkhemmet*. The classic formulation of this ideology was made in 1928 by Per-Albin Hansson, leader of the Social Democratic party and Prime Minister from 1932 to 1946:

"On solemn occasions, but also in everyday situations, we speak willingly of society [...] as being for everyone of us the common home, the people's home (*folkhemmet*), the citizen's home... The foundation of the home is the community and the feeling of togetherness. The good home does not know of any

privileged or neglected, neither favourites nor stepchildren. There the one does not look down on the other, there no one tries to gain advantages at the expenses of another, the strong do not put down and plunder the weak. In the good home equality, care, co-operation and helpfulness prevail." (cited in Rojas 1996, 16)

Arising in the late 19th century, the Swedish labour movement developed within an ethico-political field partly defined by strong temperance and puritan free-church movements. As a result, notions of solidarity that existed in the movement had a strongly religious and disciplinary character. When the social democratic mainstream of the movement (against its more radical, syndicalist wing (Lagerström 1996)) rose to power in the late 1920s and early 30s, a time during which Swedish society was undergoing rapid industrial 'development', Sweden's extremely small class of capitalists – Swedish capital was "controlled by a handful of family financial dynasties" – decided that a labour movement with such obviously disciplinary characteristics would make an excellent transmission belt to integrate the emerging working classes into capitalist society. The resulting rapprochement between the two sides led to increasingly centralised wage agreements, a reduction in rank-and-file struggles, a weakening of demands for industrial democracy, and an increasingly widespread understanding of wage labour as a *virtue* (Ryner 2002, 64-76).⁵⁷

Ideologically, this emerging class compromise and mode of regulation was stabilised, under social democratic leadership, in the notion of *folkhemmet*: "[a]rticulating more traditional conceptions of family justice and the 'harmony of interests', it showed the Social Democratic project to be beyond class interests and equivalent to more universal conceptions of fairness." (Ryner 2002, 66; Stråth 1996) As a result of the early articulation of Swedish social democracy to the temperance and Free Church movements, and the organicist 'family' reference of the term, *folkhemmet* is a morally conservative notion. Which in turn impacts social understandings of institutions like, for example, public transport: mainstream public discourse in Sweden tends to construct social institutions as *public* goods, and attempting to gain unfair advantages beyond what is due to everyone (by, for example, faredodging) can thus evoke very strong negative reactions. It is in the people's home that Swedish social democracy made its peace with Swedish capitalism and a still largely agrarian society's conservative morality – and the concept of solidarity changed from a potentially

⁵⁷ Thus we can also understand how planka's autonomist rhetoric – recall that Italian 'workerism' had abandoned a celebration of work for a *refusal* of work – does not mesh well with Sweden's social democratic moral economy.

ruptural, explosive concept of solidarity in struggle to one emphasising the individual's responsibilities towards society as a whole, and therefore also towards capital and its needs: "inequality in Swedish society is a barrier to development, not least for business." (Larsmo 1999) When solidarity means paying for privatised public transport, the concept has transformed into a concept of control, and social democracy into an apparatus of capture.

In Deleuze's terms, social democratic Sweden appears therefore as a textbook example of a disciplinary society, based on the disciplinary constitution of subjectivities, not (yet) on the management and control of flows (Deleuze 1992). And while it is of course important to point out that the code of *folkhemmet* could not be successful in capturing the entirety of social flows and struggles during the decades of social democratic hegemony (Östling 1980; Thörnqvist 1994), the general *representation* (outwardly, and towards itself) of the mainstream of Swedish society was of one, in the words of a Trotskyist organiser, "where people never quarrel, never engage in violence and never, never demonstrate" (Svensson, 2002).⁵⁸

Enclosing the people's home

While the still relatively hegemonic moral economy of the social democratic people's home thus militates strongly against 'stealing rides', faredodging nonetheless happens in Sweden, no less than in other major European cities (Ericsson 2004). The reasons for this are multiple and complex. *SL's* own research shows, for example, that after the price increase in March 2004, faredodging increased significantly (Hjelm 2004) - either suggesting that *planka.nu* is right in arguing that many people who faredodge do so because they cannot afford to pay for tickets or a monthly pass; or, alternatively, pointing to a reduction in the perceived obligation to pay, since the price increase would constitute a prior violation of the company's obligations under the rules of the people's home.

Above, I have described *folkhemmet* in primarily negative terms as an apparatus of capture. But even if we understand it through this somewhat limited lens (falling into

⁵⁸ For a more autonomist analysis of the "Contradictions of the Swedish Welfare State", cf. Samuelsson (2002).

the radical fallacy, pointed out long ago by Tronti, of attributing agency only ever to capital and the apparatuses of capture, and not to 'ordinary people' (Wright 2002, 63-4)), then control does not happen automatically – certain expectations must be fulfilled in order for the welfare state to be able fulfil its stabilising function. The state captures the flows deterritorialised by capital so that capital itself does not tend towards its destructive limit of absolute deterritorialisation: capital, if not held back, tends to destroy society, and the state reintroduces codes to prevent this from occurring (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 266-84; Polanyi 1957).

So capital, too, has obligations in the people's home. And once again, Hansson's speech frames these expectations well. He argues that "'the great people's and citizen's home [...] implies the breaking down of all social and economic barriers that now divide citizens in privileged and underprivileged, in rulers and dependants, in rich and poor, well-to-do and impoverished, robbers and robbed.' The symbol is clear: in the good home, everyone has different tasks, but needs each other – and the principle of mutuality rules." (Larsmo 1999, citing Hansson) Mutuality is crucial here: *folkhemmet* disciplines not only individuals, 'ordinary people' that have to pay their dues, *göra rätt för sig*, but also state and capital. Hegemony, after all, can never be a one-way street, but always involves and must involve the satisfaction of some of the interests of subordinate groups within in the hegemonic bloc (Gramsci 1971, 181-2).

And hegemonic it was, Swedish social democracy: from the early 1930s to the late 1980s, the social democrats were out of power only for a period of 4 years in Sweden. More importantly, social democracy exercised a hegemony properly Gramscian in its control over nearly all aspects of Swedish public and private life (Rojas 2005; Ryner 2002, 55-61). *Folkhemmet* was not so much talked about or discussed, as invoked. But things are changing. The "people's home has become one of the most politically infected terms of the 1990s. For or against, choose a side, now!" (Larsmo 1999) And politicisation is of course precisely a sign of a crumbling hegemony.

It has often been argued that neoliberalism undermines the socially stabilising power of the welfare state, instead turning it into a 'competition state' aiming to improve the conditions for capital accumulation (Hirsch 1998; Jessop 1993). These developments make themselves felt at all levels in Europe, in Sweden, in Stockholm – and in its public transport sector. There is of course no one point at which neoliberalism began

making its entry into the people's home, but in the chain of events that contributed to the crisis of the Swedish welfare state, one stands out: the currency crisis of 1992, where speculators attacked the Swedish krona at the same time as the pound was forced out of the European currency community. It was this crisis which forged a political consensus between the major parties about the need to make adjustments to the 'Swedish model', in short, to begin restructuring Sweden's welfare state along neoliberal lines (Stephens 1996; Ryner 2002, 126-158) - and in particular, to begin privatising parts of Sweden's vast public sector, in an example of what we above have called 'accumulation by dispossession'.

This new political consensus between the major parties intersected with a more molecular process of, to use Jessop's (1997) term, 'economic coding' of public enterprises through market mechanisms - a process we understood above as the attempt to create disciplinary markets in areas where no real markets exist (yet) (De Angelis forthcoming). Towards the end of the 1980s, *SL* initiated a process referred to as 'SL90', which subjected all areas of the company's activity to both internal and external competition, in order to impose market discipline on them (Alfredsson and Berndt 2002).

Thus *SL90* began to introduce more and more aspects of the capitalist logic of valorisation into an institution that, according to the company's own review of the process, employed "an army of [13500] infrastructural workers", and was characterised by all manners of bureaucratic and political inefficiency (Alfredsson and Berndt 2002, 10). At this early stage in the neoliberal penetration of Sweden, outright privatisation, or full 'enclosure', would hardly have been politically acceptable, due to political opposition and/or legal restrictions. The subsidiary strategy in such cases is the same across countries, from the British NHS to Stockholm's public transport: introducing mechanisms such as internal benchmarking, breaking up internal structures and forcing departments into competition with each other for scarce resources, or organising competitive tenders with private operators, forces actors to behave in market-conforming ways, without the actual sphere of operation being completely marketised (Harvie and De Angelis 2006; De Angelis forthcoming). This 'economic coding' can be seen as a 'softening up' strategy, preparing the ground for full enclosure, forcing actors under the hegemony of the value form by simulating capitalist markets before these actors actually encounter real ones.

But full privatisation was not long in coming. In the climate of increased pressure towards liberalising Sweden's political economy, local elections were held in Stockholm in 1998, which were won by the conservative parties. The new administration wasted no time in privatising Stockholm's subway system, selling its whole stake to the French multinational service provider *Connex*, a subsidiary of *Veolia Environnement*, the French utilities and communications company, in what was to become Europe's first complete privatisation of a subway system. Starting from this moment, and irrespective of the political reversal of 2002 which brought into power a centre-left administration in Stockholm (the crisis of the early 90s had, after all, formed a strong consensus around liberalisation), three developments became obvious: first, the steady tendency of prices for subway tickets to rise far above rates of inflation; a tendency towards ever-increasing surveillance on subways and in subway stations, primarily to deter fare-dodging (but also to combat begging, graffiti, and other such disciplinary problems); and a perceived negative impact on service provision on subways (Malm 2005; Andersson 2005).

Moving out of the people's home

So things were getting a little uncomfortable in the people's home. The underlying neoliberal consensus between the two major political forces meant that political space in Sweden narrowed sharply, at the same time as privatisation implied a narrowing of social spaces not directly governed by the logic of capitalist value. This has been argued to have been one of the main factors behind the explosive growth of the alterglobalisation movement in Sweden (both the militant and the moderate wing) between Seattle and Gothenburg (Abrahmsson and Hettne 2002; Mueller 2004). The fact, for example, that the (at least at its outset) basically social democratic network *Attac* grew so quickly in Sweden can be traced directly back to the fact that while many Swedes remained by and large faithful to the social democratic ideals of *folkhemmet*, it was the government and the established parties that were abandoning this fundamental consensus on which Swedish society had been built for decades: *staten gjorde inte längre rätt för sig* – the state was not fulfilling its obligations anymore.

And neither was capital: *SL* had been transformed from a public company with its usual strengths and weaknesses (providing lots of employment at relatively low efficiency, etc.) into a relatively small holding company, laying off employees, contracting out to companies with dubious reputations and even more dubious labour relations. Two examples may illustrate this: during the privatisation of Stockholm's commuter trains, the consortium that won the tender attempted to ignore the sector's trade union, precipitating the mass resignation of nearly 100% of their workers, leaving them without a workforce, and Stockholm, for several days, without commuter trains.⁵⁹ This spectacular failure, which for years to come would negatively impact the relationship between Stockholmers and the process of privatising public transport, was widely blamed on a French company's inability to understand long-established Swedish patterns of labour relations (Caesar 2003). Similarly, when Connex fired the leader of the mainstream union's train-drivers' section, they *publicly* explained that he was fired for 'disloyalty' towards the company – a most eloquent illustration of the company's failure to understand the social mechanics of *folkhemmet*.

There is thus less and less space in the people's home these days. Political space, economic and social space are all being squeezed by enclosure and the neoliberal consensus. The barriers that divide rich and poor, privileged and underprivileged, robbers and robbed, far from being dismantled, are built ever higher, whether it is through the ever-increasing presence of private security guards in Stockholm; more and more sophisticated turnstiles and barriers in the subway stations; more CCTV-cameras, etc. The walls are rising, and people are 'refusing' the compromise that used to stabilise Swedish society so effectively. For if 'they' are not taking their obligations seriously, why should you?

There are many ways in which people refuse or 'defect', faredodging is only one of them. But before pursuing further this line of inquiry, let me return, for a moment, to the 'social democratic' interpretation of faredodging. In this framing, people refuse to pay because it has become economically impossible for them to satisfy their 'reasonable' needs, like transport (faredodging), access to entertainment (filesharing), or food (shoplifting). This argument, and with it a good part of planku.nu's propaganda material, rests on one crucial assumption: that people in the oft-mentioned marginalised, poor suburbs of Stockholm faredodge substantially more than in the

⁵⁹ Interview with Jan Strömdahl, a local left-party politician, 22/06/05. Cf. also Samuelsson (2002).

economically well-off central districts. Research in Stockholm suggests that this is not the case.

First, survey research conducted with school children in Stockholm shows no serious difference in fare-dodging between poor and rich areas (El-Khoury and Sundell 2005). Second, my own interviews conducted with people fare-dodging on the subways, especially with younger people, suggested that the main reason why they were fare-dodging was that they *could*, rather than that they *had to*. In the words of one *plankare*: "I don't want to pay 360 crowns for a youth pass - I can think of a thousand better ways to spend that money." Finally, the Connex manager in charge of ticket controls on subways made it clear in an interview that there is *no significant difference whatsoever* in the number of fines handed out between richer and poorer areas of town: "it can be the same in Rinkeby [a famously poor part of town] as in Östermalmstorg [symbolising the height of wealth and snobbery in Stockholm]."

So, simply put: people who fare-dodge tend to do so because they can, not because they have to - and crucially, because they have not internalised the norm that they *ought* to pay for what they consume, they do not feel, at least with respect to public transport, that they have to *göra rätt för sig*. The ca. forty thousand passengers (some 6% of the total) who fare-dodge every day - according to numbers presented by SL (2005) - embody the breakdown of the people's home I have attempted to describe above. However, during my research I was unable to find reliable data about the fluctuations (or lack thereof) of number of fare-dodgers in Stockholm - and my argument of course implies that if there were indeed a progressive breakdown of the codes holding Swedish society together, then numbers of fare-dodgers would also have to be increasing, since the early 1990s. I propose two arguments to nonetheless support my contention about the connection between fare-dodging and the slow crumbling of *folkhemmet*: first, there is some data from 2004 indicating an increase in fare-dodging after a price increase. Combining this with the fact that prices have been rising steadily (by some 300%) over the last 15 years, we can assume, given the absence of evidence to the contrary, that each significant price increase has led to increases in fare-dodging, in the context of the neoliberal assault on *folkhemmet*. And second, the fact that there has been a noticeable increase in attempts to crack down on the phenomenon of fare-dodging in Stockholm over the past few years. While the reasons for this are complex (ranging from low profit margins in the sector; to the political activities of

planka.nu; and a general tendency, visible in Sweden as elsewhere in Europe, towards seeking solutions to perceived social problems in 'tough' approaches (Sandberg and Andersson 2005)) most of those I interviewed at SL and Connex (at managerial and staff level) felt that there had been an increase in faredodging over the last years.

And there is another reason for assuming that faredodging has increased in Sweden over the past few years, in tandem with a weakening of the norms of *folkhemmet*: the attention its opponents pay to it, and the desperate ideological rearguard action they are fighting not only against faredodging, but against all *gratisbeteende* ('for free behaviour'). This term is loosely applied to refer to phenomena ranging from the free newspapers available in many European subway systems; faredodging; and filesharing. To cite a few examples: an economist argues in an article in Sweden's main daily, *Dagens Nyheter*, that the desire to avoid paying (for transport, entertainment, information, etc.) is at base the result of the Swedish welfare model: "In Sweden we have for a long time had a large public sector, and we grow up with the feeling that someone else takes care of things. The concept '*att göra rätt för sig*' does not exist to the same extent anymore, and that has consequences for our will to pay for things, irrespective of age." (Hernadi 2005) Another columnist senses "a growing gap there, between, on the one hand, the young generations' desire for free lunches, on the other hand their chances and desire '*att göra rätt för sig*'." (Ekdahl 2005) And an article in *Aftonbladet*, one of Sweden's two largest tabloids, argues that whatever the reasons "the for-free-generation is today a fact. Companies and society have to adapt to the new reality that this generation implies." (Enqvist 2005)

(iv) The battle for the flows: coding, conjugating - connecting?

Faredodging, filesharing, and other 'for free behaviour': refusing capture

What is this 'new reality' that the increasing evidence of *gratis*behaviour in Sweden implies? Above, faredodging and similar behaviours seemed to be 'caused' by the progressive breakdown of the social norms tying the people's home together. But how about trying to invert this image, applying a more Deleuzian framework to our understanding of the role of the Swedish welfare state, and the (re?)emergence of

refusal? Such an inversion would not begin by searching for the causes of our actions in the actions of state and capital, but would proceed the other way round: here, it is not the welfare state's progressive breakdown that causes our disobedient behaviour. Rather, the welfare state comes to be seen as a machine that attempts, never succeeding entirely, to code the productive flows of human energies and desires that constitute life, organising them into patterns functional to the reproduction of society in general, and capital in particular.

