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Affected with Joy

Evaluating the mass actions of the anti-globalisation movement

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With almost a decade having passed since the spectacular protests of Seattle, it seems timely to evaluate the meaning and significance of the mass actions that have come to be associated with the 'anti-globalisation movement.' According to some critics, the movement must urgently re-evaluate its aims, its past successes and chances of making a difference to the future. But judgments of the movement have predictably operated at the level of ideals and ideology, according to the moral determination whereby bodies are at the behest of consciousness. The paper offers a less moralistic reading of the mass actions, arguing that they can be more fruitfully evaluated with an eye to the openness of bodily encounters. In doing so, we revisit Spinoza's ethical determination of the relationship between bodies and ideas, which goes beyond the illusions of consciousness in order to open up new powers for the body and thought. An ethical evaluation of the mass actions explores their potential to express joy, but also cautions against the forms of sadness to which our habits of thinking may lead.

In a book that remains something of a staple for anti-globalisation activists, Paul Kingsnorth (2003) enjoins the movement and the public at large to be bold in their imaginings of an alternate future and dogged in their attempts to realise it. What is needed, Kingsnorth (2003: 331) insists, 'is vision, bravery, political will, a willingness to confront those who benefit from injustice.' In this paradigmatic formulation of the task of political action it is consciousness and will that are placed at the fore. The problem (injustice) calls for a consciousness of what is and a plucky imagining of what could be, combined with a collective discipline of the will. Such idealism is also a moralism, as a sense of what ought to be the case determines how

we ought to act. Moralism at the level of ideas has as its correlate a moral view of the body, and in the heady days of post-Seattle activism, the bodily discipline required for successful activism was very much at the fore. It was the presence of thousands of bodies on the streets that indicated the strength of activists' convictions, their preparedness to put their bodies on the line, standing firm at police lines, or surging forward in order to 'reclaim the commons' (Klein, 2004).

With a decade stretching between the present moment and the spectacular protests of Seattle, it seems timely to evaluate the meaning and significance of the mass actions that remain, for the general public at least, the signature gestures of the 'anti-globalisation movement.'^[1] While much has been made of the differences between the anti-globalisation movement and the earlier generation of social movements, evaluations of its success continue to rest on conventional criteria. Did the movement achieve its aims? Did its actions change anything? Or is neo-liberal ideology too resilient for such episodic gestures of resistance?

Such are the judgments that we habitually apply to political action, as though, despite decades of theorising the importance of bodies, it is at the level of ideas, ideals, ideology and our consciousness of them that change really happens. In offering an alternative, less moralistic, mode of evaluating the anti-globalisation movement, we focus on the political significance of the highly visible events—the mass actions—that the broader public most readily identifies with the name of the anti-globalisation movement. Certainly, we recognise that these 'most visible sites of anti-globalisation protest' are only the 'tip of the iceberg' as far as the broad gamut of activities is concerned (Wood, 2004: 69). Yet, while some commentators deemed street protest an outmoded strategy within a year of Seattle, mass actions have continued to mobilise significant numbers, with recent actions still gathering within the tens of thousands. The mass actions are theoretically as well as empirically significant. Through their amassing of bodies in public space and vociferous articulation of public opinion, these large scale events bring to the fore important questions about the relationship of bodies to ideas.

What kinds of difference have such events made in a world where the machinations of global capital are such powerful determinants of how we live, what we do, what we think? What kinds of experiments with freedom have they enabled? The idea of experimenting with freedom is important, since the key task would seem to be to create a space in which new ways of thinking and being become possible. Certainly, experimentation with ideas may play a crucial role in creating a space where alternate modes of existence become thinkable. Yet there is the possibility that the 'free play' of ideas may open up such a space as the talk-back radio scenario, in which the unfettered reign of opinion leads too readily to the reproduction of cliché.

Anti-globalisation activists like to emphasise the movement's pluralistic character and its potential to create multiple alternatives to the current corporate driven form of globalisation. The movement's stance is popularly captured in the formula 'One no, many yeses'; a resounding no to corporate globalisation is followed up with an energetic proliferation of alternatives (Kingsnorth, 2003). The claim pursued in this paper is that the kind of pluralism implied in this formula—if understood merely at the level of consciousness—need not produce a qualitative change in terms of *what can be thought*.

This is not to deny the importance of the anti-globalisation movement's attempts to produce alternative visions of a global future. In fact, as we go on to argue, the significance of the more affective dimensions of anti-globalisation politics is inseparable from this attempt to *multiply* ideal potentials. It is a question of re-vitalising the way we evaluate anti-globalisation politics. In doing so we may be able to avoid the sense of impotence that has accompanied many analyses of the movement by activists and academics alike, when global capital's capacity to incorporate, and thus in a certain sense negate resistance has become apparent. McFarlane and Hay (2003: 211), for example, bemoan the capacity of media representations to 'delegitimize, marginalize and demonize' resistance to globalisation and thus to contribute 'to the scripting of a neoliberal geopolitical hegemony.' Chomsky (2004: 148) speaks of the 'iron law of journalism' that holds that 'the serious concerns of activists must be rigidly barred in favour of someone throwing a rock, perhaps a police provocateur.'

