

**ANOTHER WORLD WAS POSSIBLE: 911 AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST
NEOLIBERALISM IN THE UNITED STATES**

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ABSTRACT

SINDHU ZAGOREN: Another World Was Possible: 911 and the Struggle Against
Neoliberalism in the United States
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This thesis focuses on anti-corporate globalization struggles within the United States, and how 911 became a trope around which these activist discourses had to function. Due to specific constructions and interpretations of this event, the United States saw a limiting of protest space, increased measures of security, and an increase in concern around issues of war, surveillance and the national. The nature of this shift disrupted immanent practices of resistance that sought to create alternative social and political configurations within the spatial-temporal existence of anti-corporate demonstrations. This ultimately served to foreclose certain means of resistance such as carnivalesque production of symbolic/utopian spaces, and networked production of an alternative common. Given the national-militaristic dominant discourse post-911, activists were interpellated into a defensive position. In responding to crises rather than promoting alternatives, activists' methods were necessarily altered.

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Another World Was Possible: 911 and the Struggle Against Neoliberalism in the United States

“This state of government which bears essentially on population and both refers itself to and makes use of the instrumentation of economic *savoir* could be seen as corresponding to a type of society controlled by apparatuses of security.”

-Michel Foucault “On Governmentality”

“Today, millions of Americans mourned and prayed, and tomorrow we go back to work.”

-George W. Bush, September 16th 2001

On November 30th, 1999 activists swarmed the city of Seattle in what is now referred as the “Battle of Seattle” or N30. As a direct result of these demonstrations the meetings of the World Trade Organization (WTO) being held in Seattle were delayed. The “Battle of Seattle” marked for many the manifestation of a new social movement – one that fought the processes and ideologies of corporate globalization. Less than two years later what was scheduled to be another large scale US demonstration against the “free trade” policies of neoliberalism, focusing on a meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was repositioned as an anti-war demonstration due to the Bush administration’s response to the September 11th terrorist attacks. Within the course of a few weeks, the focus and scope of this emerging movement changed. Within the United States, anti-corporate globalization activities were ultimately usurped by a repositioning of activists’ interests into an anti-war movement, and by strategies on the part of the US government that served to disrupt the emerging networks of resistance that were being generated around concerns with “free trade.”

The forces of neoliberalism that anti-corporate globalization activists were fighting against were neither strictly juridical nor strictly economic in their nature. Anti-corporate globalization activists were opposed to a process of cultural production that sought to legitimize and normalize the practices and policies of neoliberal hegemony. Upon an examination of their processes of resistance to neoliberal hegemony, it becomes apparent that resistance to such hegemonic structures embraced culture-producing strategies that were not fully explained by contemporary sociological social movement theory. Such an examination also demonstrates that neoliberalism as a hegemonic process has been both contested and contingent. Examining the processes by which consent to neoliberalism was contested, as well as where and how that contestation failed to become culturally dominant, illustrates how contemporary resistance strategies function within the realm of the cultural, and where agency, however undermined, has existed and has potential to reemerge. Culture in this sense is doubly constituted. It is both a way in to asking a set of questions concerning the structure of our lived reality, and a process of constructing that lived reality. The experience of lived reality is in fact contingent on the construction of the discourses that compose it. People's identities, their relationship to groups and the interests of those groups are constructed through a process of articulation. This is essential to understanding contemporary social movements, as activists within these movements are increasingly aware of themselves as agents of cultural production, and conscious of culture's role in the production of their lived realities.

The following argument explores contemporary anti-capitalist struggles within the United States, from 1999 till the present, specifically centered around demonstrations in response to meetings of international organizations seeking to expand free trade (in particular the World

Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization). The first section details some of the processes of neoliberalism and the project of the Right within the United States. This section also examines specific rhetorical strategies used on the part of the Bush administration in the aftermath of September 11th that foreclosed certain oppositional responses, and repositioned those responses around issues of war and security. The second section examines how various tactics being employed in the anti-corporate globalization movement were usurped by the repositioning of these dominant discourses. In the first half of the second section I examine how aspects of the carnivalesque came into play during anti-corporate demonstrations, and where and how they ceased to function post-911. The second half of that section examines how anti-corporate globalization practices were engaging with network structures, and how this was working to produce different dominant power constructions. I argue that a new conception of social movement practices, based upon a reconception of the function of power, was produced within the struggles of the anti-corporate globalization movement pre-911, and that these understandings and activities were in part what made the movement vulnerable to dissipation post 911.

I focus on activities within the US for a number of reasons. Firstly, many of the free market ideals and the trans-national organizations that uphold them, have their basis in the United States. Secondly I wish to focus particularly on the movement's developments within the US because I believe them to be different than developments in other parts of the world. There have been major campaigns against neoliberal policies in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe. Within Europe for example, there continued to be numerous anti-corporate and "global justice" demonstrations against institutions that promote "free trade," as well as anti-EU demonstrations, after September 11th. The response in Spain to the March 2003 terrorist

bombings in Madrid was to vote out José María Aznar's Popular Party administration – the administration that brought Spanish troops into the Iraq war. The response in the US to the September 11th terrorist attacks was an almost ninety percent approval rating for the Bush administration.¹ The struggles in the United States changed and redirected after September 11th in such a way as to no longer reproduce the same networks of solidarity that had previously been produced in relation to other international anti-corporate activities outside of the United States. These networks were also increasingly vulnerable to surveillance after September 11th.

I do not wish to look at the struggles within the United States as independent from those around the globe, but rather to examine those struggles as they existed within the particular context of the United States. This paper expounds upon the specific aspects of this context, and endeavors to explain how and why US struggles against capitalism have faltered. Post-911 the questions that were being asked and the issues raised by activists seeking to contest neoliberalism were no longer functioning with the same resonance with which they had operated pre-911.