As argued above, this is precisely what happened when the potentially radical and ruptural concept of 'solidarity' became institutionalised in the Swedish welfare state. The institutionalisation of radical social movements and of the gains that they have made comes to signify both their success and their failure: where there was desire, change, and flight, there came to be obligation, stability, and stratification. To be sure, the welfare state captures not only the radical, creative energy of workers' and other social movements': it also attempts, must attempt to, reimpose some elements of codes on the deterritorialised energies released by the free flow of capital. Deleuze and Guattari (2004b, 465-7) suggest that as much as radical social movements, capital acts as a gigantic global engine of de-territorialisation of social flows, whilst (welfare) states struggle to maintain the class compromises imposed on capital, in order to maintain social stability, try to maintain codes.

But capital is not only an agent of *deterritorialisation*. In order to reproduce itself, capital must find ways to make the multiplicity of flows that make up social life functional for its ends. It territorialises, organises social flows in and through the value form, thus making them functional for its own reproduction. Commodification, enclosure: this is capital's mode of both de- and re-territorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 192).

And what of the state in this? Throughout this argument, I have described the (Swedish) welfare state as an institution that captures radical energies, flows, and organises them into socially unthreatening, stabilising patterns, usually functional to the reproduction of capital. But if this is true of the welfare state, is it true of *all* states? Above, I argued that in the transition from Fordism to neoliberalism, the state's role also changes, from an institution that imposes codes to guard against the total deterritorialisation threatening capital at its limit, to one that seeks to facilitate the

conjugation of flows by the axiomatic: a development that has been described as the emergence of a 'competition state' (Hirsch 1998, Jessop 1993). The competition state, far from de-commodifying labour power and other flows as the welfare state did (Esping-Andersen 1990), in fact makes it its business to support capital's attempts at enclosure and commodification, and competes with other states on how effectively it can provide support to capital on that front.

Thus in the transition from welfare to competition state, the state's *mode of reterritorialisation* changes. From de-commodifying flows in sectors like care, transport, education, in a manner that nonetheless remains functional to capital, the state now moves to supporting the direct commodification of these flows. From organising the multitude of flows involved in transporting the public (rather than public transport) in Stockholm through a public, non-profit institution in order to make these flows of people and resources functional to the workings of the great productive machine of the social democratic city, now the state supports capital's attempts to directly subjugate these flows to the value form by privatising them.

The competition state, it may therefore be said, does not concern itself much with *att göra rätt för sig*. Swedish social democracy and its ideology of the people's home were hegemonic forces in Swedish society. But with the transition from one mode of territorialisation, from coding to conjugation, we also witness a transition from a hegemonic mode of territorialisation to a non-hegemonic, merely dominant one: the hegemony of the people's home is coming to an end – but, at least with respect to formerly public services, there is not yet a comparable hegemony of the value form.

And this is where we return to the *gratis*behaviour that launched us into this discussion. The argument is as such: 'stealing rides' is banned under the previously hegemonic rules of *folkhemmet* – these rules constitute the code that forces into socially non-threatening paths our desire for mobility. As the code begins to disintegrate, hitherto territorialised flows are simultaneously de- and then re-territorialised through the process of commodification/conjugation. But something slips through the cracks, something breaks out when the coding of flows by the welfare state is replaced with the conjugation of flows effected by capital (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 192, 231). Some of the energies and flows that traverse the city of Stockholm every day escape, become potential lines of flight, escaping from the striated, hierarchically organised

space of the state, refusing to be drawn into the circuit of capital valorisation. Or more concretely: some people simply stop paying for rides, start stealing them, because they have stopped believing in *folkhemmet*, and have not (yet) started believing that we should pay private companies for moving freely in our cities.

From discipline to control: the battle for the subways

The hegemonic Swedish *folkhem*, relying on largely internalised disciplinary mechanisms is increasingly being dismantled and replaced by a dominant process of enclosure, which does not rely on the coded creation of pliant subjectivities, but manages bundles of flows, irrespective of subjects' intentions, moving from the coding of flows to their conjugation by the axiomatic (Deleuze 1992). The process is 'dominant' and not yet 'hegemonic' because the creation of the what I have above discussed as 'market habitus' can only occur over time, not from one day to the next: it requires "education, tradition and habituation [to recognise] the requirements of the [capitalist] mode of production as self-evident laws of nature." (Marx 1971, 765) The flipside of this need for habituation over time is that, initially, the process of enclosure, as the autonomists remind us, is one that relies very much on force.

Evidence for this shift in Stockholm's subways abounds. Ever more sophisticated barriers are built at the entrance to busy stations, and these stations are policed by ever-larger numbers of staff. Controllers now increasingly wear civilian clothing, to avoid being spotted by *faredodgers* before they begin their control. In 2004, *SL* attempted to convince Stockholm's city government to raise fines for *faredodging* from 600 to 1000 SEK. (in the event, they 'only' secured an increase to 800 SEK.) (Palmgren 2004). "Soft service personnel are exchanged for security guards. Beggars are kicked out by [the private security firm] *Securitas*. More massive *razzias* [are carried out] at the turnstiles. A secret bonus from *SL* gives the company that runs the subway more money the more fines for *faredodging* their controllers manage to hand out." (Malm 2005, 17)

A look at *SL*'s 2004 annual report confirms this sense of increased panic about the loss of discipline in the subway. After mentioning the problem of *faredodging* numerous times on the first two pages of the report, the authors devote a whole section ("reduce

the waste”) to the problem, reminding us exactly how seriously they take the issue: every day, directed by *SL*, “allied entrepreneurs” (*Connex*) control 12000 tickets; during every shift, a controller hands out between 50 and 150 fines; in 2004, 4.5 million tickets were checked, and 50000 people had to pay fines. But while these measures are said to have had some success in reducing numbers of fare-dodgers by some 20% - although, interestingly, a *Connex* manager I interviewed denied that there had been *any* noticeable impact on numbers of fare-dodgers - *SL*’s management is very aware of the fact that the battle against fare-dodging is ultimately not a matter of how many controllers can be put into the field, or how high the physical barriers can be raised: “Together with the other transport-entrepreneurs, we will have to convince the fare-dodgers that they should pay [...]. At the same time as we have to underline the fact that fare-dodging is both unacceptable and unsolidaristic.” (*SL* 2005) Good Gramscians (and Weberians), they realise that force is, in the medium- to long run, an inefficient and ineffective tool.

In other words: the disintegration of the codes of *folkhemmet* implies the progressive loss of *hegemonic* control over the flows of people traversing Stockholm in the subways every day. As a result, at the point at which these flows were to be conjugated directly to the axiomatic, or value form, the institutions and agencies organising public transport are forced to increasingly rely on the dominant tools of control societies. At the same time, knowing that the ‘problem’ from their perspective is ultimately one of attitudes, they attempt to continue to deploy the formerly hegemonic code of attachment to the collective good to keep people in line. Thus, Anna Berger-Kettner, the social democratic chairwoman of *SL*’s board, when questioned about the increasing deployment of repressive, disciplinary tools on the subway argues that “it might seem strange, as a social democrat I don’t like having to be repressive, but to steal rides [...] is an unsolidaristic way to deal with common property. [...] One shouldn’t let other, paying customers pay for ones own, private trips with ‘the commons’.” (*Malm* 2005, 19)

Beyond the struggle to impose control on the subways; and the struggle to extend the social democratic norms of solidarity and ‘the commons’ to privatised public transport (the latter a wonderfully Orwellian discursive operation); there is a third strategy that is deployed in the attempt to regain control of deterritorialised flows that increasingly progress outwards from the enclosed and territorialised spaces of Stockholm’s public

transport: fear and insecurity. *SL* and other authorities in Stockholm are thus waging their own little 'war on terror', but Stockholm's *Al Qaeda* does not plant bombs or fly planes, it wields spray cans, begs on subways, and faredodges. *SL*'s strategy against graffiti in the subway reads like a Pentagon-report, aiming for political full-spectrum dominance: it aims to "on all levels affect attitudes against graffiti and develop a united front against the sprayers." (Sandberg and Andersson 2005, 4) Why this tough attitude against a fairly marginal problem, given the fact that *SL*'s action in this field have already fairly effectively cut down on spraying in subways and tunnels? Because, as the authors of a report on the increasing incidence of *hårdaretagismen* (a 'tough on crime' attitude) in Sweden suggest, graffiti comes to symbolise a deeper "threat of normlessness", of anomie (Sandberg and Andersson 2005, 5). Similarly, Berger-Kettner reminds us that "begging creates insecurity" on the subway (Malm 2005, 20). And finally, *SL*'s number two area of concern, after "reducing the waste" of money that faredodging implies, is to "increase security" on the subway (SL 2005, 4).

But has the 'security situation' in the subway really deteriorated? Malm (2005, 18) suggests that it actually has not done so for travellers, but that violence *against staff* has in fact increased. This conclusion is supported by interviews conducted with *Connex* staff, who pointed to security as their biggest concern, as well as by public statements issued by trade unions active in the sector, which recently staged an action 'against violence in the subways.' How can this, actual or perceived, increase in violence against workers employed in public transport be explained? By understanding that, whatever Berger-Kettner and others argue, the public transport system in Stockholm has ceased being a common. As one of the interviewed train-drivers suggested: *SL* and *Connex* have been attempting to convince Stockholmers that they are providing a service, rather than a public good. As a result, travellers are more inclined to see their rights and expectations *as consumers* violated when, for example, a train is delayed – rather than displaying the more relaxed attitude one might show towards use of a service perceived as genuinely *common*. In addition, argues Christian from planku.nu, the increase in violence against staff is in fact not a cause but the response to increased security measures taken: the rougher the controls, the more police-like the staff, the more likely people will react in a hostile way to their activities.

This loss of security is thus evidence of the progressive breakdown of hegemonic control in Sweden. In the case of the privatisation of public transport in Stockholm, it is

precisely privatisation, the enclosure of public space and resources, that has created this lack of security, that has allowed flows to escape from the control of codes. The institutions in charge of public transport are trying their best, through imposing codes, stretching beyond recognition the hegemonic norms of the people's home, and through creating fear and insecurity in order to justify the disciplinary strategies, to keep a lid on these escaping energies. In this, they have many opponents, some of them organised, some of them not. Planka.nu is one of these.

So what? The politics of faredodging – or, politicising lines of flight

This returns us, finally, to the question guiding this entire inquiry into the politics of the contemporary anticapitalist movement in Europe: what, if anything, do our practices actually change? How, in this case, has the planka-campaign contributed to combating the conjugation of flows by the axiomatic of capital, through the process of commodification and enclosure?

I argued above that the practice of faredodging has a substantial social impact, being part and parcel of the process of disintegration of *folkhemmet*. More immediately, it has also had an economic impact on the balance sheets of *SL*: according to their own calculations, faredodging costs the company 200 million crowns each year (*SL* 2005, 20). Once more, this is happening in a sector where profit margins are already fairly low. The substantially increased attention paid to the phenomenon of faredodging is thus partly due to the very real economic impact it has: every faredodger is a flow traversing the city that does not immediately contribute to the realisation and reproduction of capital. As suggested in our initial discussion of practices freely 'appropriating' use value, our 'failure' to pay for a product prevents the closure of the cycle of capitalist valorisation. As a result, faredodging is met with attempts at re-territorialisation.

So the practice of faredodging clearly has an impact on capital's attempts (supported by the competition state) to organise the flows of our everyday lives under the dictatorship of the value form. It is deterritorialised movement that breaks out from the coding effected by the welfare state, and resists its conjugation to the quantifying axiomatic of capital. But understanding the politico-economic impacts of faredodging

does not yet tell us much about the impact of the planku.nu campaign. After all, there are at this point no more than 8-900 people subscribed to *p-kassan* – whilst *SL* calculates that some 40.000 people faredodge every day. I found that while a lot of Stockholmers had heard about planku.nu, they often did not know that the campaign's 'core business' consisted of such an insurance fund. And although planku-activists point out that the majority of members of the insurance fund are not part of the 'autonomous subculture' of Stockholm – implying that the campaign has at least partly reached its goal of penetrating beyond the narrow activist ghetto – the numbers of insurance members are clearly too small to assume that the existence of planku.nu has in any significant way facilitated the practice of faredodging.

People thus faredodge fairly independently of the activities or lack thereof of planku.nu, and the immediate impacts (economic and social) of faredodging can therefore not be marked as 'successes' of the campaign. Pointing out this difficulty, however, is not to say that the campaign has been irrelevant: in fact, understanding the very specific impact it has had and continues to have will be crucial in understanding the complex relationship between individual acts of freely appropriating use value, 'alternative value practices', and the articulation of effective challenges to the power of capital. Faredodging, like shoplifting, filesharing, or like the space created by riotous protest, is *politically indeterminate*, that is, its political meaning is not, cannot be, fully contained in itself. This political indeterminacy is shown by the fact that the people who faredodge tend to have no politics in common, except that they do not want to pay.

Thus, faredodging does indeed issue a practical, non-mediated challenge to the territorialisation of flows by the value form in the system of public transport: faredodging is movement not territorialised by the value form, every faredodger is a deterritorialised flow that escapes from the overcoding machine of the state, or the quantifying axiomatic of capital. But not every deterritorialised flow should be celebrated from a left-libertarian perspective. Recall that Deleuze and Guattari (2004b, 466, 253) contrast genuinely progressive, revolutionary 'lines of flight' with fascist lines of abolition, where the former are distinguished from the latter by their ability to *connect* with other lines, avoiding both the codes of the state and the conjugation by capital, in order to create social spaces governed by a multiplicity of axioms (Tormey 2005) or logics, rather than the one axiomatic.

For our discussion of the politics of faredodging this suggests that not every deterritorialised flow, not every act of faredodging, draws a 'line of flight'. Rather, returning to the discussion about acts of the 'free appropriation of use value', faredodging must be understood as an individual, "subversive-rebellious act" of appropriation (Hauer 2004), which can be destabilising of systems of stratification and territorialisation, as we saw in the case of the 'moral economy' of Stockholm's public transport system. But this raises the difficult question posed above, namely of the possibility, or lack thereof, of articulating such individual acts of free appropriation (in)to "collective-communistic", organised forms of appropriation (Hauer 2004) - whether the deterritorialised flows of faredodgers can turn into genuine 'lines of flight'.

It also raises questions about the status of acts of 'free appropriation of use value' in a politics of 'alternative value practices', for it may be argued that, far from being a practice guided by a disobedient ethos, or a simple refusal to adhere to the norms of capitalist valorisation, they could be argued to (at least in some cases) be the actions of perfectly comparing and benefit/risk-maximising individuals. As, in other words, the acts of *hominis economici*, rather than those of rebellious subjectivities. That is to say that the free appropriation of use value *may* constitute an alternative value practice, but it may also simply constitute an extension of the capitalist market habitus, one that has not internalised the one code necessary to sustain the capitalist axiomatic, namely that of the contract. Finally, such individual acts of appropriation do not generate out of themselves a politics that protects them from renewed attempts at reterritorialisation, a process that is supported by an array of institutions at once legal, financial, moral, etc.

This is where planka.nu becomes important. Rasmus suggests that planka has politicised faredodging not only at the level of discussions within public elites and large organisations, but has also caused many "non-political young people to see faredodging as a political act." Alex puts the argument about planka.nu's political effectiveness succinctly, if somewhat tongue-in-cheek: "it's main effect," he says laughing, "is that it annoys people" - people in government, people in the media, people in the traditional left parties. It does so precisely because it politicises an issue that *SL*, *Connex*, and the local government would prefer to deal with as a simple

security issue, by attempting to embed the individual act of fare-dodging in a wider critique of contemporary processes of enclosure and commodification.

As a result, Alex continues, they have managed to put *nolltaxan*, the full-tax financing and de-privatisation of public transport on the political agenda, and made fare-dodging and other for-free behaviour more acceptable. A conservative politician explains this function of the campaign perfectly in a motion submitted to parliament: "That people try to use public transport without paying is a timeless phenomenon. However, a new phenomenon, at least to its contemporary extent, is the extensive public-opinion formation that is currently being organised to justify fare-dodging, both as an act that is morally acceptable for individuals, and as a legitimate strategy for social change." (Andersson 2004) In other words, the new phenomenon is that individual, rebellious acts of appropriation are tentatively being transformed into more collective acts of appropriation – and simple deterritorialised lines into lines of flight.