How is it that the challenge of anti-globalisation politics can so readily be reduced to the already-thought, represented as the familiar? This is at least as indicative of the resilience of global capital as it is of the character of the anti-globalisation movement. Yet it may also be that, in lamenting the capture of resistance, we misjudge the primary locus and nature of change. As Massumi (2002) argues well, contemporary power does not operate most effectively through tyranny, but through seizing on the powers of the body to act, to affect and to be affected, regulating, harnessing and producing bodily capacities. So political strategies aimed solely, or even primarily, at countering hegemonic ideologies may be missing the mark. Further, we argue that the discourse of the relentless moral battle against the ever resilient bastions of neo-liberalism may be the discourse of the slave, cut off from his/her power of action, only to witness its incessant attenuation.

In arguing that the mass actions associated with the anti-globalisation movement might represent new possibilities for thought and action, we begin by considering what is specific about the movement, making it a useful point of focus. We highlight some of the insufficiencies of moral judgments of, and by, the anti-globalisation movement, in order to make way for a more ethical mode of evaluation. The founding assumption of a *moral* mobilisation of bodies is that consciousness—the conscious application of the will—is the primary cause of our

actions. The moral perspective orients action to the question 'what should be done?' It responds by calling upon actors to exercise consciousness over their bodies, so as to put them to the service of politics. An *ethical* evaluation of action approaches bodies and minds from the point of view of their capacities or powers, rather than their duties. Ethics, then, is oriented not to what the mind and body *should* do, but to the always indeterminate question of what they *can* do.

The philosophy of Spinoza is central here. The importance of Spinoza lies in the materialist manner in which he conceives the relationship between bodies and ideas. It is Gilles Deleuze's (1978; 1988; 1990) reading of Spinoza that has spelt out the implications of such materialism for us today and, specifically, the new mode of evaluation inaugurated by Spinoza's thought. Judged from the point of view of ideals, the anti-globalisation movement invariably frustrates: its ideal projects are imperfectly conceived or realised, too easily negated or incorporated. However, Spinoza's more materialist conception of the relationship between bodies and ideas enables a keener appreciation of contemporary margins and exercises of freedom.

Beyond Moral Judgment

For champions of the movement, the passing of time and the nauseating effects of media clichés have not tainted the real achievements of the 'Battle for Seattle.' Seattle is eulogised as the event that put globalisation on the map as a topic deserving of public discourse and debate (Opel and Pompper, 2003). In addition, the events of Seattle are credited with 'dramatically altering the terms of the debate over international commercial agreements like those set up by the WTO' (Danaher and Mark, 2003: 222). Within a year of the Seattle protests Hardt and Negri (2000) had announced that the anti-globalisation movement served as a prime instance of the privileged position assumed, under Empire, of 'the multitude.' A raggedy and self-organised band of strugglers, the anti-globalisation movement was said to express the multitude's incursion into the matrix of capital, and the realisation of an authentic democracy: 'the rule of everyone, by everyone' (Hardt and Negri, 2000: 307).

Subsequent mass actions have been the subject of equally impassioned judgments, both from within the movement and without. It was during the 2001 protests at the G8 summit of Genoa that the sometimes violent tenor of earlier events reached its zenith, with the death of a demonstrator shot by police. It was also in Genoa that the defenders of global capital and certain anti-globalisation protestors joined in attributing blame to a small and violent minority of protestors. Certainly the anti-globalisation movement as a whole held the Italian police responsible for the death of Carlo Giuliani, but the aftermath of the protests did highlight that the image of a happily pluralistic movement was somewhat illusory (Panayotakis, 2001). More recent protests in Rostock were met with a predictable degree of force and occasioned equally dramatic announcements from within the

movement. For Foti (2007), for example, Rostock signaled 'a possibly irreversible schism' between 'the radicalized and precarized twentysomethings and thirtysomethings from the cities of the continent' and the more timid, and increasingly irrelevant, 'middle-aged European left.'

No doubt the sheer weight of numbers in Seattle, the horribly graphic death of one protestor in Genoa and the rekindling of anti-capitalist energies in Rostock indicate a striking opposition between general public opinion and the guardians of corporate power (McMurtry, 2002). Yet, while these events may well be expressive of a clash of ideas between the proponents and detractors of corporate globalisation, there remains the question of the place of bodies in such events. For they do not operate merely at the level of the mind, through 'the development of a counter-hegemonic consciousness' (Tabb, 2003: 33), but also act on and through bodies. While we habitually treat consciousness as the source of action, a focus on bodies—and the ethics of their relations—asks us to see this habitual causal attribution as an illusion. Moreover, to judge the events at the level of consciousness is to reproduce a mode of thought which, we argue, ultimately reduces our capacity for action. When we celebrate the courage and will power of those protestors who confront the bastions of neo-liberal power with their bodies we remain within the terms of a moral determination of minds and bodies. Focusing on the substantive difference between morality and ethics, we argue that a moral framework confuses us as to the real source of our action and its ethical force.

