

# Hope and abundance: the counter globalisation movement as multitude breaking the logic of pathological modernity

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Hope and Abundance:  
The counter globalisation movement as multitude –  
breaking the logic of pathological modernity

By  
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A thesis submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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University of New South Wales, 2006

# ORIGINALITY STATEMENT

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Signed .....

# Abstract

Using the theoretical work of Hardt and Negri's *Empire* and Beck's *Risk Society*, I define current experiences of modernity as 'pathological'. The term 'pathological modernity' is used because it portrays a modernity dominated by 'spirals of crisis' that are aggravated by the solutions proposed to solve them. Like the 'war on terror' and environmental degradation, I argue that many crises facing the world today reflect the characteristics of capital as they globalised, branded, hybridised, boundless and endless.

'Pathological modernity' has various dimensions including a Cartesian logic underscored by an 'eternal truth', free-market fundamentalism, certainty in decision making, and a scientism which believes all challenges can be overcome. Additional dimensions include an operational form of biopower, pathological reflexivity, and a frontier disposition that continually encloses non-commodified spaces (or commons) creating a crisis of scarcity.

Despite its dominance, pathological modernity is being challenged on many fronts. Amongst these is the 'counter-globalisation' movement (CGM). A heterogeneous movement, it represents a qualitatively different form of globalisation and logic that brings it into conflict with pathological modernity.

Using participatory research I investigate this movement grounding it within Hardt and Negri's (2004) 'multitude'. Extending Hardt and Negri's descriptions, I propose that the multitude 'works in common' to establish new commons in both the physical and cultural spheres. Concentrating on the 'cultural commons' I argue that these represent a new form of biopolitics and promote abundance where scarcity once existed. The four cultural commons identified are hope, trust, safety and intellect.

Based on the work of Marcel Mauss, I argue that the reciprocal, free and open exchange and sharing of these cultural commons creates 'authentic' communities based on

openness, alterity and abundance. While the CGM works to establish new commons, pathological modernity encloses and commodifies them, turning hope into material aspirations; trust into anxiety; safety into security; and intellect into intellectual property.

# Acknowledgements

A central theme that emerges in this thesis is that the non-commodified and reciprocal exchange of commons is the key to establishing ‘authentic’ communities. In this way, central to a decent ‘academic community’ is the open and non-commercial exchange of ideas and intellect – a process that leads to innovation and the expansion of knowledge. Accordingly, I would like the reader to recognise that this thesis has developed in the same way. There are many academics, activists, friends and strangers who have contributed to this work. Without their input, this thesis would not have been possible. All they have asked in return is a reciprocal relationship – an exchange of my knowledge in the same non-commercial way. Specifically, I would like to acknowledge the following:

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# List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APF	Anti-Privatisation Forum (South Africa)
AFTINET	Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network
ALP	Australian Labor Party
BCL	Bougainville Copper Limited
BFM	Bougainville Freedom Movement
BHM	<i>Bougainville Haus Moni</i> (Bougainville House Money)
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
CGM	Counter-globalisation movement
ECAs	Export credit agencies
FOE	Friends of the Earth
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IP	Intellectual property
NGOs	Non-government organisations
NOII	No-One is Illegal
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperative Development
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RTS	Reclaim the Streets
SOE	State of Emergency
SSF	Sydney Social Forum
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
WEF	World Economic Forum
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organisation

# Chapter 1: Preface

In 1997 I was sitting on the side of a mountain in Bolivia watching a group of miners preparing to enter a mine just outside the small town of Potosi. The contrast between my wealth as a ‘traveller’ and their daily struggle could not have been clearer. Wearing clothes purchased from one of the many ‘adventure’ stores in Sydney, my outfit was valued at almost AUD\$1,500. This included a *Gortex* jacket (AUD\$500), a pair of *Hitec* hiking boots (AUD\$200) and *Bolle* sunglasses (AUD\$300). In striking contrast, the miners were wearing soiled clothes that appeared to be falling apart.<sup>1</sup>

Earlier that day, I had washed my hair with shampoo products carried with me from Australia valued at AUD\$20. I later realised that the amount of money I had spent on shampoo was almost two weeks worth of miners’ wages. These were people who lived on less than AUD\$2 a day. The calculation was quite simple, it would take the miners over two years of work in these mines to accumulate the AUD\$1,500 that I had spent on clothing.