Thus: even if we assume, as argued above, that it is in part the actual increase in fare-dodging that has created the increased attention paid to the topic, we can be certain that, in the absence of a campaign like *planka.nu* attempting to articulate fare-dodging to concerns about the enclosure of public space, the discussion would have taken a very different course, less favourable to fare-dodgers. Their activities have forced the political parties of Stockholm, as well as *SL*, to take seriously the possibility of *nolltaxan*: the green and left parties have a carefully positive relationship to it, but definitely reject fare-dodging both as immoral, and as an inadequate tool of struggle; the youth wings of some parties and trade unions take a positive view on both; and, as Anna reminds us, "if it hadn't been for *planka.nu*, the [youth wing of the Left Party] would never have decided to kick off their 'nolltaxa.now' campaign, or at any rate it would not have had the big effect it eventually did."⁶⁰

vii. Conclusions and open question

The story of *planka.nu* is of course not always a happy story. While above I have focussed mostly on the campaign's successes in order to highlight the political

⁶⁰ It is easy to find evidence of the active public discussion *planka.nu* has created around public transport, privatisation, or *nolltaxan* (Ekdahl 2005; Hernadi 2005; Andersson 2005; *SL* 2005).

potential of this ingenuous radical insurance fund, there are certainly areas in which the group's potential to *connect* flows has not been fulfilled, where the campaign has remained relatively isolated from other struggles and movements.

First, ironically for a campaign that wants a transport system run "by those that work there", *planka.nu* has failed almost entirely to connect with the more radical sectors of subway workers, such as those organised in *SAC*, the anarcho-syndicalist union, or those in the communist-run *klubb 119*, a local of the mainstream union *SEKO*. This picture emerges both from interviews with union leaders and organised workers, as well as from working with the *planka*-campaign, where some of the activists show open disdain for the workers' 'workerism'. While some attempts have been made to reach across the 'activist'/union-divide, for example in an "open letter to SL's staff" (*Planka.nu* 2004), these have generally been few and far between, and have remained fairly unsuccessful. During the recent subway strike, the *planka*-campaign was relatively absent from the scene, and 'activist support' for the strikers was coordinated by another group emerging from the autonomous subculture, *Stockholms Förenade Pendlare* (United Commuters Stockholm). Recognising this shortcoming, Anna argues that "one precondition for achieving our goal is that we have the public transport workers on our side, I believe in a continuous dialogue with the trade union as one of the most important strategies in the near future."

Other connections that remain underdeveloped are those with other campaigns against the privatisation of (and associated price rises in) public transport in Europe and beyond, in particular in Latin America. And while this lack of articulation between struggles is certainly not merely to be blamed on *planka.nu*'s lack of activity in the field – struggles in this sector have simply not generated a lot of excitement beyond their local contexts, evidenced also in the relative lack of information about the subject, compared to the intensification of networks and spread of information concerning anti-water-privatisation struggles (Terhorst et al. 2005) – it has had the effect that no translocal learning processes have emerged wherein new approaches to public transport could be experimented with and adapted to local contexts. In turn, as Anna and Alex admit, their proposals for the organisation of public transport in Stockholm have not progressed much beyond, first, a call for *nolltaxan*; and second, a more general call for public transport to be owned by all, and run by the workers. As laudable as

these goals may be, they do not bring us much closer to seeing those other worlds we so desperately want to see.

In spite of these shortcomings, however, planka.nu has at least been partly successful in achieving their stated main goal, namely to create a *political space* around the practice of fare-dodging that can be used to discuss alternative ways of organising public transport – to the point where even *SL*, in a subtle nod to the success of the campaign, has to make public statements discussing the possibility of introducing *nolltaxan* (Pettersson 2005). And it is precisely in the creation of spaces where deterritorialised flows can form connections with other lines that the counterhegemonic significance of projects like planka.nu lies. Not necessarily in the *generation* of such flows and lines but in creating spaces for their articulation into collective projects of appropriation that can transform isolated flows into lines of flight and thus potential challenges to the hegemony of capital. The mere existence of such deterritorialised flows, not coded by the state or conjugated by the value form, is in itself not enough to generate such a challenge, since without encountering other flows and linking up with them they too easily fall prey to attempts at reterritorialisation.

And planka.nu is not alone in creating such spaces for the articulation of deterritorialised flows to each other, but forms part of an emerging de-centred network of other for-free initiatives, from the Stockholm-based filesharing project *Piratbyrån*, to the German campaigns *Berlin Umsonst* and *Hanburg Umsonst* (*Umsonst* meaning ‘for free’), and other projects that have emerged in the context of the debate about free appropriation of use value in European anticapitalist circles. The subject of these campaigns is not merely a ‘defense of the commons’, rejecting that defensive posture in favour of a more radical project: of *creating new commons*, beyond the striated, hierarchical space of the welfare state, and the value-formed spaces dominated by capital.

Where these campaigns as a whole are going, what their long-term impacts will be, is impossible to tell at this moment – and, as Stuetzle and van Dyk (2004) point out, the German *Umsonst* campaigns seem to have, unlike planka.nu, remained fairly socially isolated, stuck in the ghetto, as it were. At their worst, they will simply go the way of all fashions in radical left discourses, in the dustbin of shattered hopes for radical social transformation, repressed by the state or reabsorbed by capital. At their best, they will

form part of an emergent a counterhegemonic politics of a new type: with multiple, linked, but relatively autonomous centres, or forms of social organisation: a new, decentred mode of territorialisation.

We have thus found that the wider political effects of the deterritorialised, everyday instances of refusal of faredodging depend on the political articulation of these practices into wider movement projects. Faredodging appears indeed as a specific refusal to close the cycle of capital valorisation, but it remains a politically indeterminate set of refusals that each enact their own value logics, that do not contain some form of collective, *common* project of an alternative logic of social organisation. The role of the planka-campaign, emerging in part out of the desire for a politics that takes as its starting point a (potentially) 'disobedient' practice widespread in the everyday lives of people who do not identify as 'activists', has in turn sought to both extend the space within which faredodging is possible (facilitate it), and politically articulate these isolated, individual practices into a challenge to the current forward push of neoliberal capital through enclosure. And while the campaign has been remarkably successful in promoting this articulation and connection, it is of course a work in progress, and many open questions remain.

Chapter VI

ESCANDA: CRISIS, OPENNESS AND ALTERNATIVE VALUE PRACTICES



(Escanda. Source <http://www.undercurrents.org/hamish/escanda.jpg>, Last accessed 04/09/2006)

(i) Introduction: from the frontlines to the backyards of capital

Above, much has been made of 'enclosure' as *the* frontline of the neoliberal offensive, and of our struggles against these new enclosures. With Harvey (2003), I have argued that overaccumulation forces capital to continuously push into new spaces in order to open up new areas for accumulation. But there is a flipside to enclosure, one that has historically featured as much in anticapitalist struggle and theorising as has the notion of the frontline of capital's assault: namely, its backyard, its weakest link.

In our investigation of the political potential of the militant summit protest, we asked, against Gramsci (1971), how far a 'war of movement' could be effective in contemporary European anticapitalist practice - only to then return to Gramsci and his

problematic of hegemony, and an analysis of the value form as the placeless 'centre' of capital. Our inquiry into the politics of planka.nu was an analysis of a strategy that sought to challenge capital in an 'advanced' capitalist country, in the city, to challenge enclosure. Different though it may be from the factory workers' struggles that inspired Marx and Gramsci, planka.nu and these struggles nonetheless have something in common: they are an attack on capital where it is strongest. We found that the 'tactics' of refusal employed in the face of the enclosure of Stockholm's public transport system were hard to articulate into a more coherent vision of another possible world, and that both faredodgers and planka.nu found themselves under a considerable amount of pressure, from the state and from capital.

But while the value-form is indeed near-*universal* – that is, its reach extends as far as the networks of capital go – the social geography it produces is not *uniform*: Harvey (2000a) calls this the "uneven geographical development" of capital. "For while, on the one hand, new spaces are constantly being opened up for capital, on the other spaces already opened up are constantly being de-valorised" (Brand and Wissen 2006). This process of what below I will analyse as 'abandonment' (of, for example, rural areas or American inner cities) in turn opens interesting strategic possibilities, and here we change sides once more in the great strategic debates of Socialist politics. Marx, Gramsci, as well as the autonomist theorists of the new enclosures all looked to fight capital where it is strongest. But there is also another tradition: Lenin, Mao, Guevara – "the strategy of revolution 'at the weakest link of the chain'" (Meszaros 1995, 903), of peasants, not the urban proletariat making the revolution, but the *foco guerrillero* of rural guerrillas winning the battle.

Times change, 'revolution' is not really on the historical agenda, but the strategic questions have remained the same, even as we descended from the summits to engage in the debates already described above. One of the more significant outcomes of these debates is summed up by The Free Association (2006, 19): "as moments of excess fade, the refrains they've thrown up make less and less sense as capitalist social relations re-assert themselves. We need to create spaces where we can continue to develop those refrains, especially as they stop making sense." This idea, to create "safe spaces" after what I have called the 'effervescence' of the summit protests, can be linked "to the development of a whole new network of social centres, both in the UK and across the world." In other words: to set up 'autonomous' *places* where we could feel relatively

safe in our everyday lives, where we could develop alternative social relations or *value practices*, build other worlds. This chapter will be an investigation of this strategy of creating places where the flows of our movement could concentrate beyond the mad intensity of a summit protest, and, Bey's (1996) protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, the *enforced* transience of the Temporary Autonomous Zone (cf. Anonymous 2003b).

Revolution at the weakest link, and setting up a social centre? The connection is this: as de Certeau (1984, xix) argues, the move from tactics, "a calculus [of force-relations] which cannot count on a [...] spatial or institutionalised location", to strategy refers to the extent to which the terrain on which one operates is structured by the enemy: how powerful it is. The possibility of setting up 'places' for our movement, or 'social centres' is therefore intimately related to questions of the relative strength of and form taken by capital's (and the state's) power in a given location. Is it then true, as Pickerill and Chatterton (2005) suggest, that autonomous places emerge more easily in "spaces where capitalism is less dominant", that have been opened by capital's ceaseless move of enclosure/abandonment?⁶¹

Investigating *Escanda*, a collective set up in the crisis-ridden Spanish region of Asturias in 2003, in order to experiment with the construction of alternative social relations and provide a permanent place of convergence for radical activists, I will ask whether this area, 'abandoned' by capital, does indeed offer greater possibilities for a politics of alternative value practices. A secondary question deriving from the focus on 'placed' projects, will be to investigate the extent to which such anticapitalist places manage to link up with each other to form expanding networks of alternative social relations against the ever-expanding networks of capital. In order to answer this question, I will first introduce *Escanda* as a project arising out of the networks of autonomous anticapitalism I have described above, and locate its emergence in the relevant movement and academic debates about social centres and the politics of space/place. I will show the political economy of Asturias to be a region 'abandoned' by capital, and then locate *Escanda* in this political economy as a potential agent of deterritorialisation. Finally, I will open up the discussion of a politics of expanding networks of alternative

⁶¹ Graeber (2001, 88) similarly suggests that it is in times of crisis that alternative value practices can more easily emerge; cf. also Summer and Halpin (2005).

value practices. Thus we move from enclosure to abandonment, from the frontlines to backyards – and from the summits, to the mountains.

(ii) Escanda: from the summits to the mountains

Shake a cola-bottle for too long, and it goes flat. Thus also the effervescence of the summit protest, or the excitement of ephemeral global meetings like the *encuentros*, the social fora, any meeting of a global network. They produce an intensity that is unrivalled, they hint at possibilities, the collective creation of other worlds. But, as one of the activists who founded Escanda tells us, the limitations of collective struggles built solely on ephemeral network meetings soon became clear to those who had been involved in the late 1990s' budding anticapitalist movement's networks: after the excitement of the encounter, the connections fade away, and inequalities of access, class, or language make cooperation more difficult. Thus, early in 2000, an idea was born that would lead to the establishment of the Escanda collective in Asturias, Northern Spain: to create, as the founder called it, a 'permanent anticapitalist convergence space' against the temporary convergence spaces of protests and meetings (Bey 1996; Routledge 2004; Pickerill and Chatterton 2005), to facilitate the long-term cooperation of people involved in different projects around the world. Whereas effervescence necessarily implies breaking the routine of the everyday (The Free Association 2006, 3), Escanda was meant to create a permanent place where the work of constructing alternative social relations could be carried out where capital's power crucially reproduces itself: in everyday life.

Believing that the best chance to locate such a place existed in what I will call an area 'abandoned by capital', they decided to set up shop in capital's backyard. Less than a year after the initial plan was hatched, the group managed to convince a small foundation (the *Fundación Ronzón*) in severely economically depressed Asturias to temporarily cede to them a large plot of land complete with manorial house and several smaller, dilapidated buildings in a tiny mountain hamlet called Ronzón just outside the small town of Pola de Lena.⁶² Thus, the collective Escanda was set up, which, aside from being the name of a local grain variety in Asturias, stands for *Espacio Social Colectivo para la Autogestión, la Diversidad y la Autonomía* (Collective Social Space

⁶² For a short history of the buildings and the foundation, see Asociación Escanda (undated-a).

for Self-Organisation, Diversity and Autonomy). The choice of Asturias was very much based on the realisation that the region found itself in a state of deep crisis, and it was for the activists precisely “this apparent lack of future prospects [which] is a great motivation for us to come to Asturias. We believe that regions in crisis offer good possibilities for people to take control of their lives, through the construction of the type of social relations that we want to experiment with at Escanda.”⁶³

“Escanda [was to be] an international collective. A space for the interaction and the cooperation between groups of people, networks and movements. Escanda is a space for practicing and experimenting how to live together, without exchange relations and with horizontal structures. The common thread is non-hierarchical, anti-capitalist grassroots movements, with an emphasis on the environment.” The collective sees itself as “part of the global movement against capitalism” (Asociacion Escanda undated-b), and seeks to “create commons” against capital’s enclosures, and “reclaim [social] relations from capitalism – from the commodity form.” (Asociacion Escanda 2006) To create what I have called ‘alternative value practices’, and in turn link their project to other such commons in order to construct an expanding network to challenge the expansion of capitalist circuits of valorisation (De Angelis forthcoming; Dyer-Witheford 2006; Huber 1980 45-65). To form part, as one of the founders put it, of a critical mass of autonomous places of convergence, and wider networks of social transformation.

If this seems to smack of 1970s dropout strategies (cf. Cometbus undated), Escanda’s activists insist that the collective “is not a place to hide from society”. And rather than reinforce what is often thought of as the activist ghetto and become simply “hippies on the hill”, to cite an epithet that the ‘Escandalos@s’⁶⁴ dread, this commons should be one that does not merely allow ‘activists’ to change their lives, but one that would also provide a focal point from which to interact with ‘non-activist’, local communities.

Escanda: What is *being* done?

⁶³ www.escanda.org, accessed 05/03/04. Due to a reorganisation of the website, this particular text is not available anymore.

⁶⁴ The ‘@’ sign can be used in Spanish to avoid the use of gender-specific nouns.

Although Escanda has been running for only three years, the collective is involved in a strikingly wide range of activities, and is home to an international group of people. While the precise composition of the collective fluctuates, at this point there are about 15 permanent members, from the Spanish state, Germany, the UK, Finland, Israel, Palestine, and the US, an internationalism constantly reinforced by visitors from an even wider range of countries. Politically, too, the members of the collective come from diverse backgrounds: whereas above I cited a self-representation of the collective as part of the global anticapitalist movement, this already rather broad umbrella is stretched to a breaking point when we try to include under it people coming to Escanda from radical ecologist or feminist backgrounds, those brought there by personal connections, or one of the members for whom Escanda is not a place to do, but to flee from, politics.

Each of the permanent members is active in at least one of the working groups organising Escanda's five 'main projects': (i), the flagship project revolves around the investigation and promotion of community-controlled renewable energies as a way to generate horizontal social activity and reduce dependence on the oil and nuclear industry; (ii) a broad range of education-projects, primarily teaching workshops in schools on topics such as gender, globalisation, or environmental education; (iii) attached to the manorial house is a large garden, which is farmed according to organic, sustainable and increasingly permacultural methods. The garden forms part of Escanda's resource base, but the collective is far from self-sufficient; (iv) although the project has now left the hands of the Escandalos@s, they were crucial in setting up free wireless internet access in Pola; (v) closest to home, a lot of time is invested in the reconstruction of some of the run-down houses in Ronzón, since to reconstruct liveable space in the hamlet is seen as contributing something to the revitalisation of the countryside (Asociacion Escanda undated-c).