According to Spinoza (2002), the faculty of consciousness is under an illusion when it believes itself to be the master of the body and the first cause of our actions, for reasons that we outline below.^[2] For the moment, it is clear that it is a very generalised critique of our habits of causal attribution that is at issue here. It is through redressing this issue of causal attribution that we can realise Spinoza's very contemporary relevance. Our concern at present is to consider why the mass actions of the anti-globalisation movement might call our attention to the ethical, as opposed to moral, significance of bodies.

At the outset, it is clear that much of the visibility the movement has gained rests on its capacity to amass thousands of people on the streets at crucial times and places. And while earlier social movements also made the bodies-on-streets method something of a signature, the individual and collective 'protest body' was framed in a significantly different manner. That is to say, the famed pluralism of the anti-globalisation movement necessarily alters the meaning and significance of embodied action (Escobar, 2000). As McDonald (2004) suggests, the image of collective personhood fore-grounded by the earlier generation of social movements implies a far more universalising mode of subjectivity. Of course, as much postcolonial critique in particular has insisted, earlier social movements were far more plural than they might have liked to admit.^[3] Nonetheless, the

self-understanding of earlier social movements tended to involve the equation of collective action with collective identity, such that the individuality of the movement was seen to consist in the “common traits and specific solidarity” that it embodied (Della Porta and Diani, cited by McDonald, 2002: 110). This universalisation of the protest subject ultimately tends toward a disembodied view of action. To the extent that the body is universalised, its status is that of an abstract thing with the pliability of something useful.

There is little doubt that a moral economy of bodies and ideas remains the order of the day. Proponents and analysts of the anti-globalisation movement alike speak routinely of bodies put to the service of resistance. The assumption here, and what defines such a way of thinking as a moral one, is that consciousness is viewed as master of the body, which can and must be harnessed for the cause. Nonetheless, the pluralised collective is less susceptible to the universalising tendencies that facilitate an instrumental view of the body and in this respect the anti-globalisation movement distinguishes itself from its precedents. This difference is manifest in the immense proliferation of modes of embodied protest, which has led some more conservative pundits to despair at the movement’s lack of tactical consensus (Ayres, 2004).

There is, too, a celebratory tenor to many of the movement’s actions, which are characteristically performative, carnivalesque and often humorous. As Shepherd (2005) notes the most obvious precedent for the anti-globalisation movement’s carnival style of protest was the AIDS activism of the 1980s and 1990s, exemplified by the camp politics of ACTUP. What sets the politics of the anti-globalisation movement apart is the broad scope of its concerns and claims. According to Shepherd (2005: 458) the ‘global justice movement’, as he prefers to call it, uses joy as an ‘organizing model that presents a brief image of what activists would like the world to actually be more like.’ As such, the movement embodies the recognition that ‘without justice there can be no pleasure’ (Shepherd, 2005: 436).

The political significance of performative and light-hearted interventions is not to be sniffed at (Hynes et al, 2007; Sharpe et al, 2005). Yet the reduction of the protesting body to the moral cause of the pursuit of justice requires some caution. It is not so much that we ought to divest ourselves of our investments in the ideal of justice. But, as Foucault (1984) suggests, when we look to ideals for transcendental or universal structures of moral action, we fall prey to modes of subjection, which limit our conditions of possibility. As creatures of the Enlightenment, we inherit not only its ideals, but the task of subjecting thought to a kind of criticism, which seeks to ‘separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think’ (Foucault, 1984: 46).

The demonstrations of the anti-globalisation movement certainly indicate—in an expressively embodied way—an awareness that it is the character and scope of our social experience that is at stake and that experimentation with new ways of being is a pressing task. It remains to conceive of the significance of these mass events beyond a moral economy. Applying transcendent criteria, the system of moral judgment is unable to appreciate the variability and complexity of our everyday relationships. As anti-globalisation activists are well aware, not all of what we encounter in the name of global capitalism is 'bad'. How are we to determine which encounters or modes of existence are good and which are bad?

Toward an Immanent Evaluation

Moral judgments apply pre-formulated criteria to the diagnoses of contemporary existence. Does the globalisation of capital work against democratisation? Are corporations held accountable, not merely to a population of consumers, but to citizens? As important as these questions are, their moral clarity is tinged with a sort of inaccuracy, even dishonesty. The targeting of evil corporations by activists, for example, may say more about Western preoccupations and fashions than about any actual hierarchy of better and worse corporations (Klein, 2000). Judgments of the good may be equally problematic, as when politically aware individuals act in ways that run counter to their consciousness and the dictates of the collective morality.

