

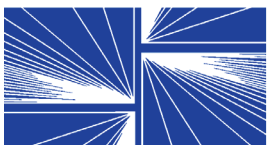
Organizing the (Un)Common

Globalization Working Papers 08/6

November 2008

WORKING PAPER SERIES

Crystal Bartolovich
Syracuse University
USA



Institute on Globalization
and the Human Condition
<http://globalization.mcmaster.ca>

Organizing the (Un)Common

Crystal Bartolovich, Syracuse University

Imagine this scene, if you will: orchestra members gather for a rehearsal. They chat amiably as they find seats and tune their instruments. Then they get down to work: in their last session they had decided to interpret a Vivaldi score and selected a Baroque specialist from among their number to serve as concert-master. In the meantime, everyone had carefully studied the score as a whole and brought with them ideas of how to work with it. To get the rehearsal underway, the concert-master talks to them a bit about the difficulties she sees in the piece and a lively discussion ensues about possible approaches. Together they make a preliminary general plan, and then the sections—wind, strings, etc—meet in their smaller groups to decide on precedence and strategies within each. Finally, the whole orchestra reassembles to play together. They seat themselves so that they can see each other—and begin. After a few bars, the newly-elected first chair violinist stops them and comments that the tempo seems off. To illustrate, he plays at a speed that seems more appropriate to him. A discussion ensues. Various musicians experiment: “how about this?” they ask. Finally, after trying out several options, they come to an agreement, and begin to play again at the new tempo. They watch each other closely as they play, responding to bodily cues and meaningful glances that help them collaborate effectively. At various points, a performer stops the group to make a suggestion or ask a question. A new discussion ensues, a new decision is made, and the orchestra tries again. It is slow, absorbing, challenging work. Sometimes group members will step out for a bit to seat themselves in the concert hall to listen from an audience position and comment on the effect of the performance as the orchestra works on, struggling at times through dissonance. Nerves can fray. Disagreements occasionally get heated, and a few personal antagonisms manifest themselves, but in the end, music is made: passionate, coherent, supremely skillful—and all without a conductor.

Those of you who know your revolutionary history will realize that I have not just produced a futurist utopian fantasy of artistic collaboration, but rather described an actual 1920s experiment with the “conductorless orchestra” in pre-Stalinist Soviet Russia, the most famous of which was the Moscow-based “Persimfans.” Contemporary music lovers among you, however, might—equally correctly—have assumed that I was describing the actually existing New York-based Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, which, although they do not advertise this fact, is organized along the same lines as their 20s Soviet precursors. What does it mean that Orpheus has re-written Persimfans, like a musical Pierre Menard, in a very different context, inhabiting the pores of capitalism with ease? What, if anything, distinguishes the two orchestras when accounts of how they are organized, as well as how they rehearse, and even perform, are often so similar that they could easily be substituted for each other and no one would be likely to suspect the switch?

I raise these questions because they bring to the fore issues of the relation of labor and “democracy” that have become crucial to the left in the wake of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s work. Hardt and Negri, in fact, mention the “conductorless orchestra”—though they do not specify which—as one of several figures they deploy to elaborate their concept of “the Multitude”—defined as “an active social subject which acts on the basis of what . . . singularities share in common”—a concept central to their theorization of resistance to global capitalism, or “Empire,” today. And it *is* a helpful figure in many respects: it offers a convincing evocation of “singularities” retaining their “differences” while working in “common,” because it conjures up an image of musicians playing different instruments without losing their specificity. Indeed, a successful performance depends upon

the articulation of relatively autonomous and distinct labors in a collaborative whole that sees to it, for example, that the violinist and the oboist complement each other rather than flatten out to a self-obliterating similitude. At the same time, the conductorless orchestra provides a model of how such “singularities” can work effectively in the absence of a static “center” by rotating leadership roles and engaging in self-conscious democratic decision-making in practice and performance. Thus, it also indicates ways to understand the production of the “common” that is necessary for such collaboration as well as its effect.

Yet we might still wonder if the “common” of Persimfans is the same as the “common” of the Orpheus. Hardt and Negri elaborate the term “common,” as they use it, from left dissident discourses such as Vandana Shiva’s critique of the ravaging of a properly common biome by transnational corporations, who attempt to patent flora, fauna and human genetic material for private profit, and Naomi Klein’s characterization of the new activism as engaged in the production of de-hierarchized and de-centralized sites of mutual participation and control that she calls a “commons.” The term also has a long, honored history in Marxist theory and historiography, including Marx’s own theorization of the “originary accumulation” of capital, which required, in his view, the destruction of the European agrarian commons so that a proletariat could eventually emerge from the ranks of landless, displaced peasants. Because capitalism destroys the agrarian commons in order to form itself, it is hardly surprising that some kind of reconstituted “commons” has been preserved as a powerful figuration of a post-capitalist social order in a variety of thinkers as diverse as E. P. Thompson and the Autonomist-inspired Midnight Notes Collective. However, the term is also in widespread use among internet populists, artists and others seeking to protect from privatization spaces and work that they describe in such terms as “Electronic Commons” or “Creative Commons,” and these are sometimes more libertarian than anti-capitalist. Tapping into this broad-based current investment in the “commons,” Hardt and Negri offer the “common” (they leave off the “s” to distinguish it from the earlier, agrarian, form) as a mutual and networked alternative to fundamental liberal concepts, such as “the public” and “the people,” which they reject for their ostensibly monologic and subordinating logics (303).

This reformulation of “the common,” then, attempts to evade the problems not only of universalism—in the “common” as they figure it, we are all still “singular” since leveling assimilation is not a requirement of participation in it as it is in the liberal figure of “the people”—but of atomization as well, since, by definition, “singularities” willy-nilly collaborate and communicate laterally. Sites that they point to as examples of the emergence of this multitude in a political project (though politics here, they emphasize, necessarily blurs into all aspects of life) include the networked guerilla warfare of the Zapatistas and the movement of alternative globalization activists (85-87). However, since Hardt and Negri concede that the multitude and its common are yet “to come” for the most part as a realized political project, they rely almost exclusively on figuration to explain the production and communication of a “multitude” through a de-centered, entirely positive “common.” These metaphors and analogies include not only the “conductorless orchestra” I introduced above, but also, most prominently, neural and computer networks, as well as language and “habit” production, open-source software generation, and the coordinated activity of insect swarms (337-39; 196-202; 339-40; 91-93). In every case, as they view it, these metaphors offer a way of understanding how differences or “singularities” cohabit within a larger dynamic coordinating process—or “common”—that they effect without obliterating themselves.

It is crucial to understand that the most important reason that these metaphors do not remain merely metaphors from Hardt and Negri’s viewpoint is not the existence of specifically political struggles that seem to them to confirm them, but because what they refer to as “immaterial labor” is for them the organizing “tendency” of capitalist globalization in its current moment. They describe as “immaterial” the form of labor that appears with the shift to globalization, “flexible” production and

the increasing importance of “service” work from the 1970s onwards in the North; specifically, they define it as “labor that produces immaterial products, such as knowledge, information, communication, or an emotional response” (108). Such intellectual, affective or “immaterial” workers would include everyone from doctors and journalists to Starbucks’ baristas and Walmart cashiers. While Hardt and Negri acknowledge that in global terms this work is not numerically dominant, they insist that it is “hegemonic in qualitative terms”—that is, the thrust of globalization is to remake in its image not just all kinds and aspects of work, but also all aspects of life in its totality, saturating the local as it sprawls the globe. Ultimately, then, they prefer to “immaterial” the term “biopolitical,” or “labor that creates not only material goods but also relationships and ultimately social life itself” (109). They insist that this labor *requires* “collaboration” and “communication” in “networks” of production, and thus that it “blurs traditional distinctions between the economic, the political, the social, and the cultural” (109). This is so in spite of the fact that the “collaborations” may occur over long distances and quite abstractly from the point of view of individual workers. As the world of work and of values, emotions and social relations becomes less and less distinguishable, they argue, the potential increases for the “multitude” to democratically take control of the “common” world that they themselves produce. Deleuzian rhizomes and Autonomist politics undergird their assumptions: the multitude is an entirely positive force of articulated singularities and its political task is to “refuse” the parasitic Empire of globalizing capitalism—a tyrannical, exploiting “conductor”—so that, in a common of mutual and collaborative biopolitical production, radical democracy’s beautiful music of freedom and equality can emerge at last. From this point of view, that Orpheus is, ideologically and practically, not consciously opposed to capitalism is, perhaps, irrelevant: it nevertheless *acts* in a way that undermines Empire as Hardt and Negri understand it. By refusing a center and encouraging collaboration and mutuality, Orpheus prefigures a possible post-Empire existence for all.

II

This is a compelling image, but it is also a debatable one, especially in terms of its key attribute, the entirely lateral “collaboration” and “communication” they posit as irreducible to the multitude, since this is much easier to observe (or imagine) happening within already organized groups than between them, or—especially—among those “singularities” not yet formally organized at all. These “communications” problems are evident in what they call “the clearest example to date of distributed network organization”—the form that they suggest offers resistance to Empire and gives rise to the multitude—“the globalization movements that have extended from Seattle to Genoa and the World Social Forums in Porte Alegre and Mumbai” (86). They return to this example often in their writing, as do others who share a similar line. Typically, they praise it in the highest terms as a model of resistance: “The magic of Seattle was to show that these many grievances [from different organizations who joined the protest] were not just a random haphazard collection, a cacophony of different voices, but a chorus that spoke in common against the global system” (288). The activists are able to accomplish this “magic” of avoiding “cacophony” because they share “common practices, languages, conduct, habits, forms of life and desires for a better future” through which they communicate across national borders and different interest groups, such as unions and anarchists, environmentalists and doves (215). Thus, “the movements that form part of this global cycle of struggles,” Hardt and Negri insist, “are not merely protest movements [. . .] but also positive and creative” (218). In excellent Autonomist fashion, they are not only protesting the world we inhabit, but creating a new one at the same time.

