# 10 'We are heartbroken and furious!'

## Violence and the (anti-)globalisation movement(s)[1]

*Sian Sullivan*

> the militant is the one who best expresses the life of the multitude: the agent of biopolitical production and resistance against Empire.
>
> (Hardt and Negri 2000: 411)

## 2003 – A summer of protest

### EU summit, Thessaloniki, June

*I am at the European Union (EU) 'counter-summit' in Thessaloniki. Prior to the main protests on 21 June, the last day of the summit, I spend several hours in Thessaloniki's Aristotle University campus, where squatting militant activists are taking advantage of the legal asylum granted on university premises. Here, in a philosophy department strewn with somewhat nihilistic graffiti ('peace, love and petrol bombs', 'from pigs to bacon', 'middle class war', 'fuck the world, destroy everything' (see, e.g. Figure 10.1), glass bottles are being transformed into molotovs, gas masks are being tried on, and 'anti-globalisation' protesters are calmly anticipating one of 'the biggest riots Thessaloniki has ever seen'. I feel overwhelmed by a lack of humour, a swaggering machismo, a palpable hatred of the police – matched by an intention to do physical injury – and a welter of self-harm scars on the flesh of several protesters. This is hardcore. I leave the campus before the protest is due to begin, feeling confused and alienated by this calculated preparedness for violence and an obvious antipathy to intellectual reflection, as well as concerned for my friends there.*

*In the evening I walk back through the streets of Thessaloniki, which for more than two days remain thick with acrid teargas. Several businesses have been gutted and are blackened with the soot from petrol bombs. Pools of blood are noticeable on the tarmac. An image that stays with me is of an old Greek man in a small corner café patiently brushing away broken glass from the steel window-trays that normally would be filled with syrupy sweet pastries.*
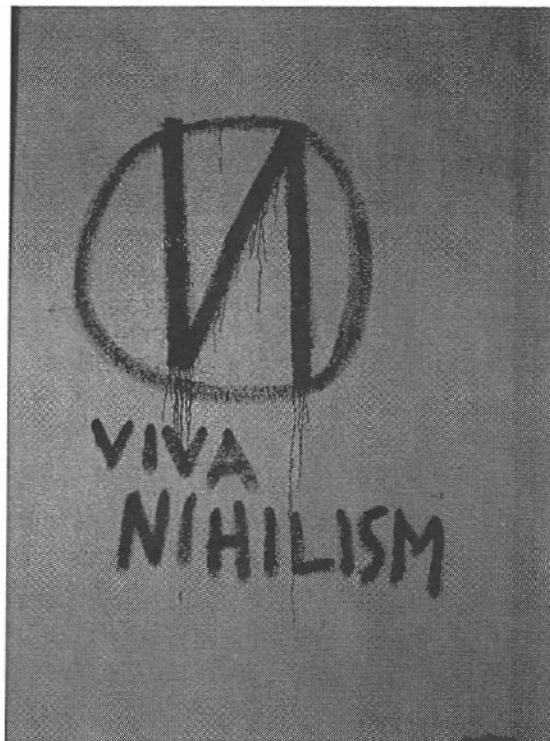
*Figure 10.1* 'Viva nihilism!' Graffiti on the walls of the Philosophy Department at Thessaloniki's Aristotle University during the EU 'counter-summit', June 2003
Source: Sian Sullivan, personal archive

## DSEi, London, September

*The arms dealers are back in town! DSEi – Defence Systems and Equipment International – is again holding its government-subsidised trade fair in London. This is where arms producers from around the world meet to display the latest weapons technology: where global businessmen deal in death. It is 10 September, the 'spiky' direct action day for which people have been invited to protest DSEi using whatever means they choose, the guiding principle being no violence to life. I have joined London-based activist samba band 'Rhythms of Resistance' (see Rhythms of Resistance 2003), partly so that I am part of an active affinity group, but also because I connect with their apparent experiential approach to political praxis: an anti-capitalist orientation that combines humour, celebration, costume, community, music and dancing in drawing attention to a range of interconnected issues. Rhythms meet early at the squat where our compadres from Sheffield Samba Band are staying, and we agree that our aim is to join others in drawing attention to the arms fair and to our dissent by causing as much disruption as possible. We launch ourselves into the streets and soon are running from police,*

*climbing over fences taller than me (not easy in a long green tutu), and eventually stopping traffic on the several-laned A13 north of the Excel Exhibition Centre. The police begin to form a linked cordon across the road. All I want is to get to the other side, but a policeman grabs me as I run. I'm not going anywhere, but he slams me into the concrete barrier that's in the middle of the road, bends me over it with my arms behind my back, and then shoves me so hard into the road that I land face down on the tarmac, bashing and twisting my elbow in the process (it's more than two months before I can stretch my arm without pain). At this point I really think I'm about to be attacked further, but thankfully he melts back into what is now a wall of policemen. I do not even catch his number.*

*It is the next day, 11 September, the anniversary of that moment when global politics crystallised as a politics of violence, terror and war. Bizarrely, the UK government has chosen this day to entertain the world's arms dealers in a gala dinner at the opulent Lancaster Gate Hotel. Police barricades have been set up to protect those inside from the protesters gathering outside. I arrive with the samba band and join the crowd. I think of the women and children killed and still being killed in Iraq and feel anger rising within me. Facing the two rows of uniformed policemen protecting those who profit from war, conflict, violence and death, I also feel fear. As I hit the agogo[2] that I'm playing I sense the physicality of this act become a release and focus for the grief and rage that I feel. I wonder if this physicality is so very different from smashing a McDonalds' window or throwing a molotov? Something 'clicks' and I think I begin to understand why these practices become part of people's repertoire of protest ...*

## Introduction

This chapter is intended as an exploratory comment on the militancy emerging in (anti-)globalisation political practice and in the policing of such practice. As someone who finds themselves crossing boundaries between, and contesting the categories of, the organic and traditional intellectual (see Gramsci 1971; Barker and Cox 2003) – engaging in the practice of activism as well as the theorising of activist practice – the piece has emerged from my own process of sense-making regarding violence in the '(anti-)globalisation movement(s)'.[3] It flows from my experiences of irruptive protest situations, as well as from my perceptions of the contextual and experiential factors that draw people towards, and make possible, the physicality of violence in these situations.