I had read about ‘these people’ previously but this was the first time I was confronted by ‘them’. This was despite the fact that I worked as an economist for financial organisations advising on finance capital which, in a globalised economy, also had consequences internationally. Therefore, even in some indirect way, the financial flows that I assisted in circulating influenced the lives of the miners at Potosi.

These differences between me as a tourist and the miners, underscores the dramatic disparity between our life experiences of globalisation. What I was witnessing on a personal level reflected much greater macro implications. For, with the processes of

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<sup>1</sup> Specific sections of this thesis are presented from my personal engagement with the various issues discussed. Consequently, I rely on both participatory and observational research approaches. The political implications of this approach are outlined briefly in Chapter 2 and elaborated in Appendix A, along with details of the research processes employed.

globalisation, I could travel to the remotest parts of the world within 24 hours. My world was smooth and open with porous borders and minimal restrictions – some financial, some security issues, and the occasional difficult to obtain visa. I could pay for a ‘tour’ of the mines with my credit card that quickly transferred funds between accounts. Using the same card I could call friends anywhere to describe my *Indiana Jones*-like adventures. When I had enough of this ‘adventure’, I could move on to another part of the world. Before returning to Australia, my final destination would be Europe, where I would rent a car that, as I would soon discover, contained some of the raw materials extracted from these mines.

In contrast, the miners would be unlikely to ever board an international flight, travel on credit, or purchase a vehicle for which their labour had provided the materials. It was also unlikely that they would ever call friends to boast about their adventures in the ‘developing world’. The luxuries that were readily available to me, were out of reach for most if not all of the miners.

A second divergence in our experience of globalisation that became apparent during my time on the mountain was the issue of ‘control’. I could undertake all these travels and adventures with only a minimal consideration of the cost. As an experienced and successful economist, I could return to Sydney (or take myself to another part of the world), and once again earn a considerable salary. Because I was born in a ‘first world’ nation and due to my education and career, I could negotiate my experience of globalisation.

Such negotiation was unlikely if not impossible for the miners. As one of a transnational elite, I had control of my experience of globalisation, while the miners were reliant on the whims of first world investors, consumers and governments for their livelihoods. That is, if investors decided that this region of South America was no longer internationally competitive, they could easily withdraw funds and the few opportunities that existed for the miners would disappear.

The mines that I was witnessing appeared to ignore any aspect of occupational health and safety. I was informed that accidents resulting in injury and death were common and that labour unions were all but outlawed. I also witnessed child labour, and was told by the guide that many of the young children working in the mines would die by the time they were in their mid-twenties due to lung diseases caused by exposure to mine dust. Though suffering many hardships, I was told that these miners are fortunate compared to other sections of the population as unemployment and poverty are extremely high in the region.

It was at this point that I recognised that the economic policies that I advocated and supported were directly responsible for the vast inequities I was witnessing. These policies included the removal of any barriers restricting the operation of free markets including labour and environmental laws, a focus on export orientated industries for low-income nations, and an emphasis on the ‘trickle down effect’ of tourist dollars such as mine. I had previously believed and argued that the history of colonialism and expropriation did not matter, for it was possible for low-income nations to use their ‘comparative advantage’ and ‘trade’ their way out of poverty and debt. I believed that economic growth complemented with free market policies was the key to overcoming *all* of the world’s challenges. This was thus a realisation that these economic policies were failing the majority of the world’s population and that *I* had played a part in their perpetuation.

Sitting there, I came to understand that these inequalities are cemented by the processes of globalisation. It is the very processes of neoliberal globalisation – processes that I advocated – that were embedding different life experiences and power relationships. It is argued later in this thesis that a pathological belief in such policies is at the core of the systemic inequalities that manifested themselves to me on a micro-level here, but also have clear macro-level consequences.