Beyond these main projects, a lot of energy in Escanda is also devoted to organising one-off international seminars on topics such as popular education, renewable energies, gender and activism, hacking, etc, and the collective has been deeply involved in attempts to bring together activists from across the Middle East, organising a major meeting in Barcelona as well as a Europe-wide info-tour. Escanda also occasionally hosts political meetings, such as a planned one-week women-only

gathering this autumn. The upkeep of a large, un-renovated country house, as well as the provision of food, fuel, hygiene, etc, is also a time-intensive process.

In addition, there are those things about living in Escanda that take up a lot of the Escandalos@s time, but that do not necessarily register as 'projects' – and yet, are a crucial part of attempting to create 'another world' in ones own home. The collective is organised along formally non-hierarchical lines where important decisions are taken by consensus by all full members, a process which takes a lot of time – as does caring for each other, since, as one of the activists pointed out to me, "we cannot change the world if we let someone living with us be broken by mental or physical health problems."

Nor can the world be changed by people who are regarded as aliens by those who live with and around them, and thus another important drive in Escanda is to reduce the sense of cultural distance that, especially initially, permeated relations between the collective, and the residents of Ronzón and beyond. To give a few examples: When two Escandalos@s were teaching an English-language class in one of the local schools, they asked the children where in the world one spoke English – *en los Estados Unidos* (in the US); *en Inglaterra* (in England); *y en Ronzón* (and in Ronzón), the children answered. In Pola, the collective is sometimes referred to as *el Planeta Ronzón* – the planet Ronzón.

This issue features strongly in strategic considerations in the collective, and in a discussion of Escanda's future direction, one of the most commonly voiced concerns was to work towards reducing this alienness between Pola and its planet Ronzón: as one of the activists put it, "I would like one day to walk in Pola and not be recognised as being 'from Ronzón'". Thus the Escandalos@s are currently working hard to overcome this estrangement, with some success, through organising projects in the town, and in particular through working with children in schools, during the carnival session, and inviting groups of children to come to Escanda. Not only have the children, according to Maria from Escanda, not (yet) imbibed the cultural conservatism of their parents, working with them is of course also an excellent way of getting to know their parents in their everyday life contexts, rather than as activists jetting in from afar. The Escandalos@s are thus increasingly becoming a 'normal' part of the social landscape of Lena and beyond.

Thus, Escanda is constituted by a diversity of backgrounds, strategies and activities, and every attempt to understand the possibilities of the project in light of a particular political perspective will necessarily be incomplete. For example, the representation of Escanda as a project that emerged out of the frustration with the ephemerality of global network meetings is very much the story of those who originally set up the place – but how do their strategies relate to those of the people who arrived there later? During 2004 and into 2005, the collective was rocked by major struggles that were at once personal and strategic, and as result, the agenda(s) and strategy/ies of the collective as it exists today may diverge to some extent from what some of the original members imagined it would become.⁶⁵

This problem with reading Escanda through the lens of a particular political strategy is compounded even further by my own relationship to the project: during my research of 3 months, I lived in the collective not merely or even primarily as a researcher, but as a full participant (Juris forthcoming). I created my own ‘data’ by, for example, being part of the working group that produced the renewable energies feasibility study that constitutes one of the collective’s major official outputs so far (Asociacion Escanda 2005). Thus, the theoretical perspective developed throughout this thesis also became part of strategic discussions within the collective. As a result, every particular choice of focus on the varied activities and strategies that constitute the flows of Escanda not only does some violence to that very multiplicity, but also selects those aspects that fit into the perspective being developed here. While this reduction may seem problematic, I never intended to tell a ‘complete’ story of the project, if such a thing were possible. Rather, I aim to tell a story that is *useful* in the context of strategic debates within our movement(s) about the politics of anticapitalist *places* or social centres, and the political implication of locating such a project in an area ‘abandoned’ by capital.

In order to tell such a useful story, I have chosen to focus below on two projects: first, the collective’s efforts to research and facilitate the local development of community controlled renewable energies as alternative value practices; and second, to contribute to the formation of networks of autonomous movements and places at a variety of scales, national, European, global.

⁶⁵ During my research in *Escanda* in the autumn of 2005, the memories of the intense infighting was still too fresh, as a result of which I agreed to not make the conflict a subject of my writing.

(iii) Places against capital?

Ever since Escanda officially opened its gates early in 2003 the project has created a buzz throughout European anticapitalist networks, attracting a constant stream of visitors. By organising international workshops attracting activists from Spain and beyond, the collective has sought to act as a convergence space, connecting flows hitherto unconnected. But beyond being a place of 'convergence' for people involved in different anticapitalist struggles, it is also a place where alternative practices of production and consumption of, for example, renewable energies, are being experimented with, in order, as Joerg put it at a seminar in Escanda, to become increasingly independent of the state and capitalist markets, 'the system'. Similarly, at the Athens European Social Forum, Escanda activists made it clear that one of the key goals of the project was to "work together without the need for [capitalist] value, measure, outcomes, or incentives."

But is it really possible to create 'places' beyond capital? The challenge to such a politics of placed alternatives to capitalist social relations is posed by Harvey (1989, 238-9) when he asks how movements that seek to construct "an alternative kind of society in which value, time, and money are understood in new and quite different ways" deal with their own reproduction - in which they have to confront "the question of value" and the "dissolving power of money". "Capital, in short, continues to dominate, and it does so in part through its superior command over space and time, even when opposition movements gain control over a particular place for a time." This refers us back to de Certeau's (1984, xix) distinction between tactics and strategies: while the former occur in, and modify and hybridise, *space*, the latter require a *place* and "a subject of will and power [that] can be isolated from an 'environment'." A strategy, in other words, can only be formulated by the field marshal (the Greek *strategos*) who stands *in a place* above the field of battle. Placed anticapitalist projects therefore seem to, from the outset, face three challenges: first, as places they rely on money and are thus always-already compromised; second, as places they rely on dynamics of inclusion/exclusion, with the attendant authoritarian tendencies (Harvey 2000a, 160-167); and third, "subjects of will and power", unlike the mute tacticians of free appropriation, are prime material for cooptation by dominant social forces. These are not insurmountable challenges, but they show that the possibilities of Escanda as a

centre of convergence and the production of alternative value practices, and more generally the strategy of 'social centres', are intimately tied up with questions of the politics of space and place.

The argument begins with the reassertion of the importance of 'place' against what Foucault (1986) described as the dissolution of place in Western modernity in general (also Casey 1997), and in the literature on 'globalisation' in particular (Castells 1996; Scholte 2000).⁶⁶ Against this tendency, anthropologists argued that "culture sits in places", that given that the capital relation had to be concretely instantiated in particular places, it would subsequently also be transformed in and through the practices of subjects in those places (Escobar 2001, 156; Hylland Eriksen 2003; Appadurai 2001).⁶⁷ In other words, while space, understood simply as "infinite extension" (Casey 1997, x), and thus held to be the domain of capital, was important, places, "the experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness", mattered, and as such could provide the grounds for strategies of "defensive localizations" (Escobar 2001, 140, 149; Starr 2000, 215; Lucas and Hines 2004). Slogans like 'think global, act local', and the excitement about the Zapatista rebellion follow a similar logic. 'The global', it seemed, was a scale of activity where only 'ghosts' or 'nomads' lived (Drainville 2004; Palan 2003). 'Real people', on the other hand, lived in local places, which therefore provided new grounds for an emancipatory politics of real life against the abomination of capital.

Alas, all was not that simple: as Marx (1857) already argued in his polemics with the utopian Socialists and Proudhon, *placed* anticapitalist projects, insofar as they remain dependent on exchanges in capitalist markets for the reproduction of their livelihoods, will become subject to the laws governing those markets, will become increasingly conjugated to the capitalist axiomatic, since that axiomatic is indifferent to the specific content of any particular axiom it adds to its long equation. It is also precisely at this point where, Escobar (2001) appears to underestimate the specificity of capital vis-à-vis other social relations of domination: it is the unique power of the value form to be able to articulate difference ('use value') in a subordinate manner to sameness ('exchange value'), wherein the hybridisation of capitalist social relations he refers to does not

⁶⁶ For a thorough critique of this kind of 'globalisation theory', see Rosenberg (2005, 2000).

⁶⁷ For a classic ethnography on this subject, see Taussig (1980).

apply to the value form as such, which remains constant, and retains its power, irrespective of any particular social processes involved in its realisation and circulation.

Following on from Harvey's challenge cited above, a number of critical geographers thus began to critique the thesis of the progressive power of localisation: Swyngedouw (1997, 144) argued that while "place matters, [it is] scale that decides;" and Peck and Tickell (2002, 387, 393) pointed out that the main problem for what they term 'progressive localism' is the fact that it is precisely relations *between* and not just within places that have become 'neoliberalised', suggesting that any progressive localism will soon be brought to heel by the disciplinary mechanisms of inter-place competition.

Can there be any solution to this perennial problem of local anticapitalist practice? Peck and Tickell (2002, 401) point us in the right direction when they suggest that the emancipatory possibilities of local resistance must remain strongly circumscribed as long as they do not manage to alter extra-local rule systems and institutions. The term to describe such a form of activism that, while rooted, like all life must be, in 'thick' places, acts on multiple 'scales' of human activity, is 'multi-scalar' (Swyngedouw 1997, 140). In the literature, it is convincingly argued that any articulation of an effective political response to the neoliberal offensive can be neither 'local' nor 'global', but must be 'multi-scalar' (Harvey 2000a; Swyngedouw 1997; Escobar 2001; Routledge 2004; Pickerill and Chatterton 2005).

Critical geographers also active in the anticapitalist movement have argued that this 'multi-scalarity' is in fact a defining feature of contemporary European anticapitalist practice (Routledge 2004, 13-4; Drainville 2004, 148-9). Contemporary anticapitalism, it is argued, is not so much concerned with remaking or protecting 'the local', but with "a more diffuse, [multi-scalar] movement towards autonomy." (Pickerill and Chatterton 2005) Autonomy is here not understood as being a property held by individuals or localities, but as relational, and therefore necessarily incomplete (Pickerill and Chatterton 2005; DeFillipis 2004, 24-37; Notes from Nowhere 2003, 107-17; Laclau 1990, 37). It is this limited notion of autonomy as relational, as process and horizon, as well as the multi-scalar nature of contemporary anticapitalist politics that becomes relevant when we begin to investigate the politics of *Escanda* as an attempt to set up a permanent 'autonomous' place. Given capital's horizon of the 'real subsumption' of social life, permanent autonomous places must be understood as "compromised" from

the very beginning of their existence (Pickerill and Chatterton 2005; The Free Association 2006, 5), a condition that is reflected in the controversies in the UK anticapitalist movement over whether to squat, rent, or buy spaces for social centres (cf. Anonymous 2003a; Anonymous 2003b; Rogue Element 2005; Tore and Ccio 2005). More prosaically, the need every social centre has for funding or resources of some kind, even if these come, as they rather often do, from the sale of alcohol to its “network of activists, sympathisers and occasional visitors”, already implicates it in the dynamics of capital accumulation (Mudu 2004, 927; Harvey 1989, 238). “We are plugged, from top to bottom, into the megamachine, no one should have any illusions about that.” (Huber 1980, 45)

Given the real-life complexity of the politics of permanent anticapitalist places, there exists today a surprising lack of empirical investigation into the politics and constitution of such projects (Pickerill and Chatterton 2005). “How does newness come into the world? [...] What compromises, what deals, what betrayals of its secret nature must it make to stave off the wrecking crew, the exterminating angel, the guillotine?” (Rushdie 1988, 8) What compromises indeed: research into European urban movements of the 1980s reminds us that, while some managed to institutionalise social-movement influence and create spaces for oppositional thought and action, they also, “sometimes due to an increasing financial dependence on the neoliberal (local) state, [...] became functionalised as manufacturers of consent in a polarised urban society.” (Koehler and Wissen 2003, 945; Mayer 2003) Thus, to respond to the challenges issued above: yes of course Escanda is necessarily part of commodified and monetarised social networks – but we still do not know what that means, beyond simply asserting that every local strategy is always compromised; and yes, the project as a subject of will and power *might* be co-opted. But will it?

Beyond that, implicit in the ‘social centre strategy’ of creating places of anticapitalist practice and convergence is the hope that ‘our’ autonomous places, be they temporary or permanent, may coalesce in cycles, spread and grow into networks of alternative ways of living, into a world into which many worlds fit, a hope advanced also by the increasing availability of easy networking technology. This raises the question: do they grow? Do our spaces indeed link up, grow, protect each other from overcoding, conjugation, repression, from the guillotine and the exterminating angel? All these questions, we find, cannot be answered but through empirical investigation.

(iv) Intensive expansion: renewing energies in Asturias

The questions thus raised, about compromise and potential cooptation (monetary or otherwise), will be discussed in this section by investigating the crucial strategic claim made by Escanda, that regions in crisis like Asturias do indeed offer greater possibilities for radical politics, for a politics of alternative value practices, through an analysis of Escanda's flagship 'renewable energies' project. The first step in this will be to find out just how crisis-ridden, how 'abandoned' Asturias really is.

The political economies of Ronzón, Pola de Lena and Asturias

Escanda occupies a manorial building dominating the tiny agricultural mountain hamlet of Ronzón, whose population minus the inhabitants of Escanda is a full five persons. A fifteen-minute drive from Ronzón lies Pola de Lena, picturesquely nestled between a mountain and the gigantic highway connecting Madrid and the central plains to the North. Pola is home to about 9000 of the ca. 13000 inhabitants of the county (*Concejo de* Lena, in turn part of Asturias' mountainous Southern *cuencas mineras*, mining valleys. Lena's economy rests on two dying industries, coal mining, and cattle farming (including milk production). Agriculture is the dominant economic sector, but has always been characterised by a lack of profitability (Rodríguez and Menéndez 1992, 134-6), and it is today made viable primarily by European Union transfer funds, which are set to run out in 2012. In spite of efforts by the regional government to revitalise agriculture in Southern Asturias, Lena's most important economic sector is dying, and the threat of Brussels cutting off life support hangs over the region like Damocles' sword.⁶⁸

The story of coal mining is somewhat more complex, and it is the ups and downs – and ultimately terminal crisis – of this sector that have to a large extent shaped the social geography of most of Asturias. Although providing only a rough third of all employment in the *Concejo* through what "residual" mining activity remains (Rodríguez and Menéndez 1992, 141), the fate of mining is of central importance to the

⁶⁸ With the EU's eastward expansion, Asturias is in danger of losing its status as a region in need of development funding.

county, partly because it continues to form the base of local identity constructions;⁶⁹ and partly because, given the generally low employment rates in Lena and Asturias,⁷⁰ the generous system of early retirement benefits which Asturian mining unions managed to negotiate, where miners retire at the age of 45, taking 100% of their wage indefinitely, props up Lena's economy to a significant extent.

Prior to industrialisation, Asturias was a relatively isolated, peripheral region on the Northern rim of Spain. The small local bourgeoisie never accumulated enough capital to kick-start an endogenous industrialisation process, thus laying the foundation for a state-led development path beginning in the mid-19th century that continues to define the region to this day. (Koehler forthcoming; Koehler et al. 1998). State-led industrialisation failed to generate much economic growth until the first decades of the 20th century, when the two world wars and the fascist regime's drive for autarky produced a long boom in Asturias' coal industry, lasting until the late 1950s (Vazquez and Perez Rivero 1994).

As *Franquismo* softened its isolation in the late 1950s, Asturian mining's lack of competitiveness was exposed dramatically, leading to a crisis which exploded into open class conflict in 1962, when the militancy of the Asturian working class produced slogans in Barcelona and elsewhere: *Hay una luz en Asturias* – there is a light in Asturias! And: *Asturias marca el camino* – Asturias shows the way! (Koehler forthcoming) This industrial conflict caused investors to flee, forcing the government to renationalise the industry, buying social peace in the region through a socialisation of economic losses. The long-term economic decline that began in the late 1950s was then exacerbated by the increased economic openness following the end of fascism in 1975 (Vazquez 1994), and entry into the European Community in 1986, but the militant trade unions continued to play a crucial role, delaying and cushioning the massive job losses affecting Asturias (Koehler et al. 1998, 47-75).