In reaching towards analysis and interpretation, my aims are three-fold: first, to explore a view that consciously militant tactics – namely, violence to property and preparedness for confrontation with police – are gaining legitimacy amongst protesters in (anti-)globalisation politics; second, to attempt a nuanced and contextual analysis of *why* this is the case, beyond a simplistic and moralistic framing of whether such tactics are strategically

'good' or 'bad' for 'the movements'; and, third, to offer some views regarding the subversive and transformative potential, or otherwise, of violent praxis in opening up possibilities for post-capitalist and post-representational subjectivities and social relations. What I suggest in this chapter is that any analysis of violence within the '(anti-)globalisation movement(s)' be framed in terms of both the global context of structural violence in which we live and the individual affective circumstances that shape our subjectivities, desire and agency. More specifically, I fore-ground the roles of depression and rage as two potent emotional sources that animate the politics and tactics of the '(anti-)globalisation move-ment(s)'.

My 'data' derive from 'observant participation' in relevant contexts; discourse analysis, focusing on unpublished and independently published texts that together indicate themes and ideas influencing contemporary activist praxis; and reflection on my own subjective and embodied experi-ence/s. Theoretically, I draw on a poststructuralist analytics that owes much to my reading of Foucault (e.g. 2001 [1965]; 1998 [1976]), Agamben (1994; 1998) and Hardt and Negri (2000) in considering subjective locations and experiences of the sovereignty effected by the biopower of global contexts. In particular, I note the psychological and physical docility effected by the panopticon society of censored subjectivities of late modernity: a docility that is *required* and enforced by modernity's current greedy incarnation in the sovereignty of global corporatism and US unilateralism. It seems to me that Foucault, in combination with contemporary anti-psychiatry philosophers Deleuze and Guattari (1988 [1980]; also see Fanon 1967 [1963]; Laing 1967), 'post-anarchist' political theorists such as Newman (e.g. 2000; 2001; 2003), and a feminist and anthropological legitimation of ontological differences and plural subjectivities, offer much by way of elucidating a corresponding *hunger* for acts and discourses of bio/psycho-political disobedience and dissent in (anti-)globalisation politics.

## Discourses/practices of destruction: violence and the (anti-)globalisation movement(s)

Violence as a tactic of protest is as old as contested authority. But if it is possible to talk of the emergence of a *new* global social movement that is challenging the current status quo of inequalities, then I think it also is possible to perceive a globalisation of proactively militant discourse and practice. By this I refer to a transnationally understood and practised suite of tactics involving both symbolic violence to property and preparedness for direct confrontation with police and *not* to attacks on human life. With the property damage and the violent clashes that have occurred between police and 'anti-globalisation' activists at significant protest events in the post-industrial North in recent years (Wood 2004), violence is now expected in these contexts.[4] One author, for example, refers to 'the habitual

violence at anti-globalisation rallies' (Toje 2002: 3). Policing strategies and the corporate media both reflect *and create* these expectations and actualities (see Notes from Nowhere 2003: 307). Techniques for crowd control comprise a major and growing focus for military and police, as well as an economic boom industry for the manufacturers of a whole new wave of crowd control weaponry (discussed further in Sullivan 2004b; 2004c).

The financial costs of policing protest events, as well as the costs of damage to property and of lost business, provide a conventional measure of the significance of confrontational practices in these contexts. But a look at the published and unpublished expressions of intent made by protesters confirms a transnational strategic militancy in contemporary (anti-)globalisation protest politics (emphasis added for all quotes):

> *We want to destroy government and rich peoples' privileges.* We want to get rid of the control that police, government and bosses have over our everyday lives.
>
> (Anarchist Youth Network: Britain and Ireland 2003)

> *[L]et's fight so hard,* and live so hard, that others inside the cages of mainstream life can see us and are inspired to join us in *our complete rejection of the old world* and all its bullshit.
>
> (CrimethInc. Workers' Collective 2001: 165)

> One of the world's biggest ever trade fairs for guns, bombs, military planes & ships, small arms, mines and tanks is scheduled to take place in London from 9–12 September 2003. … *You are invited to help destroy this market of death.*
>
> (Destroy DSEi 2003)

> [W]e, as insurrectionists must wage war on terror: the terror of the state, the terror of hierarchy, the terror of war and most importantly the terror of civilization.
>
> (Wildfire 2003)

Taken together, these statements comprise a coherent, combative and open discourse of destruction that makes a discursive challenge to the state's assumed and masked monopoly over the legitimacy of using violence to further aims. It clearly positions activists of many flavours – anarcho-primitivists, insurrectionists, CrimethInc. dropout culturists, to name a few represented by the sources of the texts – as separated by a qualitative abyss from the 'pathological passivity' (Roszak 1971 [1968]: 22; Churchill *et al.* 1998) of reformist agendas, i.e. positions that, while critical of the status quo, seek to influence existing institutions and structures rather than imagine some sort of disaffiliation from them. In the last few years, this discourse has been accompanied by two key practices in militant (anti-)globalisation

protest politics in the post-industrial North, encompassing the 'black bloc'[5] tactic of violence to the physical symbols of corporate capitalism and the Tute Bianchi/Disobedienti/WOMBLES[6] tactic of padding-up in order to engage in 'confrontational defence' – 'non-violent warfare' – in articulating with police lines.

An argument common both within and without 'the movement(s)' is that violence perpetuated (against property and police) by advocates of a militant anti-capitalism is a fringe element that discredits and delegitimises 'the movement' as a whole (Cross 2003: 11). Media and popular attention focuses particularly on the apparently mysterious and shadowy 'black bloc' – demonised and misrepresented as the dark underbelly of alienated anti-capitalist youth (e.g. in Watson 2003). While appealing to the voyeuristic tendencies of the media and thereby at least drawing attention to the incident of protest – that is, 'no fights, no coverage' (Broughton 2003) – violence is framed as distracting focus from issues that activists are protesting against and for, and as a strategy that is divisive for 'the movement(s)' as a whole (e.g. Yechury 2003: 3). For others, there is little difference between violence at a protest and riots at a football match, the violent act in both contexts being low on instrumental strategy and high on cathartic release and momentary self-indulgence.

Given the pluralistic and multifaceted social context of the (anti-)globalisation movements – with their rhetorical emphasis on 'unity in diversity' – all of these critical views have legitimacy. Their dismissal of militant practices, however, masks several dimensions pertinent for a nuanced analysis of both the occurrence of violence *within* protest events and the relationship of violence in these contexts to the wider socio-political milieux in which they take place.