Setting the Stage: Neoliberalism and 911

The end of the twentieth century saw a shift in state structures due to an increase of corporate globalization. As large corporations sought to open new markets and expand trade, they sought transnational affiliations and infrastructure in order to smooth the process.

Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade

¹ The Harris Poll, "Bush's Approval Rating Falls Again, Poll Shows," *The Wall Street Journal Online*. 17 Nov. 2005, http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB113216347138199155-5Z1Ri_om8ITUbV_jD2bx6maguMY_20061116.html?mod=tff_main_tff_top (accessed 16 March 2006).

Organization, have relaxed trade tariffs, opened free trade zones in countries throughout the world, and set up policies via structural readjustment loans, that have restructured foreign governmental programs in order to make foreign markets more amenable to international trade. Such institutions have located organized economic control at the transnational (as opposed to national) level.

While these practices have served to greatly increase the profits of an elite core of transnational corporations, the effects on many local economies throughout the world have been devastating.² These problems have not been unique to foreign countries, however, as the United States saw many of its manufacturing jobs move overseas where labor was cheaper and paying union benefits unnecessary. This has been due in part to the changing nature of the economy, which has entailed a change in not only how commodities are produced, but also in what sort of commodities are being produced. Forms of mass production are being replaced by “systems of production and distribution that can respond quickly to the different demands of smaller groups of consumers.”³ Capitalism has changed. Transnational corporations accountable to no nation state or national political doctrine have grown as a result of global markets for goods and services, and global networks of production.

This has significantly altered the role of the state in the regulation of practices that effect everyday lives, especially within the realm of labor. Benefits previously supplied by employers have become increasingly scarce. Notions of job stability have been usurped by

² For specific case studies on the effects of structural readjustment loans on a number of foreign governments see Kevin Danaher, ed., *50 Years is Enough: The Case Against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund*, (Boston: South End Press, 1994).

³ Lawrence Grossberg, Ellen Wartella and D. Charles Whitney, *Media Making: Mass Media in a Popular Culture* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1998), 53.

the increasing use of temporary workers. At the same time, appealing to traditional state means to prevent such occurrences (as had been done by previous social movements such as traditional union struggles or environmental movements) no longer addressed the larger discourses responsible for the structural changes that were enabling this form of “progress.” According to Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, within this climate of evolving neoliberal economic structures, “local institutions were being given responsibility without power, while international institutions and actors were gaining power without responsibility: a form of regulatory dumping was occurring at the local scale, while macrorule regimes were being remade in regressive and marketized ways.”⁴ The 1990s saw “a new regime of highly competitive interlocal relations, such that just about all local social settlements were becoming tendentially subject in one way or another to the disciplinary force of neoliberalized spatial relations.”⁵ As a result, “it seemed that any adequate response to neoliberalism had to be framed in substantially *extralocal* terms. Only this could stall and circumvent the *neoliberalization of interlocal relations* – a more nebulous and a more daunting adversary.”⁶

As the context of economic practices and relations was changing, so too were activists and organizers changing their targets, strategies, and objectives. Just as forces of neoliberalization were working to function along extralocal terms, means of resistance were developing along networks that joined the local to the national and international. The common concerns and interests of people who had previously remained isolated became

⁴ Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell Peck, “Neoliberalizing Space.” *Antipode*, 34, (2002), 386.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. 387. Italics theirs.

increasingly articulated by increased networks of communication and association – what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri referred to as “new circuits of cooperation and collaboration.”⁷

The 1999 demonstrations against the WTO meetings in Seattle marked one point of crisis for the United States. The structures of the nation state were failing to provide for aspects of the social welfare of many citizens. Many manufacturing jobs were leaving the United States, and the global economy was reshaping itself using organizational structures that were international in their scope. Aspects of civil society seemed to be eroding as the realm of the economic became increasingly transnational, not checked by government regulations, and therefore not susceptible to traditional modes of citizen control (such as voting⁸ or boycotting). In response to this crisis, individuals and organizations on the left were beginning to come together – a series of interests were being articulated around the problems of “free trade” and the “free market”.

A second crisis point can be located in 2000. A multi-decade project of the Right in the US garnered success with the election of George W. Bush.⁹ Although Bush won the presidency, he in fact did not win the popular vote, and his election was therefore highly contested by many different sectors of society. People on all sides of the political spectrum

⁷ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), xiii.

⁸ This became even more apparent after the 2000 election of George W. Bush, wherein he failed to win the popular vote.

⁹ This multi-decade project includes both political and economic endeavors that will secure a neoliberal economic policy, and Republican control of the executive, legislative, and juridical branches of the government. For a more detailed explanation of this project see David Harvey *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). According to Harvey the project of neoliberalism is in fact a project to restore a particular class formation of elitism – a formation that was threatened on both a political and economic level.

were suddenly faced with a breakdown of how US democracy was supposed to function. Concerns around the legitimacy of the Bush presidency further mobilized sections of the population to question the validity of US neoliberal policy. As a result, during the first months of the Bush administration's first term in office, the anti-corporate globalization movement gained even more momentum (more demonstrations, more teach-ins, more alternative living and spatial constructions in both urban and rural areas). Through the use of performative and networked tactics, the anti-corporate globalization movement attempted to restructure dominant power structures. Within the United States, however, this movement was ultimately eroded by successful strategies on the part of the Right. These strategies were especially effective in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11th.

