

CONCLUSION: NEGRI AND MULTITUDE

Yo no voy a morirme. Salgo ahora,
En este día lleno de volcanes
Hacia la multitud, hacia la vida.
Aquí dejo arregladas estas cosas
[. . .]

Por fin, soy libre adentro de los seres.

Entre los seres, como el aire vivo,
y de la soledad acorralada
salgo a la multitud de los combates,
libre porque en mi mano va tu mano,
conquistando alegrías indomables.
(Neruda, Canto general 478)

The question of the multitude is a thorn in the
side of Western political thought. [. . .]
However, this anguish and malaise are also ours.
Our answer to the questions posed by constituent
power is neither peaceful nor optimistic.
(Negri, Insurgencias 322)

constituent power

Hegemony theory and civil society discourse alike are
presented as though they offered a liberatory alternative
to the dominant social order. Yet the concept of counter-
hegemony ends up reinforcing all the assumptions upon which
hegemony rests, not least the centrality of the state.
Likewise, for all its talk of "society against the state,"
the discourse of civil society also merely serves to
entrench state power, by excluding alternative logics that

might otherwise unsettle the state's claims to legitimacy and universality. Both these left projects are tied to a conception of liberation that is at best ameliorative, most often normalizing, and in the end too reliant on the negative freedom of "resistance." But for a negative conception of freedom, it neoliberalism that is hard to beat in its professed determination to root out all state interference from everyday life. When, however, the liberating powers of the current global order themselves seek to institute a free society, the examples of post-war Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate their conceptual bankruptcy. Denuded of even the fig-leaf of consent, the state is revealed solitary and suffering, a military operation driven by vested economic interests but besieged on all sides by a culture it can barely understand. The UK's Hutton Enquiry, meanwhile, reveals that things are not so very different in the West: politics is mostly management (and management mostly media management), run cynically by technocrats who have long lost any cause to champion. Neoliberalism's ideological deficit is seldom more exposed.

On the other hand, an appeal specifically to the logics excluded by the managerial state, and so to

deterritorialized affect as a form of immanence outside or beyond hegemony, fails to account sufficiently either for the terror of a suicidal state or for the ways in which habit continually (re)encodes structures of domination, even immanently. Stressing habit alone, meanwhile, though an improvement on the theory of hegemony in so far as habit better explains the ways in which social order is secured and maintained, risks hypostasizing order and so lapsing into functionalism. Social systems may be peculiarly stable--even manifestly inequitable ones, and none more so than the system associated with contemporary capitalism. Yet they are also frequently beset by crisis--again, none more so than the system that predominates today.

Still, though it is true that affect most often figures as habit, and so as part of a process that binds the constituent elements of a social order, there is always a surplus of deterritorialized affect: something always escapes. Affect may become unbound, dislodging and subverting the idea of transcendence taken to be that order's unifying principle. In so far, therefore, as it becomes evident that the state (and its hegemonic operations) is not in fact society's effective cause, and that our engrained habits are contingent rather than

necessary, we may imagine other forms of community, other organizations of affect, that refuse the idea of transcendence altogether.

Any project of liberation has to go beyond the rejection or refusal of hegemony, in order to construct and affirm new habits, new configurations of affect that might provide the basis for a new world free from transcendence and the hierarchies it engenders. This is the constituent project of posthegemony. At the same time, we should recognize that such projects seem continually to end in failure. What begins as immanence and constituent power, as cultural innovation and creativity, seems always to end up as transcendence and constituted power, as the state form and its repressive apparatuses. An analysis of the state's doubled constitution--the fact that it can be seen both as pure immanence, a habitual disposition, and as a transcendent quasi-cause obeying a hegemonic and rationalizing logic--may reveal the contingency of its power. In so far as the state is contingent, it may also be un-necessary; understanding its contingency enables us to consider better the possibility of a constituent power that does not return as repressive constituted power. This final chapter, therefore, combines these tasks: offering an

account of the state's double constitution; and outlining the organizational principles proper to the social subject that Antonio Negri (following early modern political philosophy) terms the multitude.

It is this project, the analysis and affirmation of constituent power, that is at the core of Negri's contribution to social and political theory. For Negri, while the state incarnates and wields constituted power, this power is always parasitical on the multitude and its constituent power. Negri thus recasts the question of posthegemony in terms of a differentiation between two forms of power: one, the power proper to the state and its mediations; the other, the originary, unmediated power of the multitude. Cultural studies and civil society theory's field of visibility extends only to the form of power that is but an appropriation, a (re)articulation. It is time to examine the mechanisms of that articulation, and so the ways in which constituent power is converted into constituted power, multitude into state. Uncovering the relation between multitude and state enables a redescription of the state's double inscription in institutions and on bodies.

In undertaking this analysis, I also sketch out some of the key characteristics of the multitude as a form of organization, as follows: expansiveness, contact, commonality, activity, and emergence. The multitude's expansiveness contrasts with the boundedness characteristic of the people. Its predilection for contact usurps theories of social contract. The extent to which the multitude achieves polyvalent commonality can distinguish a "good" multitude from a "bad," blocked, and so ultimately monstrous formation. The multitude's activity is the key to its status as subject of history. Finally, for Negri, the multitude's emergent quality indicates that the preconditions are present for the multitude's final liberation from all state strictures. As Negri and Michael Hardt put it, this is "to abandon a conception of constituent power as necessarily negating itself in posing the constitution, [to] recognize a constituent power that no longer produces constitutions separate from itself, but rather is itself constitution" (Labor of Dionysus 309). Here analysis shades into project.

The history of the particular "New World" that we now call the Americas could be redescribed in terms of a sequence of failed projects of liberation, and so a sequence of conversions of

constituent into constituted power. In this chapter I return to the sequence of case studies that have served to show the ways in which current theories of the relation between culture and the state break down. These case studies were largely chosen as the ideal terrain of the theories I am contesting: thus hegemony theory would seem perfectly adapted to the study of populism, and civil society theory more than adequate to understand contemporary globalization. The choice of a national liberation movement such as the FMLN on the one hand, and Chilean social movements on the other, was dictated by a similar reasoning: these contexts once provided the privileged objects of analysis for cultural studies and the social sciences respectively. However, I have shown how these theoretical paradigms fail in their self-appointed tasks, and have demonstrated what is gained by a focus on affect and habit. This final chapter builds on and synthesizes the previous two to outline a theory of posthegemony that draws on Deleuze, Bourdieu, and Negri. I take the opportunity to redescribe aspects of these same case studies in a way that takes account of the double constitution of the state, in other words the double inscription of power in posthegemony, and the points at which that double constitution threatens to dissolve. In the postface that follows, I add a final reflection on the situation of Venezuela because events there demonstrate both the failure of the contemporary neoliberal state form and the urgent need for new theoretical tools to take us beyond blockages that are practical as much as they are conceptual.

beyond exteriority

Multitude is the third and final element in the theory of posthegemony. Even with a first, provisional definition of the multitude as the subject whose constituent power constructs but also goes beyond social order, we begin to see how the concept can resolve a whole series of contradictions and antinomies that otherwise bedevil the study of culture and state. For instance, we have repeatedly seen a problematic relation between interiority and exteriority in the dominant paradigms of social and cultural theory: whereas cultural studies is inclusive in that it aims to encompass the entire cultural domain, it does so at the expense of an understanding of the state's specificity, which thereby disappears from sight; and whereas civil society theory aims to exclude culture from its purview, in the name of state rationality, it finds itself faced with the nightmare possibility of a mirror state. In each case, a sudden transposition redraws the boundary between inside and outside: for cultural studies, populism's radical inclusiveness is finally revealed to be an exclusionary sleight of hand; for civil society theory, the attempt to banish fundamentalism as radically other inadvertently produces the specter of an alternative center

to power. From either perspective, the existence of an outside is not only irreducible, but also unsettling.

Poststructuralist and postcolonial theory has focused on the irreducibility of exteriority, emphasizing the paradox that what appears supplementary is also thereby constitutive at the same time that it unsettles hierarchies established by any center. Against Laclau and Mouffe's notion that the outside can continually be incorporated within hegemonic projects, and thus that hegemony's limits can always be surpassed, in subaltern studies it is the limit itself that is of interest. In Gayatri Spivak's terms, the subaltern is "the absolute limit of the place where history is narrativized into logic" ("Subaltern Studies" 16). As such, the subaltern outside is a transhistorical blockage to history's (and logic's) universalist pretensions.

Deleuze and Guattari turn the question of inside and outside (literally) inside out. On the one hand, they argue that what they term the "war machine" is "exterior to the State apparatus" (A Thousand Plateaus 351); the war machine is "of another species, another nature, another origin than the State apparatus" (352). On the other hand, if the war machine is exterior to the state, then

conversely the state always comes from outside--"fully armed, a master stroke executed all at once [. . .] the basic formation, on the horizon throughout history" (Anti-Oedipus 217). Following Pierre Clastres's work on indigenous groups in Paraguay and Venezuela, Deleuze and Guattari further suggest that warfare in so-called primitive societies is "the surest mechanism directed against the formation of the State." Primitive war "wards off and prevents the State" (A Thousand Plateaus 357). When the state arrives, then, it functions parasitically, illegitimately: "The State is sovereignty. But sovereignty only reigns over what it is capable of internalizing, of appropriating locally" (360).