One only has to open a newspaper or watch the news to come face to face with the fact that we inhabit a global economic and political system that is built on, pervaded with and powered by gut-wrenching levels of physical and psychological violence. Bourgois, following Galtung (1969), asserts that the contemporary world (dis)order is infused with *structural violence* such that

> the political-economic organization of society ... imposes conditions of physical and emotional distress ... rooted, at the macro-level, in structures such as unequal [i.e. unfair] international terms of trade and ... expressed locally in exploitative labour markets, marketing arrangements and the monopolization of services.
>
> (Bourgois 2001: 7)

At the same time, and as New York columnist Thomas Friedman wrote prior to the Gulf war in 1991, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the hidden fist of the (United States) military that has been behind the hidden hand of the 'free' market (in Cookson n.d.; Higgott 2003); or the

accompanying and increasingly militarised suppression of dissent and protest worldwide (Sullivan 2004c). Analytically, these constitute *political violence* (Bourgois 2001: 7): administered in the name of the political ideology of neoliberalism (what Graeber (2002: 62) refers to as 'market Stalinism'), in combination with an aggressive American unilateralism (PNAC 1997; Donnelly 2000; White House 2002; Higgott 2003; Rilling 2003).

Newman (2000) points out that for Marx the state's oppressive apparatus reflected economic exploitation and the desires of the empowered capitalist class, while for late nineteenth-century anarchist writers such as Bakunin and Kropotkin, the state itself *originates* in and has a sustained logic of violence (also Perlman 1983). Today, it is tempting to see structural violence emerging from a strong collusion of both state and capitalist interests, e.g. in today's social democratic adherence to the ideology of public–private partnerships, in combination with state-supported arms industries and the apparent use of military might to defend and expand economic interests. If this line of thought has validity, then it is impossible not to connect it with Mussolini's understanding of fascism as 'corporatism' – 'the merger of state, military and corporate power' (Pilger 2004: 20) or to envisage an emerging contemporary form of global corporatism that favours the United States as the world's largest capitalist economy and military power, and in which the state, to varying degrees, becomes an appendage of a combined and ongoing transnational and imperialist policing.

Böhm and Sørensen (2003: 2) conceive this 'globality' of violence as '*warganization*'. This is the bio-political total war (Foucault 1998 [1976]; Deleuze and Guattari 1988 [1980]) 'embedded in the very organisation of Empire'; indeed, *required* by the continual, multidimensional expansion of Empire's biopower (Hardt and Negri 2000). It signals the end of war as a bounded event – 'where war is conceived as a limited enterprise in which you engage and disengage' – and thereby also signals the end of a utopian imaginary of peace as a state of not war (Böhm and Sørensen 2003: 10). In these circumstances, *war* – war on terror, war on drugs, war on individual and civil liberties effected by the constructed paranoia of current surveillance culture and the securitisation of everyday life – becomes *the* 'organizing principle that is constantly at play everywhere' (Böhm and Sørensen 2003: 9). Ironically it is ' "sold" to us as a war for "freedom" ' (Böhm 2002: 329), or for peace – an irony embodied in the caustic slogan, seen frequently on anti-war demonstrations, that 'fighting for peace is like fucking for virginity'.

Thus 'the enemy is everywhere and everybody: ... "total war" is in fact a civil war in the sense that it is a war from *within* the social, *against* the social' (Böhm 2002: 329, emphasis in original).[7] Indeed, this total war is distributed more minutely throughout society in that it also is located throughout our selves and psyches: giving currency to the analysis by South African activist Steven Biko that 'the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is

the mind of the oppressed' (Biko 1989 [1978]). It is the 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu 1998; 2001) absorbed by both individuals and collectives that maintains hegemonic domination through the internalisation and legitimation of the categories that make the social order appear self-evident: 'producing the unwitting consent of the dominated' (Bourgois 2001: 8; also Laing 1967; Foucault 1998 [1976]). And it is thereby ever present as the internal effort – the fight – required in any waking up to our contingent power and individual freedom (Fromm 2001) that makes possible an active consciousness and overcoming of the 'regulated "interiorization" ' exacted by the corporate state (Newman 2000: 5, after Nietzsche).

An increasingly and globally connected consciousness of the central and multiplicitous roles of violence to the creation and maintenance of global inequalities also is of emerging and defining significance in contemporary (anti-)globalisation politics. This is powerfully indicated by the existence and interpenetration of both an 'anti-capitalist' movement that is global in reach and a global peace/anti-war movement that showed its presence in the streets on 15 February 2003 (e.g. Koch 2004). It is animating ongoing direct action politics as well as street protests worldwide. This understanding – that global patterns of inequality and injustice are established and perpetuated by systemically coercive and violent relationships in the realm of the social and the subjective, and therefore that political violence is not limited to the frontline of military conflict – is articulated clearly in activist statements such as: capitalism is 'a social system that condemns the vast majority of people to stunted and unfulfilled lives despite our best efforts' (Jazz 2001: 87 in Graeber 2002: 4), and: 'We could never match the violence of society. The bottom line is, we live in a society where you have to fuck people over to achieve security for yourself' ('Joe' in Thompson 2003).

In the following section I consider some ways in which relationships between this multiplicitous and multifaceted political violence and activist bio-political agency might be conceptualised and interpreted.

## Finding frontlines: activism in search of agency

I know one bitingly articulate activist whose existential pain was so extreme that he would slash his own arms and torso to pieces. One cut required more than 80 stitches. At activist gatherings and mobilisation meetings I have seen the scars of physical self-laceration on more people than I care to remember. Others retreat into the temporary psychic cotton wool of drugs – from alcohol to ketamine. And who in the activist communities does not know of someone who has attempted or succeeded in suicide? All these are tools for pain management. *We are heartbroken and furious!* I mean, how many of us, and to what degree, do we have to be hurting before the reality of where we're at collectively begins to sink in?

(Interview with 'Sam', activist, personal notes 23 November 2003)

There is no divine order, other than to love the life you live and to
spread joy. But if that is the case, then I must be a fundamental human.

(Rupture 2004: 3)

The story so far is one where political violence in the service of global
corporatism and American unilateralism permeates social, psychological
and economic relationships. Where bodily and subjective docility are
required by these colonising structures, and extended via the disciplining
governmentality of universalist discourses, 'civil society' and representa-
tional 'democracy' (see Tormey 2004). Where, short of suicide, it is
impossible to extract oneself from these violating global contexts.