It was in the realisation that I was in part responsible for the inequalities before me that the seeds of this thesis were sown. It was at this point that I decided to become an advocate for dramatic changes to the global economic orthodoxy. At the time, I did not



understand either what this meant or how to go about it. Within three years however, I found myself at the front line of the conflict between the policies that contribute to global inequalities and the global justice movement that works against them. This is a group I have termed the ‘counter-globalisation movement’ (CGM) and discuss in detail in Chapter 5.

It was while working as an activist and theorist within this movement that I came to research both the workings of the dominant (neoliberal) paradigm and those of the CGM. It is the clash of these two forces and the logics they represent that is the central focus of this thesis. My research shows, however, that this contest runs deeper than a focus on different trade or economic policies alone. Rather, it is a cultural battle revolving around how the world and its resources – human, environmental, cultural and political – are perceived and organised. Underpinning these are differing conceptions of how ‘authentic’ communities function. That is, whether ‘authentic’ communities work through cooperation and sharing, or by competition and individualism.

This chapter aims to present some background regarding the focus of this thesis as well as detailing aspects of the personal journey associated with it. As part of my journey from ‘economist’ to ‘activist’, I found myself managing a counter-globalisation organisation within Australia and being part of a global social justice network. These are experiences that have significantly informed my research. As a result, the methodology that I have employed is both *participatory* and observational. As discussed in Chapter 2 and Appendix A, this involved me attending and participating in dozens of meetings and protests both in Australia and overseas. Before discussing the aims and structure of this thesis, it is important to set it within the context of the period in which it has been written.

## ***1.1 Contextualising this thesis: a time of globalisation***

It is now a cliché to say that ‘globalisation’ is one of the defining characteristics of our age. Every generation believes that they are living in a time of great change, and today is no different.

As events unfold in Afghanistan, Bagdad, Phnom Penh and New York, we sit glued to our televisions and computer screens waiting for the next chapter in this unpredictable and changing world. Although many material benefits have emerged; ecological disasters, industrial accidents, structural inequalities (including endemic unemployment) and corporate failures are almost daily occurrences. These are combined with a growing sense of distrust in political representatives and the processes they follow – a trend that Pusey (2003) confirms in his recent analysis of the Australian political and social landscape.

The benefits of consumer choice and increased economic opportunities that a globalised world is intended to bring seem dwarfed by the escalating evidence that such globalising processes are failing the majority of the world’s population and contributing to ecological change that only a generation ago seemed unthinkable. My experience at Potosi highlights only one unfortunate example.

However, none of these challenges are separate, rather they are interrelated to a point that can be described as ‘beyond interrelated’. Environmental crises are systemic. Salinity in Australia’s rivers, for example, results from industrial farming practices and the inability of political processes to offer long-term sustainable solutions. Likewise, the BSE (or ‘mad cow disease’) phenomenon in Britain is directly related to the industrial practices of one of the world’s most powerful economies. Rather than individual crises, we are experiencing a multi-dimensional and multi-faceted crisis which I describe in Chapter 2 as ‘a crisis of the whole’.

While most academics, media commentators, economists and politicians agree that the processes of globalisation exist, the many and varying interpretations of its consequences make it one of the most contested concepts of our time. Many theorists such as Ohmae (1999) and Fukuyama (1992) celebrate globalisation and emphasise how the continued interconnectedness of nations is drawing us towards a single international economy and increasing opportunities for wealth creation. Others, however, raise concerns about globalisation such as its effects on the most vulnerable and the loss of local community. Such concerns are raised by both high profile commentators like financier George Soros (2002) and Joseph Stiglitz (2002), the former chief economist of the World Bank, as well as the hundreds of thousands of people in every continent who have taken part in ‘anti-globalisation’ protests.