Yet perhaps a re-conceptualisation of the problem is a more productive solution than self-flagellation or a politics of guilt. For it may be that the moral determinations of good and evil cannot stand up to contemporary reality. This is particularly the case when power refuses to respect conventional boundaries of inside and outside, but rather is infused throughout the social body (Foucault, 1977; Massumi, 2002). A moral economy, then, may prevent us acquiring the knowledge necessary to determine the qualitative difference between various modes of existence. Such determinations cannot be made by 'a movement' as such, and in this sense it is significant that these mass actions are experimental and plural in character. Similarly, the lack of consensus, which some critics decry, may signal something about the pragmatics of social existence; namely, that moral judgments can only be applied if the profound variability of that existence is denied.

Spinoza cautions that moral judgments, bound up as they are with the privileging of consciousness over the body, are the locus of an illusion. By assuming ourselves to be masters of our bodies and their passions, knowledge of the real order of causes eludes us. In the moral view of the world 'mind or consciousness has power over the body ... the mind has eminence and commands obedience of the body' (Metcalf, n.d.: 1). For its part, the body has merely 'a power of execution, or the power to lead the soul astray, and entice it from its duties' (Deleuze, 1990: 255).

In our own time the master of the house is no longer the soul so much as the conscious ego. It is no doubt Cartesian thought that takes to the level of a system the assumption that consciousness is the first cause and that the body is thereby at its behest. Such an assumption, which provides the condition of possibility for modern forms of knowledge, leads us to possess 'inadequate ideas' about the forces by which we are caused. Spinoza insists that it is in fact in the nature of consciousness that it knows only effects. Consciousness registers only 'what happens to' our body or mind, yet it mistakes these effects for causes and, by invoking its power over the body, takes itself for the first cause (Deleuze, 1990). This leads, Spinoza (I, Appendix) suggests, to a confused grasp of the character of our existence and of our freedom:

men think themselves free inasmuch as they are conscious of their volitions and desires, and as they are ignorant of the causes by which they are led to wish and desire, they do not even dream of their existence.

How, then, does Spinoza define the order of causes? Spinoza rejects the Cartesian preponderance of mind over body and the moral domination of the body it supports. But he does not do so in order to effect a structural reversal, in which the body would have primacy with respect to the mind. This would be to merely affirm the structure of a dualist conception of substance, which for Spinoza arises from the misapprehension that we are causes rather than effects. Rather, Spinoza posits a parallelism, in which mind and body are conceived as different modes of a single substance.

The particular way that Spinoza understands ideas, bodies and their relation is crucial here. Spinoza conceives existence as a multitude of encounters, in which bodies encounter other bodies and ideas other ideas. His is a dynamic conception of bodies. What defines a body is not its substance but the characteristic and dynamic relations between its parts: 'bodies are distinguished from one another in respect of motion-and-rest, quickness and slowness, and not in respect of substance' (Spinoza II, 13, I. I). In its encounters with other bodies, the body seeks to endure or persevere. But existence is such that some encounters will threaten a body's relations, causing decomposition, while others will agree with the body's characteristic relations, entering into a composition that is greater than the bodies taken individually. Roffe (2005: 8) clarifies the point by using this example: '(t)he shark enters into a good relation with salt water, which increases its power to act, but for ... a rose bush, salt water only degrades the characteristic relations between the parts of the bush and threatens to destroy existence.'

From the point of view of ideas, Spinoza stresses that ideas are ideas or images of the body, traces of its modifications: 'the mind does not know itself except insofar as it perceives ideas of affections of the body' (Spinoza II, 23). This means that an idea is not something that 'I have', so much as something that happens to me, in a manner that is

parallel to what happens to my body. The order of causes thus consists in the multitude of encounters between bodies and ideas and the relations of composition and decomposition to which they give rise.

In opening thought to this order, which consciousness habitually conceals, Spinoza offers an alternative account of the locus of our power and the nature of our capacity to be affected. When I encounter a body that enhances my characteristic relation, giving rise to a composition greater than previously existed, my 'force of existence' is enhanced. Spinoza uses the term *affect* to refer to this power of acting, which is subject to continuous variation.

The concept of affect has been a popular one in recent years, particularly in discourses on the body (see for example Sedgwick and Frank, 1995; Probyn, 2004). Extending the concept beyond the disciplinary confines of psychology, affect has been useful in the social sciences, for understanding the formation and motivations of subjects. For our part, we are interested in the way a Deleuzian/Spinozan reading of affect pushes the concept beyond subjective and objective forms. In Spinoza's philosophy, affect has an autonomy with respect to emotion and the drives produced in the subjective body. Spinozan affect is also irreducible to an objective state, and here Deleuze's (1978) emphasis on Spinoza's distinction between *affectus* and *affectio* is important. Spinoza uses the word *affectio* (affection) to designate 'a determinable state at a single moment' (Deleuze, 1978: 18). But *affectus* or affect, for Spinoza, is always a *passage* between states, experienced at the level of bodies and ideas, and the related increase or decrease in the power of acting. Where a more objectivist understanding of affect names states of affairs (fear, anger etc.), for Spinoza it is a question of gauging affect's proximity to joy or sadness, on an axis always structured by these two poles.