How do people cope and retain hope under the weight of these contexts?
How do individuals come to struggle; to attempt to effect change by exerting
agency? And how might 'anti-globalisation' politics really be radical – in the
sense of opening up and constituting spaces for 'the' post-capitalist, post-
represented human?

### Internalising rage: denial, depression, desire

I'm trying to say what I think brotherhood really is. It begins – it begins
in shared pain.

(Le Guin 1974: 54)

The psychoanalytic and psychotherapy literature is rich with observations
and analyses of the ways in which humans and animals cope with extended
suffering and trauma. A pattern is of desensitisation to the repeated experi-
ence of, or exposure to, violence such that traumatic experience becomes
normalised and thereby denied (see Miller 2001 [1979]: 100; Pinkola Estes
1993: 244–6; Jensen 2000; and references therein).[8] This process appears
enhanced when people become 'used to not being able to intervene in
shocking events' because of 'formidable punishments for breaking silence,
for fleeing the cage, for pointing out wrongs, for demanding change'
(Pinkola Estes 1993: 246). By this reckoning, violence – *violation* – is
normalised via the denial or silencing of felt experiences of violation, as well
as the internalising of the rage that such experiences can engender. This
constitutes a *depression*/repression of affective experience, and a corre-
sponding suppression of an ability to act according to desires to transform
situations, even if the possibility for transformation presents itself. As such it
permits the internalised 'symbolic violence' by which, as noted above, a
hegemonic and violating status quo is legitimated through 'our' own consent
(Bourdieu 1998; 2001).[9] Further, because emotions are felt – experienced –
bodily, i.e. are embodied (Csordas 1994), alienation from emotional
responses to trauma can extend into alienation from 'the' body (Totton
2002), translating into bodily as well as psychological self-harm practices.
Self-mutilation or cutting, the use of drugs that afford escape from pain,

eating disorders and suicide: all these are increasing, are certainly present in activist communities (i.e. as indicated by the statement with which this subsection opens) and are interpreted by many as sacrificial practices offering pain, blood and control for release from existential pain (Wolf 1992; Milia 2000; Wurtzel 1999 [1994]).[10]

This rise of depression is interpreted here as signalling psychological and affective distress at the forms of social–political and economic organisation in which individuals are embedded. It is accompanied by the suppression of this distress via extensive medication and the removal of such 'disordered' people from society (Foucault 2001 [1965]; Smail 1984; Baron 2003; Sontag 2003: 5). From an anti-psychiatry perspective, depression and the subjectivities and practices that flow from this state of being emerge from a necessary dissociation or splitting from subjective experiences of trauma (e.g. Laing 1967; Smail 1984). Thus, '[d]epression consists of a denial of one's own emotional reactions ... in the service of an absolutely essential adaptation' to traumatising contexts (Miller 2001 [1979]: 46). In this reading depression might be more a barometer of *social* (ill-)health, than a mental illness that inhabits unfortunate individuals (i.e. as conventionally analysed and treated). Further, as a phenomenon of socio-economic and socio-political denial and disengagement, accompanied by subjectivities of negation and the attacking of self, depression represents a reducing of the socio-political layers that construct modernity's 'normal' and manageable citizens (Agamben 1994; 1998). Depression, and the subjectivities and practices with which this state of being is associated, thereby *coherently constructs the affective and physical body as the experienced locale of socio-political relationships* – the biopower of *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2000).

My experience is that depression and self-harm practices are talked about somewhat more candidly among activists engaging in 'anti-globalisation' political praxis than in other everyday contexts (which is not to say that these phenomena are not present in other contexts). At the 2003 UK Earth First! summer gathering, for example, a workshop on mental health issues in the activist communities was so popular that a second session was rescheduled. It was as if once a space had been created where these experiences could be shared the floodgates opened, enabling voice after voice to speak of the pain, fear and anger felt at the multiplicitous violence of modern society, and a yearning for release from these contexts. For some, depression embodied a long-term and recurrent sense of alienation at modernity's fragmenting and devaluing of relationship. For others, depression and symptoms of post-trauma distress had arisen in response to the experience of police violence in protest situations, such as at the infamous G8 meeting in Genoa in July 2001 (see Indymedia 2002); sometimes as a sense of guilt if friends had been attacked while chance circumstances had led one away from a potentially dangerous situation. Still others talked of their alienating experiences at the hands of the formal psychiatric system. Indeed, a recent study suggests that participation in activism increases a

sense of well-being and mitigates symptoms of depression (University of Sussex 2002; Drury 2003), confirming that activists might be both choosing appropriate channels for the self-treatment of depression and accurately addressing contextual causes of distress.

It seems to me that this nexus of interrelationships sheds light on the unfolding of a confrontational bio-politics in contemporary (anti-)globalisation protest. As Wurtzel (1999 [1994]: 299) argues, 'one of the striking elements of this depression breakout is the extent to which it has gotten such a strong hold on so many young people. ... Affecting those who [should] have so much to look forward to and to hope for', as well as the generation(s) that are most clearly identified with current militant practice in (anti-)globalisation politics. In this aspect depression represents an individual withdrawal from desiring the future, since it signals a loss of hope, of optimism, in the possibilities that the future holds. But by stripping away conventional engagement with the political-economic status quo – which, as Jensen (2000: 108) puts it, requires adhering to the commandment that 'Thou shalt pretend that nothing is wrong' – the subjectivities of depression also create spaces for the experience and articulation of new *desires*. From here, the 'politics of possibility' (Sullivan forthcoming) of the (anti-)globalisation movement(s) – of the World Social Forum's slogan 'another world is possible' and its reframing as 'other worlds are possible' by activists of a conscientiously pluralist orientation – can be interpreted as a radical reinsertion of a politics of *desire* regarding the future. This indeed is 'a new offensive in the arena of dreams, of rights, of liberty, for the conquest of the future' (Cuevas 2000: 3). And imagining – desiring – something different is the first step towards dissent, defiance and disobedience regarding the status quo.