In many ways the processes of globalisation are as old as capitalism itself. Yet many authors, including Higgott and Payne (2000), also believe that we are witnessing a historically new phase. Like the butterfly that flaps its wings in one part of the world and affects the weather patterns elsewhere, we live in a time when a decision in New York (or London, Sydney, Paris or Jakarta) can impact on the livelihoods of subsistence farmers in the Solomon Islands, or the viability of a small rural centre in Australia. This level of interconnectedness means that those who make decisions are further away from those affected by them. We are thus seeing a growing divide between those who have (at least some) control over the processes of globalisation and those who have none.

This interconnectedness is multi-levelled and multi-faceted. The processes of globalisation mean that different cultures interact constantly – be it in the political, cultural, environmental or economic spheres. These interactions are, however, getting more complicated. This is not to argue that they were ever simple but to indicate that we are now dealing with different, more continuous types of interventions as boundaries are more porous than ever before (Camilleri 2003).

Camilleri argues that the “contemporary world is one in which a number of seemingly distinct processes are occurring simultaneously and are acquiring global reach, often in a

highly interconnected fashion” (2003: BB3). To highlight this point, Camilleri turns to the example of the independence of East Timor, linking this with “the role of hedge funds, the onset of the Asian financial crisis, the fall of the Suharto regime in Indonesia” and the eventual UN intervention (ibid).

A second example, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 5, is the way that transnational corporations and international non-government organisations now interact, as both participate in international forums that were once the domain of governments only. Media conglomerates also play a key role in how these interactions are interpreted and perceived as they both set and reflect public opinion world-wide.

Given this increased interconnectedness, this thesis draws on the theoretical work of Hardt and Negri (2000; 2004) and Beck (1992) to identify two major forces currently shaping our world. First, in a world that is experiencing ‘multiple modernities’, I argue that we have seen the emergence of a dominant modernity that is ‘pathological’ in nature (see Chapter 2). While this ‘pathological modernity’ has various dimensions detailed in Chapters 3 and 4, a central one is a frontier disposition leading to a process of enclosure and commodification creating increasing levels of scarcity. It is this scarcity which is a key factor leading to the crisis of the whole. As is discussed in Chapter 4, this enclosure is focused on non-commodified spaces or commons. Beginning with the physical and institutional spheres, this process of enclosure is now entering the realms of human relationships and interactions described here as the ‘cultural commons’.

A second driver shaping our world is the rise of the anti-globalisation movement which I describe in Chapter 5 as the ‘counter-globalisation’ movement (or CGM). The CGM does not only consist of the various organisations and individuals that take part in protests around the world but, I argue, includes any individual resisting processes of commodification and enclosure. Grounding the CGM using Hardt and Negri’s (2004) notion of ‘multitude’, I argue that this resistance movement expands by establishing new non-commodified spaces or commons, thus breaking the logic of pathological modernity (see Chapter 6).

I argue that it is in this clash over the commons that is the central contestation occurring between pathological modernity and the CGM. These two key forces of globalisation have identifiable characteristics that have come to shape our world. These characteristics, in part referred to above, set the framework to discuss both the influence of pathological modernity and the rise and consequences of the counter-globalisation movement.

## **1.2 Aims of this thesis**

Given this background, the specific aims of the thesis can now be presented. These are:

- i. To use Hardt and Negri's (2000) *Empire* and Ulrich Beck's (1992) *Risk Society* to develop a framework to analyse the interrelated nature of today's global economic, political, cultural and environmental problems. This is a multi-dimensional crisis which I describe as the 'crisis of the whole'; and
- ii. To outline the various characteristics of the counter-globalisation movement (CGM) which confronts the crisis of the whole, and identify the intellectual thread that unifies this heterogeneous group.

## **1.3 Structure of this thesis**

Before continuing I will briefly discuss the structure of this thesis. To begin with, this chapter aims to contextualise this work within a time of globalisation. While global processes have existed for centuries, I argue that the increasing complexity and connectedness of international interactions today makes contemporary globalisation unique.