The outcome of the struggles and restructurings that shaped Asturias is bleak: Asturias is a region with low employment rates, it has undergone an “environmental massacre,” (Del Castillo and Rivas 1988; CESA 2005) and shows negative demographic development. Leading positions at all levels of administration, trade unions, and many

⁶⁹ Interview with Tomas Fernandez Garcia, 29/11/06.

⁷⁰ In 2003, employment in Asturias stood at 49.6%, compared to 55% in Spain as a whole (Koehler forthcoming). Cf. also Rodriguez and Menendez (1992, 144).

other institutions continue to be occupied by representatives of a dying industrial sector, and collective political action occurs primarily in the defence of these industries. Asturias' state-civil society complex is characterised by the absence of a dynamic indigenous bourgeoisie, a paternalist/clientelist state and reactive, and in socio-technical terms deeply conservative, trade unions, a relation that is underpinned and doomed to death by the decaying industrial structure on which it rests. (Koehler forthcoming; Rodriguez and Menendez 1992; Castells and Vazquez 1994)

Old dogs...: redevelopment in Asturias, or 'death of a sales-pitch'

It is therefore not surprising that under these conditions, two crucial social actors in Asturias, trade unions on the one hand, and the regional government on the other, must remain stuck in the dilemma of their "defence of an obsolete past and the loss of the future." (Koehler forthcoming) The trade unions, for one, are capable of little but defensive action, during which they deploy their continued ability to mobilise large numbers of workers for militant actions in order to demand more government support for their members and the industry. In November 2005, miners mounted an effective road blockade, demanding that the central government allocate more money to the *Plan Carbon 2006-2012*, a programme of subsidies for the coal industry and workers. They demanded that workers continue to be able to retire at age 45, at one-hundred percent of their wages without age limits; and secondly, that the subsidies paid under the plan be such that they can maintain coal production at a higher level than currently proposed by the 'Socialist' central government (Alvarez and Fernandez 2005). This defence of the past paints a grim vision of a future with more environmental destruction, more clientelism, more slow cultural death. David Suarez Rodriguez, a member of the left regionalist *Bloque por Asturias* and sympathetic board member of the *Fundación Ronzón*, tells me that trade unions in Asturias have long ago ceased being social movements, and have become integral parts of the local, conservative power structure.

Trade unions have thus been singularly successful in defending their members' interests, in forcing concessions from governments at all levels, and in preventing many Asturians from falling into economic poverty. But in spite of all this to their credit, and in spite of their admirable militancy, we cannot help but conclude that the

Asturian working class has ceased showing the way: *se fue la luz en Asturias* – the light has gone out in Asturias.

Local and regional governments are less structurally tied to dying and destructive industries than the trade unions, but they, too, are mostly up to the ‘old tricks’ of competition states, trying to “lure buffaloes” (Palan 1998). Two ‘redevelopment’ strategies are being pursued here, both of which are configured around Asturias’ ancient ‘problem’ of the absence of a strong local bourgeoisie: the first is to create a regional growth centre combining industrial and service production in the developing urban cluster Oviedo-Gijón-Aviles, a project with so far limited success (Castells and Vazquez 1994). However, even if successful, this project would only exacerbate further the crisis affecting the *cuencas* in general, and Lena in particular, namely that of emigration and cultural decay. The second redevelopment strategy, highly relevant for Lena, is a ‘post-industrial’ growth project seeking to redefine and revalue Asturias as a land of natural beauty (Koehler forthcoming). The aim of this rebranding of Asturian spaces is to attract (eco-)tourism (*Ryanair* and *Easyjet* now both fly to Asturias), always the last resort of the abandoned place: if nobody wants to buy labour here, maybe even that can be turned into an advantage!⁷¹

Caught between two dying sectors, Lena is not industrial enough to attract large sums of money from the governmental Plan Carbon, nor ‘natural’ enough to effectively sell itself as a natural paradise: Pola’s motto, ‘gateway to Asturias’, refers to little more than its location right next to a major national highway. Nonetheless, Lena is trying to market itself as a destination for ‘rural tourism’, in a strategy that may be said to rest on three poles: first, attracting money in the form of sustainable tourism; second, on the development of local *artesanía* and ecological farming; which, third, is linked to attempts to promote a regional cultural identity, *Asturianismo*. The European Union is a major player in each of these strategies, as little that happens in Asturias today, a region that qualifies for funding from a wide range of EU funding streams, happens without involvement of one EU(-funded) agency or another.

Viewed from inside the Concejo de Lena, as of today the success or failure of these strategies is still an open question, but things are not looking too well. While

⁷¹ Cf. also Augé’s (1995) description of the potted cultural diversity being produced along French highways.

unemployment is not overly high (ca. 6%), employment rates are low and the town is visibly an old one: public squares, bars and cafes are dominated by old men, and there is little to engage (let alone employ) younger people – and insofar as there is work, it is “precarious, badly paid, and without rights.” (Prieto 2006) As a result, many young people leave the town as early as possible, while those who stay are left with little hope and, according to several of my interview partners, with high instances of drug abuse. Social self-organisation exists only marginally, and one of the most politically active and visible groups are the conservative old boys of the *Cazadores Lenenses*, the Hunters of Lena (Diez 2000) – while the local Red Cross, tellingly, forms the more progressive end of the spectrum. When the local administration, led by the up-and-coming Socialist politician Hugo Morán, managed to secure funding for a local women’s centre, they were incapable of finding enough activities to fill it – and called Escanda, asking them to organise some events there. The fear permeating Pola de Lena is therefore not one of social explosion *a la* France: it is one of simple cultural death by aging.

Asturias: abandoned by capital?

This description of the relationship between state and civil society in Asturias evokes echoes of Gramsci’s (1971, 55-90) analysis of the weakness of the Italian bourgeoisie, and its inability to play a hegemonic ‘leadership’ role. Except: in the Asturian case, the working class and its institutions are part of a regressive structure that, while providing relatively well for ‘its’ people – Asturias is, per capita, wealthier than the Spanish average (Pérez et al. 2004, 191) – perpetuates a set of relations where “the big problem that we have in Asturias is the lack of initiative.”⁷² As suggested in ch. III, the Fordist state and traditional trade unions play a similar role in this case vis-à-vis social flows: they ground and territorialise them, to such an extent that the flows that do escape, escape to the outside through emigration (Anes Alvarez and Ojeda 1994), while those that remain are slowly running into the sand (Castells 1994).

Can there be any space then for an anticapitalist strategy in a region where, on the face of it, the main problem appears to be the relative absence of deterritorialisation? What do anticapitalists do when the problem *appears* to be not too much capital(ism) but too little of it? But looking at the situation more closely, however, we find that the Asturian problem is not in fact one of ‘too little capital’, but one of ‘abandonment’ where *capital*

⁷² Interview with Tomas Fernandez Garcia, 29/11/05.

is both relatively absent, yet constantly present, where “absence is a reality as much as presence. Moreover, since ‘absenting’ is certainly a real process, what has become absent through such a process leaves not simply ‘nothing’, but a ‘determinate nothing’ structured by the specific process that brought it about.” (Bhaskar 1993, 60, 346, cited in Arthur 2002, 160)

How can this process of capital ‘absenting’ itself, of ‘abandoning’ a place like Asturias be understood? An explanation of the social geography of Asturias, one that, in many respects, it shares with the infamous ‘inner cities’ of the United States, requires us to refine the story of neoliberal capital as an expansive force engaged in its forward push through the new enclosures that I told above. Enclosure, I argued with Harvey (2003), was (part of) the ‘spatial fix’ that saved global capital from its crisis of overaccumulation in the 1970s and 80s. This created a social geography where anticapitalist struggles were more likely to occur at the frontline of this forward move, as struggles against enclosure (cf. Harvey 2003, 162-79). But if capital is thus moving to some place, it must necessarily also move *away from* some other place: conceptually (although probably not literally), the money that serves *Connex* to enclose the public transport system in Stockholm is the same money that was withdrawn from the Asturian coal mines, iron producers, and ship-builders. Hence, once again, Harvey’s (2000a, 36-86) notion of capital’s “uneven geographical development” (cf. Brand and Wissen 2006), wherein the production of spaces ‘abandoned’ by capital is the exact flipside of the process of the ‘enclosure’ of spaces by capital: one necessarily implies the other.

In Asturias, the global crisis of overaccumulation in the 1970s, and the specifically Spanish squeeze on uncompetitive businesses in the mid-80s around the country’s EU-accession, led to industrial reorganisation and, ultimately, deindustrialisation resulting from abandonment. The outcome of such a process in places with strong and militant trade unions tends to be high unemployment (Harvey 2000b, 43), but in Asturias the unions were strong enough to slow down and cushion the loss of jobs. The problem of low profitability, however, remained and today expresses itself in low rates of employment, and the need for massive government transfers.

This is the situation that much of Asturias finds itself in today: for decades its social geography has been produced by heavy and extractive industries, leaving deep scars

Ecologically, Asturias is one of Spain's most polluted regions (CESA 2005). Economically, a drive through one of the *cuencas* leading past unending rows of abandoned factories, mines and disused conveyor belts speaks volumes of the destruction of capital resulting from the long crisis of mining. And finally socio-politically, where, first, work has been so central in the formation of local and regional identities that it becomes very hard to change mentalities and explore alternative modes of social reproduction (Koehler forthcoming); and second, the particular socio-technical composition of mining industries has over a long time facilitated the development of intensely verticalist and clientelist political structures. The state is expected to provide for Asturias, and there is, according to David, a near-total lack of social mobilisation and horizontal interconnections between members of society: lines of power and resources flow upwards and downwards, not horizontally.

In such a situation, far from being entirely absent, the power of capital is present not only in the ruins of a former regime of accumulation, but also as the constant pressure to become more 'competitive', to attract investment, to fill the 'determinate nothing' that the departure of capital has left. This continued power is visible not only in the desperate attempts at 'redevelopment' described above, but also in current debates over 'competitiveness', essentially a beauty contest occurring at all scales of social organisation - supranationally (the EU's 'Lisbon process' being such an example), nationally, regionally, locally, etc (Hirsch 1998). But, in support of the thesis, crucial also in the setting up of Escanda, that autonomous places emerge more easily in "spaces where capitalism is less dominant" (Pickerill and Chatterton 2005), capital is also *absent*, or more precisely, the social geography produced by abandonment is more open, in two ways. First, prices for resources are low (since there is little moneyed demand for them), allowing autonomous 'places' to lay claim to land more easily - it is easier to squat or rent a house in which to set up a social centre in, say, Hackney, than on Oxford Circus. Second, as I will argue below, there exists, in conditions of abandonment, a substantially greater openness by a variety of social and governmental actors towards alternative modes of development, towards the kind of alternative value practices that Escanda is experimenting with.

...and new tricks? Escanda and alternative value practices in Asturias

This is the context in which Escanda is trying to promote alternative value practices through stimulating community controlled renewable energy production. The core of the renewable energies project consists of a study of the viability of renewable energy generation in Lena, attempting to both identify locations for potential generators (primarily wind- and hydro-power), and investigate the possibilities for creating a renewable energy cooperative in the Concejo. Other aspects of the project include the artisanal construction of a small windmill in Ronzón, using and producing renewable energies in the Escanda collective, teaching courses on renewables in the local school, and finally the accumulation of knowledge about community controlled renewable energies that would enable Escanda to become a specialist provider of knowledge about, for example, the construction of small windmills in non-monetarised exchange networks.

The aims of the project are, first, to exploit increasing disquiet about fossil fuels, in order to reduce dependence on the multinational corporations that often supply such fuels, and the wars that have to be fought to secure access to them. Second, given the 'verticalist' and clientelist structure of Asturian politics, to construct alternative, lateral social relations through the cooperative form, reenergising rural communities such as Ronzón and Pola (cf. Anonymous 2006). It may not sound like revolution: but the creation of non-commodified relations of production, distribution and consumption, coupled with a reduced dependency on environmentally destructive fossil fuels and large energy corporations, sounds like a promising attempt to begin creating 'the future in the present'. But such a project of course requires resources, also financial ones. And that money must come from somewhere, whether from governmental institutions, or from the small-scale sale of energy to the electricity grid, and it always comes with strings attached - which is where the questions of openness in regions in crisis, and the always-already compromised nature of permanent, placed anticapitalist projects begin to coincide.

Strategies and counterstrategies

The renewables study, concluded in autumn 2005, was funded by PRODER II (*Programma de Desarrollo Rural* - Programme for Rural Development), a Spanish government agency supporting endogenous rural development projects, in turn funded largely by the European Union. The programme forms part of a Europe-wide regional competitiveness and redevelopment strategy, the 'Objective 1' programme,

which aims to “support the takeoff of economic activities in [poorer] regions by providing them with the basic infrastructure they lack, whilst adapting and raising the level of trained human resources and encouraging investments in businesses.” (European Commission 2006) The keywords here are ‘human resources’, ‘investment’, and ‘takeoff’, suggesting that the European Union here is attempting to stimulate the de-territorialisation of social flows necessary for the emergence of ‘proper’ entrepreneurial capitalism. After all, the two ‘great movements’ of deterritorialisation that stood at the beginning of capital(ism) in Europe (‘takeoff’) were those of labour (‘human resources’) and money cum capital (‘investment’) (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 242-6). But the reality ‘on the ground’ of such funding tends to look rather more complicated than it appears from simply perusing some funder’s website.

Let us descend then from the lofty heights of programmes conceived in Brussels (the sphere of discipline, strategy, competitiveness and Bentham’s panopticon) to the hidden abode of really existing redevelopment, a sphere of adaptation, messiness and muddles of strategies, of administrative interests irreducible to discipline – and of anticapitalist strategies that are sometimes hard to discern from post-Fordist accumulation strategies. As we jump from Brussels to Madrid, and follow the money trail into the Asturian mountains and finally Pola, we arrive at a little office away from the town’s main square, right next to the town hall. The office is an outpost run by one administrator, but she is not the person who controls the flows of money and power here: for that, we need to shift our gaze from the little corner office to the much more imposing building gracing this square, Pola’s town hall, residence of *el alcalde* Hugo Morán. Morán is a powerful man: he is not only mayor, and the director of the local PRODER II branch – he is also the head of the *Fundación Ronzón*, as well as the president of the Asturian federation of municipalities. According to Maria, Morán is tipped to assume a ministerial post in the Socialist government in Madrid in a few years: he is young, and very much a rising star in Asturias and in Spain.

Without Morán, there would be no Escanda as we know it: first, as head of the foundation he was crucial in making the decision to lend the land in Ronzón to Escanda. In turn, the foundation’s decision was very much linked to the renewables project – where we return to Morán and his strategies, since he is the one running the

local PRODER office.⁷³ The Escandalos@s see him as a shrewd political player with a general openness towards and interest in grass-roots and alterglobalist projects (as he made clear to the founders in their initial discussions about leasing the land), without any particularly strong ideological leanings. And indeed, his position vis-à-vis Escanda's renewables project appears extremely pragmatic. At a press conference after an international seminar on renewable energies organised by Escanda he argued that "With the Kyoto protocol, administrations will play a fundamental role in reducing the quantity of emissions, which means that we need to go and look for initiatives that can achieve this." He also viewed "this project as a way to profitably employ the community's own resources, given that 'the costs of energy which the town hall has to deal with increase all the time, while income does not increase at the same pace. Therefore, if we could get the county to generate the resources it needs itself, the local economy would also be improved at the end.'" (cited in Ozamiz 2004)

For Morán, therefore, a successful renewables project in Escanda could have a number of benefits: it would improve the economic position of the Concejo; it would contribute to the search for new ways of producing and using energy under the pressure of popular opinion, the Kyoto accords, and the costs of environmental disasters; overt support for a 'radical' project like Escanda could shore up his 'domestic' political position vis-à-vis the leftist opposition party, *Izquierda Unida*; and all of these would improve his chances for a ministerial post in Madrid. Finally, Escanda's aim of creating networks of community controlled renewable energies could allow for a way out of the tension highlighted when the local administration rejected in 2001/2 an application by *Energía Hidroeléctrica de Navarra* to build a large-scale wind-farm in the Concejo (Asociación Escanda 2005). The tension lay between the administration's desire to attract investment on the one hand, and its attempt to market itself as a destination for green tourism on the other, a prospect that could easily be thwarted by siting a potentially unsightly large windfarm. In other words, supporting Escanda would have appeared to Morán as a perfect way to integrate a 'green' development strategy with a focus on rural tourism, and to reduce the dependency on external capital with its limited positive feedback effects into local economies (MacEwan 1999, 54-8).