### Externalising rage: anger, activism, agency and affinity

> When actions are performed
> Without unnecessary speech,
> People say, 'We did it!'
>
> (Lao Tsu 1972)

A common perception of militant activism is that it is a childish and reactionary *acting out* of anger driven by adolescent angst and a displacing of Oedipal rage onto 'papa state'. As Miller argues (Miller 2001 [1979]: 121) '[p]olitical action can be fed by the unconscious rage of children ... [and] partially discharged in fighting "enemies", without having to give up the idealization of one's own parents'. It gives rise to comments such as: '[s]mashing things comes off as a little kid whining in the streets about how much he doesn't like his little situation' (Frank 2003); or, 'you did a great job of acting like children on a tantrum while erroding [*sic*] the credibility of the peace rally' (Shot By You 2003).[11]

Perhaps some physically confrontational protestors indeed are attracted by the very potential of violence to the moments of protest that are part of anti-capitalist/(anti-)globalisation politics. Violence in this reckoning would be an end in itself, although importantly the brutality of a context of *everyday violence* (e.g. football riots, pub brawls, domestic violence, etc.) is shifted into the *political violence* of the protest (Bourgois 2001).[12] *Activism* as opposed to *reactivism*, however, is a targeted and strategic expression of the emotion of anger, as well as an ethical assertion of *the right to be angry*, given contextual circumstances that are thought and felt to be wrong. Thus '[t]he point about the Black Bloc is that people simply want the autonomy to be able to express their anger as they see fit' (Anon. 2004: 7).

It is not difficult, therefore, to perceive the targeted violent act in the context of protest as generating an immediate and individual experiential satisfaction, in part through effecting direct concrete results in exterior public space (see Fanon 1967 [1963]). These actions transform the lack of agency many experience given a global political economy that constrains options for spontaneity and self-determination and which generates the permanently unfulfilled desire of consumer capital. But when such physical acts also are part of a strategy of 'smashing' coherently selected targets, it is not appropriate to frame them as violence as an end in itself, since they embody a conscious subversion of the *symbolic violence* that otherwise fosters collusion in disempowering contexts. Militants themselves are quick to distinguish their actions from those of incoherent, unstrategic riotous activity. In fact, it seems to me that there is not a great deal of difference between these actions and the carefully planned sabotage of deliberate 'monkey-wrenching' acts (Abbey 1991 [1973]; Do or Die 2003) occurring outside the circumstances of major street protests. Consider, for example, the statement made by veteran UK Trident Ploughshares activist Ulla Roder, arrested in March 2003 for causing criminal damage to a Tornado ground attack aircraft in protest at the attack on Iraq:

> I looked at the seat in the cockpit in the streamlined white Tornado warplane, which I had just entered. In my mind I had the picture of a young pilot, boy, son, father; the many years of fear for the people of Iraq; for their survival; for a new world war – nuclear war; fear of losing the little bit of freedom we people have left in this world, to a state which has officially declared that it wants 'Full Spectrum Dominance' on earth as well as in space and which has shown all willingness and cynicism to use whatever means of power to gain this. All this made me lift the red and black bolt-cutters in my hand. Crash! I shouted out aloud in the hangar. There was no-one to hear, but it helped. 'We don't want your war, Bush and Blair!' This for all the dead civilians in Iraq and all the children still suffering at poor hospitals, caused by 12 years of sanctions against civilians. Crash! The control panel was out of commission.
>
> (Roder 2003)

Here we find coherence of intent as well as beautiful, angry passion. It is unlikely that many people will appreciate or accept the parallels between the sober, directed sabotage of an older woman such as Ulla, and the smashing tactics of '(anti-)globalisation' protesters, black bloc or otherwise. But these parallels exist in both intent ('mindful destruction' of things that cause, or represent causes of, violence to life (Anon. 2004)), and felt experience (anger and need for release). Even the clear difference in activist style between accountability and clandestinity[13] appears to be breaking down, if Ulla's non-appearance at two recent court hearings is anything to go by (Roder 2003).

Another example of strategic militancy in 'the movements' can be found in the tactics of the Italian Tute Bianchi (now Disobedienti) who go into police lines, prepared not to attack but to invite a defensive confrontation (as indicated by their mock salute of a fist with the little finger raised, waved at the police to mean 'Come on, break it!' (Anon. 2001: 3)). This is a conscious strategy to draw out the tendency towards violence of the police, thereby making explicit the violence that is systemic to contemporary capitalism: exposing the fallacy and fantasy – the contradictions – of the Hobbesian 'social contract' (e.g. WOMBLES 2003a). As such, it constitutes an instru-mental bio-politics (Foucault 1998 [1976]): a means of physically confronting the repression of the state and its support for corporatism as the primary means of structuring society. Foucault (among others) articulates body (and psyche) as the locale(s) of power's micro-physics which, as argued above, can be self-attacked in multiple ways as a further expression of this micro-physics. In this bio-political tactic of protests, the body is reconstituted individually and collectively as the appropriate (and only possible) locale of rebellion.

Participation in the organising and practice of actions that transgress the boundaries of 'good bourgeois behaviour', especially when accompanied by a clear cosmology that conveys the broader meaning of such actions, also has socio-psychological significance in terms of reinforcing internal social and psychosomatic coherence (or *habitus*) (also in Cross 2003, after Bourdieu 1990 [1980]). This is in part by ritualising the experience of repres-sion in these contexts (Mueller 2004a). The sharing of such extreme experiences is integral to the building of solidarity. As Barker and Cox note,

> [f]or many activists … it is a turning-point to be at the receiving end of police aggression and to discover that an institution they have been brought up to see as underwriting their safety and the moral order is in fact prone to violence against 'ordinary people' … pursuing what they understand to be eminently moral (and often altruistic) pursuits.
>
> (Barker and Cox 2003: 8)

And again,

> [b]eing attacked by heavily armed riot police is terrifying. It has happened to me many times now and I think you never get over the fear.

But I have come to feel more and more like fighting back and I have come to understand more the value of the Black Block.

(WOMBLES 2003a)

Perhaps the most politically powerful aspect of protest actions, however, is not the actions themselves, but the social and psychological dimensions that infuse organisation and experience(s) of them. Take, for example, the forming of groups of affinity: small, extra-institutional socio-political groupings arising from direct relationships, trust, shared interests and actions, reciprocity and an emphasis on consensus and inclusive processes of decision making. These attempt a shift to group emergence from shared values as opposed to conventional identities (such as sex, race, religion, etc.) or geographical location (e.g. WOMBLES 2003b: 10). This emphasis on direct relationships in the context of affinity groups can be considered, and is consciously framed as, an insurrectionary act and process in itself. It arises from an understanding that capitalism means that 'most of our encounters have already been defined in terms of predetermined roles and relationships in which we have no say' (Willful Disobedience n.d.), and that it functions in part by fragmenting social relations – favouring competition over co-operation and requiring objectification (e.g. people = human resources, 'nature' = natural resources) rather than communion.