September 11th became a turning point in the anti-corporate globalization movement within the United States – a point at which US anti-capitalist activities ceased to function within a developing international culture of resistance. After the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States and the ensuing anti-war demonstration on September 29th 2001 the US anti-corporate globalization movement lost its accelerating momentum and resonance as part of a larger anti-capitalist movement. Discourse surrounding problems of “free trade” were confounded and displaced by what was considered the more pressing discourse centering on the problem of war. This shift towards concerns of war caused a refocusing on internal (national) issues, and this in turn served to diminish solidarity with international anti-capitalist struggles. I do not intend to argue that this loss of momentum was a direct effect of the attacks. Rather a number of external factors, as well as divisions within the movement itself, allowed this particular moment to take on a significance that had negative consequences for anti-capitalist struggles articulated as a movement in the United States.

The Bush administration's response to the September 11th terrorist attacks altered the significance of performative and networked opposition to neoliberalism. Criticism of the Bush administration, including their neoliberal economic stance, was rhetorically produced by the administrations as "anti-American" and therefore labeled terrorist. The anti-corporate globalization movement was not able to counter this rhetorical turn effectively within the United States (although anti-capitalist struggles somewhat increased in other parts of the world as US Imperialism took on phenomenal new dimensions). This failure of the anti-corporate globalization movement to cope began almost immediately after 911 with the canceled September 29th IMF meetings. The meetings were canceled, and the scheduled protest was transformed into an anti-war demonstration with a very small turn out.

According to the International Action Center (IAC), one of the major organizers of the September 29th 2001 event, "In light of the current crisis, with its tragic consequences for so many thousands of people, we have refocused the call for our demonstration to address the immediate danger posed by racism and the grave threat of a new war."¹⁰ This moment marked a definitive turn in US anti-capitalist activities as they were rearticulated from a series of struggles engaging with issues of corporate globalization to struggles against military engagement

From this point out, protests became framed "in light of the current crisis." This qualification became a necessary precursor for all people who spoke out against the policies of the Bush administration. This was made necessary by a series of rhetorical strategies employed by the Bush administration immediately following the September 11th attacks. In

¹⁰ IAC as quoted in: Staff Reports, "Students to Attend D.C. Anti-War Protests." *The Breeze Front: James Madison University's Student Newspaper Online* 20 Sept. 2001. <http://www.thebreeze.org/archives/9.20.01/front/front4.shtml> (Accessed 28 Feb. 2006)

the series of speeches that George W. Bush delivered after the September 11th terrorist attacks, there is an effort to carefully construct a common sense that excludes a position of opposition and creates a need for increased security. This is done through a series of repeated themes in the course of his speeches. The crux of this argument is firstly, a strong dichotomy between “Us” and “Them,” and secondly, an equivalence between America, freedom, and security.

The dichotomy between “Us” and “them” is most clearly demonstrated in Bush’s speech on September 20th 2001 when he declared: “Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.”¹¹ Later on October 7th 2001, this sentiment is repeated when Bush informed us: “In this conflict, there is no neutral ground.”¹² Within Bush’s post-911 speeches, the position of “Us” is built through two main strategies: an association with the victims, and a stress on the importance of unity. In George W. Bush’s September 14th speech,¹³ the audience is associated with the victims through phrases such as “our grief” and “our nation’s sorrow.” We mourn with our fellow Americans and “offer the deepest sympathy.” This association with the victims of tragedy also serves to heighten a sense of unity – “Our unity is a kinship of grief” and a “unity against terror.” According to this same speech, “we feel what Franklin Roosevelt called the warm courage of national unity. This is a unity of every faith, and every back ground.” Later on September 20th, towards the end of Bush’s Address to a Joint

¹¹ George Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American people, The Whitehouse, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html> (Accessed 24 March 2006)

¹² George Bush, Presidential Address to the Nation, The Whitehouse, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/10/print/20011007-8.html> (Accessed 24 March 2006)

¹³ George Bush, President’s Remarks at National Day of Prayer and Remembrance, The Whitehouse, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/new/releases/2001/09/print/20010914-2.html> (Accessed 24 March 2006)

Session of Congress, he repeats the phrase “we will come together” five times in as many sentences, and repeatedly uses collective pronouns (us, we, our).

The subjectivity of “Them” is constructed as directly opposed to “Us” (where “Us” is American, and “Them” is terrorists). This terrorist other remains an ambiguous threat. They are the “evil folk [that] still lurk out there.”¹⁴ They are “evil-doers,”¹⁵ enemies of the American people, and “enemies of freedom.”¹⁶ They “plot evil and destruction” and “they hate our freedoms.”¹⁷ They function along networks of association, and all associated are guilty as well, therefore Bush assures us: “I will keep my focus to make sure that not only are these [terrorists] brought to justice, but anybody associated will be brought to justice.”¹⁸ Our enemy is not a singular individual, nor a particular group or organization, but rather “a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them.”¹⁹ These terrorist networks are “the heirs of all murderous ideologies of the twentieth century.”²⁰ “They” are the evil thoughts and networks that oppose freedom and America.

The association between freedom and America is also equated with a third term – security. There are “enemies of human freedom” who “have attacked America, because we are

¹⁴ George Bush, Remarks by the President Upon Arrival, The Whitehouse, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/print/20010916-2.html> (Accessed 26 March 2006)

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People. They are also “enemies of human freedom” in Bush’s September 16th speech.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Bush, Remarks by the President Upon Arrival

¹⁹ Bush, Address to a joint Session of Congress and the American People

²⁰ Ibid.

freedom's home and defender."²¹ According to Bush's September 20th Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American people, "This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom." In order to win this fight, however "we will need the help of police forces, intelligence services, and banking systems around the world." Towards the end of this same speech, Bush claims: "Freedom and fear are at war" and that he will "struggle for freedom and security for the American people." This is a contradictory trope wherein to be free means to be free from fear, which calls for increased security. Less than three weeks after the September 20th Address to the Joint Session of Congress, on October 7th the United States military began strikes against Afghanistan (operation Enduring Freedom). In his Address to the Nation Bush assures us: "Peace and freedom will prevail." Yet "there can be no peace in a world of sudden terror." Therefore "the only way to pursue peace is to pursue those who threaten it." Freedom can only be maintained through security and war, which takes the form of increased surveillance (the office of homeland security had been created in late September). Peace can only be preserved through war. Through the use of these tropes, the Bush administration managed to structure the dominant US narrative in terms of war. This served to reposition US anti-corporate activity in the terms of that dominant narrative.