If this is so, however, what are we to make of an earlier passage in *Multitude* which concedes: “The globalization protest moments are obviously limited in many regards. First of all, although their vision and desire is global in scope, they have thus far only involved significant numbers in North America and Europe. Second, so long as they remain merely protest movements, traveling from one summit meeting to the next, they will be incapable of becoming a foundational struggle and of

such reliance on a “score” is necessarily suspect. Attali, for example, links not only the organization of orchestras, but also the musical forms developed with it, to capitalism:

the constitution of the orchestra and its organization are [. . .] figures of power in the industrial economy. The musicians—who are anonymous and hierarchically ranked, and, in general, salaried, productive workers—execute an external algorithm, a “score” [*partition*], which does what its name implies: it allocates their parts [. . .] Each of them produces only a part of the whole having no value in itself. (66)

In response to such assessments, it is important to recognize that though Persimfans did not banish the score along with the conductor, the *musical* score was not its only, or even its most important, relation to a shared code; they saw themselves as belonging to not only a musical project but a *revolutionary* one as well—or rather, as belonging to a revolutionary project through music.

Typically, they performed in factories for audiences of workers, many of whom were hearing an orchestra for the first time. So that these new listeners could make “elite” music their “common” possession, Persimfans artists prefaced each concert with a lecture about the music, and opened the floor to questions and comments after the formal program was complete. They realized that the tools for listening were neither fully innate nor likely to develop without training: they required a pedagogy, a social score to accompany the musical score. Similarly, they recognized that the complexities of political life and social cohabitation, are greater, not less, than musical performance, and therefore multiple educational emancipatory projects—of which they were just one—had to be developed and engaged, both within Persimfans itself, and in its relation to others. Participating in a revolutionary “code” as innovators and organizers in this way is not “elitist” if dialectical—that is, if there is constant engagement between an open, responsive avant garde and the larger multitude.

Articles in the late twenties sometimes managed an intriguing frankness when considering what was at stake in Persimfans. The *Musical Times* (U.K.) described the conductorless orchestra as a “creative” revolution alongside the “economic” one in the Soviet context. It also suggested, however, that there was an element of *ressentiment* in the deposing of the conductor among “the ranks of those who in some way or other have been unsuccessful in their artistic careers” (307). Similarly, it suggested that excellent musicians were far more numerous in Russia than great conductors, which invited the innovation. Nevertheless, the conductors (and music critics) who were available were largely unsympathetic, insisting that Persimfans’ “playing was impersonal [. . .] the product of the reciprocal action of the psychologies of the individual performers—psychologies not subordinated to a sole reacting centre” (308). Contradictorily, like the kettle joke, these same critics also grumbled that, in any case, Persimfans *did*, in effect, have a conductor during rehearsal—he simply did not visibly take up his role on the night of performance. The *Musical Times* article refuses to adjudicate the debate about what happened during practice and what happened on stage, but does concede that

from the point of view of economy of artistic means, the preference must undoubtedly be given to a conducted orchestra, since it is able to obtain far more quickly and cheaply the results which, *ceteris partibus*, must be considered the best. (308)

By all accounts, Persimfans rehearsals were arduous and lengthy—far more time and effort was required by a conductorless orchestra to achieve quality in performance than by a conducted one. “Efficiency” is, however, a quintessential capitalist productivity criterion, not an absolute one. In any case, the author of the *Musical Times* article feels compelled to admire the “experiment” just the same, despite its inefficiency:

the orchestral members declare that in playing without a conductor they experience an uplift of the artistic spirit incomparably greater than when they are controlled by the baton, no matter who wields it. And one can believe this: for the first time the musician has felt himself to be an artist enjoying equal rights, a member of a powerful body, an artist utterly

and finally responsible for his own performance and not obliged to share the appreciation and divide the laurels with some individual who, though in a position of authority, does not belong to the personnel of the orchestra. (309)

For Persimfans and the other Soviet avant gardes, the assumption was that this same intensity and “uplift” could be *generalized*.

The Orpheus, however, makes no such assumption. While it, too, enacts a pedagogy, its constituency is very different: MBA students and corporate executives. The symphony has thus been praised in venues such as the *Economist* and served as inspiration to business bloggers. A spokesman for Charles Schwab has explained the company’s enthusiasm for the “Orpheus model” in this way:

Most businesses today are trying to inspire people and generate commitment, rather than just compliance, and that means you need a lot of engagement and involvement [. . .] In a conductorless orchestra, the musicians have to make the decisions and agree on how they will play each part of a score. That requires team emotional intelligence. The orchestra members have to relate to each other in a very mature way to get results, and everyone has to participate.

While these views have indisputably gained some currency in the upper levels of large corporations and in small high-tech firms in the North, they by no means trickle down to the rank and file in any meaningful way, and certainly not into the highly regulated—even policed—factories of the global South, where workers can be locked in, exposed to dangerous work environments, frisked, forced to do overtime, and otherwise constrained—conditions to which they must submit or lose their jobs. Despite the evident hierarchization of work forces in this way, both locally and globally, even some supposedly left-wing commentators have advocated the division of labor between a low-waged, manufacturing South and a “creative,” service-oriented North. Far from moving us toward a collective and free globe, however, the selective deployment of workplace democracy helps keep North/South and elite/subordinate hierarchies intact. Some aspects of the current economy may “tend” toward the “immaterial” or the “biopolitical,” as Hardt and Negri argue, but the “tendency” is not yet concretely pervasive enough to inform a “standpoint” of resistance based on a “common” its conditions create—even if a standpoint epistemology were effective.

In other words, in the world we actually inhabit, what happens in the upper levels of Charles Schwab, or the funky, experimental precincts of Second Life, also a fan of the “Orpheus model,” is of course quite different from what happens at, say, the checkout lanes of Walmart, where workers are forbidden the “collaboration” of a union, much less the collaboration of participating in corporate decision-making, even as they may be connected to workers worldwide in the networks of supply on which Walmart depends. Without an explicit “radical democratic” code through which to make their solidarity visible and their discontents “common,” how can there be effective resistance? Who provides this “code” and helps organize the multitude to make it prevail for *everyone*? Furthermore, how do we overcome the sexism, racism, fear, apathy, ignorance and other impediments to collaboration that manifestly saturate the social order? In other words, how do we contend with the forces of the debilitatingly “uncommon” at work *within* the multitude? Might it not demand counter-hegemonizing, and might it be possible that this would not always work in strictly “lateral” and “decentralized” ways?

III

And, yet, you may be thinking, have not the past few decades been precisely a necessary and welcome reaction to “elitism,” a quest to rethink “equality” in terms of an absolute mutuality and question the pretension of intellectuals to situate themselves in the position of The One Presumed to Know? To take seriously the “weapons of the weak” and refuse to relegate the struggles and

articulating an alternative social organization” (87). They might have added, as others have, that these protests are comprised largely of “a relatively select group of well-educated, well-heeled and even well-bred people”—students and professional activists, for example—within the globally privileged countries. Far more seriously from my point of view, these groups—at least as Hardt and Negri describe them—typically direct their “protest” against corporations, NGOs and other related institutions, such as the WTO and the IMF, instead of trying to communicate with, and appeal for, the collaboration of those far larger numbers of people who are not among their number, those who don’t dress as turtles or tear down fences or even hold up placards and yell slogans. In spite of the wide range of “singularities” within the “common” the protesters share, it seems politically fatal to assume that all potential participants see themselves in it. This matters because “Seattle” is Hardt and Negri’s self-nominated *best* concrete example, conjured up numerous times as the current movement closest to achieving aspirations toward social justice, and because they contend that its “mobilization of the common and the political project to create the multitude need to be extended much more widely across society and established more solidly” (218). It seems to me that it stretches the model very, very far, however, to assume that this can happen in an entirely “lateral” and completely “decentralized” way, despite Hardt and Negri’s careful use of “across” rather than, say, “into.” Surely the most important question is how the “common” might be created and extended—or, even, *recognized*—among people who do not currently share “common practices, languages, conduct, habits, forms of life and desires for a better future” (215).

Implicitly, at least, Hardt and Negri see this problem, though it usually arises only indirectly. For example, in a discussion of “one of the central organizing groups of the [G8] protests,” the Italian activists who called themselves the “White Overalls,” they comment: “After Genoa the White Overalls . . . decided that the time had passed when a group like theirs should act as leaders in the movements of the multitude” (267). Before their breakup, however, they

managed to create a form of expression for the new forms of labor—their network organization, their spatial mobility, and temporal flexibility—and organize them as a coherent political force against the new global system of power. Without this indeed there can be no political organization of the proletariat today. (267)

Once again we are inhabiting a contradiction: if the “organization” of the putatively de-centered network into a “coherent political force” depends on “central organizing groups,” and if its supposedly lateral collaborators have “leaders,” then in what sense are we to understand this organization to be either de-centered or lateral? And how are the activities of such an organization supposed to be “extended much more widely across society” in an absolutely “lateral” and de-centered way when, apparently, activists committed to resisting global capitalism and creating radical democracy do not accomplish this feat? I suspect that Hardt and Negri themselves might answer—as they do when confronted with other infelicities of current conditions—that this is a problem of a transition period, and merely indicates the gap between the actually-existing multitude and the multitude that could be. Choosing “Seattle” as their primary example, however—despite the extremely small numbers of people that participate in it when compared to the vastness of the multitude—suggests that they might also be indulging in the old 60s counter-culture hope that mere example will encourage imitation because everyone really must want, already, what progressives do. Exposing the folly of this faith in setting an example without concerted organization, a former hippie explains: “we thought that there would be soooo much love, and sooooo much drugs and soooo much music that it would end the war! It didn’t happen.” The other possibility, of course, is that not all forms of “leadership” are toxic, and sometimes a strategic “center” can be liberatory instead of oppressive. Building on this possibility, I propose that we cannot do without some version of a theory of *hegemony*, though theoretically it seems to be anathema for Hardt and Negri, who, when they—rarely—use the term at all, tend to give it a negative charge, as when they call for a new “political realism” that is not “based strictly on force,

hegemony and necessity” (357). Conversely, I would argue, any left “political realism” today would have to include a self-conscious hegemonizing of the multitude against Empire.