Of course, the dynamics of any group or organisation can be conservative and constraining, and activist communities are no exception to this. For example, the internal structuring of what Marcellus (2003: 3) describes as a 'pretentious and authoritarian elitism' among those prepared to commit violent acts can itself take on a conservative and exclusionary tendency, such that participation becomes 'more about just identifying oneself with a … group' than about libertarian and strategic/creative political action. Or the pressure to be 'radical' and to eschew any form of populism again can prop-agate an exclusionary elitism (see Anon. 2001: 4). But in ideal terms, the presence of dynamic organisational practices emphasising autonomy and affinity in themselves constitute the means to mitigate against a potential sedimenting – or 'molarising', to use Deleuze and Guattari's term (1988 [1980]) – into the restrictive and regulated structures characterising legally constituted social groupings. Such practices include: the fluid, dynamic and temporary nature of affinity groups formed for the purposes of specific actions; the access activists have to emerging trans-local cultures of resis-tance and disobedience – located virtually (via the Internet e-lists, discussion groups, etc.) and physically (at meetings, parties, actions, etc.) – that recur-sively open and shape activist values and tactics; and the conscious adherence to anarchist and network principles of organisation that recog-nise the value of horizontal networks as well as temporary hierarchies.

To summarise, a gulf of difference distinguishes activist agency involving violence to property and preparedness for confrontation with police from an unconsciously reactive, infantile acting out of anger. The former are

manifestations of broader and recursive cultures of practice, organisation and discourse. They represent the weaving of a social fabric based on mutual aid, affinity, reciprocity, direct relationship and solidarity that in itself constitutes a psycho-cultural break with the accepted warp and weft of a modern sociality (i.e. of de Sade, Darwin, Hobbes and Freud) that assumes individualism, competition and tendencies towards violence as the dominant drives for humanity. While the experiential power of the 'rite of passage' of irruptive situations and the contribution of such 'peak experiences' (Maslow 1973) to individual and collective identities cannot be underestimated (Mueller 2004b), the social practices with which they are accompanied arguably are at least as politically challenging as the moments of protest constituting a direct action bio-politics.

*But ...*

When you are acted upon violently, you learn to act violently back.
(CrimethInc. Workers' Collective 2001: 36)

If this movement progresses in terms of escalating violence alone then we will lose, because they have guns and we do not.
(Anon. 2004: 19)

The above analysis locates me outside a strictly pacifist activist discourse and practice, or at least, in support of a position of 'deep' questioning of a reactionary violence/non-violence dichotomy in protest politics. Indeed, I actively affirm the transformational and communicative value of 'sitting in the fire' of anger and conflict (Mindell 1995).

But please read the small print. Debord (1983) famously wrote that alienation cannot be combated 'by means of alienated forms of struggle'. Indeed, if (anti-)globalisation politics is about moving *beyond* the oppositional categories that support the status quo – about proleptically imagining other possibilities for being/becoming, and about a process of creating and doing the new as well as contesting the old – then violence surely has a compromised place within 'the movement(s)'. It is a response that is defined by, and thereby increases, the reactionary violence of the state in its support of *Empire*, and that can slip easily into a reactive opposition that strengthens rather than outgrows the strong (Newman 2000: 3). It reinforces the power that is, by definition, present in opposition to its resistance, while also making the opposition more and more like its enemy, amounting to 'a terribly ugly mirror image' (Böhm and Sørensen 2003: 13). This is the familiar equation that violence + violence = more violence. Thus, just as the structural and political violence of neoliberalism sediments into interpersonal violence in everyday domains (Bourgois 2001: 29) – constituting what Bourdieu (1998) refers to as the 'law of the conservation of violence' – violence in the context of protests also easily shifts between the 'meaningful' political act and the boring violence of the everyday (also see Marcellus

2003). By resonating with the particular masculinities of a conventional, humourless and Leninist left perspective that emphasises the violent necessity of the revolutionary moment,[14] a politics that otherwise is framed as anti-establishment and subversive becomes conventional rather than radical: overly bound by past imaginings of what is possible. On this point, a strengthening of particular 'hegemonic masculinities', i.e. that valorise physical strength, machismo (in relation to other men as well as to women) and emotional passivity (discussed in Cross 2003: 14–15; also Viejo 2003), perhaps also generates its own momentum and problematic – one which is akin to that represented by the machismo of a male-dominated, body-armoured riot police. Given reports of sexual harassment made by women at the anarchist encampment at Thessaloniki's Aristotle University in June 2003, for example, it indeed is tempting to see an emerging dynamic in militant factions whereby 'worthy' political violence is transmuted and normalised 'back' into the banal and disempowering violence of everyday sexism.[15]

Thus, it is hard for me not to stay with the conclusion that a conscious orientation towards violent praxis acts to buttress inequalities, as well as being 'profoundly disabling', both physically and psychologically (Bourgois 2001: 12). Given the context of structural and symbolic violence characteristic of late capitalism, of the distributed biopower of *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2000) and of US military imperialism, however, it also is hard to avoid the corresponding conclusion that the period of social change in which we find ourselves will be associated with escalating levels of violence, in (anti-)globalisation protests as elsewhere.

## And now? Becoming uncivil society

> It starts when you care to act, when you do it again after they say no, when you say 'We' and know who you mean, and each day you mean one more.
>
> (WOMBLES 2003c: 39, emphasis in original)

Following Foucault, Agamben and Hardt and Negri, the sovereignty of the global manifests and is sustained as biopower. This 'not only regulates human interactions but also seeks directly to rule over human *nature*' (Hardt and Negri 2000: xv, emphasis added). Given this omnipresence – the pervasive structural violence that permeates the global in which 'we' all are located, together with the accompanying tyrannies of universalising liberal civil society discourses – is it possible for individuals to come to agentic struggle that might subvert, transgress and *unravel* these structures?