⁷³ It should be pointed out here that the rules governing the foundation itself constitute a strategy that constrains even relatively powerful actors like Morán, insofar as its rules stipulate that the property be put to use as a non-profit institution promoting agricultural education. It would thus be hard to site a major hotel in the grounds.

Crisis and openness

Viewed exclusively from this strategic perspective, Escanda's project should be doomed from the outset, competing with powerful European pressures towards creating more competitive regions, and with a politically savvy local mayor, each of these strategies holding the funding strings.⁷⁴ However: as powerful as Escanda's local and trans-local institutional 'partners' might be, we need to recall the considerable political thought that went into Escanda as a project, thinking that in turn was embedded in decades-long learning processes in radical movements: never again the 1970s, never again hippies on the hill! We need to recall that the founders of Escanda consciously chose an 'abandoned' area as the location for their project, assuming that regions in crisis would be particularly open for experiments with alternative forms of social reproduction. Is this openness an illusion, or does the fact that Lena and Asturias are in crisis indeed open possibilities that allow Escanda to subvert the strategies of European funders? Of the mayor? Can contact with Escanda actually shape these strategies themselves, 'hybridising' them much in the way that Escobar (2001) would suggest? And maybe even more importantly, how do the people of Lena and beyond, those without overtly political strategies, those that see their town, their village, their farms or their jobs go to hell, relate to Escanda's attempt to create new, lateral social links and new forms of producing and using energy?

Given the relative youth of the Escanda collective, and the slow and incremental nature of the social change that is envisaged in the renewables project, it would be foolish to expect measurable results at this early stage. As a result, in the following discussion I will not be able to point to a specific increase in the production or use of renewables, or attempt to quantify the creation of 'new', horizontal social relations in the Concejo. The fact that the collective has successfully carried out measurements as to where renewables generation could viably occur is nothing more than a politically open prelude to the potential siting of a windmill or hydro generator. Similarly, the fact the Escandalos@s recently finished the construction of a small windmill supplying power to the house of their friend Tomas is an achievement, but in itself not particularly enlightening.

⁷⁴ Escanda is not entirely dependent on major project funding: the collective has a number of other resource and money-streams supporting it, from money earned in wage labour both in Pola and elsewhere in Europe; to personal resources of individuals, monetary and non-monetary; and the sale of educational products to local schools.

The goal of the following discussion is rather to investigate the strategic claim frequently made by anticapitalists that crises are moments of potential and productive openness, where there exists more space for the creation and expansion of alternative value practices, of life other-than-capital. This is a story about *possibilities* for social change, a story that is being written somewhere else as I write this story here: a story that is being written in Pola itself, right now, by the Escandalos@s and the inhabitants of Ronzón, Pola, and beyond.

Let me start with the latter, then: while there exists no systematic research on attitudes in Lena about renewable energies in general, and renewables cooperatives in particular, as part of the renewables study we did carry out a small, non-representative survey of 20 residents.⁷⁵ There was a lot of interest in the production and use of renewable energies, in particular among younger respondents (below the age of 45); many of those interested in renewables complained about the lack of information about and administrative support for renewable energy generation. The main reason people were interested in renewables was environmental, rather than economic. And although people were interested in the creation of a renewables cooperative in Lena, many also felt that the large-scale windfarm should have been sited in Lena, as it would have provided jobs and investment. Among this small sample there was substantial openness to the project of creating a renewables cooperative in Lena, but that openness was balanced by a lack of concrete information on one hand, and a certain cultural conservatism of particularly older people on the other. In this sense, the 'openness' talked about by Escanda and other activists might not necessarily be an openness for a specific project – but simply a general interest in something being done differently. Or, to use a notion we have already encountered in our analysis of riots, and of the Stockholm faredodgers: people's attitudes towards types of energy, as well as the associated relations of production and consumption, are indeterminate – they could go any number of ways.

To ascend one step in the local hierarchy then, to *el alcalde* Morán: his position I have above described as 'pragmatic', to watch and wait if Escanda can generate ideas and projects that can in turn generate some form of 'development' (movement of deterritorialisation) in Lena. In crises, it may be argued, actors in political systems seek

⁷⁵ Of which 8 women and 12 men; highest age 71, lowest 19; including pensioners, ex-miners, unemployed people, homemakers, construction workers, etc.

to select adaptation mechanisms that ensure systemic survival, and this selection, although path-dependent, occurs in a more open manner if the traditional systemic mechanisms do not provide solutions to the crisis. To grossly simplify: in a crisis, such as the rural exodus afflicting parts of Asturias, almost anything will do. From this perspective, it made eminent sense from the mayor's point of view to grant the land to Escanda, as the collective added one particularly creative actor potentially capable of coming up with solutions to Lena's problem to the mix of already existing attempts at 'redevelopment'. That they were 'anticapitalists' does not so much matter from this perspective of systemic adaptation.

Note that I am here not speculating about the possibility of recuperation of a not-yet existing renewables cooperative in Lena from the point of view of capitalist value practices: this possibility always exists in a politics that, as discussed above, is always-already "plugged into the megamachine" (Huber 1980), and never "pure" (The Free Association 2006), and the collective's need for financial resources has also led them to discuss the possibility of selling, on a small scale, energy to the local electricity grid. No, here, I am only talking about the possibility of such a cooperative emerging with tacit or overt support from local and other authorities, in a way that would almost certainly be impossible if there was major capital investment to be attracted or supported in a given region. The perspective of the local authority is, in this case, once again politically indeterminate – it could go either way, as long as the given systemic problem is solved. Thus, the local administration recently contracted Escanda to build a number of small windmills for them, in a relationship whose outcome remains an open question.

What of the perspective of PRODER and, by extension, the European Union? PRODER, the Spanish government, and the European Union through its 'objective 1' funding programmes, are attempting to stimulate the endogenous accumulation of capital in regions in crisis, and to create acquisitive, investment-minded neoliberal subjectivities – a project that is particularly relevant in a region like Asturias, where the prevalent type of subjectivity may be thought of as 'Fordist', or at least non-entrepreneurial, as it tends to involve a moral economy where money and dynamic intervention is expected to come from the outside: the state, foreign capital, etc. Contra this moral economy of expectations and clientelism, PRODER is seeking to generate in Lena activities

primarily in the tourism industry, and artisanship, involving self-motivated relations of production, and endogenous initiative. In their own words:

In terms of strategy, the programme [...] is structured around endogenous, local resources considered hallmarks of the region's unique identity that can be used as basic driving forces for diversification and economic reactivation of rural activities. [...] *Consolidating a lively, diversified, competitive productive fabric in the area* should be a fundamental aim of rural development programmes. In this respect, tourism has clearly proved to be the main factor for diversification in recent years. (READER 2005 – my emphasis)

Thus, in Lena PRODER has funded a number of hotels, and other investments in the tourism industry (Fanjul 2003) – and Escanda. Escanda, one should think, is not a project that would immediately appeal to an EU-agency hell-bent on generating some form of economic take-off in the area. After all, beyond being run by a group of anticapitalists,⁷⁶ it is a not-for profit institution, and after the departure of one of the founders none of the current members hail from Asturias. Aside from the fact that Morán is likely to have played a strong role in the decision to allocate money to Escanda; and aside from the fact that, as academics well know, any funding application and subsequent accounting for moneys always entails complex and sophisticated games of adapting proposals to funders needs while attempting to bend use of the money more towards ones own; I would argue that there are two arguments explaining why Escanda, and projects like it (that is: anticapitalist projects), are able to receive funds from EU-institutions.

The first argument returns to the similarity between neoliberal and contemporary left-libertarian discourses (cf. Łuk 2003): a critique of the (welfare) state as creating dependence, pliant subjectivities, immobility, bureaucratisation. Recall that the movements of 68' and the 1970s were not initially movements against neoliberalism, which had not raised its ugly head yet, but in part movements against the excesses of welfare state regulation in Europe and the United States. One does not need to accept the 'autonomist heresy' in its entirety to understand that the neoliberal revolution and contemporary anticapitalism, with its resurgence of 'anarchism', autonomism and other libertarian ideas (Graeber 2002; Carter and Moreland 2004b), share a common genealogy in the rejection of the over-regulation of social life that became necessary under welfare state capitalism. In fact, if we juxtapose the neoliberal subjectivity that

⁷⁶ At least Morán is aware of the fact that the collective was set up by people with connections to the alterglobalisation movement.

PRODER and other institutions aim to create with, on the one hand, the 'anarchic' subjectivities that are being produced in Escanda, and the Asturian mining-identity described above on the other, we will find that the former tend to have more in common with each other than each does with the latter. Both result from movements of deterritorialisation, attempting to break out flows from the strongly striated, verticalist spaces of Asturian politics, identities, and economics.

The moral economy of Asturian coal mining involves identities constructed around wage labour, not productive investment, unsurprising given the historical absence of a bourgeoisie. Initiative tends to come from the outside, and is viewed with some suspicion. The Spanish state is expected to take care of the Asturian working class, given the 'historic debt' the latter feels it is owed by the former for its sacrifices against Franco, and in the mines (Koehler forthcoming). And while the young leave in droves, older Asturians tend to be highly immobile. A 'post-fordist' subjectivity, whether 'neoliberal' or 'anarchist', by contrast, is expected to be highly mobile (geographically, and in terms of occupation), possibly multi-lingual, possess extensive skills ('human capital') that are constantly expanded on, be self-motivated, take initiative, be creative, and so on.⁷⁷ As a result, PRODER's bureaucrats may be forgiven for assuming that, given time, Escanda will surely become productive parts of the (potentially) emerging postfordist Asturian economy.⁷⁸

More specifically, and returning to the question of renewable energies: whereas Escanda might see renewable energies as an important source of independence from multinationals and a destructive industry, as well as an excellent way to form new horizontal social linkages, PRODER will understand renewables as promising new sites of endogenous capital accumulation, with a strengthening of an increasingly eroded social fabric thrown in as bonus. In this case, therefore, 'openness' for a project aiming to create new social relations is the result of an uncanny similarity in strategies between anticapitalist and neoliberal institutions, both seeking to create social relations other than those of mining-Fordism which obtain in Asturias. Understanding Fordism

⁷⁷ 'Newcomers' who enter 'activist' spaces such as meetings, camps, groups, squats, etc, tend to be exhorted not to expect others to do what they want to happen, but to take 'autonomous action', maybe organise a small group, to make their wishes come true. While the words used may be different, this is not a far cry from a motivational speech at the employment agency, reminding applicants that they should not expect the state to take care of them too much, but start marketing themselves, creating their own 'brand'.

⁷⁸ Especially if they have read the literature on radical spaces, which brims with warnings to this effect: Mayer (2003); Huber (1980, 43); Koehler and Wissen (2003, 945).

in Asturias as a particular combination between the deterritorialisation of flows effected by capital and a very strong re-territorialisation effected by trade unions and the state, the agenda shared by Escanda and neoliberals is the de-territorialisation of flows, or the 're-activation' of a nearly dead society. Where they differ, in turn, is the mode of *re*-territorialisation implied in their practices. It may be argued, once again, that de-territorialised flows are in principle politically indeterminate.

On the other hand, one may read PRODER's and Escanda's strategies as substantially less commensurable, and suggest that it is in fact the relative absence of other interesting projects to fund in the region which causes this openness. To illustrate this, compare the relationship between funder and funded in Asturias to the relationship between UK-government institutions and UK-based NGOs: the latter find themselves in an increasingly crowded market for subsidies, which in turn allows funders to impose ever-tighter conditions on groups receiving funding, to pull the strings ever tighter (Wallace 2004). In a 'sellers' market' like Asturias, however, where, according to Tomas, awareness of the possibility of receiving EU-funds is not particularly widespread in Pola, strings cannot be pulled particularly tightly. Which in turn increases the power of the funded group vis-à-vis the funders, in particular if we factor in the peculiar administrative logic that dictates that lower-level administrations must spend all moneys available to them so that these are not reduced in the next budget round.

We are thus left with a local PRODER office that must spend large sums of money in a sellers' market and can thus exercise very little control over the sellers. When the collective therefore handed in the final report of the renewables project, the local PRODER branch accepted the fact that the collective had not carried out all the activities it had originally promised. It was also tacitly accepted from the start that some of the funds connected to the renewables project would in fact be used to fund the setting-up and daily running of the collective. And finally, the Escandalos@s frequently found PRODER administrators and other local and regional government officials surprisingly open to their project, and even, as in the case of one regional government official responsible for agriculture and rural development, to the more anarchist/left-libertarian nature of the project.

To briefly sum up this discussion then: we have found that there is indeed substantially greater openness towards alternative projects in regions of crisis: the backyards of capital offer possibilities for a permanent, placed anticapitalist practice that do not obtain where struggles are against enclosure. But at the same time, there is also a greater chance of cooptation, given the structural similarity (as agents of deterritorialisation) between Escanda's and the various instances of the competition state. But that possibility, as I concluded from the discussion about the politics of place, always exists, and, as banal as that may sound: we simply have to deal with it. As The Free Association (2006, 5) reminds us: "there are no 'pure spaces' and there is no 'pure politics', and [...] we should welcome this. Because purity is also sterility."

v) Finale: extensive expansion, creating networks of autonomous places

We can thus identify an openness towards the creation of alternative value practices which obtains in abandoned regions, providing favourable conditions for locating anticapitalist projects. This would not come as a surprise to the above-mentioned critics of a politics of 'place', who would in response continue to argue that "while place matters, scale decides." (Swyngedouw 1997, 144; Harvey 2000a; Peck and Tickell 2002) In other words, even if Escanda were successful in creating non-commodified relations of production and distribution, how could the recuperation of these 'new' social relations into circuits of capital valorisation be prevented? One concept that has already been introduced to challenge the idea that capital controls space while 'we' can control only places is that of 'multi-scalar' activism: Escobar (2001, 163) cites the example of a Colombian campaign that resisted a development project at the local level, but augmented its power and resistance by engaging in networking at various scales of activity, from regional to national to transnational.

Escanda can tell a similar (though much less dramatic) story: when threatened with eviction by the foundation in 2003, the collective organised a multi-scalar campaign drawing on extensive national and transnational networks, also mobilising local support, and managed to stop the eviction as a result. Other examples of multi-scalar activism in Escanda include the various international seminars they have organised, which are attended by upwards of 60 participants from all across Europe and occasionally beyond. Further, the very idea of Escanda, that of a 'permanent anti-

capitalist convergence space' is a multi-scalar one, insofar as the very existence of the place on which movements from different places and with different foci converge allows for multi-scalarity to emerge (Routledge 2004): a number of projects have developed from within Escanda (such as the 'Trapese'-popular education roadshow touring Europe in the run-up to the G8 protests in Scotland, 2005), and Escanda-activists use the space to be active in a wide variety of projects and networks.

But we ultimately return to a dream that keeps popping up over and over again in the strategies of contemporary European anticapitalists: that of an *expansive* network of autonomous spaces, of alternative value practices that can avoid immediate recuperation. De Angelis (forthcoming) suggested that our integration into the circuits of capitalist value practices depends precisely on our ability to reproduce our livelihoods outside of capitalist market relations. Rather than asking: how self-sufficient is Escanda today, this should raise the question: to what extent is Escanda involved in the creation of networks that contribute to reducing their dependence on external funders on the one hand, and capitalist markets on the other? In how far are they actively constructing our 'own' scales of action, or spaces connecting our places?

So far, attempts have not been very successful. Escanda has, at two European Social Fora, in Paris (2003), and in Athens (2006) attempted to initiate a European 'network of autonomous spaces', and although the Athens workshop happened only very recently, it appears that not many new connections between existing collectives were formed.⁷⁹ Attempts to create networks of autonomous spaces are of course not new: Huber documents a number of ultimately failed attempts to create networks of alternative projects in Germany in the 1970s, arguing rather scathingly that the 'expansive' strategy, must necessarily face its own 'limits to growth', first politically – in the state as repressive institution; and second, economically, with their inability to coordinate large sets of inputs and outputs without sophisticated signalling systems such as markets (Huber 1980, 46-53; cf. Mudu 2004).