Certainly other theorists who have been invested in Radical Democracy, such as Raymond Williams and Ernesto Laclau (different as they are), have thought we could not simply junk this concept as the harbinger of oppression. Indeed, the more “plural” the players in any struggle are, the more necessary, in their view, hegemonizing becomes. With his typically balanced and careful articulation of difficult concepts, Williams observes of hegemony: “like any other Marxist concept it is particularly susceptible to epochal [reifying] as distinct from historical definition . . . And then the problems of the reality of domination and subordination, and of their relations to co-operative shaping and common contribution, can be quite falsely posed.” Hardt and Negri appear to “falsely pose” the problem of hegemony in just this way because they fail to allow for the possibility of a “counter-hegemony” or “alternative hegemony” that strategically centers and “leads” the multitude without reifying into a Party formation. Williams, however, associates left hegemonic forces—broadly understood—with art and other cultural expressions rather than with “the party,” and insists that it is crucial for the left to continue to enact its own hegemonization in order to offer alternatives for subjective “self-identification with hegemonic forms, a specific and internalized ‘socialization,’” a project at which capitalism has proved so resourceful (118). In other words, he foregrounds something that Hardt and Negri ignore: the possibility that Empire *inhabits* the multitude to a greater or lesser extent and that this “internalization” must be confronted at the same time as Empire is “refused”—or, rather, in order for it to be refused, as an alien force. Radical democratization, from this perspective, is a counter-force to consumerist, fundamentalist and liberal competition. As Laclau puts it: “there is no future for the left if it is unable to create an expansive universal discourse, constituted out of, not against, the proliferation of particularisms of the last few decades.” This is the work of hegemony as he understands it—an open, flexible, *organizing* force.

To understand fully why one might have a continued investment in “hegemony” so understood, we must first recall that theories that have arisen to account, or compensate, for, the proletariat’s failure to fill its putative world historical role of leading revolution have, broadly speaking, taken two different tacks. The Frankfurt School, among others, saw capitalism as producing a conformist “mass” and, more important, they also insisted that it “alienated” and atomized individual subjects at the same time as it is assimilated them to capitalist norms. In the face of such subjection, the best that might be hoped for is the critical stance of highly trained and vigilant intellectuals and artists who would produce and fan the weak embers of dissent under conditions that did not favor it, while waiting for a future, more propitious, time, when its flames might burst forth more generally. Hardt and Negri’s “multitude,” in direct assault on this concept of the “mass,” takes an opposed tack: it pluralizes potentially revolutionary subjects and sees the multitude, in its differences, as fully capable of creating and articulating a “common” as well as resistance to Empire on its own. Williams is, in some respects, a forerunner in this camp, but—following Gramsci—he implies that resisting capitalist globalization’s dominance requires an alternative hegemony for *organizational* purposes. Hardt and Negri demur because they seem to assume that hegemony can only mean reification, a truncation and containment of collective energy rather than a honing and channeling of it. Alternatively, they see novel resistant values, ideas and ways of life as emerging willy-nilly from the “standpoint” of the multitude as it goes about creating the world through biopolitical production (348-49).

To evaluate this assumption, it is crucial to recall that capitalism has been engaging us in creating “ways of life” at least since Fordism, with its recognition that mass production required mass consumption, and that therefore the “mass” needed to be inculcated not only as workers, but also as “consumers,” requiring a major shift in subjectivization in industrializing capitalisms. It was this crucial move, Stuart Ewen and others have suggested, that changed the meaning of democracy in the U.S. from a struggle for juridico-political equality among citizens to a struggle among consumers to

appear “middle class.” Hence, the politics that industrial capitalism rendered possible by massing workers in ever greater numbers in factories, mines and company farms—that is, opportunities for communication and collaboration—were often displaced and contained by the individualizing and competitive appeals of consumerism as well as the seductive, escapist fantasies of mass entertainment. What is most curious about Hardt and Negri’s analysis of post-Fordism, is that they observe and extensively describe, as such, the extension of opportunities for collaboration and communication that globalizing biopolitical production gives rise to, but they never theorize, or even mention, the containing forces of consumerism and other individualizing and pacifying “trends” that accompany both Fordism *and* Post-Fordism.

This certainly cannot be said of other theorists, such as Thomas Frank—or, curiously enough, Naomi Klein, whose analysis in other respects Hardt and Negri often rely upon. These commentators have devoted considerable attention to the ever-more refined techniques of capitalist marketing, which, in its most recent incarnation, has branded and commodified even dissent, as we are urged to “buy Green” or participate in the “revolution” of wearing a particular brand of blue jeans. Leslie Sklair, meanwhile, has tracked the expansion of “consumerism” from an ideology of industrial capitalism into what he identifies as the ideology of corporate globalization as such, extending its tentacles beyond the wealthy Northern countries even when it fails to extend the financial means to satisfy it. And with consumerism in its most highly developed forms often comes not only an acceptance of capitalism but also a mistrust of its unsettling. Alternatives to consumerism, such as religious fundamentalism, do arise, but they do not necessarily tend to carry the multitude leftward. One might expect Hardt and Negri, then, to at least mention consumerism and other forces of atomization or containment that are typically cited as accounting for the diversion of discontent in disparate directions—discontent that might otherwise be targeted *on* capitalism—and suggest what that might mean for their argument.

Because they fail to discuss impediments to resistance to Empire *within* the multitude, even when they ostensibly “solve” the historically thorny problem of identifying a revolutionary agent by positing that it is all peoples together in their singularity, we are—short of leaving it to chance—faced with the profound problem of identifying a catalyzing *impetus* to radical change, even if we agree with Hardt and Negri’s refusal of a specific designated group on which such historical transformation depends. They themselves observe: “the invention of a new science of democracy for the multitude is certainly an enormous task, but the general sense of the project is clear. *We* can recognize the need for it in the real and urgent grievances and demands of so many throughout the world—and from where would the power to realize such a project come if not from the desires of the multitude?” (312, emphasis added). Where indeed? What they present as a rhetorical question, is, I think, a real and crucial one: who is this “we” that “recognizes”? What is the relation of this “recognition” to the “desires” of the multitude? Hardt and Negri boldly assert that the “desire” of the multitude is for a “democratic world” in the radical form that they embrace themselves (353). They must inhabit a different planet from the one I do. How are we to account for the fact that the manifest “desires” of large swathes of the multitude are for car culture and locally-out-of-season produce rather than protecting the ozone layer? a fatter personal paycheck rather than a global end to poverty? capturing “terrorists” rather than safeguarding personal freedoms? defending the sanctity of marriage rather than exploring alternatives? asserting the “American Way of Life” rather than celebrating “singularity”? excluding “illegal immigrants” rather than creating global equality of access to the world’s comforts and pleasures? blowing up or lopping off the limbs of religious or political or ethnic “others” rather than finding “common” ground? Neither Empire as such nor “the people” do such things, but, rather, people do. Differences the “common” can accommodate, if it is to be directed to a *liberatory* project, are necessarily limited, a possibility that Hardt and Negri do not address, though they, too, clearly assume certain “ways of life” are preferable to others from a liberatory perspective, as is evident on every page of their book. Even if we bracket everyone who happens to “love the smell of napalm in

the morning” (in spite of the fact that, actually, I don’t think we can bracket *anyone* given Hardt and Negri’s definition of the multitude), we will still find a large number of views and habits among the putatively becoming-multitude which will not, in any conceivable configuration, produce a workable liberatory “common.”

In his brilliant “Mars” trilogy, Kim Stanley Robinson tries to think through this predicament by imagining how an ever-expanding group of settlers to Mars might confront the difficulties of producing a new social order. Even in the small originary group of colonists—only 100 (plus one stowaway)—irreconcilable differences emerge. On one extreme are those who advocate leaving Mars as close to its “natural” state as possible, and, on the other extreme, those who want to “terraform” it—that is transform its ecology to make it as Earthlike as possible. In this earliest stage, Robinson is keen to show that, despite widespread good will and utopian intentions, some differences simply cannot be simultaneously accommodated and, in any case, we are limited in our capacities to dream the new by how much of the baggage of the old we carry with us. Furthermore, conditions are never of our choosing, even if history is of our making. As more and more colonists arrive, bringing an even wider diversity of viewpoints and ways of life, more crises emerge despite their considerable (though not universal) desire to inculcate mutual respect and as much direct participation and laterality as possible. A tacit agreement emerges—one that, it should be said, has proponents among utopian theorists outside of Robinson’s fiction, since it appears to solve the problem of centralization, hierarchy and imposition—that every group would be left to organize itself as it sees best, as long as individuals might always vote with their feet by choosing an alternate settlement. However, the limits of this compromise quickly emerge: first, how to organize relations among groups with radically different ways of life when these differences have implications beyond the individual groups? Secondly, the question of responsibility arises: are there ways of life that cannot be tolerated by the generality even if they are tolerated—even valued—by a particularity (slavery, for example)? Finally, would any individual really have the freedom to vote with one’s feet if s/he is raised in a context of relative isolation and limited access to alternatives? Robinson does not provide conclusive answers, but he is superbly acute in raising the questions vividly, in a way much more evocative of “political realism” than anything in Hardt and Negri’s books. And this is *not* because Hardt and Negri eschew offering a political program (especially since the suggestions that they do provide, as they admit, are obviously inadequate), but rather because they are so vague about the *organization* of the multitude and its decision-making process.