Pursuing Joyous Passions

The seated protestors, blocking delegates' entrance to the World Trade Organization meeting, were overwhelmed, yet most did not budge. Police poured over them. Then came the truncheons, and the rubber bullets. We watched as long as we could until the tear gas slowly enveloped us. Police pushed and truncheoned their way through and behind us. We had covered our faces with rags and cloth, snatching glimpses of the people being clubbed in the street before shutting our eyes. The gas was a fog through which people moved in slow, strange dances of shock and pain and resistance. Tear gas is a misnomer. Think about feeling asphyxiated and blinded. Breathing becomes labored. Vision is blurred. The mind is disoriented. The nose and throat burn. It's not a gas, it's a drug. Gas masked police hit, pushed, and speared us with the butt ends of their batons. We all sat down, hunched over, and locked arms more tightly (Hawken, 2000: 29-30).

Beneath the somewhat clichéd language in this depiction of an encounter between anti-globalisation activists and police, an ethics of the body is discernable. The dramatically visceral description enables the reader to visualise a series of events or states: bodies braced against force, watching the offensive before and after the tear gas, bodies harmed yet holding out. Yet, beyond this, we can also sense that these events envelope a lived passage, which is irreducible to the instantaneity of states. The passage is inseparable from the mobilisation of the body, not by consciousness but in and of itself. Vision blurred, minds disoriented, organs burning, forms pushed and speared, all indicate bodies struggling to adapt to new states, but also the openness that defines affect, the variability of the power to act and of the capacity to be affected.

The piece quoted ends with a recognisable act of resistance: 'we all sat down, hunched over, and locked arms more tightly.' This act of resistance is readily understood in moral terms, with the protestors exercising conscious control over their bodies in order to defend their ideals (justice, democracy, freedom). But this moral level creates confusion and 'separates us from our cause'. If there is something *good* about this final moment in the narrative, it consists not in the instantaneous state ('arms locked more tightly') but in the passage between states. There is a transition from the state of being 'asphyxiated and blinded' to the state of having 'arms locked more tightly', which seems to represent an increase in the power of acting. Consciousness is not the master here, but represents simply the doubling of the ideas that happen to us in the event of the encounter between bodies. As Deleuze (1988: 59) explains it, 'consciousness is not the moral property of the subject, but the physical property of the idea.'

No doubt it takes the romanticism and heroism out of action to locate the good and bad in the passage between instants, rather than in the goodness of the moral exercise of control over one's body in the name of worthy ideals. But the transcendental criteria on which moral determinations rest are precisely what separate us from our power of action. An immanent mode of evaluation examines the relations of composition and decomposition involved in an encounter, as a way of differentiating a good, free encounter and a bad, servile one. Does a given relation decompose one or more of the bodies in the relation, or does it give rise to a new and greater composition? What mode of existence does a given action imply?

Such ethical evaluations refute the moralist's blackmail that beyond transcendentalism there is only relativism. As Deleuze (1990: 269) puts it:

There are things one cannot do or even say, believe, feel, think, unless one is weak, enslaved, impotent; and other things one cannot do, feel and so on, unless one is free or strong.

An immanent evaluation thus distinguishes between those actions that imply weakness or servitude and those that express vitality and freedom. But it does so without reference to guiding moral principles, which would serve as a measure for particular cases. Without the ideal banisters of moral transcendentalism, an immanent ethics will have only an affective barometer by which to orient itself. The transition that occurs for the writer between the state prior to tear gassing and the instant of the gassing is a bad one for him, because it represents a diminution of his power to act. But it does not necessarily follow that the actions of the police represent an increase in *their* power to act. Certainly their forceful movements express the power of their bodies, what they are capable of in a relation. Yet the outcome of the relation is the decomposition of the characteristic relations of others.

It is the *sad passions* such acts express which are the key, as well as the weakness they presuppose. To say that one is affected with sadness is to imply that one's power of acting is diminished through an encounter or relation. Seen from the point of view of the relation, it is as if the power of one body opposes that of another, 'bringing about a subtraction or a fixation' (Deleuze, 1988: 27). One of the more provocative political questions raised by Spinoza's work concerns the relationship between power and sadness: to what extent does one's 'empowerment' require the sadness of others, the diminution of their power? The use of scare quotes here is more than a rhetorical gesture, because the point is that those who require the sadness of their subjects ultimately diminish their own power of acting, their own vitality or force of existence.