To be against US foreign policy now meant to be opposed to the US military initiatives, rather than to be opposed to US economic policy. This is not to say that people were no longer objecting to the economic policies of the Bush Administration, but rather all objections had to be made in terms of the events of September 11th ("In light of the current crisis"). In efforts to prevent the military operations that followed September 11th and

²¹ Bush, President Remarks at National Day of Prayer and Remembrance

eventually led to the US invasion of Iraq, many activists shifted their attention to anti-war demonstrations – as clearly demonstrated by the rearticulation of the September 29th planned demonstrations against the IMF as an anti-war protest. Given the terms of the “current crisis,” an articulation of concerns around neoliberalism was no longer as pressing as the need to organize around issues of war. The old crisis (that of neoliberal economic policy and the infiltration of capitalism into the spaces of everyday life) did not go away, but was trumped by the current crisis of impending military action.

While the prominence of discourses of war led to new formations of articulated interests, these articulated interests did not necessarily promote a position on the institutions of neoliberalism that had been the targets of previous demonstrations. Nor did these new articulations against Bush’s military intentions promote a new conception of common sense. Rather these anti-war coalitions sought direct governmental response (as opposed to a more broad based cultural change). This effectively changed not only the focus of political actions, but also the tactics, and general objectives of the actions. By the time of the September 24th 2005 peace demonstration in Washington DC, a wide variety of interests had come together to stop the US war in Iraq. The agenda of these activists, however, was not to create a new cultural hegemony.

Momentum that had been building towards asserting a new cultural hegemony, one that stood contrary to neo-liberal economic policies and capitalist ideologies, was disrupted post September 11th. The coalition anti-corporate globalization activists had formed among labor, human rights organizations, students and environmental activists, dissipated as the Bush administrations’ articulation of freedom and security, and a program of neoliberal economic

policies eventually assumed cultural dominance, and won the Bush Administration a second term in office.

This repositioning of interests in terms of the dominant narrative marks a lost revolutionary moment, not unlike Michael Denning's interpretation of E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*. Denning views Thompson's book less as a coherent narrative of class construction than as an attempt to understand a point of failed revolution. According to Denning, "Thompson argues that revolutions that *don't* take place are just as devastating as those that *do* happen."²² In *The Making of the English Working Class* a revolutionary moment is constructed through a time of political radicalism, yet this is a revolution that does not manifest, a moment that *could have been* and yet wasn't.

Practices and Usurpation

As mentioned above, between the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle, Washington (N30) and the anti-war protest in Washington DC which took place on September 29th 2001²³ (shortly after the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States) anti-corporate activities were developing at an accelerating rate. Collaborations and articulations of interests were bringing together labor, environmental, and human rights organizations as well as student and anti-prison groups. Such alliances stemmed from a reconception of the multiple concerns of different people around issues of the global expansion of capital. These alliances produced networks, strategies, and means of knowledge production that sought to create and

²² Michael Denning, *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds* (New York: Verso, 2004), 40.

²³ These dates, while not arbitrary, do not mark a definitive beginning and end points of a "movement." Rather they mark important turning point is *US* perception of the anti-globalization movement.

enact an alternative to the structures and ideologies of neoliberalism. These struggles incorporated innovations in and rearticulations of organizational and communicative strategies. Tactics such as carnivalesque performances, affinity groups, and the opening of Independent Media Centers (IMCs) functioned non-hierarchically and were themselves means of resistance.²⁴

The means of resistance embraced by anti-corporate globalization activists, along with the nature of the demonstrations themselves, were enacted using networked and performative practices. These practices utilized methods and logics not fully explicated by previous conceptions of social movement theory. The two main sociological paradigms for studying social movements within the United States are the Resource Mobilization paradigm (RM) and the New Social Movements paradigm (NSM). Each of these paradigms offers an understanding of how social movements function in order to make change. The Resource Mobilization paradigm frames social movements as primarily concerned with accumulating and employing available resources to achieve state sanctioned change. The New Social Movements paradigm conceives of change as stemming from processes of identity formation, and the restructuring of civil society in order to ultimately affect state recognition and control. Both of these paradigms seek change within the state apparatus. These understandings of social movements are analogous to what Michael Denning refers to as “sociological theories of institutions, groups, or parties, an abstract model of the dynamics of a particular social construction.”²⁵

²⁴ Laura A. Stengrim, “Negotiating Postmodern Democracy, Political Activism, and Knowledge Production: Indymedia’s Grassroots and e-Savvy Answer to Media Oligopoly.” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 2 (2005): 281-304.

²⁵ Denning, 41.