The advantage to Deleuze and Guattari's perspective lies in the way in which it recasts the relation between the state and its other(s). No longer is the other excessive or supplementary: the other is now primary; the state, belated in its exteriority. Hence the prospect of autonomy--the autonomy of affect--and of an existence beyond the state and its claims to hegemony. The subaltern can refuse, and so negate, hegemony. From the territorialization of the state, to a line of flight, deterritorialization, freedom. Alberto Moreiras expresses

this possibility in his discussion of Martín Luis Guzmán's depiction of the zapatistas:

If subaltern negation is a simple refusal to submit to hegemonic interpellation, an exodus from hegemony, is that not a new assumption of political freedom that remains barred to any and all thinking of hegemony, to any and all thinkings of location? What do the zapatistas retreat from if not sovereignty? (The Exhaustion of Difference 126)

Subaltern negation, then, might be the first step towards a political freedom that goes beyond not only hegemony, but also sovereignty tout court. This is posthegemony in its first instance: a thinking and a practice beyond hegemony, towards a form of existence in which subjectivity is dissolved within the general flow of affect, and in which disciplinary subjectivity is cast off.

Yet we have seen that submission to sovereignty is not merely a matter of ideological interpellation; it is also, and perhaps more importantly, a deeply engrained habit. The state may be radically other, but it does not feel other. Our relation to the state is inscribed on the body, in what Bourdieu terms habitus, before it is ever articulated or symbolized; as it works its way under our skin, social order is incorporated, interiorized. Often, and in fact when it is most secure, power lodges itself within culture without ever coming to consciousness or even

becoming available to consciousness. Indeed, to an unprecedented extent sovereignty today is able to do without interpellation, to dispense with the politics of articulation. Posthegemony, in this second instance, describes a mutation of the state whereby sovereignty becomes diffuse and dislocated but not for that any the more fragile; rather, it is more stubbornly present than ever. We know (in Zizek's formulation), of course we know; but still we do it. Or, perhaps better, the power of the state resides in what Michael Taussig terms the "public secret," that is, the "reconfiguration of repression in which depth becomes surface only so as to remain depth [. . .] the public secret, which [. . .] can be defined as that which is generally known, but cannot be articulated" (Defacement 5; emphasis in original).

We have, therefore, two versions of posthegemony, two perspectives on embodied and affective culture beneath or beyond ideology, and they seem to be diametrically opposed. One, Deleuze's, envisages a world of affect as liberation; the other, Bourdieu's, sees a world of habit as (perhaps) perpetual enslavement. Yet this opposition is not quite total. Both approaches exhibit moments of profound ambivalence, in which liberation mutates into oppression

and vice versa. These reversals, suddenly and unexpectedly encountered--the suicidal state; the critical withholding of investment from social order--offer the possibility of a reconciliation between otherwise diverse theoretical approaches. We have seen the seeds of such a reconciliation in Diamela Eltit's image of a constituent line of flight. Might this suggest a third instance of posthegemony: as a political movement that constitutes itself beyond the wreckage of any hegemonic project?

It is the concept of the multitude that unifies and completes this vision. The multitude traverses and ultimately undoes any demarcation between inside and outside. As the subject of social order that is never fully contained by it, the multitude is simultaneously at the heart of society and also one step beyond it. The multitude both pre-exists modern society--as "the conjunction of persons who inhabited a pre-social world that had to be transformed into a political society" (Negri, El exilio 38)--and returns in that society's death throes. "Today," Negri argues, "the problem is once again that of the multitude" (38). Within modern society, the multitude's existence is always subterranean: the conditions of a subject's existence within a social order

defined by transcendence is that subject's representability, its susceptibility to representation; the multitude, however, resists representation because it refuses transcendence. Any representation of the multitude is also its misrepresentation, its misrecognition, and its conversion into some other subject.

But in so far as representation is never exhaustive, so the multitude's presence is evidenced in the apparent excess (or outside) that resists narrativization. We might now re-envisage the subaltern, not as a subject in itself, but as an indication of the continuing presence of the multitude subtending and disturbing social representation. Whereas the concept of subalternity still depends upon (even as it deconstructs) a distinction between inside and outside, the concept of the multitude does away with that distinction altogether. The subaltern is therefore at best an index of the multitude, a privileged symptom or index of the multitude's presence, albeit not the only one: all moments of crisis and excess can also be re-read in terms of the multitude's constituent power.

the fiction of contract

In that constituent power rejects any distinction between inside and outside, from the point of view of the multitude, all is open and still to be determined; its constituent power is "expansive" and "unlimited" (Negri, Insurgencies 3). The multitude's tendency is always deterritorializing, beyond bounds. Yet looking around us we see that, reconfigured, (re)composed, the state appears to lie at the end of every road. This is the classic paradox of political theory, most famously expressed in the opening lines of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's The Social Contract: "Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains. [. . .] How has this change come about? I do not know" (45). The constituent power of free agency always seems to be overtaken by the constituted power of the state. Initial expansiveness is replaced by closure, interiority, boundedness. Even the most revolutionary beginnings appear to go wrong, get bogged down, or transmute into the terror of totalitarianism. What happens to the moment of liberation that is so soon closed down?

Rousseau puts forward the fiction of an originary contract as an "assumption" (54) to sidestep the problem of a lost origin. This contract is then embedded within

society, never up for re-negotiation ("the slightest modification [of its clauses] would make them empty and ineffectual" [55]), and indeed never up for discussion because it is "the same everywhere, and everywhere tacitly recognized and accepted" (55; my emphasis). In the few short pages of The Social Contract's first section, freedom thus quickly mutates from a birthright to something always already relinquished in "the complete transfer [l'aliénation totale] of each associate, with all his rights, to the whole community" (55). The contract is pivotal: it explains, but thereby also justifies, the transmutation from freedom to total alienation, from constituent to constituted power. In and through the contract, individuals are assumed to have transferred their rights to a higher order. This is the contractarian tradition, which stretches back from Rousseau to Hobbes in the early modern period, and forward to John Rawls (A Theory of Justice) in the transition to postmodernity. Contract theory presents consent as the basis of social order.

The originary contract is envisaged as absolute and with no remainder. For Rousseau, "the transfer [of rights] being carried out unreservedly, the union between the

associates is as perfect as can be, and none of them has any further requirements to add" (55). However, in postulating a sphere of nature that predates the institution of the contract, the contract also de facto establishes a realm that lies beyond or outside social order. Society is a bounded entity, but there is however no relation between the social and what lies beyond--there are no "further requirements to add." The social contract marks a phase transition: the contract defines a civil society (and civil rights) in opposition to an originary state of nature (and natural rights). A new subject is born: the "human race [. . .] change[s] its mode of existence" to overcome "the obstacles to men's self-preservation in the state of nature" (54). As Hobbes famously put it, the state of nature is envisaged as a "warre [. . .] of every man against every man" (Leviathan 185) in which the "life of man [is] solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short" (186). The contract purports to introduce a definitive separation between the social and the natural, between civilized community and the terror (or "continually feare, and danger of violent death" [186]) that lies beyond. Only in the context of the relative safety

provided by the contract can industry, science, and the arts prosper.

But the transition between the social and the natural is not simply historical, and the border between the two states is not simply encompassed in a mythic narrative of origin. The border is also spatial. At the global periphery, the failure of civilization can be explained by the fact that there are peoples still living in a state of nature: "For the savage people of America [. . .] have no government at all; and live today in that brutish manner, as I said before" (Hobbes, Leviathan 187; emphasis in original). The contract therefore not only provides a mythic narrative of foundation for a particular form of sociality; it also establishes a boundary between a civilized interiority and a subaltern exterior in the present. Even Rousseau, theorist of the "noble savage," does not dispute the notion that only with the establishment of a "civil state" are man's "faculties exercised and improved, his ideas amplified, his feelings ennobled" (59). Within the terms of the social contract, the citizen can be "an intelligent being and a man"; outside, he is a non-citizen, nothing but "a limited and stupid animal" (59). That "limited and stupid animal,"

with whom civilized society is in strict non-relation, is the subaltern.

Further, within the social order that it defines, the theory of the contract introduces a separation as well as a relation between individual and state, with the state rising transcendent over the people. For Hobbes, the best comparison is religious: the contract enables "the Generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speake more reverently) of that Mortall God, to which we owe under the Immortall God, our peace and defence" (Leviathan 227; emphasis in original). A civil society is also a civil religion. But most importantly, it is this distinction between citizen and state that enables representation: a single institution stands in for, and as such therefore replaces, the multitude that enters into the contract. This is, for Hobbes, "the Essence of the Common-wealth," that there be

One Person, of whose Acts a great Multitude, by mutuall Covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the Author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their Peace and Common Defence. (228; emphasis in original)

Reciprocally, then, if the relation between citizen and state is one of difference (though at least it is a relation, as opposed to the non-relation that defines the

opposition between civil and subaltern), the relation between citizens is one of equality and homogeneity. Differences in (natural) power between individuals are no longer relevant, because all power has been transferred to the sovereign. On the basis of that transfer, citizens have no need to fear each other, and are able to work together constructively and industriously.

The contract constructs the individual, but also a particular organization of individuals: the contract is envisaged as marking the emergence of the people, a body of individuals united and homogenized by their common relation to the state, a body that thus can be regarded as a single subject. The people's consistency arises from the multitude once it is regarded as a single juridical individual. In De Cive, Hobbes is quite particular about the distinction between multitude and people, and the intimate connection between the people and the concept of representation:

If the [. . .] multitude do contract one with another, that the will of one man, or the agreeing wills of the major part of them, shall be received for the will of all; then it becomes one person. For it is endued with a will, and therefore can do voluntary actions, such as are commanding, making laws, acquiring and transferring of right, and so forth; and it is oftener called the people, than the multitude. (Man and Citizen 174)

In so far, therefore, as the multitude contract, and can be represented, the multitude becomes the people. The multitude stands outside civil society in that it pre-exists the contract that constitutes juridical persons. On the other hand, the multitude stands on the threshold of civility in that the people arise from the multitude--or rather, in that the couple people/state replaces an immanent multitude.