They concede that the “central point” in their articulation of a multitude that can form itself is theorizing how it comes to a “decision,” but nonetheless they rely on analogy from biology and neurology instead of direct practical description: “a single decision is produced by a multitude [of cells] in the brain and body” (338). They take this bodily and mental process to be a model of the “biopolitical”: “just as the multitude produces in common, just as it produces the common, it can produce political decisions” (339). In turn they compare this process to the “open-source movement,” pointing out that “programmers with different approaches and agendas all contribute collaboratively,” and propose that “one approach to understanding the decision-making of the multitude, then, is an open-source society, that is, a society whose source code is *revealed* so that all can work collaboratively to solve its bugs and create new, better social programs” (340, emphasis added). Aside from the drastic differences in scale between a computer code and an “open-source society”—and the fact that programmers have a common investment and skill-level in code-writing that they bring with them to their task—it seems odd that Hardt and Negri do not pause to consider who will “reveal” the “social code” and offer it up to “all”? What form would it take? How are the skills to work on it developed? How are the conditions (i.e., education, food, health care) achieved that would position “all” equally in relation to the code? How can the complexity of the social be reduced to anything like an “open-source” *code* (in the singular) in any case? We have to remember, too, that attitudes toward social codes have not universally been characterized by eagerness to crack them; to the contrary,

ignorance—sanctioned and not—displaced abjection (i.e., visiting violence upon weaker members of the social order rather than against elites), individualization of social problems (e.g., asserting that poor people are “lazy”), as well as apathy and fear have arguably been at least, if not more, common.

From the perspective of “Mars”, then, I want to pose three questions for Hardt and Negri’s examples and metaphors of the earthly multitude and the common: first, how is the subjective discontent of the singularities that make up the multitude supposed to *translate* into discontent with *capitalism*, or “Empire” as they prefer, when it demonstrably does not do so now, and even when it does, does not always do so in liberatory ways, as with backward-looking religious fundamentalisms in any of their global varieties? Second, how does one deal with problems of scale: that is, while a relatively tiny, self-selecting, coalition of groups with access to advanced technologies may be able to organize globally and speak as well as act “in common,” how, practically, does this extend to the whole “multitude”? And, finally, what is the role of “consciousness” in this effort: at times Hardt and Negri’s metaphors—as with their characterization of the multitude as resembling an insect swarm—suggest that acting “in common” can happen without any consciousness of it; I’m wondering, though, if that can ever be true of an effective liberatory politics. Once again, I hasten to add that I am not necessarily identifying problems that Hardt and Negri are not aware of—they, too, assert that one must consider goals as well as “network” form, for example, in organizing a liberatory movement, since they are keen to differentiate the “globalization protest movements” from, for example, Al Qaeda, which they describe as aspiring to “resuscitate older regional social and political bodies under the control of religious authority” (218). Apparently the “common” that they have in mind does not include all singularities, after all, and it operates at a considerably more refined level of specificity than that “we share bodies with two eyes, ten fingers, ten toes; we share life on this earth; we share capitalist regimes of production and exploitation; we share common dreams of a better future” (128). Quite clearly, from their own examples, not everyone for whom the first items in the list apply, also “share” the last. Their metaphors and examples of the multitude, however—because they seem intent on avoiding the necessity of hegemonization—do not adequately explain why the “singularity” represented by Al Qaeda can confidently be excluded from the multitude whereas other singularities cannot, nor how the true liberatory multitude forms itself by drawing more and more singularities to itself without a leadership to set that process in motion, precisely to actively and consciously differentiate it from, say, Al Qaeda. Indeed, the paradox is even more intense, because, *practically*, they actually *do* nominate the “globalization protest movements” to something like the *role* of leadership (they come closest, they say, to modeling the appropriate network form, and their values and goals are the Hardt-and-Negri-sanctioned ones), while, *theoretically*, they claim that the multitude doesn’t need any such centering forces as leaders or models or roles.

Adding to the perplexity, their metaphors suggest that the multitude, to realize their political project must share a “score” or “code” or “language” in common, and they take for granted that this shared code must position the multitude against “Empire” to be liberatory. They do not explain, however, where this “code” or “score” or chosen “language” (from among many possibilities) comes from. No code emerges from a collectivity in a spontaneously liberatory form. There isn’t even a guarantee that it will emerge in a coherent form. The “code” that computer open-source advocates tinker with, to the contrary, is developed by a tiny subset of writers and offered up for critique to a larger—self-selecting, highly educated (albeit sometimes self-educated) and skilled—community, just as scores are composed by individuals or small groups and then interpreted by—again, self-selecting, highly educated and skilled—performers. Even if we recognize that any such “code” depends upon a host of prior—and supporting—labors, the organizing moment of immediate production does indeed have an identifiable site of emergence. This step of code production is simply skipped by Hardt and Negri, as is how the entire multitude is to be educated to a level in which participation in code production is imaginable. For them the potentially liberatory source “code” seems always already to exist—like one’s mother tongue—and liberation and “equality” do not appear to require prior

education or material conditions that assure that they have a chance to prevail. What I been suggesting, alternatively, is that a *struggle* is currently underway *for* the multitude by a variety of “codes,” with the fundamentalist and consumerist being the principal (though not only) competitors with the liberatory. Precisely because the former have developed sophisticated and successful hegemonizing strategies (proselytizing and marketing, respectively), the radical democratic left must do so as well *or we will fail*. Furthermore, universal participation in code production will require education as well as health and welfare provisions—and, thus, an avant garde to get this process underway.

The existence of a sophisticated education in consumerism hardly needs proving to anyone who inhabits the advanced capitalisms (and, increasingly, the rest of the globe as well, though with far less means to satisfy it). Marketing techniques infiltrate all aspects of existence, not only the explicit realm of “advertising,” nearly ubiquitous as that already is, or even in “traditional product placement” in media. As the CEO of Big Fat Inc., an “undercover marketing” firm cheerfully explains, “real life product placement is placing stuff in movies, but [now] the movie is actually your life.” Ordinary-looking folks are paid to order certain brands of alcohol in bars, or to pass around seemingly offhand observations touting music, movies, or clothing, or engage in numerous other subtle encouragements to desire particular products in ways that seem to confirm Baudrillard’s simulacrum, except that marketing firms are manipulating it, like the aliens of *The Matrix*. Traditional advertisers, not to be outdone, employ psychologists to help them pitch effectively to the youngest children, in hopes of establishing preferences and desires to last a lifetime, while systematically inducing the nagging that gets parents to buy stuff for them in the meantime. Fundamentalists are equally proactive in their techniques, forming religious schools for the same reasons as marketers target children: solidifying brand loyalty at a young age. Take the “Hell House” phenomenon in the U.S. South, where an evangelical church yearly devotes a great deal of time and money to mounting a variation on the Halloween “Haunted House,” stocking its version with moral dramas warning against the evils of abortion, homosexuality, suicide, extra-marital sex, alcohol and raves. The sophistication of the presentation—carefully scripted, rehearsed and staged—belies the crudeness of the messages, which appeal to fear, prejudice and insecurity rather than reason and complexity. Visitors are guided by a guide past the various scenes, and then delivered to the Gates of Heaven and the judgment of a God of vengeance, who turns away sinners, consigning them to the smoky, strobe-lit darkness of a Hell filled with the screaming damned writhing beneath transparent flooring. Volunteers are on hand to pray with the (as yet) unsaved, and sign them up for the church. Against marketing and proselytizing of this systematic kind, the left urgently needs to develop a concerted *program* of “democratization,” through a critical-intellectual appeal that does not neglect our affective lives, but does not seek to manipulate emotion either, and thus offer a counterweight to the tapping of unconscious desires and fears.

A contrast of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra with Persimfans is instructive in this regard. Both groups rebelled against the tyranny of the conductor, who, at first, had been part of the orchestra but over time was set apart and above it. According to Jacques Attali, “he is thus the representation of economic power, presumed capable of setting in motion, without conflict, harmoniously, the program of history traced by the composer.” And yet, abolishing the conductor was by no means an end to the “score” in either case. Persimfans and the other conductorless orchestras of the time did not write their own music, nor did they operate like latter-day punk bands (or some non-European cultures) who assume a porous boundary between performers and audience, or do away with the distinction altogether. To the contrary, they were formed from cadres of highly trained and talented musicians, who practiced intensively and extensively, working with challenging compositions from the standard repertoire, an ongoing musical tradition that included new works as well as established ones. They did not play as the moment inspired them, but rather in relation to a carefully practiced and articulated plan, which depended on developing a relationship to a pre-existing score. For some commentators,

discontent of the vast majority of the planet, however seemingly misguided or ineffectual, to what E.P. Thompson called the “enormous condescension of posterity”—by which he meant, in the first instance, historians, as well as intellectuals more generally? What of the insistence of Fanon and others in the South on the revolutionary power of the “wretched of the earth,” as well as the anti-sexist and anti-racist challenges to hierarchism and the various experiments in anti-authoritarian activism and living in the North? Don’t all of these movements and the many others “from below” lead us in the direction of precisely the de-centering and lateral relations that Hardt and Negri advocate? Didn’t the decline and fall of the Soviet Empire concretely illustrate the evils of centralized planning of any kind? Hadn’t the implementation of the utopian dreaming of the High Modernist, Le Corbusier kind proved utterly disastrous? Surely a movement for Social Justice cannot be organized “from above”? hasn’t history itself so decreed? Aren’t I the one, then, who has got things wrong side up, and needs to be stood on my feet again?

The anthropologist James Scott, for example, has taken a prominent interpretation of “hegemony theory” head on and argued for the remarkable capacity of the oppressed to resist the conditions in which they find themselves, often in supremely creative and subtle ways, thereby sustaining subcultures of dissent that provide organizing principles for overt struggle when opportunities arise. His principal gripe is that scholars have often mistaken a lack of *overt* resistance as *consent* to prevailing conditions, and he asserts forcefully that, at least in situations of explicit domination, such as slavery or prison camps, this is rarely the case. To the contrary, a public performance of subordination actually enables the backstage nurturing of what he calls “hidden transcripts,” in which grievances are elaborated in a collective space of dissent forged by the oppressed, vengeance imagined, and a variety of covert activities to express them perpetrated (such as pilfering, shirking, sabotage, irony, folk song and tale). He calls these activities “infrapolitics,” and insists that they are crucial to understanding power and resistance in a dynamic way. Misrecognizing infrapolitics, he argues, “naturalizes” power relations that are far less secure than either elites or scholars often realize. For situations of extreme personal domination, his examples are overwhelmingly convincing, as any reader of slave narratives can readily aver, but he insists that his theory of “infrapolitics” is suggestive for reassessing power relations in liberal democracies as well. The concept of hegemony, in his view, “does not allow for the degree of social conflict and protest that actually occurs in any given situation.” He further suggests that it makes sense for resistance, under all conditions, most often to be anonymous, spontaneous, informal and indirect, since these qualities offer protection to the oppressed. These gestures of defiance and refusal, while perhaps individually trivial, are potentially powerful for two reasons: first, collectively they may take a huge toll upon the status quo, and, secondly, they provide a continuous exercise in dissent that might at any moment erupt in manifest struggle from below.