Another paradigm of social movements is what Denning refers to as a populist conception of social movements. This model asserts that since the time of the Enlightenment and the revolutionary doctrines and actions that brought about the political structures of Western modernity, social movements have been a part of cultural production. According to Denning, a populist understanding of social movements sees “popular mobilizations [as] central to the mass politics of modernity, the age of parliaments, mass media, and urban crowds.”²⁶ This understanding of social movements positions them as representations of society – as dominant cultural forms are produced, so too is resistance to those forms produced. The United States saw an unprecedented amount of technological change and innovation in the last fifty years. As technologies and means and modes of communication developed and altered, American society changed. According to such a populist theory, as society changed so too did the strategies for changing it. Within this conception of social movements, collective actions merely reflect the morphing dynamics of the population. Yet neither the conception of social movements as based upon identity politics, nor movements as a version of populism account for the specific manifestations of anti-corporate struggles as they appeared within the United States and internationally at the end of the twentieth century.

Performative Means, Surveillance, and the Carnavalesque

One of the objectives of the anti-corporate globalization movement was to address problems that were not exclusively of a juridical nature pre-911. Hence, this movement could not appeal solely to state apparatuses. Work was being done on the part of those who sought to introduce and strengthen neoliberal projects in the United States, and much of this

²⁶ Ibid.

work functioned on a cultural level. For example, well-funded and politically connected Right Wing think tanks such as the Heritage foundation worked “to formulate and promote conservative public policies”²⁷ which were then marketed “to congress, the Executive branch the news media and others.”²⁸ Through lobbying, and the corporate press, such organizations endeavored to create a cultural consensus along neoliberal lines.

In order to counteract this cultural work, activists created a pastiche form of protest that incorporated traditional means of protest (with the traditional goal of reformation on the part of the state) with performative means of protest that had effects immanent to the protests themselves, rather than juridical effects. Whereas sociological theories of social movements seek to address how movements produce changes sanctioned by and affecting the state, anti-corporate globalization as a social movement sought to appeal to something neither explicitly produced, nor controlled by the state apparatus.

Juridical changes,²⁹ which had been assumed by sociological social movement theories to be the objectives of social movements, were not necessarily the objectives of anti-capitalist activists who were engaging in performative methods³⁰ of resistance. The suspension of

²⁷ The Heritage Foundation, “Our Mission,” <http://www.heritage.org/about> (accessed 16 March 2006)

²⁸ The Heritage Foundation, “About the Heritage Foundation,” <http://www.heritage.org/About/aboutHeritage.cfm> (accessed 19 March 2006)

²⁹ Examples of such juridical based change-making strategies include attempts by the feminist movement to have the Equal Rights Amendment enacted, attempts from environmental activists to seek more governmental preservation of land, or civil rights activists struggles that led to court decisions such as Brown vs. the Board of Education, and the ensuing Civil Rights Act of 1964.

³⁰ This refers to a variety of activities, ranging from puppetry and costumes to the actual enactment of alternative infrastructures such as the training for and distribution of medical treatment.

norms within the spatial/temporal existence of the protests themselves effectively became one of the objectives of anti-corporate globalization protests. The protests became sites of resistance where aspects of the carnivalesque came into play. According to M. Lane Bruner, carnivalesque protest embraces the fictive and the real in such a way as to temporarily produce a suspension of hierarchies.³¹ Within such practices, there is “a temporary retextualizing of social formations that expose their ‘fictive’ foundations.”³² This was especially important for anti-corporate globalization protesters, as they sought to contest the validity of neoliberal policies and ideologies that were restructuring interlocal relations, political formations, and colonizing aspects of everyday life.

Within these demonstrations, norms of capitalism and capitalist constructions of everyday life were suspended and “another world” literally became “possible.”³³ According to Bruner, “during carnival people replace the everyday world with a symbolic/utopian world, and the ‘truth’ of that utopian world becomes ‘a real existing force.’”³⁴ Carnavalesque protests function by “modifying the society as a whole in the direction of social change and *possible progress*”³⁵ – such protests effectively become about “controlling control” itself.”³⁶ Through enacting relations and opening spaces that were not colonized by capitalist interests,

³¹ M. Lane Bruner, “Carnavalesque Protest and the Humorless State,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 25, (2005) 136-155.

³² Bruner, 139.

³³ This is taken from the global justice slogan “Another world is possible.”

³⁴ Bruner, 141.

³⁵ Ladurie, Le Roy. *Carnival in Romans*. Trans. Mary Feeney. New York: George Braziller, 1979. 313-316, italics in original. Qtd. in Bruner, 139.

³⁶ Ibid.

the demonstrations created another world. This world exposed the “fictive” foundations of a capitalist society by demonstrating, however temporarily, that a non-hierarchical, non-capitalist society could exist within and despite the dominant power networks.

According to an interview with one activist, commenting on the September 26th 2000, IMF protests in Prague:

The accomplishment is not if you succeed in shutting the meetings down, which seems to be how most people judge the success of a protest. No, the success was what was generated. What people got out of it. Specifically that people organized in a fashion which most are not used to seeing. Most people have a hard time conceiving of a society without a centralized government. Who’s going to be policing the street? Who’s going to take care of the hospitals. But each of these things had their alternative there. You have the mainstream media on one hand. The response is the independent media center. You have centralized ambulances (and it’s hard to say whether they would come for us) so we had our own medics. People got together and we had a clinic of our own, and clinics going mobile. People learning how to treat people for tear gas, broken arms, all kinds of things. We had all these things which pose an alternative. The IMF delegates ate expensive foods, served only to the few. We had our own catering service which fed thousands. To counter the IMF’s seclusion, we had our own workshops to share information. The IMF had their summit. We had our counter-summit, with intellectuals who talked about the IMF and the economy and how it works. So the achievement is for those ten days we created an alternative, that made it so easy to conceive that this could work, not for ten days, but for years and years.³⁷

The anti-corporate globalization movement was using performative means to circumvent norms of capitalism and capitalist ideologies (ideological assumptions such as extreme individualism; land use for profit; and privatization of resources). These performative means created new signifying regimes³⁸ for the spatial/temporal existence of their enactments. The