The determination of actions as joyous or sad has pertinence for anti-globalisation activists as well. For sad passions do not confine themselves to those moments in which police have engaged in brutality, 'thrashing people about the head ... breaking ribs, breaking hands' (AFP, 2000). Sadness can also be discerned in the 'joy' that characterises many activists' descriptions of victory over their enemies, which is too often mixed with a sense of deflation:

This truly was an insurgency from below, in which all those who strove to moderate and deflect the turbulent flood of popular outrage managed to humiliate themselves. Of course, none of this seemed to deter the capitalists. (St. Clair, 1999: 96)

Such 'joys of hate' are a familiar response to the frustrations of dealing with the heavy-handed suppression of protest, which has been a feature of all the mass actions (Deleuze, 1978: 20). But these are, Spinoza warns us, 'joys of compensation' that 'will never get rid of the nasty little sadness' that poisons them (cited in Deleuze, 1978: 20). The sad passions represent the 'lowest degree of our power,' even impotence (Deleuze, 1988: 28). And oppressive powers exploit the sad passions of others, *needing* them to establish their power and to share out their own wretchedness (Deleuze, 1990). Spinoza's ideal types of the slave and the tyrant are instructive here: the slave is 'the

man with sad passions' and the tyrant 'the man who exploits these sad passions' (Deleuze, 1988: 25). How might resistance break with this conceptual structure and the power relations it supports?

It is in this respect that the more affirmative strategies of the anti-globalisation movement gain a particular significance. To the extent that humorous interventions can exceed the moral projects of education and consciousness-raising, they may open up to new affective possibilities. Planting lipstick-rich kisses on the Perspex shields of riot police and tickling the noses of their horses might seem silly and futile gestures in the scheme of things (Johnson, 2005). But perhaps these protestors, or the clowns who lightly taunt police with pink feather dusters and tease them about their lycra shorts, increase their margins of freedom, even if only by degrees (Kolonel Klepto, n.d.). By opting for gentle humiliation they may avoid the 'hardening of divisions along identity lines' that violence tends to bring (Massumi, 2002). The point here is not to celebrate the clown army's tactics as pacifist gestures.[4] It is more the fluidity of the tactics with respect to existing power structures that is important. For they may be less susceptible than directly oppositional tactics (whether violent or non-violent) to the affirmation of existing structures of power. In some way, and however temporarily, they disrupt the relations of dependence between the slave (who needs a hostile other) and the tyrant (who needs the sad passions of the slave).

To the heroic machismo that the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA) associate with both 'the "There Is No Alternative" neoliberal police state' *and* certain forms of protest, CIRCA opposes the spontaneity and openness of the body, inspired by the bodily improvisation of classic clownery: 'the falling over, the foot in the bucket' (Kolonel Klepto, n.d.). Confounding police by laughingly creating lines in front of their own (rather than surging through police lines) does indicate a degree of sensitivity to the spontaneity and autonomy of bodies—bodies which are more than mere vehicles of ideas. If such theatrics indicate a potential for a slight rapprochement between traditional adversaries it is not because 'fraternising with the opponent' leads to an ideological alignment or a 'conversion' at the level of belief (cf. Branagan, 2007). Such a reading merely supports the delusions of consciousness, which mistakenly posits itself as prior to the bodily relations of composition and decomposition of which it is a trace.

Rather, if police and protestors shift marginally from their positions in a good humoured moment it is because their bodies meet in unpredictable ways. Something barely perceptible happens, which for a moment at least changes the scene, perhaps allowing the participants of the event more room to manoeuvre. The point here is certainly not to insist that clownery is the only or even best tactic of resistance. Good encounters do not follow moral formulas any more than they adhere to morality's absolute distribution of good and evil.

What is important is to disrupt the moral certainties that separate actors from their power of acting.

When moral judgments within the movement prescriptively align resistance with the forces it means to oppose, it is no longer simply a question of a philosophical error. Rather, Spinoza's emphatic question becomes a politically urgent one: how is it that we come to actually desire our own impotence (Smith, 2007)? Debates on the place of violence in anti-globalisation protest illustrate effectively the link between moral judgments and servitude to the prevailing order. The now *de rigueur* scapegoating of the 'Black Blocs', renowned for their black uniform and practice of destroying capitalist property, is a case in point. In response to the attack of the Black Blocs on several corporate targets in downtown Seattle, advocates of non-violence physically confronted the activists, publicly condemned their actions and called for their arrests, 'with some going so far as to form a human chain protecting Nike Town' and other corporate targets (Hurl, 2005). The blocs served as ideal scapegoats in the aftershock of Carlo Giuliani's murder in Genoa, with well known activist Susan George demanding of them 'Are you happy that you have provoked police brutality? Are you happy that you finally have a martyr?' (cited by Albertani, 2002: 586).