Chapter 2 moves to detail the *problematique* and establish the theoretical framework for this work. Here, I use the theoretical works of Hardt and Negri's (2000) *Empire* and Beck's (1992) *Risk Society* to analyse the interrelated nature of today's economic, political, cultural and environmental global problems. This is a multi-dimensional crisis which I describe as the 'crisis of the whole'. Although these works stem from different theoretical traditions, I weave together their key themes to articulate the multi-dimensional nature of the *problematique*. For example, Beck's theoretical framework presents a world dominated by risk resulting in ongoing crises but falls short of describing its cultural dimensions. It is here that I turn to the work of Hardt and Negri (2000) and their post-Foucaultian analysis of a new type of imperialism which they term *Empire*. By drawing upon these two texts and other authors, I argue that we are witnessing the emergence of a specific modernity best described as 'pathological'.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I detail the various dimensions of 'pathological modernity', arguing that it is dominated by a Cartesian logic, an operational form of biopower, a pathological reflexivity and a frontier disposition that commodifies and encloses areas once considered outside the realms of the market, particularly commons or non-commodified spaces. These dimensions combine to create a crisis of scarcity that is the basis of the crisis of the whole.

In addition to discussing the frontier disposition of pathological modernity, Chapter 4 expands upon the concept of the commons. Starting with its historical meaning, I discuss more sophisticated applications identifying commons in the area of human relations – which I describe as 'cultural commons'. It is proposed that cultural commons exist in the areas of hope, trust, safety and intellect. These cultural commons reflect the characteristics of physical commons; for if they are managed properly they promote abundance. This can be directly contrasted with the scarcity manufactured by pathological modernity.

Under pathological modernity, however, the existence of commons is precarious. Commons are under constant threat of enclosure and commodification. In the sphere of

the cultural commons, this results in hope transforming into material aspirations; trust into anxiety; safety into security; and intellect into intellectual property. It is argued that pathological modernity's commodification of the cultural commons is at the core of the crisis of scarcity driving the 'crisis of the whole'. At this point, I also introduce a 'commons/commodity typology' to highlight this process.

Chapter 5 follows with a description and analysis of the emerging global protest movement. Although this movement has been termed 'anti-globalisation', I argue that it is more aptly described as the 'counter-globalisation' movement (CGM). The growth of the CGM is evident in both the protests that now accompany most meetings of global institutions such as the World Trade Organisation and the World Bank, as well as through the proliferation of alternative globalisation forums run in parallel with meetings of groups such the World Economic Forum. In outlining the various characteristics of this heterogeneous movement, I also argue that the CGM presents us with a manifestation of Hardt and Negri's (2004) notion of multitude.

In Chapter 6 I identify the intellectual thread that unifies this movement as *the desire to defend and establish commons*. This desire to establish non-commodified spaces brings the CGM into direct conflict with pathological modernity. This is not limited to the physical sphere, but also includes institutional and cultural commons. It is through the commons that the CGM promotes abundance and works to establish 'authentic' communities. Consequently, I define the contestation between pathological modernity and the CGM as one over the commons generally, and the cultural commons more specifically. That is, while the CGM aims to establish new commons, pathological modernity moves to enclose and commodify them.

Using participatory research I also analyse the 'political space' of the CGM and argue that this movement has the *potential* to confront and challenge pathological modernity's Cartesian logic. In contrast to the totalising nature of pathological modernity, the CGM offers a plurality of alternatives that promote abundance. This is a political space that is driven by a 'politics of paradox'.

Chapter 7 looks at the broader implications of this political space. Based on the Gudeman's (2001) interpretation of Marcel Mauss in combination with Diprose's (2003) 'hand of friendship', I argue that the free and open exchange and sharing of the cultural commons is the foundation of an 'authentic' community. If pathological modernity moves to enclose these commons, then the very nature of communities are dramatically altered.

The thesis concludes by completing the typology introduced in Chapter 4 and contemplating future directions for research.

With this overview, it is now possible to present the *problematique* and theoretical framework of this thesis.