³⁷ Sindhu Zagoren. “Praha 2000 No Pasaran” *The Blaze: Antioch College’s Alternative Newspaper* Vol. X no. 3 November 1, 2000. 20

³⁸ According to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, a regime of signs is “the form of expression . . . reducible not to words but to a set of statements arising from the social field considered as a stratum. . . The form of content is reducible not to a thing but to a complex state of things as a formation of power.” Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, 66.

possibility of the disruption of dominant signifying regimes exposed as “fictive” the necessity of the production of certain meanings that created and maintained power structures and created new possible meanings in the spatial/temporal existence of the protest. As a result, the anti-corporate globalization movement stressed objectives that were not necessarily juridical in their logic. Often, the object of contestation was not limited to state structures, but to power structures enacted in the very processes by which meaning is made. In response to these objectives, many activists embraced performative logics of resistance, which allowed them to enact a symbolic/utopian version of reality during the course of anti-corporate globalization demonstrations. This symbolic reality produced the real effects of suspending hierarchies, and exposing the necessity of neoliberal economic practices as “fictive.”

In the United States, however, the same aspects that made contemporary anti-corporate globalization struggles so unique and effective left the movement open to devastation by the state. Many of the performative measures employed by anti-corporate globalization activists did not stress a juridical goal – they did not seek to change legislation because the structures they were opposing were not specifically held accountable to national legislation. The performative nature of some of the anti-corporate globalization strategies enacted the possibility of opening up anti-capitalist cultures within a dominant culture of capitalism. Having these possibilities mediated into state structures would have foreclosed the agency being produced and would have incorporated acts of resistance into the dominant codes that were being opposed. The Bush Administration’s “War on Terror” served to exploit this tension between the act of protesting and the political effects of protesting, by repositioning the dominant discourse in such a way that immanent means of resistance no longer served to

contest the dominant discourse. After 9/11, protest tactics either directly appealed to state apparatuses in order to prevent war, or else involved cultural campaigns that, rather than being immanent to the space/time of the demonstrations, remained inaccessible or obscure (as in the case of the Yes Men and AdBusters) or else became polemical (as in the work of Michael Moore).

Carnavalesque practices were made both difficult and less potent post 9/11 due to increased control on the part of the state. According to Bruner, certain “windows of opportunity”³⁹ were closed down post 9/11 as a result of the Bush administration’s measures to stifle dissent (“e.g., ‘protest free zones,’ ‘loyalty oaths,’ ‘homeland security,’ [and] the surveillance measures contained in the ‘Patriot Act’”⁴⁰). According to Bruner:

Before the attacks on 11 September 2001, large numbers of protesters were on the streets to voice their displeasure over what they believed were the antidemocratic practices involved in corporate globalization. After those attacks, however, the United States indeed faced a further serious crisis: thousands of innocent people had been murdered, and the risk of further terrorist attacks on the United States could not be denied. This was, and remains, a truly serious problem. One results of those attacks, however, was increased security measures and a reduction of civil liberties in the United States.⁴¹

Aside from closing down the physical spaces of protests through the creation of protest free zones and increased surveillance measures, the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the ensuing “War on Terror” also closed down the symbolic spaces of protests. One of the functions of

³⁹ Bruner 151. This term is referring to opportunity structure, which is taken from the political process paradigm of social movement theory. This paradigm is closely related to the resource mobilization paradigm, in so far as organizational structure of movements is concerned. It adds to this paradigm by stressing the importance of receptivity to change on the part of the state apparatus being challenged.

⁴⁰ Bruner 146.

⁴¹ Bruner 152.

the carnivalesque within protest situations was the creation of a symbolic/utopian space that did not function within the norms of consumer capitalist culture. The symbolism of the utopian space, however, is no longer symbolically relevant if the scope of the discourse has changed from that of processes of capitalism to processes of militaristic violence. Creating a utopian space that disrupts norms of capitalism and consumerism does little towards preventing a war, as the war is not immanent to the protest. Whereas the encroachment the signifying regime of capitalism into everyday life is to some degree always present, it is open to such immanent opposition. Once the basis of opposition changed from practices of capitalism to practices of the military, the spatial/temporal resistance of the carnivalesque no longer opened spaces outside of the dominant discourse, because the space of the dominant discourse being opposed was no longer immanent to the space of the protests.

Carnavalesque practices, however, were not the only tactics being embraced by anti-corporate globalization activists. These measures derived much of their larger significance from their articulation to other international struggles that also stood in opposition to practices of neoliberal “free trade.” This articulation stemmed from a series of communicative networks that functioned along non-hierarchical organizational structures. These networks were working toward a conception of power that could function outside of the domain of capital. After 9/11, however, the networks within the United States became subject to increasing surveillance, and were reconfigured to function along anti-militaristic, rather than anti-corporate lines.

Networks, Multiplicities, and the Common

Part of the momentum that fueled the anti-corporate globalization movement pre-911, was due to the use of communicative networks both nationally and internationally. These networks included both mediated networks (such as email, listservs, and Independent Media Centers,) and interpersonal affective networks (connections and affiliations between friends, associates, community members, etc.). These networks functioned non-hierarchically to produce congruent non-hierarchical resistance strategies such as affinity groups, or the non-hierarchical reporting strategies of the Independent Media Centers.