To criticise this moral defence of impotence is not to defend the destruction of property as an exemplary solution, a position which may well lead to its own forms of moral absolutism (Epstein, 2001). But it is necessary to question the confidence of a moral judgment such as George's, which fails to note the substantive difference between carefully targeted attacks on private (corporate) property and the shooting dead of a young protestor. George's position rests on the commonsense opposition between a principled 'collective responsibility' and the supposed 'anarchistic individualism' of the blocs (Gilham and Marx, 2003: 71). Apart from the fact that many participants in Black Blocs actively dissociate themselves from, or simply do not identify with, the philosophy of anarchism, Black Bloc tactics are not commonly justified in terms of the defence of individual rights.

But beyond the possible inaccuracy of the opposition of violent individualism and non-violent collectivism, we might ask whether 'collective responsibility' is the most appropriate representation of the collective character of resistance. The idea of responsibility is commonly bound up with that of morality, which, we have argued, actually distances us from the affective relations that are the basis of our sociality. Spinoza's critique of morality goes further than an attack on its short-sightedness. He raises the spectre that morality is a form of laziness, which substitutes law for understanding. There remains the question of *why* thousands of people join in the streets at mass actions, and here again the habitual reference to ideological motivations seems inadequate (in the common and the strictly Spinozan sense of that term). For one cannot fail to register the

affective character of activists' descriptions of these events, the excitement of rising tensions and uncertain moments and the openness of encounters with others, amongst and through whom these events take place. Are we justified in assuming, as is most often the case, that the most probable or *best* reason for participating in anti-globalisation actions is a commitment to an ideological or moral cause?

We might more fruitfully read the good feeling of being 'part of the movement' as a doubling of affect. Beneath the ideological justifications for participation, as well as the more emotional appreciation of it what it means to belong, there exists a plurality of encounters between bodies, relations that, from time to time at least, increase our capacity to act. Our contention is that this barely perceptible modulation of affect is as crucial an element of, and motivation for, participation as the more readily perceived emotions and ideals. This question of why one is part of the movement is important, not because it is the identity of the largely Western movement that is crucial, but because of the sad passions that have often inspired the advocate of the exploited other (world): the sadness for the human condition, the regret, guilt and pity, but also hope. To the figure of 'the priest', as Spinoza labels the lover of a tortured humanity, Spinoza opposes an affirmation of *this* life, of this present and the possibility of being more intensely in it. And affirming life in a reasonable way (as only humans can) involves an adequate knowledge of what makes for good relations with others—where 'good' is understood in an ethical, rather than moral, sense. Thriving in one's own existence and through one's relations is not, from this perspective, a selfish (immoral) act, but an ethical one, as well as an act of freedom. Gatens (1996: 111) outlines well what is at stake here:

An individual who thrives does not indicate a will that is both free and enlightened, but the determinate power of that particular thing to maintain itself in existence and to combine with those things that agree with and enhance its power.

The problem, then, becomes one of how we might gain an adequate knowledge of what makes for good relations. Given the persistence of the illusions of consciousness, how might we gain a more adequate grasp of the relations 'which actually determine our power to act, and our ability to experience active joy' (Roffe, 2005)? It is, as Spinoza puts it, a question of forming a 'common notion,' an internal comprehension of the reasons that a body agrees with mine. As an idea expressing what is in common between my body and another body with which it agrees, the common notion is concerned with the common *capacities* of bodies. Bodies do not agree because of their attributes (identity), but because they share a capacity. Gatens (1996) has effectively argued that the appearance of essentialism in Spinoza's ontology is chimerical. An essentialist distribution of capacities along sexual lines (specific kinds of pleasures and pains of which each type of body is capable) might be seen to follow from Spinoza's insistence that the mind is the idea of the body. Yet, she

argues, 'a notion of ontological sexual difference belongs to a system of classification (genus, species, kind) that is quite foreign to Spinoza's thought' (Gatens, 1996: 130). Stressing that Spinoza defines beings by their capacity for being affected, Gatens (1996: 131) quotes Deleuze:

In this way, one will obtain a classification of beings by their power; one will see which beings agree with others, and which do not agree with one another, as well as who can serve as food for whom, who is social with whom, and according to what relations.

Kindling plurality is not, then, a question of extinguishing the differences between the various sub-groupings of the movement (Pink Bloc, Black Bloc, environmentalists etc.) in the identity or moral consensus of the collective. A comprehension of what makes a relation ethically agreeable will not obey rules or follow lines of filiation. To this extent, the common perception of ethics—ethical trade and consumption, ethical activism and the like—confuses ethics with morality. For unlike morality, ethics is precisely not a matter of law, of creating generalities that could serve as the basis for transcendental rules.