# Chapter 2: Introduction

## ***2.1 The problematique***

Zygmunt Bauman (1999) has noted that it is possible to mark generational change by the fears that rise to dominate the consciousness. The ‘war on terror’ has become one of the defining fears of the current period. Previous generations contended with conflicts that divided the globe along national lines, as well as the Cold War and the threat of nuclear conflict. However, the ‘war on terror’ has come to reflect our globalised and hybridised world. The ‘crises’ of our generation recognise no boundaries as they cross national, ideological, spiritual and cultural lines.

Terrorists can take any shape or form, strike anywhere, use any means at their disposal and appear to believe that nothing is ‘untouchable’. This echoes many other aspects of our globalised society – for similar descriptions can be used to reflect on financial markets, advertising, technology and capitalism more generally. Adjectives to describe terrorism can also be used to define our current stage of modernity – radical (Giddens 1991), fluid or possibly liquid (Bauman 1999) or even, as I discuss below, ‘pathological’.

Although the recent terrorist attacks in the US, Madrid and London seem unique by the fact that they occurred in ‘Western’ or first world cities, they can be interpreted as having broader implications.<sup>1</sup> These terrorist attacks showed that ‘it could happen to any of us’ and strike us at any place and time. The focus of the attacks has also been directed at the symbols of ‘modern’ society: high-rise buildings, mass transport systems and advanced technology. This sense of familiarity means that no-one feels safe.

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<sup>1</sup> Noam Chomsky (2003) commented that if the world’s media were only interested in the number of fatalities, such events would have only limited coverage compared to other catastrophes around the world, particularly those in low-income nations.

It is argued below that despite the fact that the ‘war on terror’ has a number of familiar characteristics, it is unique in that it represents the manifestation of a specific type of modernity which proliferates crises. This specific modernity takes many forms and has many manifestations – and the ‘war on terror’ is only one, albeit important, example. To begin with, the hybrid and global characteristics outlined above indicate that it can be potentially described as a ‘postmodern’ war. This is not a conflict between nations but between cells, networks and ideologies – crossing all boundaries.<sup>2</sup> Borrowing from Hardt and Negri’s description of a new postmodern and imperial Empire, this conflict is both decentered and de-territorialising, as it “progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers” (2000: xii).

It is also a ‘branded’ war, with a logo that is continuously being outsourced. The ‘war on terror’ can be understood to reflect an *advanced franchising strategy* available to any member of the ‘Coalition of the Willing’ to use as required. This strategy is used to crush internal dissent, invade nations and introduce laws that erode civil liberties – everywhere from the United States to Russia, Pakistan, India and Australia (Roy 2004). This ability to ‘franchise’ the ‘war on terror’ to respond to local disputes is also reflected in the amorphous character of the language used to describe it. Crocket and Lawrence (2004) argue that the war is a declared war on the *emotion* of terror rather than any physical enemy. This has allowed the protagonists to then link the war to seemingly unrelated events further fuelling the ‘war on terror’ (Crocket and Lawrence 2004).

A third unique characteristic is that this is a war with no end. Like the ‘war on drugs’, it is not a conflict that aims to subdue specific territories but is perpetual. This establishes a permanent ‘state of emergency’ that allows the parties to pursue the conflict across time and space.

The ‘war on terror’ can be understood to be promulgated by a series of crises caused by the parties involved. An insight into the escalating spiral of violence can be derived from

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<sup>2</sup> While the Cold War was an ideological battle, it was fought between states – with lines drawn and each side flying their particular flag.

Beck's (1992) *Risk Society*. Beck's analysis argues that we are facing a modernity typified by reflexivity and risks. The risks that society confronts – and Beck describes many – are socially created and endanger the very survival of the species. Likewise the terrorism we are witnessing is a socially created risk. Terrorists such as Al Qaeda have emerged because of a long history of colonialism, decades of Western (first world) foreign policy, and more recently the very policies of the United States and other members of the 'Coalition of the Willing' (Blum 2002; Johnson 2003). Such a cyclical process is described by Beck (1992) as the 'boomerang effect'.