In short, the theory of the contract has much work to do: it explains and justifies the rise of the state; it establishes an exterior limit between the civil and the subaltern; it establishes a relative limit, bridged by the operation of representation, that differentiates people from state; and it simultaneously invokes and displaces the multitude as the semi-coherent subject that stands on the threshold of civility. All this is legitimated and secured in advance by the assumption of prior consent to sovereignty. Hence for Negri, the contractarian tradition, is "the inevitable deferral to transcendence, to constituted power, and its apology" (Insurgencies 29).

Yet the multitude is never fully banished from the social; the contract is never fully effective. Indeed the multitude continually threatens the social pact from

within. However much contract theorists wish to banish the multitude to the subaltern exterior, Spinoza suggests that natural rights are never entirely abandoned: "every man retains some part of his right, in dependence on his own decision, and no one else's" (A Theologico-Political Treatise 215). These rights may always therefore be advocated and promoted, disrupting and unsettling any power that claims sovereignty over the multitude: "for men have never so far ceded their power as to cease to be an object of fear to the rulers who received such power and right" (214). In his Political Treatise Spinoza explicitly formulates the retention of rights in terms of the multitude. Here, aristocracy (for Spinoza, any system in which the few purport to rule over the many) is

in practice [. . .] not absolute [because] the multitude is a cause of fear to the rulers, and therefore succeeds in retaining for itself some liberty, which it asserts and holds as its own, if not by an express law, yet on a tacit understanding. (A Theologico-Political Treatise and A Political Treatise 347)

Indeed, Spinoza goes further: it should be tacitly, if not perhaps expressly, acknowledged that "if there be any absolute dominion, it is, in fact, that which is held by an entire multitude" (347). Any other claim to sovereignty

will always be partial, dependent ultimately upon the multitude.

The social contract, therefore, cannot simply be assumed as originary and settled; it has continually to be made and remade in the everyday life of the state. The contract is not itself foundational. The contract (or, better, the assumption of the contract) is, rather, the effect of the state. The state assumes the contract and so simultaneously posits the people as, retrospectively, the cornerstone of social organization. In Hardt and Negri's words, "the modern conception of the people is in fact a product of the nation-state" (Empire 102; emphasis in original). And the people are merely a misrecognized reconstruction of the multitude. Paolo Virno, noting the way in which the people are defined by their distinction from the much more unruly subject that is the multitude, therefore describes the multitude as the "defining concept" of modernity, in that it grounds the constitution of popular citizenship ("Virtuosity and Revolution" 201). The contract purports to convert multitude into people, and so to establish a bounded social order.

For political philosophy, the multitude incarnates all threats to social order and social contract:

The multitude [. . .] shuns political unity, is recalcitrant to obedience, never achieves the status of juridical personage, and is thus unable to make promises, to make pacts, or to acquire and transfer rights. It is anti-State, but, precisely for this reason, it is also antipopular: the citizens, when they rebel against the State, are "the Multitude against the People." (Virno, "Virtuosity and Revolution" 200-201; emphasis in original)

No promises, no pacts (and no consent): this is an uncertain world of treachery and deceit.

The multitude is always therefore essentially untrustworthy, an unknown and unknowable force, exercising what Spinoza sees as its unshakeable natural right "to act deceitfully, and to break [. . .] compacts" (A Theologico-Political Treatise 204). Throughout modernity, the state's aim and function has been to convert the multitude into the people--to remind them of their promises and to establish consent to consent. We see the apogee of this stratagem in populism, one of the state's most effective discourses. But latent distrust always surrounds the concept of the popular, revealing that behind the people still lurks the multitude. The risk of representation is that the multitude might overwhelm the state. For the first, and primary, characteristic of the multitude is its expansiveness.

The invocation and suppression of the multitude (and the risks involved) can be seen clearly for classical populism. In October 1950, at Peronism's height, an anonymous article in Mundo Argentino entitled "The Multitude is the People" rehearses this very gesture:

Until a short while ago [. . .] we Argentines did not know what the multitude was. We would talk about the people, and others would talk about the people, without anyone having seen its face [. . .]. But in October 1945 the multitude in the street took us by surprise--a multitude that was the people--and we saw its face. And a few months later, in February 1946, we saw it act in the elections. ("La multitud es el pueblo" 27)

The popular, then, is constituted in a retroactive act of naming that puts the multitude in a relation with the state. The Peronist multitude can be equated with the people once put into a relation with Perón and re-framed within a hegemonic process, here the 1946 elections. The multitude comes as if from nowhere, but its arrival is articulated as though it were long expected, predestined. Except it is the people who have been expected, and the multitude is invoked only to provide evidence for popular will and agency--as the body to which the people will put a face. The multitude threatens personal identity--the same writer states "I too forgot myself, confused among the multitude"--until identity can be recast in terms of the nation-state, forming a nexus of individualism, patriotism, and the popular, bound by the low-intensity affect provided by contentment: "at nightfall I escaped back home, very content with myself, with my fatherland, and with its people" (27).

Populism is a meditation upon the multitude's power: it identifies, appropriates, and then disavows the multitude in the name of the people, anxiously aware that it may always return. Peronism's anxiety centers around the October 17th demonstration mentioned above, as though in recognition that the regime's founding moment did not,

itself, accord with Peronism's own imaginary. Peronism's primal scene was gradually, retroactively, brought into line with Peronist self-representation by being re-imagined and recast in the yearly anniversaries recreating the 1945 events (for which see Plotkin's Mañana es San Perón). Annual celebrations produced a succession of copies ever closer to the original as it was--as it had to be--imagined by Peronism. But the effort of recreation threatens to reveal the anxious realization that the initial demonstration--and thus Peronism itself--belonged less to the people than to the multitude. Peronism's reading and portrayal of October 17th, and its subsequent anniversaries, cast the multitude as unrepresentable, overwhelming, and fanatical, but by channeling these attributes through the figures of Juan and Evita attempted to represent, subsume, and pacify these energies as, now, belonging to a people celebrating what came to be called a "day of loyalty."

Hence Mundo Argentino's account of the 1948 celebration invokes a "huge multitude" that the magazine's photographic spread can only fail to represent, as its captions make clear: "the photograph shows only a partial aspect of the multitude" taking part in "scenes of indescribable enthusiasm" (27th October 1948). Any attempt to convey the experience of the event ends up as a trope of sublime awe before a power that could overwhelm the political and geographical landscape of the state: the multitude is everywhere, picnicking on the grass and stopping traffic, its waves of energy and affect lapping at the walls of the presidential palace. To prevent the multitude from swamping the state's own position of enunciation, it has to be put into a determinable (representable, reproducible) relation with the state. Populism's "balcony effect" insinuates a limit between multitude and

state, substituting a social contract for the social contact that the multitude desires and threatens, and so reconstituting the multitude as the people.

The balcony effect consists in applying the classic cinematic device of pairing shot and reverse shot to public spectacle: the multitude and the Peróns are not to be represented together; rather, a (partial, inadequate) representation of the multitude is followed by a representation of the balcony from which Juan and Evita address them. The cut from multitude to balcony (and vice versa) presents each as in meaningful (logical rather than accidental) relation with the other. These are the classic images of populism: the medium shot view (from in front and slightly below) of Evita on the balcony, her arms raised in salute, coupled with the long shot from above of the people crowded into the plaza. Mundo Argentino and other contemporary print publications mimic the cinematic effect in photographic spreads juxtaposing these two shots, making almost redundant the accompanying commentary: the multitude are gathered "to listen attentively to what the president of the republic and his lady wife have to say"; Evita's speech is reported as provoking "repeated demonstrations of warm enthusiasm." Enthusiasm is given meaning (is now describable and qualified, and so domesticated) by Evita's speech. What exactly she said goes unreported; it is enough that affect should be subordinated to the word. Pairing the eminently representable Peróns with the otherwise unrepresentable multitude gives meaning and visibility to what had been unintelligible: the multitude becomes the people.

The cut established in the sequence taking us from the square to the balcony (and back again) both joins and separates: the multitude's heterogeneity becomes homogeneity as its various partial aspects (all

that can be represented conventionally) are joined in what Laclau and Mouffe term a "chain of equivalence" (127) dependent upon their relation with those on the balcony. Contemporary newsreel footage presents a narrative in which, first, the multitude gathers and builds from groups originating in the most diverse locations--from the hidden recesses of the city and its suburbs--only, later, to be represented (literally, presented again) as the people whose gathering is retroactively intelligible by reference to the balcony, and to the state. Moreover, as this relation is established, and the multitude are retrospectively reduced to a homogenous (hegemonic) bloc, properties of the multitude can be transferred to the figures of those on the balcony: the Peróns acquire their own sublimity as, now, larger than life, they dominate the frame with a presence borrowed from the thousands thronging the square who give their presence meaning.