Though Hardt and Negri do not cite Scott, their own understanding of resistance has some overlap with his and similar work, like that of Michael Taussig, because the tendency of many theorists and activists in recent years has been to champion the creativity of supposed victims and offer stark critiques of centralized planning or direction of any kind as harmful, blind and repressive, however well-intended it may be. This new anthropology of the exploited accords well with the strategies of the Autonomists, from whom Hardt and Negri adopt key elements of their theory (and, especially in Negri’s case, practice as well). Autonomists, in any case, have long advocated dropping out, squatting, tax evasion and various other form of passive aggression or countercultural flight, while emphasizing resistance from below in the absence of formal, centralized organization. In theoretical terms, such a formation is familiar to readers of *A Thousand Plateaus*, where Deleuze and Guattari describe the “rhizome”—a concept-metaphor Hardt and Negri adopt—as “an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automaton” (21). It is, instead “defined solely by a circulation of states” (21). Furthermore, Hardt’s and Negri’s work on Deleuze makes evident that virtually the entire problematic of the multitude—

including that term—derive from their reading of Deleuze on Spinoza. Hardt, for example, explaining Deleuze's Spinoza, argues that: "the constitution of knowledge, the intellectual constitution of the community, must be equaled and complemented by a corporeal constitution of community. The corporeal common notion, the adequate social body, is given form in the multitude." Here, as elsewhere, the emphasis is on not only refusing a center, but also eschewing the priority of the "intellectual"—theory—over the "corporeal" as practice. Hence, *Multitude* insists on the irreducible participation of all people equally in the "singular" creation of the "common" world, much as all people necessarily participate in the use and, thus, development, of their mother tongues:

the multitude is organized something like a language. All of the elements of a language are defined by their differences one from the other, and yet they all function together . . . Just as expression emerges from language . . . a decision emerges from the multitude in such a way as to give meaning to the whole and name an event [. . . However] unlike language the multitude is an active subject—something like a language that can express itself. (339)

This means that everyone necessarily participates in the creation of the multitude and its world, and resists its enclosure: "since the poor participate in and help generate the linguistic community by which they are then excluded or subordinated, the poor are not only active and productive but also antagonistic" (132). Hence, from the point of view of biopolitical production as they describe it, the problems of scale, consciousness and translation I raised above seem to melt away. And their perspective often does seem to be confirmed in business journalism and the observation of pundits: a recent *New York Times* article on innovations in portable phones quotes a policy guru observing that "the Internet is going mobile, and it's not just top down, it's one to one and many to many all at the same time, and that's what the Google guys get." This is, too, what Hardt and Negri "get" from their analysis of current conditions. The appropriation and "enclosure" by Empire of common resources and practices—whether language, land, the genome, traditional knowledge, etc—are necessarily met by resistance on the part of the multitude who creates them, and this resistance is, by Hardt and Negri's definition, de-centered, mobile and lateral ("many to many"), thus evading what they perceive to be the errors of organized resistance of the past.

Building on these assumptions, we can return, then, to the question of "score" and the multitude as "conductorless orchestra" from a different direction. The biopolitically tending globe is one in which the "conditions of the production and reproduction of [. . .] social life" by the multitude "are developed within the continuous encounters, communications, and concatenations of bodies" (348). Biopolitical production cannot elude the "common" which, in turn, depends solely on the multitude, who, willy-nilly, creates it "from the thousand points of intersection, from the thousand rhizomes that link these multitudinous productions, from the thousand reflections born in every singularity" (349). In this way, "the production of the multitude launches the common in an expanding, virtuous spiral [. . .] tending to form a constituent motor" (350). These new conditions of biopolitical production provide the singularities of the multitude with a "standpoint" from which they necessarily participate in the project of the multitude—democracy—which emerges as an "act of love" parallel, for Hardt and Negri, to the "Christian and Judaic love of God" (351). Thus, "what Lenin and the Soviets proposed as the objective of the insurrectional activity of an elite vanguard [. . .] must be expressed today through the desire of the entire multitude" (353-4). This is possible because it manifests and enacts "swarm intelligence," an "intelligent system with no central control" (91-93; 340).

IV

Why, then, in the face of such a rousingly egalitarian model of resistance, respectful of self-determination and recognizing the creativity, power and productivity of all people alike under conditions of biopolitical production, would anyone insist on "hegemony" with its seemingly onerous

and outmoded baggage of centering, planning, consciousness, and leadership? I insist because, while Hardt and Negri have consistently asserted that there is “no outside” to Empire, their model of resistance nonetheless seems to assume that Empire does not penetrate the multitude. And yet this makes no sense in the world as it currently exists, or even in terms of their theory. In Rwanda, when “Empire” lops off a boy’s limb or rapes a woman, it does so through ordinary agents. When Californians or Texans agitate for anti-immigrant legislation, this is not the work of “elites” alone. Empire, as such, does not beat wives, commit hate crimes against gays, or settle occupied territories: “singularities” do. Because Empire inhabits us, we require a theory of hegemony to combat it. Current conditions manifestly produce inequality of access to education, resources and satisfying work, while at the same time inhibiting the effectiveness of resistance to Empire to the extent that it inhabits us. These conditions must be addressed first and head on before the “equality” that Hardt and Negri imagine can possibly emerge. In short, we must retain “hegemony” as a revolutionary concept because in a world of rampant and increasing inequality, *assuming* equality does not effect it; indeed, paradoxically, it often—perhaps most often—assists its opposite, as Marx himself observed in his critique of the Gotha Program’s “equality” as bourgeois. The problem, as he saw it, was that treating unequals equally intensifies *inequality* in practice. To be sure, Hardt and Negri have in mind a radical rather than a “liberal” equality, but, once again, assuming it does not make it so. For example, it may well be necessary for a disproportionately large amount of resources to be diverted to areas of the globe that have, historically, been undersupplied, in order to remedy the effects of the legacy of the globally uneven distribution that has already occurred; this may come at a cost to the populations of the North as the South is compensated for past deprivation.

Hardt and Negri seem to assume, however, that absolute equality can occur right now, and is necessary to a just way forward, because, in their view, it takes a network to beat a network (which they see as Empire’s own *modus operandi* despite the hierarchies it keeps in place). Thus, as a means to combat Empire they imagine the multitude deploying a supposedly de-centered “swarm intelligence” in which a group ostensibly comes to a decision without any leaders. There are numerous problems with this metaphor. Insects that swarm (bees, for example) do not necessarily have unhierarchical social orders. In any case, it turns out that swarms *do* indeed have leaders, and that insects can be swayed to go against their usual preferences by them. This is not my main objection to Hardt and Negri’s model, however. Far more serious, in my view, are the effects of trying to take the figure as they deploy it seriously, since it does not pay enough heed to the implications for the multitude of the dialectical inverse of Empire’s “network”: not only the ways in which, especially (though by no means exclusively) in the “North,” it distributes, divides, alienates, reifies, and individualizes subjects but also the ways it elicits their consent—that is, hegemonizes them, largely through consumerism, but sometimes via other forces, such as nationalism. Nor do they fully consider the implications in the South of the ways Empire violently dominates, controls, silences and brutalizes by limiting the access of millions to even minimal means of life in situations of starvation and untreated disease, as well as with guns and other explicitly repressive mechanisms. Hardt and Negri *note* these conditions, but seem to assume that exploitation necessarily and inevitably produces a desire and even a demand for freedom and democracy. However, if you have to spend hours collecting fuel, water and food—and even then often cannot get enough—or evading roving gangs of thugs, time and energy for effective resistance are necessarily limited. This is not a critique of the oppressed, but a recognition that inequality of conditions matters for generating and sustaining *effective* resistance to Empire. There are, after all, considerable discrepancies in even the minimal aids to organization, such as access to (and experience with) communications technologies—not to mention a reliable source of electricity to run them. On the other hand, those who live in conditions of relative comfort may fear sharing it as a loss; anti-immigrant legislation and suburban flight indicate as much. Hardt and Negri often write as if generalized abundance will come at no cost whatsoever. Would that this were so! Global warming, toxic waste, landfills crammed with unbiodegradable

plastic packaging, water shortages, limited availability of certain key raw materials, pressure on land: all of these and many (many!) more environmental pressures suggest otherwise. Even if a film can be endlessly viewed without loss to anyone, the power to run the equipment is a different matter altogether. For this reason, Enrique Dussel argues that the first task of any movement for social justice must be to assure that the global *material conditions* for equal capacity for thought and deliberation, for imagining and bringing into existence a better world—that is, for life itself—exist: clean water, full stomachs, health care, education, and so on; the dead, he points out, do not argue or demand, much less speak. At current levels of resource availability, this imperative will often mean that the relatively privileged will have to change their ways of life to accommodate the whole multitude, especially if we are not simply to defer dealing with stresses on the planet to future generations.