Perhaps this problematic can be framed differently as engendering a multiplicitous *opportunity* for empowerment, since it also implies that the frontlines of struggle, indeed, are everywhere – investing all thought, action

and sense of self with political meaning and potential (Sullivan 2003). As Hardt and Negri (2000: 21) suggest, the omnipresence of Empire's biopower is precisely the medium in which 'a completely different ethical and ontological axis' becomes articulated, becoming a social revolution of subjectivities.

But where and how might this 'ontological basis of antagonism' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 21) emerge? Is it possible to experience, articulate and share understandings of structures and practices that are 'dehumanising' in their violence without being interpreted as promoting a constructed, hegemonic humanist and universalising rationalism that discounts difference? And can this alternative come into being without constructing a corresponding liberal tyranny of the safe and 'nice'?

What I have attempted to articulate in this chapter is that it is unsurprising that violence is emerging in (anti-)globalisation politics as a conscious transformation of the felt experience of rage in relation to the glue of structural violence that makes possible the biopower of *Empire*. I have suggested further that the related experiences of depression and rage are affective articulations with alienating and violating contexts that in (anti-)globalisation politics become animated by the desire for new praxes of being human. In this analysis, the stripped down subjectivities of a contemporary upwelling of affective depression comprise political locales of latent desire: echoes of Agamben's philosophy of 'bare life' (1994; 1998) as comprising spaces emptied of citizenship from where 'new' philosophies and praxes of what it means to become human might emerge. I have also indicated that militant practices can be both empowering and radical, and constraining and conservative, and that it is only with the explicit locating of such practices within the discourses, situations and subjectivities in which they emerge that intent and effect can be elaborated and interpreted.

Of course, struggle also implies and requires tactics. Just as for Negri (2002) the 'multitude' is 'a whole of singularities' that cannot be collapsed into a homogenous mass of people, the material discussed in this chapter also suggests that the political tactics of the multitude do not comprise competing alternatives to each other: instead they are complementarities that in themselves affirm the pluralism sought by the rhetoric of the movements. The difference and singularities embodied by tactics are themselves politically heretical given the fundamentalism associated with global power and universalist agendas (Baudrillard 2003: 4). In other words, no one has a monopoly on tactics. But actions will be stronger in total if their experience is communicated and debated amongst individuals and collectives, such that the corresponding openings – and reclaimings – of social, physical and subjective spaces are able more fruitfully to jostle, overlap and recreate each other.

As made clear in the accounts with which this chapter opens, I locate myself as someone who desires and participates in struggle for change. For myself, I am inspired by a brilliant image by graffiti artist Banksy, of a

masked protester with arm raised to throw violently – not a molotov, but a bunch of flowers (see Figure 10.2). This captures both the engaged anger and the seriously subversive and celebratory creativity comprising the hallmarks of a global politics of defiance that has its feet planted firmly in the twenty-first century. My desire is for a processual, *interstitial*, Dionysian radical politics that exploits, explodes and subverts the instability of correspondences between signifier and signified, inside and outside, the messiness of experience and the reified categories of modernity. And in doing so attempts a continual transcendence – a going beyond – that acknowledges the destruction inherent in creativity, but that is not a call for nihilism as an end in itself.

In this reading, militancy in (anti-)globalisation politics is a proactive politics of the lived rather than the managed human. The supraterritorial soil in which it is fertilised is the painful legacy 'we' have been bequeathed: of the Holocaust and Hiroshima; of Chernobyl, Bhopal and the *Exxon Valdez*; of Thalidomide, BSE and the technocratic penetration of genes and atoms; of advanced democracies promoting the trade of arms and the precursors of WMDs to repressive regimes worldwide; of endless privatisation and commodification – from nature, to states of mind, to knowledge; of the



*Figure 10.2* Attacking with flowers instead of molotovs
Source: Sian Sullivan, personal archive

construction of a 25 feet (8 metres) high concrete wall to separate communities even as the memory of the Berlin Wall is still warm. Is it surprising that 'we' distrust and even despise modernity's fabricated ideologies of self-interested economic rational man, of 'there-is-no-alternative' political realism and of faith in civilisation and technocratic solutions? Or that we fill our subjective spaces with the identities and practices of activist, nomad, anarchist, pagan, outlaw, raver, 'wild woman', sambista, poet, WOMBLE, clown, shaman, hactivist, heretic – modernity's 'freaks' – everywhere? I feel not. But then, of course, I could just be depressed …

## Notes

1 A longer version of this piece is available at Sullivan (2004a), which builds on and substantially reworks an earlier piece (Sullivan 2004b).

2 Hand-held bells hit with a wooden drumstick.

3 The term 'anti-globalisation' is problematic for several reasons. For example, 'the movement' draws on and is made possible by the same processes and technologies that have made contemporary globalisation phenomena possible (e.g. Sullivan forthcoming). This, together with the movement's support for 'the effacement of borders and the free movement of people, possessions and ideas', suggests that we could talk more accurately of the 'globalisation movement' (Graeber 2002: 63), hence my bracketing of 'anti'. Mueller (2002; 2004a) describes 'the movement' more accurately as the 'globalisation-critical movement', while Chesters (2003) refers to the 'alternative globalization movement'. Further, an emphasising of 'the movement' as merely reactionary, or 'anti' (e.g. Williamson 2003), masks and diminishes what protagonists actually may be campaigning and motivating for, such that much corporate media and other analysis becomes dislocated from the discourses and practices emerging within, and constructing, 'the movements'. I pluralise movements to reflect the realities of diversity and difference among the collectives that are contesting the status quo worldwide, and the equally diverse and situated imaginings and practices for socio-political change that they embody (as captured in the title of Kingsnorth's (2003) recent book *One No, Many Yeses*). This also is intended as a conscious rhetorical and conceptual shift away from modernity's constant drive towards the singular, towards the root or deep structure of things (Deleuze and Guattari 1988 [1980]: 3–25).

4 I am not forgetting that those in the 'Global South' who are contesting the insidious effects of neoliberalism on their lives and livelihoods have had to endure much higher levels of violence for much longer, and it is not unusual for protests to culminate in the death of protesters at the hands of police (e.g. Bretton Woods Update 2003). It is in part due to outrage and empathy regarding these incidents and trends that people in the post-industrial North are contesting and critiquing current globalisation processes, particularly the securitisation of the inequities and injustices required by global state–corporate capitalism.