When the balcony effect is derailed, populism threatens to collapse as the multitude re-emerges as an insurrectionary presence. This is the risk populism takes, as is nowhere more apparent than in the trauma of Evita Perón's renunciation on 22nd August 1951. At this tumultuous open meeting, in front of a crowd two million strong, Evita tried to fend off the demand that she stand for election as vice-president. Tomás Eloy Martínez narrates this episode as a film script pieced together from newsreel depictions. Indeed, the demonstration's staging was perhaps the most fully cinematic of all of Peronism's set pieces. Scaffolding set up in the broad Avenida 9 de Julio held a false balcony flanked by two enormous photographs of Juan and Evita. The newsreel cameras cut from this huge screen to the multitude frantically waving handkerchiefs below. Eloy Martínez describes "the ebb and flow of the multitude, dangerous surges to get closer to the

idol" (Santa Evita 85; translation modified); newsreels show the balcony effect maintained for some time, then increasing agitation, until there are fewer real cuts and more pans as the camera darts from crowd to balcony. Eloy Martínez writes that "Perón looks dwarfed" (87), but it is when, as daylight fades, Evita comes out onto the balcony that the spectacle truly disintegrates.

Juan Schröder's documentary Evita shows Evita's image compressed into one corner of the frame as the camera tries simultaneously to take in as much of the multitude as possible.¹ Evita seems lost, about to disappear from the mise en scène. Peronism's mechanisms of control fail, as the crowds demand that Evita accept her nomination. Evita can only defer a decision, but her attempts to make a contract with the crowd (asking them to wait four days, twenty-four hours, a few hours) are overwhelmed by their demands for immediacy and contact.

Through Evita, Peronism operates a particularly powerful mechanism of conversion, converting multitude into people and thereby setting bounds and establishing transcendence and so the state in its double constitution. But Peronism enters into crisis, at the very moment of its greatest success: populism promises immediacy, and welcomes affective investment, but so long as a line always be drawn, a limit establishing the people as the body whose representability depends upon their distance from their leaders. Without this distance, populism finds its "own" people strictly incomprehensible. Alive, Evita fails finally to maintain that separation and has to renounce and be renounced: the balcony becomes "the altar on which she [is]

¹ My thanks to Gabriela Nouzeilles for bringing this aspect of the film to my attention.

sacrificed" (Eloy Martínez 98). (Dead, of course, Evita is another matter; dead, she ensures Peronism's continued meaningfulness.)

from contact to resonance

Seeking contact over contract, the multitude searches out other forms of social organization. Contact invokes the immediate social ties generated in and through affective relations, rather than the deferred satisfaction promised by the contract. Whereas a contract refers to the future and requires "adequate consideration" (an unconditional promise is unenforceable in law), contact is the moment of the encounter, the brush or grip of body upon body. Contact comes from contiguity and contingency (words sharing the same Latin root). Contract, on the other hand, presumes distance and difference, and the premeditated attempt to bring those differences together. Contact, in short, concerns affect; contract, effect. If the multitude's expansiveness breaks down the boundary between inside and outside, its affective tactility reconfigures social relations between its constituent elements.

Contracts formalize and encode, and so abstract from, affect. This is true as much of juridical contracts as of the social contract itself. Contracts undertaken within

the framework of a juridical system rely for their effectivity on the fact that they are backed by the force of law. They obey a series of predetermined rules governing which contracts are enforceable--or rather, which agreements are, by virtue of their legal enforceability, contracts, and which are not. In their dependence upon the possibility of legal intervention should the promise they encode be unfulfilled, contracts abstract from the contact and affective investment that first motivates the parties entering into the undertaking so contracted. Thus, paradigmatically, marriage is a legal contract formalizing an affective relation. Marriage is often regarded as an exceptional type of contract given that the contracting parties are legally prevented from dissolving their obligations of their own accord--a marriage can only be dissolved in a court of law. But the fact that the state is thereby a "third party" to the marriage contract only reveals all the more clearly the way in which civil contracts always imply the potential intervention of the state.

The social contract is likewise presented as doing away with the contingency of affective encounter. For Hobbes, the social contract protects citizens from the

"continually feare, and danger of violent death" to which they would otherwise be subjected in the state of nature (Leviathan 186). Yet it is not as though fear is dispelled altogether by the constitution of the Commonwealth. Fear founds the state, and permeates civil society: as befits the comparison with the God of the Old Testament, the state imagined by Hobbes is an object of fear and awe, a "common power to feare" (187), "to keep [men] all in awe" (185). In other words, affect is redistributed and focused in the construction of an overarching relationship between citizen and state: men and women no longer fear each other, but their industrious activity is facilitated by a common fear of the state. Regulated, low-intensity affect encourages habits of neighborliness and productivity. The social contract presents this affect as emotion (anxiety, ambition) possessed by individuals in the shadow of a state. Just as the contract constructs individuals to possess private property, so it also gives us subjects who can own their private (interiorized) emotions.

Yet juridical contracts also depend upon as much as they encode affective contact to produce a distinct social order. The handshake that traditionally seals the agreement indicates at least one way in which the contract

is premised on the contact that it purports to supersede. Indeed, the very notion that a contract needs to be signed and sealed with the imprint of contact signals that contract can never fully escape its dependence on the tactile. A contract depends on contact, but imposes conditionality. It constructs difference as a distance that requires mediation, rather than as the contiguity of the encounter. At stake in the distinction between contract and contact, then, are two forms of difference: an immanent and substantial difference of the encounter versus the formal difference between juridical equals mediated by a transcendent state. Beyond converting the multitude into the people, as a bounded unity, the contract also (re)presents individuals as distinct and distant; their distance distinguishes them from each other, as they are formally equal before the law.

By contrast, the internal organization of the multitude accords with a conception of difference as immanent and tactile. For Spinoza, the multitude is constituted as multiple bodies come into contact, reinforcing and amplifying their mutual powers to affect and be affected, to incarnate a compound body greater than but not transcendent to the bodies that compose it:

When a number of bodies of the same or different size are driven so together that they remain united one with the other, or if they are moved by the same or different rapidity so that they communicate their motions one to the other in a certain ratio, those bodies are called reciprocally united bodies (corpora invicem unita), and we say that they all form one body or individual, which is distinguished from the rest by this union of bodies. (Spinoza, Ethics 50)

Thus bodies which are themselves distinguished not intrinsically or formally but "merely by movement or rest, by swiftness or slowness" (50) are bound to each other and constitute a new body when they establish a mutual resonance by "communicat[ing] their motions one to the other." The multitude is a compound body made up of a multiplicity of bodies (some compound, some simple) whose principle of union is immanent rather than transcendent. The multitude comprehends difference, but this is the difference between singularities rather than of units. Refusing internal division or separation, the multitude is constituted through felicitous encounter.

For Negri this affirmation, and the proposition within which it is embedded, is perhaps the key moment of the Ethics: "The entire thematic of idealistic thought [. . .] is denied. The materialism of the mode is foundational [. . .] . Corporeality, therefore, is foundational" (The Savage Anomaly 65). Negri sees "a terrible storm, now on

the verge of explosion" (67). For Spinoza now has to outline a theory of encounter that will explain how and why resonance is sometimes achieved, and sometimes destroyed.

It is in the theory of the encounter that we see the ambivalence embedded in the concept of the multitude: there are two forms of contact, two forms of encounter, the good and the bad. When bodies meet, they either increase or diminish each other's power of existence, their mutual powers to affect and be affected. Spinoza's theory of the encounter contrasts with Hobbes's pessimistic conception of the war of all against all. Spinoza is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. The encounter encompasses the possibility of war, but also of union and alliance; it is profoundly ambivalent. Spinoza outlines his theory as follows:

Whatever brings it to pass that the proportion of motion and rest which the parts of the human body hold one to the other is preserved, is good; and contrariwise, that is bad which brings it about that the parts of the human body have another proportion mutually of motion and rest. (Ethics 169)

Encounter leads either to dissonance, and so the dissolution of bodies, or resonance, and their constitution. Dissonance is death: "the body suffer[s] death when its parts are so disposed that they assume one with the other another proportion of motion and rest" (170).

We have here what Negri terms "a physics of society" (The Savage Anomaly 109; elsewhere he will call such an approach "a veritable thermodynamics of society" [Time for Revolution 50; emphasis in original]), "a mechanics of individual pressures and a dynamics of associative relationships, which characteristically are never closed in the absolute but, rather, proceed by ontological dislocations" (The Savage Anomaly 109). This is no disinterested science. Analysis of the social physics of the encounter, and the bodies that come into being as a result, is the heart of Spinoza's ethical system: resonance is good because it is the key to empowerment, and "by VIRTUE (virtus) and POWER (potentia) I understand the same thing" (Ethics 145). It is only by exercising all a body's power that it can be led "truly to a greater state of perfection" (155). Empowerment can only be ensured socially, in union and communication--in other words, in contact. Potentia is not "power over," it is "power to," and potentia increases the more bodies are in contact and communication. The power of the multitude, in other words, is constituent and positive rather than constituted and negative. The dissolution of formal characteristics of identity into a larger body or individual ensures the

preservation of the characteristics of the bodies
constituting that greater body:

It is above all things useful to men that they unite their habits of life (consuetudines) and bind themselves together with such bonds by which they can most easily make one individual of them all. (193)

Habit, therefore, becomes a principle of union that needs no mediating transcendent instance. The immanent positive feedback it provides enables "a process that sees the human individuality construct itself as a collective entity" (The Savage Anomaly 135). The multitude takes shape.