What I am getting at here is that a “common” may well need to be negotiated at times against the grain of one’s own immediate comfort. Anti-colonial self-determination movements were manifestly successful in terms of ending formal colonialism and producing nation-states—but this “success” was immediately contained by global conditions that severely limited the capacity for building upon localized anti-imperial victories to create genuinely socialist collectivities. On the one hand, as Neil Lazarus has shown, the production of a “common” project of national self-determination proved insufficient to broader revolution because the coalition was *too broad*, included too many irreconcilable differences once the task of freedom from direct colonial rule had been achieved. In this case, a too-expansive commonality, rather than a too-narrowly focused vanguard, proved an impediment to liberation. On the other hand, that this was so indicates a larger global lack of support for the most progressive elements of revolutionary forces. We still inhabit the world of this larger failure—a collective global failure—which will require a self-conscious coordination of global struggles to move beyond. It is important to think through this relation not because the “vanguard” necessarily inhabits the “most advanced” sites of capitalism, but rather because the most privileged should not assume themselves “off the hook” as far as transformative efforts are concerned in the most exploited regions.

Indeed, my point is that without a conscious, organized counter-hegemony in both North and South, it seems unlikely in the extreme that the ways in which global Empire gets under people’s skin, so to speak, is unlearned easily. And while I have argued elsewhere—and continue to believe—that revolutionary energy will most likely come from the global South, such a possibility seems depressingly remote as long as resisting death is the most immediate preoccupation of millions, who are structurally contained in conditions of misery, such that even capitalist exploitation can be coded as an improvement, as the endless stream of young women fleeing rural and tribal areas to take up urban sweatshop jobs, or the streams of young men amassing for illicit and often dangerous “economic migration” from South to North, attests. These movements far outnumber the circulation of either “terrorists” or progressive activists. The end result is that, in North and South alike, overt resistance to Empire *as such* is demonstrably a minority project. Adorno would not have been surprised; it was precisely such conditions that led him to make what are now viewed as embarrassingly “elitist” comments, such as “savages are not more noble.” “It would be poor psychology,” he observes, “to assume that exclusion arouses only hate and resentment; it arouses too a possessive, intolerant kind of love” (52-53). This “love” fuels not only economic migrancy—which is not at all a resistance to *capitalism*, however much it may be a threat to national borders of the rich countries—but a global taste for Hollywood blockbuster film, pop music, and other consumer produce, as well as—alternatively—evangelical religions, which have been far more successful globally than radical movements of any stripe. From this perspective, the “love” of the multitude that Hardt and Negri associate only with democracy is suspect, even leaving aside their ethnocentric association of it with the “Judeo-Christian” tradition, which would be troubling to more of the multitude than secularists alone. It’s not only Adorno who was skeptical of “love” as a revolutionary category. In *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud critiqued the Christian injunction to “Love thy

neighbor as thyself” as both repressive and oppressive. Even if we take Marcuse’s side (as I do) in the debate with Freud on the human capacity for affirmative association and the sublimation of aggression, “love” proves a rather ambivalent category through which a “common” might be produced. Jerry Rubin’s infamous retreat from social activism to consumerist narcissism provides one example of why this might be so. Not even love comes with a social justice guarantee.

Hardt and Negri, however, explicitly and predictably dismiss the Frankfurt School because, as they put it, “the nightmares of such authors correspond to the dreams of the strategists of full-spectrum dominance [. . .] These nightmares and dreams, however, are not real. Dominance, no matter how multi-dimensional, can never be complete” (53-54). Anyone invested in transformation had better hope this is so, but, equally, they need to keep in mind how daunting the enemy is, how deeply it infiltrates into our very beings, even those of us who devote ourselves to resistance, which most people do not seem to have the time, freedom or the inclination to do. If most of politics is showing up, it seems evident that most people *do not* show up to resist Empire in any overt way. As Naomi Klein admits in her discussion of “anticorporatism” in the university—one of its most important sites: “it’s true that these students do not make up the majority of their demographic group—in fact, this movement is coming, *as all such movements do*, from a minority, but it is an increasingly powerful minority” (xxi). Reasons for non-participation range from lack of time, or fear when one’s immediate concern is staying alive, to assimilation to Empire, such that individuals assume their unhappiness derives elsewhere, and can be alleviated with a big screen tv, a better job, a new lover, meditation, or a rave. Willy-nilly, then, a counter-hegemonic pedagogy must be organized: both to encourage people to show up and confront Empire in a collectively conscious and informed way, as well as to help produce the conditions that would make it possible for everyone to express their discontent explicitly as discontent *with Empire*. By simply rejecting the Frankfurt School instead of refining their critique, Hardt and Negri miss an opportunity to explain how the multitude can forge itself *in spite of* the incursions of Empire into the very neural pathways of each of the individuals that they contend act in “common.” If unaddressed, the organizing effect of Empire, even granting that it is not all-powerful, has a good chance of assuring that any “common” that may emerge would lead to a “vicious circle” of the status quo, or worse, rather the “virtuous cycle” Hardt and Negri imagine.

I want to point to a curious contradiction in Hardt and Negri’s text on this score, because I think that it gets at one of the key dilemmas. Despite their supposed respect for singularities as absolutely equal, and their proclaimed penchant for “open-source code” available for all to adjust to the collective benefit, not only are their books published in the usual print form—under their own names (despite the long legacy of ideas, and current debates, on which they depend)—but they do not even permit critics the benefit of bringing their own words to confront the text within it (see 219-27). Instead they *summarize* critiques that have been made of their work without even giving any bibliographical information. Furthermore, they do not admit to having learned anything from critics, but assert again and again that they have been misunderstood and seek to “correct mistaken impressions.” They compare criticism of themselves to the Bourgeois critiques of the Communists that Marx and Engels refute in the *Manifesto*, despite the fact that the critiques Hardt and Negri adduce are not the right-wing ones, but those from the left, supposed allies and the most imaginably eager constituency of the multitude! There are at least two observations to make here: first, that collaboration on equal terms is really hard under current conditions, even for those who actively aspire to the most radical forms of it, structures and habits being what they are; second, at least implicitly, Hardt and Negri *do* recognize the importance of hegemonizing, and see their own text, continuously described as a theoretical intervention (despite their frequent assertions that we should not privilege theory), as participating in that task, and thus they have an investment in not just opening it to tampering by anyone with access to the internet. Their actual practice indicates that we do still need to privilege “theory” as part of the moment of struggle with consumerist and fundamentalist ideology, and also to combat the rampant anti-intellectualism that characterizes much of everyday life

in the U.S. at least. Their book is offered as a “code” that we are persuaded to “share” in a form considerably more durable than “open-source code” on the internet, or a wikipedia entry: this *is* a hegemonizing gesture.

Similarly, at one point in *Multitude* they try to assure us that in the joyous democracy to come, politics will not take time out of life, it will *be* life. Alluding to Oscar Wilde’s quip that the problem with Socialism is that it took too many evenings, they promise that “biopolitical production presents the possibility that we do the political work of creating and maintaining social relationships collaboratively in the same communicative, cooperative networks of social production, not at interminable evening meetings” (350). My immediate thought, given how many evenings I’ve already given up, is: sign me up, please! But by the end of the book, they tell us that they will not point the practical way forward, because “that has to be decided concretely in collective political discussions” (357). So there, alas (or hooray?), go the evenings—as the members of the Persimfans, who had to practice much longer to play without a conductor than they would have had to with one, could confirm. In the period when politics still takes a lot of evenings, when it is not immediately a product of everyday life, who takes it on? how is it encouraged and nurtured? The moment we currently inhabit not only requires hegemonization and struggle, but, to be effective, it requires direction and organization in a conscious, critical, assertive form, actively encouraging participation of others, and providing an alternative to the ways of life that compete for our assent.

There is an illuminating moment in Spike Lee’s *Four Little Girls* (1997) that makes clear the stakes of what I’m getting at here. Various speakers are outlining the difficulties with organizing in Birmingham during the civil rights struggles, and Andrew Young utterly refuses a romanticized view of collectivity and collaboration. He observes that when he is asked questions today that assume everyone “got together” in the sixties, wondering how that sense of common purpose can be aroused again, he points out that everyone did *not* get together at the time: “it was a small group of dedicated people who got it started and then the kids took it over.” Many interviewees who were adults at the time admitted that they did not take part in *any* of the movement’s activities, out of well-founded fear and uncertainty. “Kids,” one of the organizers explained, “don’t have to pay the rent.” This is the opposite of Scott’s theory of the “hidden transcript” as an effective collective production. Young suggests, to the contrary, that a small group may need to articulate what remains inchoate, albeit palpable, in a broader constituency. Activist-intellectuals can offer an alternative to other forces—such as marketing, mainstream politics, fundamentalist religion and gangs—that seek to tap into and organize this same pool of desire and discontent as well as helping people to manage the understandable fears—and experiences of retribution—that the confrontation of powerful forces entails. To leave discontent to organize “itself” is, more often than not, to leave it to the enemy. However, mistrust of assistance or coordination or affirmation by any “center” or “leadership” is so profound in certain activist circles at the moment that many are unable to recognize the continuing potentially progressive thrust of non- “networked” or non- “lateralized” forces, even when they are manifestly at work in front of their eyes.

For example, Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein’s *The Take* (2004), a wonderful film in many ways, encourages a vision of politics that eschews the state and works “from below.” Their “take” on electoral politics is skeptical as they depict cynical and corrupt campaigning in Argentina while the economy collapses and contrast it with experiments in local democracy as laid-off workers occupy owner-abandoned factories and set them—successfully—back into production. Yet, in *every case* of plant take-over the film documents, it is not worker control alone—impressive and inspiring as this is—that transforms the situation. Appeals to legislators and the courts are equally important to protect and nurture these fledgling movements as plant owners try to re-“take” their abandoned factories and call upon repressive state apparatuses to assist them. Though it complicates the “from below” democracy they champion, Lewis and Klein’s own film illustrates that the State remains a site of

struggle in itself, not simply an irrelevance or the enemy, as interesting developments in Venezuela and other Latin American countries have indicated recently—experiments that may degenerate into demagoguery, but may also mutate into something novel and progressive: a “center” that is actually responsive, flexible and open.