If ethics cannot provide rules, it can offer a degree of knowledge of what is good and bad for me, so that I might extend that knowledge, and thus extend my power for action and my capacity to be affected. To experience active joy amongst others, when joy is so easily and cruelly reduced to the 'pleasure' of active consumption, is no small feat. Again, the specific sense in which Spinoza understands joy is crucial here. Were joy simply the subjective feeling of belonging to a movement, there would be little to distinguish the ethical joy that we are advocating from the bodily joy expressed in the marching columns of the Thousand Year Reich. Yet the 'joy' experienced by the Nazis would be much more readily associated with tyranny (where the tyrant needs the sad passions of others to exploit), than with the empowerment resulting when two or more relations combine to form a more powerful whole. It is not only that this tyrannical type of bodily joy requires the suffering and diminution of others, but that it consists in little more than a state of intoxication. Spinoza makes it clear that intoxicating passion and morality alike stand in the way of a knowledge of the *cause* of joy, since they take us no closer to an understanding of what causes an increase in our power to act (and may indeed prevent such an understanding). It may be that knowing what makes for a good encounter, when all our habits of thinking prevent ethics from taking place, is an act of resistance in itself. What is important is to gain an adequate knowledge of the cause of joy, so that we are not 'condemned to undergo effects' as 'slaves of everything' that happens to us, but can experience active joy (Deleuze, 1988).

Perhaps the carnival atmosphere of the mass actions do, as Shepherd (2005) suggests, demonstrate the possibilities of a joyous existence. But this is not principally because they embody a

commitment to the ideal of justice. Rather, it is because they express the absolute plurality of lived encounters, the possibility of good encounters and the power of an affective excess that cannot be captured or (mis)represented, but which *can be thought*. A more rigorous conception of a pluralist politics, which encompasses an affective and embodied pluralism, appears especially necessary when resistance is so easily and frustratingly captured. Creating ‘many yeses’ (Kingsnorth, 2003) and imaging that ‘another world is possible’ (George, 2004) may involve the refusal to reduce thought to consciousness and the errors and clichés to which it often falls prey—especially the constitutive illusion that it is the master of the body. After Spinoza, it is a question of pursuing the parallel tasks of discovering ‘an *unconscious of thought* just as profound as *the unknown of the body* (Deleuze, 1988: 19). Given that our habits of thinking lead us astray, developing an acute sensitivity to the minute alterations of bodies will enable us to grasp the corresponding movements in thought, creating new and plural possibilities.

An ethical appreciation of the anti-globalisation movement provides new criteria for evaluating its actions, as well as its ideas. Certainly, the critical left has no monopoly on affective politics. But its practices and its ideas can mobilise affect in important ways. While we challenge the notion that activists are, in the first instance, ideologically motivated, we retain an interest in the ideas that anti-globalisation politics espouse. Judged from the point of view of a moral project, ideas are always compared to their realisation. Put another way, existence is judged from the point of view of transcendent ideas (how perfectly or imperfectly are they realised)? Smith (2007: 67) clarifies what is distinct about an ethical evaluation:

What he calls “ethics” is, on the contrary, a set of “facilitative” [*facultative*] rules that evaluates what we do, say, and think according to the immanent mode of existence that it implies. One says or does this, thinks or feels that: what mode of existence does it imply? “We always have the beliefs, feelings, and thoughts we deserve,” writes Deleuze, “given our way of being or our style of life.”

It may well be the case that being part of ‘the movement’ requires one to be a ‘despiser of the body’ (Nietzsche, 1961), touting the rhetoric of moralism and disciplining one’s own and others’ bodies in the name of the cause. Spinoza alerts us to the nature of the moralist trinity that goes with such a project—the tyrant, the slave and the priest—and to the terms by which such figures necessarily operate. Yet there are also those who are *free*, who act politically by cultivating a sort of addiction to joyful passions. According to Deleuze’s (1990: 262) Spinoza, the individual ‘who is to become reasonable, strong and free, begins by doing all in his (sic) power to experience joyful passions:’

He then strives to extricate himself from chance encounters and the concatenation of sad passions, to organise good encounters, combine his relation with relations that combine directly with it,

unite with what agrees in nature with him, and form a reasonable association between men; all this in such a way as to be affected with joy.

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Notes

1. We have retained the label of the 'anti-globalisation movement' in view of the popularity and thus recognisability of this term. We recognise that many critics and activists prefer to maintain a distance from the 'anti-globalisation' label, stressing that it is the corporate or neoliberal character of contemporary globalisation that is at issue (Smith, 2001). In spite of these reservations, the term 'anti-globalisation' movement connotes an easily recognisable movement, as well as signaling the roots of the current movement in more autonomous and local modes of protest, such as that of the Zapatistas (Starr and Adams, 2003).

2. All subsequent references to the work of Spinoza are taken from the *Spinoza: Complete Works [Ethics]* (2002). In text references include the part and number of the proposition; 'l' refers to a lemma, 'p' to a proof.

3. The divisions within feminism, particularly marked along lines of race, are a case in point. As black feminists were keen to point out, the goals and aspirations of white feminists were not necessarily those of black feminists, and of course were far from universal (Gordon, 1987; hooks, 1989).

4. One perceptive anonymous reviewer noted that it was actually the non-violent protestors (specifically, the Pink Bloc) who were subjected to the lion's share of police brutality in Genoa, and certainly, there is no guarantee that a pacifist stance can safeguard activists from violence.

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