In that "the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things" (Ethics 41), the thermodynamics of power governing the logic of the encounter finds its counterpart in thought and feeling. Resonance corresponds to pleasure, and dissonance to pain: "pleasure is an emotion by which the power of acting of the body is increased or aided; but pain contrariwise is an emotion whereby the body's power of acting is diminished or hindered" (171). Pleasure indicates good encounters; pain accompanies bad encounters. The strategic, political question therefore is how to maximize the number of good encounters (and so pleasure) and to reduce the number of bad encounters (and so pain). As the multitude expands and tends towards maximum mutual empowerment, it will tend

towards joy. Whatever dissolves, divides, or regulates the multitude is associated with pain.

We see now how the multitude comes into being, and also its principle of union. The multitude pervades modernity as a virtual presence, a potential inherent in the possibilities for contact and communication that the modern world provides. Again, a feedback loop: pressing for contact, demanding the conditions for its further expansion and becoming to be made real, the multitude drives modernity forwards. In this sense, the multitude pre-exists and calls forth the modern. At the same time, however, we see the multitude constituted before our eyes. A social physics opens the door to a physical sociology, whereby the vicissitudes of social encounter, resonance, and dissonance are charted and (re)described, no longer in terms of hegemony or consent or the mediating pretensions of the state, but on their own terms.

We should expect, however, to find blockages, setbacks, and reverses. Though the process by which the multitude is constituted is expansive and tends toward the absolute, the logic of the encounter is contingent, encompassing pain as well as pleasure, with the ever-present possibility of dissolution as much as of resonance.

These are the grounds on which we should differentiate between immanent processes, between those that continue to expand and find the common grounds for joyful encounters and those that hit a limit, however contingent such limits may be, and bring death rather than life.

For the theory of the encounter allows us to go beyond some of the more simplistic implications of the dichotomy between immanent and transcendent, between culture and state. It would be useless to pretend that all pain can be laid on the state. There are surely movements and processes that obey the logic of resonance until they hit a wall, a precipitous limit of dissonance. Such, surely, is the case for instance with al-Qaida. From all that one can surmise, al-Qaida obeys the logic of the multitude and its form of organization to a very great extent. Immanent, unrepresentable, fluid, active, this is surely a movement that is multitudinous, but that in the attack on the twin towers hit some limit, some failure to achieve commonality. Al-Qaida is the multitude monstrous, which is why it demands our attention as much as it calls the attention of the neoliberal state. Perhaps, as with a suspension bridge, there is a point of such extreme resonance that the whole structure collapses. Perhaps there are combinations

of bodies that prove singularly ineffective at maintaining their expansive tendency, however much their internal operations correspond to the logic of the good encounter. A social thermodynamics must surely be able to account for such non-linearity.

We are left with a self-constituting multitude whose only limit is contingent. The refusal of all internal limits constitutes a fundamentalism; but this is a pragmatic fundamentalism. A politics of the encounter, in which all interactions may either constitute a new and more powerful social body, or may spell death and destruction for constituted bodies, is a politics of experimentation. There are no norms or principles that can be deduced from outside the system, only a series of events defined by the particular set of bodies in conjunction, which may result in either pleasure or pain. In Warren Montag's words, we have "a politics of permanent revolution, a politics utterly without guarantees of any kind, in which social stability must always be re-created through a constant reorganization of corporeal life" (Bodies, Masses, Power 84). The multitude promises joy; but the lack of any guarantees means that the multitude may also end up as monstrous as its enemies suggest.

Attempts at a sociology of Sendero Luminoso have seldom been convincing. Efforts to account for the movement's composition and support have been hampered, of course, by the difficulty in gaining access to militants, and by their reluctance to be interviewed. But there is more to it than that. It is clear that Sendero's internal organization differs markedly from that of comparable guerrilla or terrorist groups. Many have commented on the fact that an unusually high number of the organization's cadres (up to 40% of its militants according to Kirk [14]) are or were women. Indeed, this has been a particular source of shock for those attempting to comprehend the group, a shock paradigmatically seen in the assassination of barrio activist María Elena Moyano by a woman militant in 1992. Robin Kirk's short but fascinating book, Grabado en piedra, as well as Gonzalo Portocarrero's Razones de sangre begin to outline the immanent logic of the Sendero organization, both its openness and expansiveness that enabled it to incorporate new militants with such speed and such success, and the brick wall that also caused its implosion.

Perhaps the nucleus around which Sendero grew monstrous was its insistence on purification, a near-obsession with cleanliness. On the one hand, the category of the unclean was not fixed in advance-- Sendero showed no obvious racism or prejudice against any pre-constituted group--thus allowing any individual to enter, submerge themselves, and be purified. On the other hand, whatever was taken to be an obstacle, whatever body produced a bad encounter, was vilified incessantly for its impurity and filthiness. As Kirk comments:

Guzmán has an ambiguous fascination regarding dirt (the best grades that he obtained in college were in hygiene and deportment), and this fixation has been translated into the

suggestive style that is Sendero Luminoso's trademark: its enemies are reptiles, cretins, monsters from the sewer depths who will be crushed, pulverized, annihilated, hurled into oblivion. (33)

In the same vein, Portocarrero emphasizes Sendero's quasi-religious character, and quotes one of the movement's tracts: "Enough of the putrid sewage of individuals, the manure left behind. A new stage: we cleanse our soul, we cleanse ourselves thoroughly" (58). With its fixation on dirt, Sendero becomes univalent rather than polyvalent.

Further investigation would show, I think, Sendero as a prime example of a multitude that has gone wrong. In other words, an expansive non-contractual body whose internal arrangement accords with the principle of resonance and indifference, but which hit a blockage, failed to connect, and turned monstrous (uncommon, corrupt, and hateful) in a storm of bad encounters.

multitude and empire

As a corollary to the principles of expansiveness and immanent contact, we can add that the multitude's polyvalence means that it has the maximum amount of connectivity. We could take as an instance of the historical multitude the "many-headed Hydra" of Atlantic proletarianism described by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, a "motley crew" of disparate difference and singularity

expanded by movement [. . .] banished or dispersed in diaspora, carried by the winds and the waves beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. Sailors, pilots,

felons, lovers, translators, musicians, mobile workers of all kinds [who] made new and unexpected connections, which variously appeared to be accidental, contingent, transient, even miraculous. (The Many-headed Hydra 6)

Promiscuous and perverse, the multitude's polyvalence implies not only a refusal of the obstacles and boundaries imposed by the state, through transcendence, but also the opportunity and will to overcome blockages that emerge immanently, on what Deleuze and Guattari term the plane of consistency or immanence.

Polyvalence and connectivity are the principles by which we can distinguish a "good" multitude from a multitude that has gone bad, that has been corrupted. This principle can be rephrased in terms of commonality, and love. Commonality facilitates encounters: the greater the degree of commonality, the greater the possibility for encounters (good and bad). Love, defined as "pleasure [. . .] accompanied by the idea of an external cause" (Spinoza, Ethics 172), provides the impetus for maximizing good encounters on the plane of commonality. Hence a good multitude has the greatest amount in common with the greatest number of bodies, and, characterized by love, is motivated to enlarge further the scope of commonality available to it by seeking more good encounters. "Love is

the desire of the common" (Negri, Time for Revolution 209); it is "an immanence that generates" (213). Love animates the common (223).

But there is a thin line between love and hate. And there is also a thin line between love and money, as George Orwell reminds us in Keep the Aspidistra Flying with his adaptation of 1 Corinthians 13: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not money, I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (5). There is a thin line, in other words, between a good (loving) multitude and a bad (hateful) one, just as likewise there is a thin line between the multitude and capital in its current phase.

In Empire, Hardt and Negri describe the workings of capital in its contemporary incarnation, in the epoch of the real subsumption of society by capital. "Capital," they argue, following Deleuze and Guattari, "operates on the plane of immanence [. . .] without reliance on a transcendent center of power" (327). Capital, therefore, is always in tension with the state. It is only now, however, that this tension is becoming resolved, and in favor of capital's immanence rather than the state's transcendence. Globalization marks the end of the nation-

state, but also the end of modern forms of sovereignty tout court. If "the transcendence of modern sovereignty [. . .] conflicts with the immanence of capital" (327), with the arrival of postmodernity "the absoluteness of imperial power is the complementary term to its complete immanence to the ontological machine of production and reproduction" (41). Hardt and Negri's term for the world order that emerges is "Empire": this is the postmodern, neoliberal, globalized form of power that succeeds the nation-state and its associated imperialism. Empire therefore approaches the condition of the multitude while retaining, however tenuously, the privilege of constituted over constituent power. Indeed, it is because of the growing congruity between Empire and multitude that Hardt and Negri argue that "we must push through Empire to come out the other side. [. . .] we have to accelerate the process" (206).

If, therefore, sociologically and historically the distinction between multitude and Empire tends to blur as the multitude emerges from the other side of capitalist globalization, it should be all the more important to maintain some kind of conceptual distinction between them. Yet given Empire's decentered, immanent, flexible form, it becomes all the more difficult to distinguish its mode of

organization from that of the multitude, and thus constituted from constituent power. Alberto Moreiras argues, in fact, that the two concepts ultimately become indistinguishable. "What would keep us," he asks, "from suspecting that there is finally no difference between Empire and counter-Empire, once immanentization has run full course?" ("A Line of Shadow" n.p.). Moreover, the problem becomes all the more acute when one considers a movement such as al-Qaida. After the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington DC, there was no shortage of critics of Empire who were quick to jump to the idea that Hardt and Negri's book offered some kind of apology--or even inspiration--for the attacks. These criticisms were often somewhat hysterical, but their impact was if anything exacerbated by the rather incoherent reaction to and unconvincing analysis of the events that Negri especially displayed in a number of interviews--as for instance when he suggested that bin Laden and the hijackers were representatives of a global oil elite ("Terrorism is an Essential Sickness of the System") or when he commented to Le Monde "I would have been a lot more pleased if, on 11th September, the Pentagon had been razed and they had not missed the White House" ("Interview with Toni Negri").