In any case, Scott, for his part, sees the construction of “hidden transcripts” as highly localized, typically dependent on face-to-face interaction. He does not propose how they might become generalized, and it is difficult to imagine how the process of their formation that he describes would work at any but a small scale if they function *only* laterally. This issue is compounded further, it seems to me, under conditions of capitalist exploitation, which does its best not to show its cards, as Marx emphasized in his analysis of the commodity that, he pointed out, does not bear a stamp on it to tell us how we are screwed. “Immaterial labor,” surely, does not make exploitation *more* visible; indeed, arguably, precisely by being so geographically expansive and temporally accelerated, as well as by attempting to burst the boundaries between work and the rest of life, it renders the machinations of capital far less visible, necessitating what Fredric Jameson has called “cognitive maps” to come to terms with it.

Consider, for example, Michael Haneke’s *Code Inconnu* (2000) and Delphine Gleize’s *Carnage* (2003), to name just two of many recent European films with plots that hinge upon chance encounter, direct or indirect, to indicate the interconnections of people in the new spaces of Empire. Haneke brings together a Romanian woman (new Europe), a provincial boy (declining rural life), a Parisian actress, her photo-journalist boyfriend on assignment in Afghanistan, and an Malian émigré family (colonial legacy immigration) in Paris, and then tracks their global wanderings. Gleize traces the parts of a slaughtered bull as they circulate into the hands of a wide range of consumers in formerly autonomous nations (Spain, France, Belgium)—and then tracks the movements of this arbitrarily connected group in “Europe.” Whether following people, objects, images—or the contents of any of Arjun Appadurai’s other “scapes”—in motion, such films, collectively, along with television programs, newspapers, migrants’ tales, and so on, help render globalization imaginable, and they do so not only in terms of familiar codes but in a far more delicate way: inserting the viewer into geographical grids that make spaces beyond the imagined communities of the nation affectively and viscerally resonant and perhaps even inhabitable—though the codes are often currently *inconnus* [unknown] as Haneke puts it. Without such cultural forms, economic and political globalization (or regionalization, as with the EU) could hardly hope to succeed in either right (neo-liberal market) or left (“another world is possible”) versions; such cultural forms participate in the struggle over the globe or Europe (and other contested terrains) by figuring confusions and doubts, contradictions and possibilities, that open up at the subjective level as globalization unfolds, and by helping to produce spaces for these new conditions. They take as given that local experience cannot simply be attributed to local factors any more, and seek out codes to make this situation comprehensible. Their grids and imagined communities are necessarily abstract though not necessarily false (they may even be materialist in the sense of exposing the social relations on which our lived reality depends). We tend to take this process of abstraction for granted, which is by no means to say it takes place without a struggle. Without a conscious critical project of the left to construct “cognitive maps” that assist in making transformative possibilities—and the collectivities that can effect them—visible in this way, other, less liberatory codes will continue to organize everyday life in ways that maintain the status quo.

Adorno proposed that in conditions unpropitious for the production of a critical relation to the status quo, intellectuals could generate something like Scott’s “hidden transcript” for everyone—a sort of score for an unfinished anti-capitalist symphony. This is precisely what Andrew Young is describing in the case of the “small group of dedicated people,” who were the seeds of effective resistance in Birmingham, which, in turn, spurred the civil rights movement in the U.S. as a whole.

However, the efforts of a “small group of dedicated people” today cannot merely lie in wait for a proper revolutionary moment to burst forth so that they can inform practical transformative politics; they must help provoke it. The flaw of Adorno’s formulation, I would suggest, was not to assume that intellectuals, with the time, training, inclination and skills to perform this task, have this role to play, but rather that he did not concern himself with how to make the transcript dialectical in relation to everyone else: either in terms of how to disseminate it, or in terms of how to render it responsive and flexible as it circulated among the multitude.

I want to squeeze every last bit of elitism from my heart, but thinking you know better than other people how justice might be achieved is only one form of elitism; another is doing fellow mortals the disservice and condescension of judging them less strictly than you would judge yourself. Where Hardt and Negri see laterality and purposeful resistance, I see impediments and far less participation in building the road to justice than their book would imply. Indeed, transforming the world would be a lot easier if sexism, racism, homophobia and various forms of ethnic and religious parochialisms only inhabited corporate boardrooms, and if apathy, ethnocentrism, consumerism, environmental degradation, displaced abjection, exhaustion, individualism, the nuclear family, etc., etc., etc., didn’t get in the way of establishing social justice. Hardt and Negri are often forced, however, by their Deleuzian positivity and emphasis on the “creative” into something very like a “salt of the earth” vocabulary that I find both repellent and false; in any case, they are entirely silent on how to commence a project of *unlearning* Empire *within* the multitude so that the project of creating democracy can unfold. This task, it seems to me, raises issues that they seem to think belong to a “dead” past: hegemonization and counter-hegemony. Fighting Empire, in other words, will necessarily involve fighting the Empire *within* the multitude, subjectively and socially.

I conclude with one possible way forward, then: do we have to throw out the conscious critical dreaming that we have called “avant garde” with the imposed order of the vanguard *party*? Susan Buck Morss has strenuously argued not: her *Dreamworld and Catastrophe* comes to a conclusion rather like Williams’ on “hegemony,” though she does not say so. She suggests that what distinguished avant-garde artists—even if they did not know this themselves—from the vanguard party was a radically different relation to time, at least before they subordinated themselves—or were forcibly subordinated—to party discipline. The problem, in her view, then, was not the “elitism” of the avant garde as a small group of intellectuals and artists striving to elicit revolutionary energies and inform utopian dreams, but rather that the creative, *interruptive* thrust of the avant garde was yoked to the political vanguard’s vision of the “future,” which ultimately rendered it static and impoverished. The avant garde’s most important power is a critique of the present and figuration of alternative possibilities, a task whose needfulness was by no means exhausted in 1917.

Similarly, the problem with 5-year plans, from Buck Morss’ point of view, was not that they were *plans*, or even that they were formulated by a central authority, but that they were undialectical; practice was forcibly bound to theory rather than each engaging the other:

the fantastic constructions of the avant-garde could no more be a blueprint for socialist existence than a Five Year Plan can be for how economic activity actually impinges on human lives. Both are utopian representations, the forced actualization of which can have very dystopic effects. The power of art to change life is indirect. But so is (or ought to be) the power of political sovereignty. Once an urban design or building, once a policy or plan enters the interactive world of the everyday, its uses should be allowed and indeed encouraged to transcend the constraints of the creator’s intent.

Buck Morss takes it as self-evident that in the actually existing world, at least, we still have to pay attention to the relation of intellectuals to the organization of revolutionary agents.

Between the Scylla of elitism, blindness, condescension and forced imposition and the Charybdis of absolute de-centralization and laterality, we might find another Sympligidean rock on which to build radical democracy. And it could be a far sounder one, it seem to me, than the “Seattle” that Hardt and Negri propose, which floats like an oil slick on the surface of the vast sea of the multitude, without as yet having developed a practical means of exploring, openly, the vastness of that sea and thus engaging far more of its creatures. In any case, *Multitude*, the book, implicitly puts “Seattle” in the place of a center by affirming its form and values and indicating that not all singularities can be accommodated under even its ample umbrella, but does not explain how the alternative globalization movement can bear its task responsibly, in the strongest theoretical sense of that concept. So, while Buck Morss’ vocabulary is one that Hardt and Negri would reject, the problem she poses, I would suggest, they simply cannot evade. It is perhaps the greatest challenge for their de-centered networks and post-guerrilla struggles. For when they provide figures of a future radicalized democracy, they never propose how communication and collaboration will work *in the meantime*, extensively *and* in depth, to take us all there. For this, I insist, we still need to preserve and refine hegemony as a concept, even if it is a ladder that we eventually throw away.

Intriguingly, Naomi Klein inverts Hardt and Negri’s hierarchy of current struggles, assessing the “Zapatistas” contribution to be more globally significant than “Seattle” at least in its “summit-hopping” form—an assessment with which I emphatically agree. However, I would describe its significance somewhat differently. She applauds the Zapatistas as a “counter-power” to the state, not an attempt to replace it: “their goal was not to win control over the Mexican state but to seize and build autonomous spaces where ‘democracy, liberty and justice’ could thrive.” Subcomandante Marcos, who arrived on the scene as a “Marxist missionary,” had to learn this re-orientation from his engagement with the rural communities that he hoped to organize, peasants who, in Klein’s words, told him “they weren’t workers but people, and besides, land wasn’t property but the heart of their communities” (455). What she does not say, however, is that the opposite is also manifestly true: that Marcos did not simply trade in Marxist dogma for the uncritical nativism that Fanon mocks in the *Wretched of the Earth*. For global consumption, at least, the discourse of the Zapatistas is unmistakably Marxist—a transformed, indigenized Marxism, to be sure, but still recognizably a Marxism. To critique Marcos and assume that he had many things to (un)learn is a lesson well taken; but the opposite is also true: rural villagers do not inherently have every conceivable theoretical tool nor access to a whole world of knowledge (and technology) at their disposal to make transformative sense of the degradation, desperation and discontent that they are structurally induced to experience. When we are thinking in global terms, as we now must, (un)learning is necessarily a two-way street in every local situation: to propose otherwise (that the oppressed already know the score in all its parts) is both politically fatal, and, in effect, just as arrogant as arriving on the scene as a “Marxist missionary” assuming you have *all* the answers. What I admire about the Zapatistas, alternatively, is not the supposed refusal of centralization and authority, which, as Klein’s own discourse reveals, works far better as a “counter-force” than as a long-term solution, in any case, but rather their evident success in moving between an organizing center and the subjects organized, the local and the global, in an effective and dialectical way.