An affinity group is “a small group of 5 to 20 people who work together autonomously ... You can form an affinity group with your friends, people from your community, workplace, or organization.”⁴² Affinity groups function non-hierarchically with everybody within the group having an equal say, and determining the actions and goals of their particular group. Affinity groups historically can be traced back to anarchist workers movements in late nineteenth century Spain, and they were later employed in the Spanish Civil War.⁴³ The Independent Media Centers, however, began with late twentieth century anti-corporate globalization struggles and are new to social movements and international activist communities. These are linked websites, which also usually have a physical meeting space within their given communities. These websites allow for posting from any viewer of the

⁴² Rant Collective. “What is an Affinity Group?”
<http://www.rantcollective.net/article.php?id=30> (Access 21 Feb. 2006).

⁴³ Rant Collective. “History of Affinity Groups.”
<http://www.rantcollective.net/article.php?id=33> (Access 21 Feb. 2006).

site.⁴⁴ The first IMC opened in Seattle in tandem with the N30 demonstrations. Since its inception in 1999, over one hundred fifty IMCs have opened, with centers in every continent except Antarctica. Therefore IMCs can be seen as both emergent and global in scope. The emergence of IMCs as part of late twentieth century anti-capitalist struggles functioned in two unique ways. Firstly, IMC created and enhanced mediated information networks (made possible by the technologies of the World Wide Web) that had not previously existed, as well as bolstered and connected already functioning solidarity networks. Secondly, IMCs fashioned a non-hierarchical, non-capitalist information service that posed a viable alternative to corporate media. Hence they were able to serve as part of a larger discourse of resistance to neoliberal economic policies.

This non-hierarchical arrangement is implicit in the networked structure of what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari refer to as a rhizome.⁴⁵ According to Kai Eriksson “the notion of network should be regarded above all as a horizon of thought and action; it not only provides an instrument for thinking pre-existent objects, but constitutes an ontological realm as a precondition for these objects. It is not external to our world relationship but is an inherent part of it.”⁴⁶ This rethinking of “our world relationship” was one of the objectives of anti-corporate globalization activists, and network structure became an integral part of the tactics they employed. The structure of networks held the possibility for different formations of

⁴⁴ For more information about IMCs see Laura Stengrim “Negotiating Postmodern Democracy, Political Activism, and Knowledge Production: Indymedia’s Grassroots and e-Savvy Answer to Media Oligopoly” or www.indymedia.org

⁴⁵ Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

⁴⁶ Kai Eriksson, “On the Ontology of Networks,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 2 (2005) 318.

social relationships – social relationships that could conceivably be arranged non-hierarchically, and outside of current structures of control.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri elaborate on these theories of power and control. According to Hardt and Negri, we are in an age of network-power, which is “a new form of sovereignty ...now emerging, and it includes as its primary elements, or nodes, the dominant nation-states along with supranational institutions, major capitalist corporations, and other powers.”⁴⁷ Yet while on the one hand, there exist supranational “imperial” forces, the structure of network is also creating “new circuits of cooperation and collaboration that stretch across nations and continents.”⁴⁸ These circuits allow for an “open and expansive network in which all differences can be expressed freely and equally, a network that provides the means of encounter so that we can work and live in common.”⁴⁹ The anti-corporate-globalization movement attempted to create a networked common, which could reproduce affective relationships (“circuits of cooperation and collaboration”) in a different formation than that already existing under capitalism (“another world”). This networked common was in part what was invoked by the carnivalesque tactics that were employed during anti-corporate globalization demonstrations.

Hardt and Negri contrast this notion of the common with the concept of the *commons*, which “refers to pre-capitalist-shared spaces that were destroyed by the advent of private property.”⁵⁰ The construction of private and public, however, is at the center of

⁴⁷ Hardt and Negri, 2004, xii.

⁴⁸ Hardt and Negri, 2004 xiii.

⁴⁹ Hardt and Negri, 2004, xiv.

⁵⁰ Hardt and Negri, 2004, xv.

contemporary juridical claims, and highly contested within the social field. Because of neoliberal economic policies, we are witnessing “the great expansion of private property into realms of life that were previously held in common,”⁵¹ yet conversely there is also the tendency “to make everything public and thus open to government surveillance and control.”⁵² Post 911 we are living under what Hardt and Negri refer to as “the logic of antiterrorism.”⁵³ Within this logic of antiterrorism, “since security must in the final instance come before all else, there really is no ‘private.’ Security is an absolute logic of the common or, really, a perversion that conceives the entire common as the object of control.”⁵⁴ This is the form of what Deleuze refers to as the society of control,⁵⁵ where the site of the common becomes the object of control. After 911 there has been an increase in policing (most notably in the form of the Patriot Act), which is working to impose control over spaces that had previously been held in common (be they physical or virtual). This form of policing is using a networked structure of surveillance that functions along the model of Deleuze’s society of control. According to this paradigm, as we become a society of control, enclosures/barriers are no longer the dominant model. Rather we are facing a paradigm based upon the structure of the network – the rhizome – that controls through modulation, and functions in a de-centered, non-hierarchical manner. Within this new form of society “what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person’s position – licit or illicit – and effects a

⁵¹ Hardt and Negri, 2004, 203.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Deleuze, Gilles. “Postscript on the Societies of Control.” *October*. 59 (1992): 3-7.

universal modulation.”⁵⁶ These de-centered methods of control are another set of ways that power operates.

We have moved from a society of enclosures, which function to mold individuals, and are now operating under a system of control, which modulates “like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point.”⁵⁷ Within the society of control the structure of the corporation has come to replace that of the factory. If the mechanical allegory for the society of sovereignty was the simple machine (the pulley or the lever), than the disciplinary society adopted more complex energy consuming machines, which became the basis of the factory and the assembly line. The mechanic equivalent of the control society, as Deleuze would have it, is the computer. Capitalism has also changed from the nineteenth-century model centered upon production and property, into a process that wants to sell services, but buy stocks.⁵⁸ As a result “the family, the school, the army, the factory are no longer analogical spaces that converge towards an owner – state or private power – but coded figures – deformable and transformable – of a single corporation that now has only stockholders.”⁵⁹ Man is no longer enclosed, but rather “man in debt.”⁶⁰ Control no longer deals with the erosion of frontiers “but with the explosions within shanty towns or ghettos.”⁶¹

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Deleuze, 4.