Moreover, the controversy helped rekindle the story that Negri had been some kind of terrorist mastermind behind Italy's Red Brigades in the 1970s. Though this accusation is as tenuous as is the notion that Hardt and Negri are somehow to blame for 9/11, it does also point to a theoretical problem that marring Empire. This is the under-theorized status of the concept of "corruption."

For it is corruption that is to distinguish Empire from multitude. Corruption is the "simple negation" of the multitude's "power of generation" (389, 388). "In Empire, corruption is everywhere. It is the cornerstone and keystone of domination" (389). Indeed, "corruption itself," they argue, "is the substance and totality of Empire" (391). It is "not an aberration of imperial sovereignty but its very essence and modus operandi" (202). Yet, given the importance of the concept for an understanding of Empire, it is used in a surprisingly loose and broad manner. Sometimes corruption seems to be understood in its ordinary usage, as for instance elsewhere when Negri is discussing Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi: "He is the most corrupt, and he has made use of corrupt instruments in the fight against corruption" (Il ritorno 74).

Empire, however, contains a list of slightly more rigorously-defined instances of corruption. Thus it is also akin to psychological egoism: "corruption as individual choice that is opposed to and violates the fundamental community and solidarity defined by biopolitical production" (390). It is the extraction of surplus value: "corruption of the productive order, or really exploitation. This includes the fact that the values that derive from the collective cooperation of labor are expropriated" (390). Ideological distortion is also corruption: "corruption [. . .] in the functioning of ideology, or rather in the perversion of the biopolitical realm" (391). Corruption is also political and military, "when in the practices of imperial government the threat of terror becomes a weapon to resolve limited or regional conflicts" (391). Indeed, a little later it is almost another name for constituted power per se: "corruption is the pure exercise of command, without proportion or adequate reference to the world of life" (391). Elsewhere, however, and when the concept is first introduced, there seems to be more ambivalence attached to the idea: corruption is "omni-crisis" (201); it describes Empire's hybridity and the fact "that imperial rule functions by

breaking down. (Here the Latin etymology is precise: com-rumpere, to break.)" (202). Corruption is both the sign of an "ontological vacuum" (202) and a process, "a reverse process of generation and composition, a moment of metamorphosis" that as such presents an opportunity in that it "potentially frees spaces for change" (201).

In this multiplicity of uses of the term, it is no wonder that "the forms in which corruption appears are so numerous that trying to list them is like pouring the sea into a teacup" (Empire 390). But, along with the sea whose fluidity it seems to share, what also disappears is much sense of the concept's definition. Hence I propose to redefine corruption as the presence of an immanent limit, a blockage within the nexus of commonality and love that therefore reduces polyvalence to univalence and transforms love into what we might term hatred. Corruption therefore is no longer unique to Empire: it can also affect a multitude. A multitude that is (become) corrupt may share the characteristics of expansiveness, multiplicity, and internal de-differentiation, but its cutting edge consists either of non-encounter or of bad encounters that are destructive and tend to dissolve rather than amplify the immanent connections that bond the multitude's constituent

parts. We might perhaps think of corruption in terms of a resonance so extreme that, just as a suspension bridge swaying in the wind may reach a certain pitch that signals its imminent collapse, it tends towards death and dissolution rather than towards life and constitution. Though Empire is always corrupt, a multitude too may be corrupted: the more relevant and urgent distinction, therefore, is not between multitude and Empire but between corruption and connection. This is the distinction between affirmation and negation, love and hatred, joy and despair.

Let us return to Omar Cabezas's La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde. Despite its publication context of Sandinista triumph, the book is suffused with dissatisfaction. We have seen (in chapter three) Cabezas realize that clandestinity entails absolute separation from his past life. He feels profound disorientation as a result: he "had lost [his] bearings in space and time" (214) believing "we were living in a society of the absurd and our life was the life of the absurd" (216). This is the nadir of despair.

But the very next morning, Cabezas encounters an aged campesino, Don Leandro, who, it transpires, had fought with Augusto Sandino forty years earlier. Listening to the old man's stories, Cabezas is now suddenly able to relocate himself within an imagined history of revolutionary Nicaragua. Cabezas imagines himself heir to this national history, with Don Leandro as hitherto absent father: "when I met that man, when he told me all of that, I felt I really was his

son, the son of Sandino, the son of history. I understood my own past; I knew where I stood; I had a country, a historical identity" (221). Anomie is replaced by entitlement and empowerment. At precisely this moment, however, the book ends.

Cabezas's own narrative proves insufficient. The narrator's voice has to be supplemented by that of the peasant informant, who will finally give meaning to the struggle of the intellectual turned guerrilla. Lost in the despair of non-belonging, Cabezas invokes another genre that would, he imagines, provide full representation of "the essence of Nicaragua" (221). As Don Leandro speaks, Cabezas says: "how I wished I had a tape recorder right then, because what he was telling me was so wonderful" (218). The tape recorder indicates that the novel, in this final scene, is cast as prelude to testimonio, one of whose distinguishing features is that it is a collaborative text "involv[ing] the recording and/or transcription and editing of an oral account by an interlocutor" (Beverley and Zimmerman 173).

Its collaborative structure means that testimonio is represented as a genre of solidarity: it exemplifies solidarity, and calls for solidarity from its readers. Yet when Cabezas's narrator transforms himself into a would-be editor of a testimonio, the process whereby a single individual (Don Leandro) accidentally encountered stands in for an entire people comes retrospectively to justify the hierarchical structures (intellectual/peasant, city/countryside, and so on) that it allegedly displaces. In its very appeal to authenticity, testimonio constructs the fiction of an organic link between historical tradition and political project, between national culture and nation-state. Though testimonio is presented as the cri de coeur of the oppressed, Cabezas shows it is equally the means by which a committed

intelligentsia seeks to resolve its own sense of isolation and affliction. Testimonio consolidates a revolutionary state's claim to legitimacy by appealing to the mediation of subaltern interlocution.

Testimonio reinvents Latin American populism, constructing a people, and so also the effect of a state, not in the mass mobilization beneath the balcony, but through a narrativization of the exemplary individual interlocutor. For the Salvadoran case, Roque Dalton's Miguel Mármol corresponds most closely to Cabezas's ideal type, but it is by no means alone. Consider the subtitle of Alegría's No me agarran viva: La mujer salvadoreña en la lucha again posits the exemplary figure as the basis on which to construct a national type. No wonder Beverley and Zimmerman link testimonio to so closely to counter-hegemony: the genre rehearses the articulatory strategies characteristic of classical populism, but as narrative strategy founded on the encounter. This narrativization of the encounter is testimonio's key trope--think of Elizabeth Burgos's description of meeting Rigoberta Menchú or the opening of Rodolfo Walsh's Operación masacre. The accidental contact paves the way for the invention of a people. Testimonio becomes univalent--here, fixated on the fantasy of a revolutionary state.

But we could redescribe the testimonial encounter not in terms of the representativity of the exemplary, but as the singular opening out to the common. Pace Cabezas, Beverley, Zimmerman et. al., is it really reading against the grain to suggest that testimonio does anything but lead to the national-popular? Testimonio touches directly on the global. After all, much of testimonio's importance lies outside its original national or Latin American context. Testimonio was read more by US university students than by Central

American campesinos. While the genre was celebrated for contributing to a national-popular rebellion within Latin America, in fact it was above all a prime avenue for the construction of international contact in the US and elsewhere. Far from condemning the genre, such a redescription opens up new modes of reading testimonio no longer within the straightjacket of the desire for organic tradition. Rather than reading testimonio as the authentic voice of a particular Latin American people, we can now see how it connects with a much more disparate, global network with cultural effects that cannot so easily be mapped onto any individual state formation.

Testimonio has transformed the conditions of its own production as mapped out by Cabezas, Alegría, or Burgos. Las mil y una historias de Radio Venceremos is perhaps a better figure for the genre than Menchú's purported claim to speak for "all poor Guatemalans." As the genre has developed and diversified, a territorializing desire for lineage such as Cabezas's has given way to the self-consciously globalizing use of the internet by a figure such as subcomandante Marcos of the zapatistas, who welcomes identity loss and polyvalence:

Marcos is gay in San Francisco, black in South Africa [. . .] indigenous on the streets of San Cristóbal [. . .] artist without gallery or portfolio, housewife on a Saturday night in whatever barrio of whatever city in whatever Mexico, guerrilla in Mexico at the end of the twentieth century [. . .] woman alone in the metro at ten at night [. . .] landless campesino, marginal publisher, unemployed worker [. . .]. In short, Marcos is a whatever human being [un ser humano cualquiera] in this world. ("La ternura insurgente" 54)

The very figure of the "whatever," Marcos is indefinite, singular (a multitude of singularities), and universal all at the same time.

Testimonio now emerges as one vehicle for the multitude's pursuit of multiple, singular, good encounters.

the subject of history

Seeking commonality, the multitude continually extends its sphere of influence and contact. Expansive, tactile, polyvalent, the multitude also forces a response and recomposition from constituted power. The multitude, in short, is active while the state is reactive. We can therefore analyze its effects diachronically and historically, rather than simply in its synchronic and structural opposition to the state. Indeed, we can analyze the succession of state formations in terms of a series of attempts to contain the multitude. Hence the history of the state is discontinuous--a series of revolutions and coups--while the history of the multitude is an unbroken thread of constituent power. In all the various scenarios that result from this antagonism between multitude and state, however, the state remains on the back foot.