A final glance at Persimfans, then: to what extent is the “conductorless orchestra” a model for political organizing? First observation: it *does* matter that Orpheus dresses itself in Persimfans clothes without its revolutionary goals: their “common” is not at all the same as that to which the Russian avant gardes aspired, and this makes all the difference between a liberatory project and a merely liberal-individualist one. Whereas Orpheus is interested in the democracy of its own members, it does not imagine this as any but an exceptional and elite project, as the constituencies of its workshops make evident. This limits absolutely how much of a “model” for a generalized democracy it can be, since the desire to generalize democracy must be part of the project for it to be truly *radically* democratic. Observation two: part of that generalization project must be pedagogic and anticipatory;

material conditions for general participation must be worked for by the dedicated core while they engage in the education and organization projects necessary to achieve hegemony. In themselves these do not guarantee success (Persimfans and the other avant garde projects did not prevail), but they are a necessary, if insufficient, condition of transformative projects. To refuse left hegemonization in the name of “equality” will be to assist inequality by conceding too much to the competing forces of consumerism, fundamentalism, nationalism and so on. In an unequal world, left leadership to encourage, educate and organize the multitude, and bring about material conditions of equal participation, is irreducible.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989) 135-40.
2. See <<http://www.orpheusnyc.com>> accessed December 4, 2007.
3. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004). On page xii they summarize the attributes of “Empire” as a global “network power.” They refer to the “orchestra with no conductor” on page 336 and define “multitude” on page 100.
4. ⁴Vandana Shiva, *Biopiracy: the Plunder of Nature and Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA: South End P, 1997); Naomi Klein, “Reclaiming the Commons” *New Left Review* ns 9 (2001) 81-89.
5. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1992) chaps. 26-33.
6. E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (New York: New P, 1991); Midnight Notes, *The New Enclosures* (New York and Boston: Autonomedia, 1990).
7. <<http://www.ecommons.net/index-e.html>> accessed December 4, 2007; <<http://creativecommons.org>> accessed December 4, 2007. There are also a “Wikipedia commons” and many other web-based communities organizing themselves as supposed virtual “commons.” For a bibliography of discussions of these works in utopian/dystopian terms from left and right perspectives, see <<http://utopia.nypl.org/2ndsources.html>> accessed December 4, 2007.
8. Rhizome is the first concept-metaphor elaborated in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987). On Autonomia, see Steve Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism* (London: Pluto P, 2002); Harry Cleaver, *Reading ‘Capital’ Politically*, 2nd ed. (Leeds: AK/Anti-thesis, 2000), especially the introduction; and Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, eds., *Radical Thought in Italy* (Minneapolis and London: U of Minnesota P, 1996).
9. James Heartfield, “Capitalism and Anti-Capitalism,” *Interventions* 5.2 (2003) 271-89: 271. I firmly disagree with some of Heartfield’s conclusions, but not with his characterization of the constituency.
10. One of the more extreme illustrations of this addiction to symbolic politics appears in David Graeber’s confession in “The New Anarchists,” *New Left Review* ns 13 (2002) 61-73, that helping to tear down a fence at the FTAA summit in Quebec City not only “was certainly one of the more exhilarating experiences of this author’s life” but also was “one of the most powerful moments in the [alternative globalization] movement’s history” (65). To the extent that this is so, it indicates the poverty of the movement. For this reason, Naomi Klein added a substantial “Afterword” to the second edition of *No Logo* (Picador, 2002), and one of its principal agendas is to claim that the maturing alternative globalization movement realizes “activism can no longer be about registering symbolic dissent. It must be about taking action to make people’s lives better—where they live, right away” (453).
11. *Berkeley in the 60s*, dir. Mark Kitchell (1990).
12. We might think about a “strategic center” on the model of Gayatri Spivak’s “strategic essentialism”—along with her own cautions and reservations. See Sara Danus and Stefan Jonsson, “An Interview with Gayatri Chakravory Spivak,” *boundary 2* 20.2 (1993): 24-50.
13. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford UP, 1977), 112.
14. Ernesto Laclau, “Constructing Universality,” Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (London and New York: Verso, 2000) 281-307: 306.
15. Stuart Ewen, *All Consuming Images*, rev. ed. (Basic Books: 1999).

16. Thomas Frank, "Why Johnny Can't Dissent," *Cultural Resistance: A Reader*, ed. Stephen Duncombe (London and New York: Verso, 2002) 316-27.
17. Leslie Sklair, *Sociology of the Global System* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1991).
18. See, especially, Kim Stanley Robinson, *Blue Mars* (London: HarperCollins, 1996).
19. Jonathan Ressler, interviewed in *The Corporation*, dir. Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott & Joel Bakan (2004)
20. Lucy Hughes, Initiative Media, interviewed in *ibid*.
21. *Hell House*, dir. George Ratliff (2002).
22. Jacques Attali, *Noise*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1985) 66.
23. Leonid Sabaneev, "A Conductorless Orchestra," trans. S. Pring, *Musical Times* 69 (1928) 307-09.
24. Terry Pearce, qtd in Diane Ainsworth, "Conductorless Orchestra shows MBA Students How to Inspire Workers," *Berkeleyan* (19 November 2001): <http://www.berkeley.edu/news/berkeleyan/2001/11/29_orch.html> accessed December 4, 2007.
25. McKenzie Wark, "Fashion as a Culture Industry," *No Sweat*, ed. Andrew Ross (London and New York: Verso, 1997) 227-48.
26. The problem with standpoint is that for it to work, practically, it has to be made *conscious*, and more militates against this than for it in the advanced capitalisms, and much militates against its practical organization elsewhere—this means relentless organizing is necessary. See Tom Mertes, "Grass Roots Globalism," *New Left Review* ns 17 (2002) 101-10.
27. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966) 12.
28. James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1990) 78. See also his earlier book, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1987), as well as his more recent *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1998).
29. Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis and London: U of Minnesota P, 1993) 110.
30. Miguel Helft and John Markoff, "Google is Pursuing Plans to Put a PC into Every Pocket," *New York Times* 6 November 2007: C1.
31. Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, trans. unnamed (New York: International Publishers, 1966).
32. See, for example, Kenneth Chang and John Schwartz, "Cockroaches Respond to Peer Pressure, Study Suggests," *New York Times* 15 November 2007: [page?]; and Carl Zimmer, "From Ants to People, an Instinct to Swarm," *New York Times* 13 November 2007: [page?].
33. This is one of the more astonishing blindspots of their books; when they discuss "externalities" for example, they only discuss *positive* externalities (i.e., generalized benefits), not the much more pressing *negative* ones, such as a factory spewing pollution into the atmosphere—which comes at the general cost of degrading air quality—instead of a factory owner bearing the cost of installing smokestack-cleaning equipment (147-48). They also claim "immaterial property [. . .] such as an idea or an image or a form of communication, is infinitely reproducible. It can be everywhere at once, and my using it and having it does not hinder yours" (311). As I point out, this ignores the necessity of delivery systems for the "immaterial"—which are, themselves, quite material and non-infinite, as well as highly unequally distributed (if you don't have a computer or electricity, the availability of images and ideas on the internet is as remote as volumes on closed stacks of libraries—indeed, perhaps more so).
34. Enrique Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor and the Philosophy of Liberation* (New Jersey: Humanities P, 1996).
35. Neil Lazarus, *Resistance in Postcolonial African Fiction* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1990)
36. See my "History After the End of History," *New Formations* 59 (2006) 63-80; and "The Eleventh September of George Bush," *Interventions* 5.2 (2003) 177-99.
37. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London and New York: Verso, 1978) 52.
38. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1961).

39. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston: Beacon P, 1955).
40. A prominent organizer of 60s protest movements, Jerry Rubin became disenchanted as state violent repression increased and the chances for something like revolution appeared to decrease in the U.S. He became both more inward-directed and entrepreneurial, a shift charted in the third segment of Adam Curtis's *Century of the Self* (2002), which suggests Rubin's turn was symptomatic of the success of corporate attempts to tap into and redirect anti-authoritarian impulses into the self-love of consumerism.
41. Interviewed in *Four Little Girls*, dir. Spike Lee (1997)
42. Tariq Ali, *Pirates of the Caribbean* (London and New York: Verso, 2006).
43. Fredric Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping," *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1988) 347-57.
44. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996) chap. 2; "imagined communities" is derived from Benedict Anderson's book of that title (London and New York: Verso, 1991). It describes "imagined community" as the fundamental concept of emergent nationalism, and traces it to a variety of political and cultural changes that encourage a subjective sense of simultaneous inhabitation of its space.
45. For a discussion of "materialism" in this sense, see my "Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be?," *Early Modern Culture* 1: <<http://emc.eserver.org/1-1/bartolovich.html>>.
46. Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe* (Cambridge and London: MIT P, 2000) 65.
47. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove P, 1968) 221.

Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition

The Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition was created in January 1998 following the designation of globalization and the human condition as a strategic area of research by the Senate of McMaster University. Subsequently, it was approved as an official research center by the University Planning Committee. The Institute brings together a group of approximately 30 scholars from both the social sciences and humanities. Its mandate includes the following responsibilities:

- a facilitator of research and interdisciplinary discussion with the view to building an intellectual community focused on globalization issues.
- a centre for dialogue between the university and the community on globalization issues
- a promoter and administrator of new graduate programming

In January 2002, the Institute also became the host for a Major Collaborative Research Initiatives Project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada where a group of over 40 researchers from across Canada and abroad are examining the relationships between globalization and autonomy.

The WORKING PAPER SERIES...

circulates papers by members of the Institute as well as other faculty members and invited graduate students at McMaster University working on the theme of globalization. Scholars invited by the Institute to present lectures at McMaster will also be invited to contribute to the series.

Objectives:

- To foster dialogue and awareness of research among scholars at McMaster and elsewhere whose work focuses upon globalization, its impact on economic, social, political and cultural relations, and the response of individuals, groups and societies to these impacts. Given the complexity of the globalization phenomenon and the diverse reactions to it, it is helpful to focus upon these issues from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.
- To assist scholars at McMaster and elsewhere to clarify and refine their research on globalization in preparation for eventual publication.

To reach the IGHC:
1280 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON L8S 4M4, Canada
Phone: 905-525-9140 ext. 27556
Email: globalhc@mcmaster.ca
Web: globalization.mcmaster.ca



Organizing the (Un)Common

Crystal Bartolovich
English Department
401 Hall of Languages
Syracuse NY 13244
USA

clbartol@syr.edu