5 Although generally perceived as 'anarchists', in continental Europe, where a strong centrally organised left tradition remains a political *tour de force*, a black bloc on a protest might incorporate militant members of worker-oriented parties as well as anti-imperialist nationalists (e.g. Anon. 2004). Thus,

> [a] Black Bloc is a collection of anarchists and anarchist affinity groups that organize together for a particular protest action. The flavor of the Black

Bloc changes from action to action, but the main goals are to provide solidarity in the face of a repressive police state and to convey an anarchist critique of whatever is being protested that day. ... Black is worn as the colour that symbolises anarchism [i.e. governance without leaders], to indicate solidarity and to provide anonymity.

(Infoshop 2003)

6  White Overalls Movement for Building Libertarian Effective Struggles (for more information, see WOMBLES 2004).

7  Witness, for example, the increasing incidence of requests by states that citizens report 'suspicious behaviour' observed in fellow citizens: from Irish Health Minister Michael Martin proposing to set up a telephone hotline so that people can inform on those breaking the country's new smoking law (West 2004); to plane-spotters at Fairford military base (from where B52 bombers took off to bomb Iraq in 2003) being provided with relevant phone numbers for the reporting of 'anything of a security nature' during the war on Iraq (T. Lee 2003).

8  This suggests that there indeed is *qualitative pattern* to experiences and ways of accommodating (and perpetrating) patterns of trauma and violence. This is not the same as saying that every person experiences events and processes in exactly/absolutely/quantitatively the same way. Further, perpetrators as well as victims are created by brutalising contexts and discourses. A well-known social psychology prison experiment illustrates, for example, that a social situation sanctioning a discourse of dehumanisation (in this case of prisoners) is all that is required to shift the behaviour of 'ordinary people' into that of vindictive perpetrators of physical and psychological violence, even where they have no apparent previous history of such behaviours (Zimbardo 2004: 21–50).

9  Denial also might be seen in the detachment of spiritually oriented positions that fetishise retreat and withdrawal into interior reflective and perhaps personally transformative spaces as the primary means to engage with exterior transformation. As argued in Willful Disobedience (n.d.; also Mindell 1995), these make the problematic and incoherent assumption that by addressing first-order alienations (between subject and object, nature and culture), the violations effected by second-order alienations (e.g. private property, the division of labour, and alienated power) will be simply transcended or slip away. My personal stance is that becoming conversant with ordinary spiritual/mystical experiences of 'ekstasy' is a seriously subversive political practice that extends ontological consciousness, claims mind–body–spirit spaces not sanctioned by modernity's fetishising of rational consciousness, and which can become tools in extending experiences of the possible in searching for and constituting 'the' post-capitalist and post-representational human (Sullivan 2001; 2004d). But, if asserting agency requires articulation between interior and exterior spaces, then such flight from the organised particulate body will itself not be enough to effect socio-political change. Assuming a 'spiritual rank' (Mindell 1995: 62–3) or high ground that delegitimises the potential for transformative action through engagement with contexts, thereby becomes as helpful as its mirror attitude – that of denying the role/s of individual and collective spirituality in aiding an envisioning and engendering of societal alternatives open to multiplicitous human experience.

10  While not a new 'disease', depression or 'melancholy' as a category of 'illness' *has* increased dramatically in post-industrial society. In the early 1990s the results of a long-term, international and multigenerational study indicated that people born after 1955 were *'three times* as likely as their grandparents' generation to suffer from depression'. Similar findings emerged for countries as disparate as Italy, Germany, Taiwan, Lebanon, Canada, France, Puerto Rico and New Zealand, suggesting that this trend is global in reach (figures reported in Wurtzel

1999 [1994]: 298–9, emphasis in original). Also indicative of this trend are the rocketing numbers of prescriptions made for anti-depressant drugs in recent years, causing some commentators to describe this as a 'legal drug culture' (New York Times 1992, quoted in Wurtzel 1999 [1994]; 298; also Boseley 2003; Laurence 2003). Figures for suicides articulated as responses to the marginalising effects of neoliberal policy also are rocketing worldwide (e.g. Sharma 2003: 2). This phenomenon was brought into sharp relief by the public suicide of Lee Kyung Hae, leader of the Korean Federation of Advanced Farmers Association, at the Fifth Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization in September 2003 (Carlson 2003).

11 Given the perennial conflict between socialist hierarchical and anarchist positions towards socio-political change – or between the 'verticals' and 'horizontals' as these orientations are coming to be known in the current UK context – it is pertinent to note that this accusation of infantilism was precisely what Lenin (1993 [1920]) used to discredit an emerging anarcho-syndicalism in the early part of the last century. He, of course, favoured Bolshevik discipline, organised revolutionary force and administrative centralisation. Nietzsche too dismissed the militant practice associated with nineteenth-century anarchism as a reactive politics of *ressentiment* – as 'the spiteful politics of the weak and pitiful, the morality of the slave' and the 'vengeful *will to power* of the powerless over the powerful' (Newman 2000: 1–2, emphasis in original).

12 It certainly is not unknown for such contextual relocations of violence from the everyday to the political to occur. As a Salvadoran guerrilla fighter expressed to Bourgois (1982: 24–5), for example,

> [w]e used to be *machista*. We used to put away a lotta drink and cut each other up. But then the Organization [the FMLN – Farabundo Martí Liberation Front] showed us the way, and we've channeled that violence for the benefit of the people.

13 This is the difference between accepting that the legal system provides an appropriate space for the justification of one's actions, versus carrying out actions while masked and with every intention of avoiding arrest and trial by a justice system perceived to be supporting the structures being contested.

14 Italian Marxist Antonio Negri in the 1980s, for example, writes that

> [p]roletarian violence, in so far as it is a positive allusion to communism, is an essential element of the dynamic of communism. To suppress the violence of this process can only deliver it – tied hand and foot – to capital. Violence is a first, immediate, and vigorous affirmation of the necessity of communism. It does not provide the solution, but is fundamental.
>
> (1984: 173 in Callinicos 2001: 4)

15 This is *not* the same as saying that discourses and practices of bio-political violence are somehow an exclusively male domain. Indeed, numerous references regarding different times and spaces indicate that this is not the case (e.g. Klausmann *et al.* 1997; Ruins 2003; LeBrun n.d.).

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# Critical Theories, International Relations and 'the Anti-Globalisation Movement'

The Politics of Global Resistance

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