But does the relative failure of such 'utopian' projects in the past necessarily point to their failure in the future? It could be argued that the increased availability of tools enabling decentred networking (mobile phones, the internet, no-frills airlines) might

⁷⁹ There are also other such networking meetings, organised by other collectives: for example one of the more active squats in Barcelona, Can Pascual, is currently organising a meeting of rural collectives, the *Jornadas de Preocupacion rural 2006* (Days of rural preoccupation 2006).

enable the overcoming of such 'limits to growth' of networks of autonomous projects: our own anticapitalist 'technological fix' (Silver 2003) – can we, like capital, constantly displace our limits to growth through the application of new technologies? The answer, disappointingly, must be: only to some extent. For while some of our limits to growth may very well be amenable to a 'technological fix', others remain problems of social form more generally: *pace* Dyer-Witthford's (2006) inspiring attempt to think 'the commons' as the cell-form of a new 'commonism', in a thought positing a homology with the commodity as the cell-form of capitalism, our commons lack the uniquely self-expansive drive of capital and its commodity form (which it obtains through the twin mechanisms of intercapitalist competition, and class struggle). Thus, one of Escanda's early attempts to network autonomous projects in Europe, a website called 'skillsharing.org', intended to facilitate the transfer of skills between autonomous projects in Europe, failed due to disuse. While the existence of new networking technologies may therefore be a necessary condition for the emergence of self-sustaining and expansive networks of autonomous spaces, it is clearly not a sufficient one.

But lest we are left with the impression that nothing good can come of such networking attempts – that, in other words, our 'commons' are incapable of extensive growth or expansion, let me finish this section with an example of such networking that might involve interesting pointers to the future. Partly by default, partly by design, Escanda is increasingly building up a pool of specialist know-how regarding the artisanal construction of electricity-generating windmills. This know-how, together with the developing strength of the collective in popular education, produces a situation where members of the collective have travelled to other autonomous collectives in Spain, Finland, and France to teach courses on wind-mill construction, in an example of a non-monetarised gift-economy operating on an extremely loose principle of general (movement) reciprocity (Graeber 2001). In another example of the exchange of specialist knowledge through informal autonomous networks occurred when members of the collective publishing *Diagonal*, a biweekly radical newspaper published in Barcelona, asked the Escanda collective for advice about how to apply for European Union funds. Finally, the already-mentioned seed-exchange network is another example of such non-monetarised, extensive exchange.

These interactions hint at the possible emergence of a non-monetarised gift-economy with alternative principles of reciprocity. Such an economy would involve exchanges of information, know-how, people, goods along already established roads, electronic networks, air-routes, but only purists would take that to be a problem to be overcome rather than a simple fact of living in a society deeply spatially structured by centuries of imposition of capitalist discipline – and did not the Germanic tribes advance unto Rome using roads built by the Roman empire?

A final open-ended note on these types of exchanges – for open-ended is what this chapter must remain: utopian Socialism has often argued that the specialisation of productive activities and work is, if not at the root of all evil, then surely an aspect of contemporary social production that must be overcome, recalling the young Marx' dream "to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic." (Marx and Engels 1978, 160) Contrary to this rejection of specialisation that still lives happily in contemporary anticapitalist circles, I would argue that any emerging network of autonomous spaces would be vastly strengthened by the development of specialised pools of knowledge – primarily because otherwise, each collective would have to invest scarce energies into re-inventing the wheel (or the windmill), making it very unlikely that they would be able to ensure their economic survival. Much as we have developed something that a management consultant might call 'best practice' around organising summit protests in networks spanning North America and Europe in order to counter the 'best practice' of European policing, so we can develop best practices of setting up collectives, and our ability to coordinate the interaction of various knowledge nodes across at least this continent would greatly enhance our sustainability, permanence, and ultimately extend our capacity to live alternative value practices within such networks of non-monetarised exchange.

Much of this process is still in its infancy, where after this movement's 'heroic' phase, collectives not unlike Escanda are being set up in many places in Europe. In this context, I hope this analysis of the politics of Escanda as characterised by a particular openness as a result of crisis; of the intersecting, competing, and occasionally mutually reinforcing strategies of a variety of actors in this open setting; and ultimately of the potential of Escanda to sustain and expand (both internally and externally) their domain of alternative value practices can be usefully employed in developing further

the politics of permanent autonomous places. A discussion of the possibilities of networking such a politics will therefore form the subject of this thesis' concluding chapter.

Chapter VII

**CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A DECENTRED
COUNTERHEGEMONY?**

(i) The story thus far...

The overall question that has from its inception, and through various transformations, animated this thesis, was always this: how do we effectively fight capital in the European anticapitalist movement? More specifically, I aimed to trace the development of anticapitalist thought and practice from its spectacular return to the stage of global politics in the militant summit protests, to the more embedded, everyday attempts to create and sustain social relations, *worlds* other than the one being created by capital. The thesis therefore began with an inquiry into the ruptural politics of militant anti-summit protests, where, drawing on a radicalised reading of Emile Durkheim, and concepts developed by Deleuze and Guattari, I argued that against the closure of social space effected under conditions of neoliberal hegemony, such events can generate an 'effervescence' which can turn the captured and striated social flows of desire into 'lines of flight' which open up new spaces, create new possibilities. These energies, however, are in principle politically *indeterminate*, that is, short of their connecting with other lines in the construction of new social spaces they either become subject to repression/recuperation, or, worse, turn into fascist lines of abolition. More succinctly: militant protests, riots, can be empowering moments, but they can never be enough to develop a constructive, left-libertarian anticapitalist politics. They only develop their full political meaning through articulation to wider practico-discursive networks where the immediate challenge to state power and capital's enclosure that is embodied in a riot can link to other practices, mutually constituting each other's meanings.

From an analysis of those riotous moments, we turned to a genealogy of contemporary European anticapitalism, attempting to understand how the ethico-political field constituting that movement came into being in a process beginning in the late 60s, in the rebellion sweeping through Europe in those years, in the rejection of the politics of trade unions and communist parties. In the French, Italian and German autonomous

movements we saw the emergence of a networked politics of desire, everyday life, and refusal, a politics that, rather than push for increased wages and a *right to work*, advocated the *refusal of work* and sought to create, against the ever-faster encroachment of state and capital into every nook and cranny of life, autonomous spaces and geographies. In turn, we began to understand that these politics were not simply a rejection of parties and trade unions as hierarchical ‘apparatuses of capture’ but also related to changes in the regime of accumulation as we moved from fordist to neoliberal capitalism: where the former had been an intensive regime of accumulation, producing surplus through productivity-increases at the point of production, the latter is primarily based on extensive accumulation, producing surplus through opening up new spaces for capital investment and accumulation. The struggles that came to define today’s anticapitalist movement, we found, were precisely struggles that revolved around the defence, creation, and/or extension of such spaces not (yet) subjected to the logic of capital. Finally, we saw how these struggles, decomposed and isolated during the heyday of the neoliberal offensive, slowly began to link up with each other throughout the 1990s, creating submerged networks, writing ‘off-stage’ transcripts of resistance that finally, in the ‘effervescent’ moment of Seattle, exploded onto the global media stage in what is often seen as our movement’s ‘coming out party’: it was in Seattle that we demonstrated that, against the neoliberal slogan that ‘There Is No Alternative’, ‘other worlds are possible’.

In chs. II and III we had thus seen that our spectacular politics were able to create spaces, practical and discursive, where these spaces had increasingly been closed off during the neoliberal offensive – but also that the effectiveness of such politics would quickly reach their limits (through habituation, repetition, or lack of connection to other practices). Having opened these spaces, we were faced with the question of how to fill them, how to create the ‘other worlds’ we so loudly proclaimed were possible. In order to answer this question, I argued that we first needed to understand how capital managed to set the limits of the possible in our everyday lives, to convince everyone, beyond critiques, accepted or not, of the destructive tendencies of neoliberal capital, that we are, naturally, selfish individuals. The problematic, in other words, was the same that already exercised Gramsci when he developed his understanding of ‘hegemony’: of how we come to love capital, how it becomes hegemonic.

In a wide-ranging argument, drawing on a tradition of (structuralist) Marxist theorising from Gramsci to Althusser, Deleuze and Guattari and Bourdieu on the one hand, and analyses of the capitalist value form from Marx to Rubin, Arthur and Heinrich on the other, I argued that the construction of pliant subjectivities under conditions of Fordist accumulation occurred through a series of disciplinary institutions (especially schools and the family). By contrast, and in part because neoliberalism as an accumulation strategy relies on the enclosure of such disciplinary institutions, neoliberal hegemony rested on our constant (re)enactment of what I called a 'market habitus' as a result of the ever-increasing enclosure and 'value-forming' of formerly non-market spaces, their conjugation by the capitalist axiomatic. In other words, if neoliberal capital tends towards the enclosure of spaces not (yet) subject to the logic of capitalist value; and if we therefore, in more and more spheres of our everyday lives, are interpellated into capitalist social relations; then we cannot but become ever-more accustomed to this market habitus, which, insofar as we have fewer and fewer spaces where we can enact value logics other than those of capital, increasingly comes to constitute our very real limits of the possible.

But since the question was not only how capital works its magic, but also of how we can resist it, against the somewhat depressingly structuralist assumptions of Althusser and the German value critics, I drew on recent work by de Angelis and David Graeber to show the contested nature of this process of the imposition of capitalist value logics on our lives: suggesting that life everywhere and all the time produces social practices governed by logics other-than-capital - 'alternative value practices'. Our 'counterhegemonic' potential therefore lay in the creation, defence, and/or extension of social spaces not conjugated by the axiomatic, where we could practice logics other than capital, and consequently produce and reproduce subjectivities other than those generated by and within capitalist market relations.

In turn, this threw up two questions: first, what are the actual politics of attempting to create, or sustain and defend an existing, 'alternative value practice' in Western Europe; and second, how could 'we' answer David Harvey's (1996, 324) sympathetic challenge to 'utopian' (others might say, 'prefigurative') anticapitalist politics, namely that we might be good at controlling 'places', but that capital necessarily retained control of the 'spaces' between and connecting places, therefore making sure that such placed utopias would be recuperated. Chs. V and VI therefore analysed the politics of

two European anticapitalist strategies, attempting to understand their specific impact, their political potential, and the social and political terrain on which they moved. In addition, by doing fieldwork in two very different locations I aimed to both demonstrate the different terrain on which anticapitalist projects struggle as a result of what Harvey calls the 'uneven geographical development' of capital, but to nonetheless show their commonality in the creation, defence, and/or expansion of alternative value practices.

In ch. V, I analysed the Stockholm-based Planka.nu campaign, which concerns itself with facilitating, organising and politicising the widespread practice of *faredodging* on the city's privatised subways. While politically efficacious insofar as it reduced profit-margins and challenged hegemonic representations of Swedish society, *folkhemmet*, we once again found that the wider political effects of *faredodging* understood as deterritorialised, everyday instances of refusal depended on its political articulation into wider movement projects: it was this articulation, this politicisation of a politically indeterminate practice of freely appropriating use value that planka.nu provided. While the campaign was therefore politically efficacious insofar as it managed to politicise the practice of *faredodging*, and prevent its subsumption under a disciplinary discourse of juvenile delinquency, thus providing some form of 'protection' from repression or re-articulation; and insofar as it succeeded in creating a debate around free movement in the city and privatisation, we also found that it fell short on one of the counts that crucially distinguishes contemporary anticapitalist politics from those pie-in-the-sky revolutions of the Socialisms of old: to be a *prefigurative* politics, a politics that begins to create a new society in the shell of the old (Graeber 2004b).

The second 'case study' was of Escanda, an anticapitalist collective in Asturias, in the North of Spain: unlike planka.nu, the Escanda collective sought to create a permanent, intentional anticapitalist community or 'convergence space' in an area largely 'abandoned' by capital. In this peculiar combination of the simultaneous presence/absence of capital, I found that there existed, at all social and administrative levels, a substantial openness towards experimentation with alternative value practices – towards placed strategies of creating alternative ways of living, of 'prefigurative politics'. At the same time, however, partly because of an overlap between the 'deterritorialising' strategies of both the Escanda-collective and European Union institutions funding the collective – both of which trying to break up the strongly

stratified, nearly petrified flows of social life in Asturias – this openness also implied a high potential for rearticulation of Escanda’s projects seeking to create new, horizontal, non-monetarised social connections, in particular its renewable energies project, to potential post-fordist accumulation strategies. Insofar as Escanda and other social actors (the EU, the mayor, etc.) shared an interest in deterritorialisation, the means used in that deterritorialisation were once again relatively indeterminate with respect to their mode of reterritorialisation.

One of the key conclusions from the two case studies was thus that their local success depended very much on the extra- or translocal connections and networks into which these projects were integrated, a fact already pointed out by critical geographers arguing for what has been termed ‘multi-scalar activism’ as the only way to challenge the similarly multi-scalar networks of capital (Escobar 2001). Which is where we return to a point made in the discussion of the capitalist value form in ch. IV: de Angelis argues that we become subject to the disciplinary pressures of capitalist markets to the extent that we depend on these markets for the reproduction of our livelihoods. This point must also apply to collective subjects, like Escanda: to the extent that it is dependent for its reproduction on market relations, it will become subject to the resulting disciplinary pressures. Conversely, to the extent that it is able to be part of extensive translocal networks that we might think of as non-monetarised ‘gift-economies’, it would be able to evade these pressures and contribute to the construction of sustainable social relations other-than capital.

(ii) ...and now, the conclusion: Indeterminacy and counterhegemony

What then are the more general conclusions we can draw from the story told here as a whole? To attempt such a summary is tricky: not only because of the necessarily diverse nature of the theoretical concepts employed in analysing a set of very different practices in the European anticapitalist movement – rioting, faredodging and its insurers, producing renewable energies in Asturias – but because our politics have always resisted easy reduction to one common denominator. On one level, this thesis has simply been an attempt to grasp that very diversity and understand the effectiveness of these practices in light of its common enemy: capital. The analysis in ch. IV, and the subsequent case studies, fleshed out the principle that has underpinned

this movement from its inception, what the Zapatistas called its 'one No (to the capitalist axiomatic/value form), and its many Yeses (alternative value practices).

But is there anything that we have learnt after this journey that goes beyond this rather descriptive point? In all my three 'case studies' I found that their politics ultimately were *indeterminate* from the perspective of each single practice, campaign, or struggle. That their meaning and effectiveness depended to a large extent on the connections they were able to make to other struggles, campaigns, events, discourses, on their embeddedness in wider networks of struggle. The riot as such means little without its embedding in networks of discourses and practices within which it becomes a left-libertarian challenge to state and capital; faredodging means little without politicising it by linking it to a political discourse and project; in turn, Planka.nu, which has sought to provide these meanings and connections to faredodging, can only do so because, or insofar as it is itself embedded in wider networks of political strategies, namely the European autonomous/anticapitalist movement. However, it fell short of providing 'solutions' to the question of how to organise public transport partly because the struggles that exist around the globe on this issue have not developed the same strong translocal networks and learning processes that have arisen for example around struggles against water privatisation (Terhorst et al. 2005).

Escanda, finally, as an example of 'placed' resistance (as opposed to simply being an event or a 'campaign') is relatively 'thick' with meaning, but we once again found that the sustainability and transformative potential of their projects depend on their links to wider networks of flows of resources, knowledge, production, exchange, etc. Post-fordist accumulation strategy, or a step towards the creation of networks of cooperative energy production and consumption in Asturias and beyond: it all depends on how their local project can be articulated to other practices, either capitalist market practices, or non-monetarised circuits of flows. Deleuze and Guattari (2004b, 252-3) remind us that the line of flight is a line of *flight*, rather than one of *abolition*, only insofar as it connects with other lines to form new intensities, new spaces, ultimately new forms of territorialisation beyond those of state and capital. The research contained in this thesis substantiates this assertion, which in turn is crucial for conceptualising a politics that remains 'minoritarian' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b, 116-8), and yet is able to articulate a challenge to the vast and destructive power of capital. Whether our practices can become constitutive of self-sustaining and expanding non-

monetarised circuits of common production, or whether they plug, or are plugged back into capitalist circuits of valorisation: it's the connections, stupid!