⁵⁸ Deleuze, 6.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Deleuze 7.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Anti-corporate globalization as a movement sought to restructure the dominant edifice of power, through a new conception of power relations. According to Michel Foucault in “On Governmentality,” governing a state means applying an economy at the level of the entire state (as opposed to restricting the economy to the level of the family). This act of governing will oversee “the behavior of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and his goods.”⁶² Here we have the economy being shifted from that which controls the family, to that which controls the state. With the advent of neoliberal trans-national economic structures, the authority over the economy is no longer explicitly the role of the nation state. This shifting of power structures produced opportunities for alternative non-corporate networks and social structures (ones that did not function along the lines of nation states – just as neoliberal power structures were no longer functioning exclusively within the constraints of nation states). These shifting power structures, however, also created opportunities for increased surveillance and control, particularly after the events of September 11th, which became the rationale for such surveillance.

As I have argued earlier, September 11th became the reference point around which other immediate concerns within the United States were framed. As the Bush Administration’s production of 9/11 as a central nodal point became the dominant discourse in mainstream sectors of the population, so too did it spread through activist networks. This did not diminish the scale or complexity of the networks themselves, but rather rearticulated the purpose of what the networks were generating. Rather than producing alternative networked

⁶² Michel Foucault, “On Governmentality,” *The Foucault Effect; Studies in Governmentality*. Eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 92.

common spaces that could reproduce affective relationships, these networks turned their attention to juridical objectives within the United States, such as preventing the war in Afghanistan, and later the Iraq war. This contestation of war was essentially a national issue, and diminished the common objectives that had previously held US anti-corporate globalization interests in solidarity with international struggles.

Prior to 911, part of the effectiveness of anti-corporate globalization demonstrations was their articulation to international resistance to a neoliberal capitalist agenda. Divergent activist groups around the globe were forming an international culture of resistance that proposed an alternative to international capitalism. Resistance movements in Mexico, Argentina, South Africa, Korea, the European Union, and the United States were coming together through an articulation of struggles against international capitalist free trade. This gave resistant performances (ranging from large scale demonstration to smaller scale acts such as gorilla gardening, dumpster diving, and information workshops) significance derived from their articulation to a larger set of practices. These articulations would not have been possible without the production of international networks of communication and solidarity. Through these networks, processes of articulating interests were making a global social movement out of a series of events, thoughts, and practices – a “movement of movements” that sought convergence without negating what Hardt and Negri would refer to as the singularities within it. This movement allowed for multiple perspectives and tactics articulated via an interest in defying capitalist global expansion. Each particular affiliation, however, could maintain autonomy from the others, and thereby use methods and tactics best suited to demonstrate each particular group’s interests.

After September 11th, activist networks within the United States mobilized around issues of war and resistance to the surveillance measures being promoted in the guise of national security. These interests, however, no longer produced the same kinds of international solidarity that had been so central to anti-corporate globalization struggles against “free trade.” Neither were the networks within the US producing the same kinds of resistance strategies they had pre-911 (a networked common that could reproduce affective relationships, or carnivalesque practices that immanently produced “another world”).

Activist networks within the United States continued to function toward the production of alliances and solidarities, as was evident in the anti-war demonstrations, and more recently in the immigration marches.⁶³ The productive intent of these networks, however, is juridical. They are seeking governmental responses, rather than the production of the common. These networks are no longer functioning to produce a new form of common sense, but rather reform within the post-911 dominant model of state surveillance and control.

Conclusion

Within the United States, the Bush Administration successfully produced 911 as the focal point, the nexus, around which all other arguments had to frame their concerns. This fundamentally altered how activists within the United States could respond to the Administration’s policies. This shift in focus revolved around issues of war and surveillance, and was centered on conceptions of the national (as opposed to articulation with international

⁶³ The immigrant workers marches of April 2006 are certainly international, in so far as they are concerned with the doings of more than one country. They are also articulated to issues of “free trade” to the degree that many of the economic problems facing these workers can be directly linked to neoliberal economic policies. The demands of these marches, however, are juridical. They seek direct change within governmental apparatuses, rather than the production of new formations of the common.

struggles). The nature of this shift foreclosed certain immanent means of resistance such as carnivalesque production of symbolic/utopian spaces, and networked production of an alternative common. Given the national-militaristic dominant discourse post-911, activists were interpellated into a defensive position. Within this new (post-911) configuration, US activists were no longer promoting alternatives to the dominant discourses, but rather responding to crises within the already established dominant discourses. In responding to crises rather than promoting alternatives, activists' methods were necessarily altered. Methods and tactics that worked to create new forms of the social and political (that worked to create "another world") did not necessarily function to prevent war or contest increased practices of surveillance.

After 911, increased measures of security cut down the physical means for political protest, while discourses of nationalism, patriotism and security eroded the cultural foundations and coalitions of articulated interests forged by anti-corporate globalization activists. Examining how the anti-corporate globalization movement attempted to impact US hegemony can provide insight into what the significance of this lost revolutionary opportunity might be. Narratives of lost moments, or descriptions of the processes of ideological production, serve to reinforce that situations are not unchangeable, and that power is always a contested field. There was in fact opportunity and agency created within the anti-corporate globalization movement. Examining how the strengths of the anti-corporate globalization movement also served to make the movement susceptible to state cooptation can contribute to a conception of practices that would be less susceptible to state control in the future.

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