This proposition is perhaps the single most innovative contribution of the Italian operaismo and autonomia traditions from which Negri derives. One of its most significant early expositions can be found in Mario Tronti's analysis that capitalist transformation is always the reaction to working-class demands or subversion ("Lenin in England"). In other words, capital retrofits and

improves its means and control of production in response to labor strategies that make the existing regime untenable. In response, then, to demands for a shorter working day, capital improves the efficiency of the production process and turns from the formal subsumption of pre-capitalist working practices to the real subsumption of labor through the introduction of working practices that are capitalism's own. In this manner, capital responds to working class demands with revolutionary change, but not on the terms of the working class: exploitation increases. Yet this is a Pyrrhic victory for capital, in so far as the sphere of struggle has broadened, so advancing the expansive alliances sought by the working class. Class struggle is followed by class recomposition, which in turn provides the basis for further struggle, on a different basis.

A number of consequences follow. First, the importance of working class subjectivity is established. Second, however, that subject is continually mutating, as are its demands. As the cycle of struggle and recomposition develops, the subject becomes broader and its demands increasingly, directly, political. Thus operaismo theorized a transformation at the turn of the twentieth century, from skilled labor as the subject of struggle (in

the establishment of unions) to the mass worker who came to the fore within the context of Fordism. As Steve Wright puts it in his indispensable history of autonomist Marxism,

Struggle [. . .] was seen as the great educator of the working class, binding the various layers of the workforce together, turning the ensemble of individual labour-powers into a social mass, a mass worker. (Storming Heaven 77)

What is more, however, capital endlessly if inadvertently colludes in this process. As Fordism responded to the demands of the skilled workers through their union organizations by relying increasingly on unskilled labor and the assembly line, so new opportunities arose for contact and communication within the expanded class subject that arose accordingly. Contact and communication led to new forms of struggle, and new responses from capital.

From the skilled worker to the mass worker in the Fordist factory, and then with Keynesianism from the mass worker to the social factory. For Negri, the Keynesian welfare state was a direct response to the Russian revolution, and it expanded the terrain of struggle from the shopfloor to society as a whole. The state became a "social state," its ambit of control extended throughout society, but in response to a broader and more expansive threat from below. "Thus," he wrote in 1968, "the only way

to understand our present state-form is to highlight the dramatic impact of the working class on the structures of capitalism" (Revolution Retrieved 30). By 1982, however, Negri was arguing that a new cycle had commenced: in the transition to post-Fordism we had moved from the mass worker to the "social worker." "The mass worker," he writes, "the semi-skilled worker (whatever his subjective consciousness) is not so much the final figure of the skilled worker, but rather the first impetuous prefiguration of the completely socialized worker" (217; emphasis in original). Negri's parenthetical remark on the unimportance of consciousness is indicative: this whole process takes place immanently, beneath the level of ideology or representation. Meanwhile, the terminology of work and "workerism" would come to seem increasingly a holdover irrelevant now that the wage was social and the constituent elements of the social worker included many who would not traditionally be recognized as part of the productive process. As Negri put it in a reflection on the social upheavals in Italy of 1968 and 1969:

The only possible answer [to the changes associated with post-Fordism], from the working-class viewpoint, was to insist on and fight for the broadest definition of class unity, to modify and extend the concept of working-class productive labour. [. . .] there was a growing awareness of the interconnection between

productive labour and the labour of reproduction, which was expressed in a wide range of behaviours in social struggles, above all in the mass movements of women and youth, affirming all these activities collectively as labour. (Revolution Retrieved 208-9)

The socialized worker, in other words, would prefigure the emergence of the multitude.

Paolo Virno updates and refines this narrative with his concept of "counter-revolution": this is "an impetuous innovation of modes of production, forms of life, and social relations that, however, consolidate and set again in motion capitalist command" ("Do You Remember Counterrevolution?" 241). On this basis, Virno analyzes the neoliberal transformation of Italy, effected through state repression in the 1970s. Virno sees Italian neoliberalism as a response to demands made by the generation of 1968. If the 1960s counter-culture demanded freedom from the strictures of the factory or the office, freedom to leave work or change jobs at will, and freedom of lifestyle choice and recreation, neoliberalism responded to all these demands by restructuring capitalist production techniques and work practices but not on the terms in which the demands had originally been made, as these freedoms were translated into the strictures and insecurity of high unemployment, the abolishing of long-term contracts and job

security, and consumer products designed for built-in obsolescence and forced impermanence.

We can recontextualize this history in a global frame. As the other side of a history of the Latin American multitude, we can then understand the succession of attempts to construct and reconstruct the fiction of a pact that would bind culture to politics, constituent to constituted power. In Latin America, from colonial power relations to the wars of independence, from liberalism to state-sponsored indigenism, and (in the twentieth-century) from populism to neoliberalism, the vicissitudes of the state can be reinterpreted in the light of a series of responses to an expansive multitude. Populism is perhaps the limit of the attempt to convert multitude into people. As populism crumbles, failing in its attempt to invoke and contain through the construct of the people, broken on the back of the multitude's overwhelming desire for contact, so neoliberalism should be seen as a further advance in the reactive force of constituted power. But neoliberalism may also be the first sign of the state's defeat, in its abandonment of hegemony as hitherto most effective tool to ensure social order.

Rethinking neoliberalism and the globalization it claims to embrace leads to a new conception of the way in which neoliberalism structures or manages contemporary societies, and of globalization's genesis and history. In some senses, however, this would be a first description: neoliberalism fails to offer a self-description, or any self-explanation. It is a regime that seems to function without the need of ideology, for which it substitutes practices of technical management which do not offer themselves up for interrogation. This ideological deficit is neoliberalism's strength, in that it allows for a sort of invisibility, a resistance to description given that its rule depends on a set of more or less unconscious presuppositions; but this same ideological deficit is also its weakness. In contrast to populism's endless vocality, in which the state endlessly states, producing discourses and constructing its own legitimation, in neoliberalism the state is curiously silent and for this reason if no other can be imagined to have disappeared. This, however, is not necessarily to say it lacks legitimation: its silent inscrutability, the fact that it goes without saying, provides rather a new form of legitimacy. Even so, it is no more than a silent response to the multitude.

The current relative quiescence of the social movements that were much remarked upon and studied in the final years of Pinochet's dictatorship has variously been taken to indicate either consensus and support for the post-dictatorship regime, or depoliticization and apathy. For a relatively celebratory write-up of the social movements, see inter alia, and especially within the context of civil society theory, Philip Oxhorn's Organizing Civil Society; for a more jaded subsequent account, see the same author's co-edited collection, What Kind of Democracy. But the unprecedented success in Chile of Tomás Moulián's Chile actual suggests some desire to penetrate neoliberalism's inscrutable silence. As the Chilean right's response to Pinochet's detention in London also suggests, neoliberalism is entering a new phase of relative exposure if we are all to be sociologists now.

Moulián's book is written to counter the "compulsion to forget" that he sees as characteristic of contemporary Chile (31). More recently, Moulián's Conversación interrumpida con Allende, whose framing fiction is, as the title suggests, a dialogue with Salvador Allende about the state of post-dictatorship society, is also an attempt to recover historical memory. The functional importance of forgetfulness within neoliberalism demands therefore not simply a sociology but also a historical perspective that understands the democratic transition not as the new start or blank slate that its architects propose, but within the context of at least the last thirty years of Chilean history. The fact that so many of those who demonstrated in Santiago in favor of Pinochet during the House of Lords trial were too young to remember properly Pinochet's regime, let

alone Allende's Unidad Popular that allegedly justified pinochetismo, can only be understood by reference to what the demonstrators themselves were not in a position to remember.

The semi-conscious repetition or perpetuation of apparently forgotten positions recalls Javier Martínez and Alvaro Díaz's argument about Chile's long-term transformation over the past thirty-five years (Chile: The Great Transformation). Martínez and Díaz argue that what is most striking about Chile's recent history is the continuity that it exhibits rather than any abrupt switches between extremes or the new and evermore radical beginnings or contrasts that each of the various regimes since the 1960s have claimed to institute. The successive regimes since the mid-sixties have been Eduardo Frei Montalva's progressive Christian Democracy (1964-1970), Allende's socialist Unidad Popular (1970-1973), Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1989), and the Concertación (1989-present), whose presidents have been Patricio Aylwin, Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle (son of the former president), and Ricardo Lagos. Each regime is characterized by a claim to a self-foundation, a new beginning and erasure of the past.

By contrast, Martínez and Díaz argue for an overall continuity rather than a series of ruptures for two reasons. First, they suggest that Frei Montalva's and Allende's center-left and left regimes prepared the way for the transformation towards neoliberalism in that each weakened the traditional, landed oligarchy and finally left a vacuum among the middle-class, commercial elite into which (under Pinochet) could step the new, managerial-technical elite who introduced and applied neoliberal economic and social policies. Second, they show how Pinochet--again contra the neoliberal mantra of rolling back the state in favor of globalization--relied upon the

economic power of the state, not simply its repressive apparatuses, benefiting from (and refusing to reverse) Allende's nationalization of the copper industry to intervene in the economy, most notably during the banking crisis of the early 1980s. They conclude that the Chilean experience "indicates that the opportunities for a successful and radical capitalist transformation are better in those societies that have experienced a previous process of advanced socialization" (135). The great transformation is a lengthy but integrated process whereby socialization precedes reactive, capitalist transformation.