I have suggested that our counterhegemonic potential lies in the creation, defence and extension of spaces governed by value logics other than those of capital, where we can learn to be other than capital, where different subjectivities are produced. But given the argument made here, that the political meaning of each of these alternative value practices can only be constituted in and through networks extending far beyond each practice, we must conclude that our counterhegemonic potential lies not only in the practices as such, but in the networks we manage to construct between them. If we accept the argument advanced in chapter IV, that capital conjugates ever-longer networks of flows, networks which are organised through what I called its 'placeless centre' of the value form/the axiomatic; and that it is through our ever-increasing interpellation into these networks of capitalist value practices that capital's 'habitual' hegemony is constituted, that we increasingly become the selfish individuals of liberal mythology; and if we in turn accept the argument that our ability to challenge and push back capital's power over our lives, to be 'counterhegemonic', depends on our ability to construct networks of flows *not* conjugated to the capitalist axiomatic – then we are faced with an interesting *homology*, one already hinted at in ch. VI: between the ever-expanding networks of capital, and the (hopefully) expanding networks of anticapitalism, or alternative value practices.⁸⁰

The homology of capital and anti-capital

“Homologous... *adj.* **1.** Corresponding or similar in position, value, structure, or function. **2.** *Biol.* Similar in structure and evolutionary origin, though not necessarily in function... **3.** *Immunol.* Relating to the correspondence between an antigen and its antibody.” (Berube et al. 1993, 651 – emphasis in the original)

This homology between the networks of capital and networks of anti-, or more precisely, non-capitalist practices exists, particularly when viewed from a Western European perspective, because, first, the ground or space on which we struggle against capital and on which alternative value practices arise is always-already partly structured by capital. In our Swedish example, on the one hand by the hegemony of

⁸⁰ A thought indebted both to Dyer-Witheford's (2006) thought-provoking paper, and Gramsci's (1971) more general work on hegemony, where the thought that our politics must take into account, and somehow *mirror*, the structures of capital's power.

Swedish social democracy as a particular form of organising the accumulation of capital, and on the other by the neoliberal offensive and its encounter with the former. In the Spanish case, by the environmentally and socially destructive social geography of extractive industries, and subsequently by the flight of the capital organising this extraction. Second, following Nunes' (2005) suggestion, because the form in which we conceive of anticapitalist struggle and its effectiveness in our movement, the network form, is one that becomes generalised precisely because of the global movement of capital.

Homology suggests similarity, not sameness. And if capital, the villain in this piece, must play the role of the antigen – the virus – then the question arises: is the antibody, anticapitalist practice understood as the defence, creation, and extension of alternative value practices, strong enough to check the viral spread of capitalist social relations? Clearly, it is not, and the difference in strength lies in the different structure of the networks that are being organised by 'antigen' and 'antibody' respectively: even if we accept the suggestion that that the 'cell-form' of the antibody/anticapitalist movement is 'the common' – that, in other words, 'our' networks too have a placeless centre around which they can organise – defined as "a good produced to be shared in association" (Dyer-Witheford 2006) then we are faced with the challenge of realising that 'our' placeless centre lacks, must lack the uniquely *expansive* drive of capital's placeless centre, the value form. This capitalist value form may be understood as a machine that, powered by its engine of living labour/creative life, acts back onto that engine by constantly pushing it to ever-greater productivity, new enclosures, driven by the twin forces of inter-capitalist competition and the dynamism and struggles of living labour/life itself, which always posits the danger of evading and/or exceeding capital's control. 'Our' networks, as it were, are of course powered by the same engine: life itself, living labour, productive desire, whatever name we choose to give to the ceaseless processes of becoming that we produce and that produce us. But in our case, this engine is not harnessed in the same way, has never generated the same power.

Against the Cynics: a short rant

The argument developed here, that capital is a uniquely powerful and expansive force of a kind never before or since encountered in human history, is one that underpins a number of arguments that are traditionally deployed in critiques of anticapitalist

practice in Europe and beyond: that occupied social centres in cities are likely to become part of local redevelopment and even gentrification strategies (Koehler and Wissen 2003); that many of 'our' struggles are too place-based to resist capital's control of space (Harvey 1996, 324; Swyngedouw 1997, 144); that collectives like Escanda are places where people *decide* to live, whereas capital's axiomatic, as argued in ch. IV, works its magic precisely without needing to produce a particular code or ideology (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a, 270-2). All these are versions of saying the same thing, that capital is history's most effective virus ever, tending *all by itself* (as self-valorising value) towards the 'real subsumption' of all life.

From this position, we could conclude that nothing that we could come up with consciously could ever rival this force. In order for this not to lead to defeatism, we would then have to argue that it is *within* the self-expansive movement of capital that the possibilities for its overcoming lie. Since the capitalist axiomatic is more powerful than the codes it articulates or destroys (and subsequently resurrects in its service), we can only hope that the self-expansive movement of the axiomatic will provide us, magically, with the means for its overcoming. This is the position taken by, for example, Hardt and Negri in *Empire*, Deleuze and Guattari (2004a, 36-7) in *Anti-Oedipus*, and certainly Marx when he assumed that capital would lay the grounds for the emergence of communism (however precisely he may have envisaged that transition), rendering any defence of 'traditional' social relations reactionary, since we must wait for capital to run its course, or even assist in this process: recall the injunction to "push through Empire to come out the other side" (Hardt and Negri 2000, 206), or Marx' admiration for capital's tendency to melt all that is solid into air and profane all that is holy (Marx and Engels 1978, 476). The trick with this position is that it takes historical agency, history, out of our hands and places it in the movement of capital. Capital is too powerful, so we leave its overcoming to history, in turn driven by capital itself - over which, although it is driven by 'living labour', we precisely have no collective control. Karl Kautsky and his turn-of-the-last century social democrats would have been proud. On this reading, to paraphrase Kautsky, 'anticapitalism is a revolutionary movement, but not a movement that makes the revolution.'⁸¹

⁸¹ Kautsky suggested that "the Social Democratic Party is a revolutionary party, but not a party that makes the revolution." (1972, 52)

This position, I believe, is the horizon towards which the majority of critiques of initiatives that try to construct worlds other than capital in the now, critiques that ceaselessly refer to capital's amazing power to commodify, reabsorb, capture and co-opt ultimately must tend. Not that these critiques are (necessarily) wrong. Given the rather dismal record of 'intentional anticapitalist communities' in getting rid of capital, they are quite possibly right. But in how far do they help us, by once again stating the obvious fact of capital's amazing power? These critiques wield the iron hammer of history against hope and contingency, are deeply disempowering: 'yes, we know all that - now what do we do?'⁸² Such critiques usually end up with a variation on traditional Marxist developmentalism. Which is only logical: if capital is the strongest social force ever to exist; and if all our attempts to construct practices other than capital must, in the long run, be met with destruction or incorporation; there can therefore be no other way than to push through Empire. The fact that this is not a political strategy but an apocalyptic vision in which millions or billions might die and the global ecosystem be damaged beyond recognition seems to not be a problem, nor is the fact that it is a strategy articulated from a highly privileged, often Eurocentric position. In a sharp rebuke of such developmentalist dystopias, De Angelis (forthcoming) comments that the perspective that "alternatives can be built by 'pushing through' empire and meeting at the other end of the tunnel" is certainly "not something you want to recommend for example to the central American indigenous struggling against the enclosure of their lands through the Plan Puebla-Panama."

This Eurocentric defeatism, however, is not the only politics that can be read from a realisation of capital's uniquely expansive power. An alternative position, one that I read out of the works of Graeber (2001), Escobar (2001) or De Angelis (forthcoming), would acknowledge this unprecedented power of capital to articulate, conjugate and co-opt - but in turn affirm the incompleteness of these processes, their fragility, and the ever-present possibility that networks of practices 'other-than-capital' (that is, organised along different logics or values than those of capital) can coalesce into sustainable and even self-expanding networks. In the search for this logic of self-expansion, however, we must take care never to create something that would, like the vampire of capital, come back to haunt us: because the secret of capital's self-expansion is of course precisely its ability to come to dominate its human creators. In our search

⁸² Hence Deleuze and Guattari's disavowal of 'History' (rather than historical scholarship per se) (2004b, 25).

for an other-than-capital we must resist the temptation, in the face of capital's awesome power, to hand agency back to history, which on this reading in fact means 'capital'. We must, as Graeber argues, be mindful of capital's ability to incorporate, and yet look for the radical potentialities that lie in alternative value practices. We must never succumb to the cynicism of the old Marxist who can brilliantly explain how, in a society dominated by capital, any alternative value practice is always-already doomed to become a cog in the machine and point out against this cynicism, even if it entails a portion of naiveté, the transformative potential of such practices (Graeber 2001, 157-227).

Of course, the cynics have an easy counterargument against this kind of 'naïve' search for the transformative potential of 'alternative value practices', namely that capital in fact relies on these kinds of creative life practices for its expansion and reproduction, specifically insofar as these practices suggest new technological or product fixes. In this vein (though as the result of empirical inquiry, rather than theoretical fiat), Mayer (2003) and Huber (1980) argue that the urban 'alternative movement' of the 1970s and 1980s in Germany became, unwittingly, part of the process of neoliberal restructuring by developing innovative ways of service distribution, making them attractive partners for local councils in neoliberal 'poverty reduction' strategies.

More generally, if we take the 'autonomist heresy' (at least partially) seriously, then every one of capital's major 'fixes' has been a direct response to the creative practices and struggles of 'living labour' (Silver 2003). If this is so, and even if they adopt the more limited 'hybrid thesis' that living labour/life is creative, but so, even if only in a 'vampiric' way, is capital, then we arrive at the proposition that, since capital lives and expands itself (since capital is self-valorising value only by virtue of its being powered by the energies of labour) by feeding on our creative activities, any such creative activity is necessarily doomed to be recuperated. Conclusion: let us stop all creative life activity – since it is likely to only prolong *capitalism* by making it more adaptive and reducing 'strain' – until such a time where capital has died more or less of its own accord. Alternatively, and here we return to Hardt and Negri's horror-vision, we will continue our creative life processes (an obviously somewhat more sensible position) until such a time that we have pushed through Empire and come out the other side. In this proposition, there can be no defence of place, since Hardt and Negri have ruled

out any such project as necessarily conservative. And we wouldn't want to stand in the way of progress and 'pushing through Empire', would we?

To be clear: I am not primarily challenging these theories and theorists on conceptual grounds here (which is not to say that such a challenge can and should not be made), but on the grounds that their theories and concepts do not and cannot yield an emancipatory politics on the grounds of which European 'radicals' can meet, for example, Latin American indigenous movements concerned, in part, with their physical and cultural survival, or Indian farmers concerned with biodiversity and food security. A politics that is serious about trying to create *un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos* (a world into which many worlds fit) cannot be articulated on the grounds of a theory where capital controls social space to such an extent that anticapitalism must emerge from an abstract and potentially yet-to-be-discovered (or produced) outside; nor on the grounds of what is ultimately old-fashioned Marxist developmentalism in autonomist baggy pants and hooded sweaters.

I have attempted to develop in this thesis a position that is both theoretically coherent, *and* which can be articulated to understand and develop further some of the politics of the contemporary anticapitalist movement. It is a theory and politics that, following Rosa Luxemburg's motto, is "high on life, in spite of it all" (Laschitz 1996). A politics that is not blind to the awesome power of capital to conjugate, to rearticulate, co-opt, that is, the power of capital to turn to its advantage precisely *everything* that we could come up with to subvert it. A politics, then, that does not abandon critical (and Marxist) inquiry into the power of capital, but that retains a hope in life, in the powers of human creativity and collective (if distributed, non-linear) agency to remake our world, and to create a life despite capital, and maybe, at some point, beyond capital. A politics that remains aware of 'it all', and yet always remains 'high on life'. No politics can ever be fully secure against attempts at recuperation, whether economically (directly into circuits of capital valorisation) or politically (into stabilising modes of regulation). As a result, the search for purity can only ever produce political stasis: purity is death (cf. The Free Association 2006).

Un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos: but how?

So we finally return, after some dangerous mixing of metaphors (machinic and immunological) and concatenation of concepts to the question of counterhegemony. Neoliberal capital's hegemony is the outcome of networked processes of value-forming social life, organised around a stable yet placeless centre. The potentially counterhegemonic networks of what Dyer-Witheford (2006) suggested we call 'commonism' would by contrast be de-centred, as 'the commons' is necessarily a form of social organisation that is diverse and locally specific. This is why I have coined the term 'decentred counterhegemony' for this (potential) network of alternative value practices. But how would it work: for having dismissed the politics of those I above called 'cynics', I have done nothing to weaken their theoretical challenge. How to deal with the fact that neoliberal capital controls spaces, or more exactly, relations between places, and therefore also between commons? Given this, and the fact that 'the commons' *lack* the internal dynamism of the commodity form, our networks of alternative value practices have to, first, rely on what we might call 'simple' human creativity, and therefore 'simple expansion' (I am of course thinking here of Marx' concepts of 'simple' and 'expanded reproduction'), as opposed to the turbo-charged expansion of the commodity (where dead labour acts back upon living labour to force the latter into ever-more productive activity). Which, as I have argued, is as it should be, for I doubt that we want to unleash yet another viral growth like capital onto the world.

Second, in order to protect the 'simple expansion' of our commons from the 'expanded expansion' of the commodity - here is where we return to what I suggested was the conclusion that arose from the case studies analysed in this thesis: it's the connections, stupid! - we need to focus our attention on the multi-scalar connections between places, between commons, on the way we construct our networks, on the machines that animate them. This is where we need to look for the secret of our ability to resist the conjugation of our spaces to the capitalist axiomatic: rather than looking for inherently expansive mechanisms to rival capital, and of course, rather than waiting for capital to do all the work and riding into commu/onism on its back, we need to look for (from an analytical/academic perspective) and build (from a political perspective) apparatuses or machines of counterpower, like those identified by Graeber (2004b, 32), drawing on the work of Pierre Clastres (1987). Apparatuses that both construct and animate our networks, and can protect them from conjugation to the axiomatic. Such

'protection' is of course not, can never be, total: we have yet to find some-*thing* that cannot be conjugated, recuperated, commodified.

In this process of constructing such apparatuses, we can draw on several important sources of knowledge: on what might be called 'ethnographic' knowledge of the kind that Karl Polanyi and David Graeber (drawing partly on the work of Marcel Mauss) refer to when they describe non-monetarised exchange networks existing outside of Europe (Graeber 2001; Polanyi 1957); on the vast literature on 'alternative' or 'solidaristic economics' of various kinds (cf. Wall 2005), from LETS-schemes, to Michael Albert's 'ParEcon' (2003), to proposals for money with inbuilt anti-accumulation machines, and beyond; and finally, not in the realm of political economy but on the other hand much closer to the experience of many European anticapitalist activists, on the 'apparatuses of counterpower' that we have put in place, in networks, meetings, and groups, to guard against the emergence of strong leaders.

It is in the gathering, synthesis and dissemination of such knowledge within social movements that 'intellectuals' can play a role in this important process of the construction of counterpower. But to be entirely clear: the development and construction of such machines, if it is to occur, is not a process in which 'intellectuals' will or even should play a leading role. In this, I must, for once, agree with Hardt and Negri (2002, 185) when they suggest that

"[s]ometimes political theorizing runs up against obstacles that only practice can solve. [...] The example that strikes us as most significant in this regard is that way that Marx responded to the Paris Commune. Ever since his early writings he had been very skeptical of giving any positive content to the notion of communism, but suddenly the Parisian proletariat storms the heavens establishing its Commune and he learns from them more clearly in practical terms what communism can mean, how the state can be abolished, how democracy can be extended absolutely, and so forth. His thought could not move forward without the practical advances of the Parisian proletariat."

Following David Graeber's (2004b, 12) suggestions on the role of what he terms an 'anarchist anthropology', we need to "look at those who are creating viable alternatives, try to figure out what might be the larger implications of what they are (already) doing, and then offer those ideas back [...] as contributions, possibilities – as gifts."

This, then, is the conclusion, unsatisfying maybe to those who were expecting The Answer to the entirely immodest question asked at the outset – how do we fight neoliberal capital effectively? – that our practices, while locally transformative as I have demonstrated, are indeterminate with respect to their articulation into wider networks of value practices, capitalist, or ‘alternative’ ones. And that, since their political meaning is constructed only as the result of the articulation into such wider networks, it is therefore to the question of the constitution of those networks that we must now turn, both analytically and politically: we know how capital organises its networks, and how they are powered. We must in turn begin to experiment with machines that can organise ours and at least temporarily protect them from being conjugated to the axiomatic. Our potential to become counterhegemonic depends precisely on our ability to develop such machines, otherwise we will never be able to effectively answer Harvey’s challenge, the challenge of capital’s control over space set against our ‘mere’ control over places.

Beginning to answer one question, in other words, only opens up new ones – but in this process of questioning, where one question leads only to partial answers and thus ever new questions, I am in good company. Allow me, one last time, to cite a Zapatista slogan: *caminamos preguntando* – we walk while asking. For me, and I hope for the reader, this thesis has been an exercise in this practice of *caminando preguntando*, where every partial answer led to a new question, and where the conclusion is similarly only a small intermediate step to yet bigger questions, questions, in fact, that cannot possibly be answered by an academic text, but that must be answered by the movements of life, movements of movements, movements of desire: ‘how to fight capital effectively’ is not simply the question of this PhD – it is a question of collective human survival.

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