Yet Martínez and Díaz see this as the consequence of simple functionalism or as political opportunism on the part of the Pinochet regime (which, famously, came to power with no clear economic or political plan, and handed over economic control to the so-called "Chicago Boys," Chilean former students of Milton Friedman). Further, Martínez and Díaz overstress the sociological and economic continuities without taking sufficient account of political discontinuities between these four widely different types of regime, and without trying to examine the causes of either continuity or discontinuity. How is it that in the transition between Allende and Pinochet, the same (socially constituent) process was continued, but on other (political) terms?

Whereas the notion of a sharply differentiating transition from dictatorship was once the social scientific consensus, now we can see a rather more significant agreement between leftist critics of the transition (Moulián, Thayer and others) on the one hand and Pinochet and his defenders on the other. The current (cynical) consensus, diametrically opposed to the previous (mystificatory) one, emphasizes the continuities between dictatorship and post-dictatorship. However,

what is more difficult to explain--and more difficult to admit, for right or left--are the continuities observed by Martínez and Díaz in the transition to dictatorship (from Allende to Pinochet), a transition which combines sociological continuity and political reversal. Overall, then, the period 1964 to the present (the "great transformation") is characterized by a social continuity at the same time as it contains a sharp discontinuity (the shift from socialization to capitalist transformation) marked by the coup of 1973. Martínez and Díaz's emphasis is on state policy and the continuity of the policies initiated from above; but the continuity itself remains unexplained, as does its coexistence with the coup.

To understand not only the continuity of the social processes described above, but also their radically distinct political valences, we will have to look elsewhere: the state does not explain its own transformations, though it does still have to be explained. But if, by pointing again to the general's role as "head of state," the Pinochet affair demonstrates that we cannot take the state for granted, the British Law Lords' difficulties as they tried to establish the state's foundation in their examination of the extradition evidence, and to define the state's allegedly foundational role, indicate that the state itself may be an alibi for some other social force, not yet represented in this scenario.

Rather than Martínez and Díaz's top-down account, or their neutral discussion of a "great transformation," let us take up Moulián's terminology of revolution and counter-revolution. Moulián calls the "capitalist revolution" initiated by Pinochet a counter-revolution in that it was "a reaction against an ascendant popular movement, it was a movement that at first lacked any positivity being rather overloaded

with negativity" (Chile actual 25). Moulián undoes the concept of democratic transition, bringing together Pinochet's regime and the so-called transition under the rubric of counter-revolution. Willy Thayer goes further when he argues that if we are looking for a transition then it is to the dictatorship that we should look, in that the Pinochet regime constituted a transition from state to Market (La crisis no moderna). Or rather, we might say, the dictatorship constituted a moment of the state's extreme visibility during which its logic, however, became inscrutable and hence invisible--a combination of total presence and apparently diaphanous irreality performed almost literally in the state tactic of disappearances. With Pinochet's extradition hearings, however, the state returns to visibility, if briefly (and elsewhere--displaced to a Surrey housing estate).

We need to combine the notions of counter-revolution and of transition, recognizing the Pinochet regime's constructive part in the capitalist revolution and in the formation of a new state-form. For if the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s sought freedom from patriarchal landlords, social mobility, the end of national insularity, a sense of regional integration, more and better-quality consumer goods to be available, and so on, as Martínez and Díaz imply, the Pinochet-led counter-revolution fulfilled these demands but through a protracted restructuring that enabled capital and the state to maintain their command. Likewise, if the 1980s social movements demanded an end to dictatorship and an opening to the global, the Concertación responded but at the price of impunity for the former regime and historical amnesia. To put it simply: all Chilean regimes since the 1960s have been responding to, and attempting to

accommodate, a very consistent set of demands from below. The state has had to bend backwards, and in the end to revolutionize social relations, in response to the unbearable pressures exerted by a multitude that consistently threatens to over-run it.

The neoliberalism in train today, extending marketization to all areas of everyday life, is the real subsumption of society by capital in response to the demands of two generations of social movements. It has not been a process that the political and economic elite entered into lightly or even of their own accord, as is clear from the sacrifices that were required of the middle classes in terms of the destruction of capital resources, the bankruptcy or closure of firms that, however inefficient, were still profitable within the old regime, and the tremendous social re-engineering that the elite themselves also had to undergo to reproduce themselves in technocratic mould. The Pinochet regime can be described as an attempt to discipline the dominant sectors in Chilean society; its economic savagery was equally directed against the complacency of the Chilean land-owning class and its industrial national bourgeoisie, who were no longer in a position to hold back the growing pressures that threatened them from below. Here is the other side of the joke that in nationalizing much of the banking industry after the financial crisis of 1981 Pinochet simply continued along the Chilean road to socialism; the great transformation has indeed led to an increasing socialization of the economy, albeit above all in the form of the socialization of debt. Hence, again, it was a realization of the demands of the Chilean multitude, if on other terms.

the end of politics?

We might speculate as to why the transformations effected by neoliberalism are not represented as a response to demands from below--as finally the most efficient of all the state's responses to demands for reform--but are rather imagined to be a necessary correction imposed by a sovereign necessity arriving from outside. Why, in other words, are neoliberalism and, on a global scale, globalization always seen as inhuman, quasi-natural, and abstract, but nonetheless irresistible and inevitable, forces that take over the nation-state from without? Why do neoliberal technocrats suggest that they are the willing if helpless agents of a shift from state sovereignty to the sovereignty of impersonal international economic forces, when the Pinochet affair demonstrates that national sovereignty and national self-determination remain as inalienable a principle for neoliberals as ever? Why, finally, does neoliberalism not represent its concessions to the pressure for globalization and modernization that comes from below in a style--and a legitimating maneuver--that traditional liberalism, always eager to show a human face, would have done? Perhaps it is because were these demands and their satisfaction, however distorted,

acknowledged, then it would also be that much easier to recognize the liberating possibilities, the new internationalism and the potential elimination of work or of the law of value, that neoliberal globalization contains, if in inverted form.

In Negri's conception, the multitude exists on two planes. On the one hand, transhistorically, it is the ever-present constituent power within modernity, identified first in early-modern Europe, but a red thread through all revolutions and social movements since. On the other hand, the multitude has still to emerge, and is only beginning to assume its place as neoliberalism and Empire fray. For Negri, the multitude is now emergent as the unalienated subject with the potential to bring about the Communist revolution. Neither neoliberalism nor Empire are the end of history, though they are the last ditch defense of constituted power. They must continue to deny the multitude, because the multitude threatens to do away with them once and for all.

The various technologies of containment--the cinematic scenography of populism, testimonio as last gasp of the hegemonic project, the televisual ubiquity of neoliberalism--are effectively bankrupt. Nothing

demonstrates the end of the televisual mode of neoliberalism more than the Venezuelan coup and counter-coup of April 2002 (for which see my postface). We see (or, rather, sense) the multitude breaking down such regimes of visibility and mechanisms of representation. What, then, follows? For Negri, we enter onto the terrain of an imminent Communism.

With the announcement that Communism is or could be imminent, analysis becomes project. Posthegemony as project is a revolutionary undertaking. Moreover, the promise of Communism is not merely contingent for Negri: it is that promise that motivates the call to pass through Empire. For without it, there would be no motivation to go further through and into Empire, a form of rule more vicious and arbitrary than any seen before. It would seem to be the case that without a belief in the viability of revolution, posthegemony as project is groundless. Its ground, therefore, lies in a future that Negri takes to be certain. Neither cultural studies nor civil society theory have pretensions to revolution. Neither can imagine either a habitable outside (for both, exteriority is mute subalternity), or still less the breakdown of barrier between inside and outside, and as such also the breakdown

of a social pact co-coordinated by and through a transcendent center. The best that cultural studies can call for is more hegemony. And what kind of slogan is that? Negri's posthegemonic postulation of a multitudinous liberation is the sole revolutionary project with any credence remaining. And it depends fully on credence, on something like faith.

For Negri posits the multitude as a modern god, a divinity here on earth. "The poor," he and Hardt claim, "is god on earth" (Empire 157; emphasis in original). In the best tradition of fundamentalism, they call for the kingdom of God on earth to start here and now. This belief fits also with Spinoza's philosophy--Spinoza the great atheist, but also the great (if heretic) theist. Spinoza can and does imagine a fully-achieved immanence, but this is only the perspective of the divinity. Sub specie aeternitatis all differences are perfectly resolved, and harmony and knowledge are all. The ultimate aim of Spinoza's ethical system is to achieve blessedness, the third kind of knowledge (after knowledge revealed through signs and knowledge revealed in the joyfulness of commonality). The achievement of blessedness is communion with God in eternity; it is the end of history. "The wise

man," for Spinoza, "is scarcely moved in spirit: he is conscious of himself, of god, and things by a certain eternal necessity, he never ceases to be, and always enjoys satisfaction of mind" (Ethics 224).

But the achievement of absolute immanence would be not only the end of history, but also the end of the play of encounter, the series of events that give rise to either pleasure or pain. All contingency and accident would be abolished in favor of absolute necessity (albeit for Spinoza, a necessity understood as freedom). There would be no encounter because everything would be already in its place. Pure intensity, outside of time--or of time, not in time. Should the multitude come into its own, then, and transcendence disappear, there would be no objectivity, only the pure subjectivity of the divine presence and power. Nothing would happen. It would be perfect, but it would be dead.