This 'boomerang effect' was underscored in a *New York Times* (2004) editorial which reviewed the decision to invade Iraq as part of the 'war on terror'. The editor noted that despite promises that the ousting of Saddam Hussein would remove the risk of terrorism, nothing of the sort has eventuated. If anything, the war continues to be the impetus to further terrorist attacks, such as in Madrid and London. Worst still, the *New York Times* describes how the war has led to increased instability in the region with the major parties in Iraq "showing no serious signs that they are able to cooperate" (ibid). In other words, the very policies aimed at limiting terrorist action have increased its likelihood.

While terrorism provides an exemplary case of the boomerang effect, similar examples can be found by looking at other socially produced risks like global warming and nuclear accidents. Schell (2004) draws similar conclusions, arguing that the US's "destructive hyper-activity in Iraq cannot be disentangled from its neglect of global warming". In many ways this disregard of consequences is a mirror image of Al Qaeda's strikes that ignore the number of civilian fatalities. For Beck (1992), what makes these risks different is that there is no escape – they threaten us all.

While Tariq Ali (2003) describes the current conflict as a 'clash of fundamentalisms', I argue that it can also be understood as something more foundational: a manifestation of a specific type of modernity that is 'pathological' in nature. As a result, I argue that the many characteristics of the 'war on terror' are fundamental to our current experience of modernity. As these crises cross all spheres of life, they are described here as the 'crisis

of the whole', itself constituted by many smaller crises. And, as is discussed in Chapter 4, this crisis is driven by a sense of scarcity crossing all dimensions of life. Thus, while the notion of *pathological modernity* touches all dimensions of our society, the crisis it constitutes is both multi-dimensional and multifaceted.

Despite the unique features of the 'war on terror', there are a number of familiar characteristics that work to propagate the crisis of the whole. One recognisable feature of the 'war on terror' is the many ways it reflects the binaries defining much of modern Western thought. This was highlighted by the now famous speech by US President, George W. Bush (2001), when he stated: "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists". This is not restricted to the 'war on terror' but is also reflected in many of the debates surrounding it which possess the hallmarks of the 'clash of civilisations' thesis promoted by Samuel Huntington (1996).<sup>3</sup>

Another characteristic of the 'war on terror' is that a main beneficiary has been the 'defence' industry (Roy 2004). While budgets for social programs such as health and education continue to experience cutbacks, defence and security dominate domestic fiscal priorities. This then continues to create a global arms race and new nuclear states that then, in turn, create further crises of security.

Building on Hardt and Negri's (2000) *Empire* and Beck's (1992) *Risk Society* framework, pathological modernity is presented as a set of interrelated power relationships and values promoting a specific political ideology, logic and governance system. These include a Cartesian logic promoting the enclosure of all aspects of the life-world.

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<sup>3</sup> Such binaries were evident in the letters pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald* a week after the terrorist attacks in Madrid, Spain that occurred in March 2004. Discussing the cause, effect and longer-term consequences of the terrorist attacks, the debate focused on where to lay the blame. While some readers attempted to work through the complicated links between poverty, marginalisation, fundamentalism and violence, others invoked this simple 'us versus them' scenario. Those drawing the connections between Spanish foreign policy, the wider 'war on terror' and the attacks were accused of 'blaming the victim'. One letter charged those drawing these links as being 'impotent' and 'apologists'. Source: Mr Daniel Lewis, *Sydney Morning Herald* letters page – 15 March 2004.

However, as Foucault argued, power never achieves quite what it sets out to (Danaher et al 2000), and rather than creating an all inclusive ‘state of emergency’, the emergence of pathological modernity has given rise to a number of resistance movements. Key amongst these is what I describe as the ‘counter-globalisation’ movement (CGM). The CGM incorporates a wide range of social movements and non-government organisations that represent a counter-logic to pathological modernity, and has been labelled the ‘anti-globalisation’ movement. Rather than a group of incoherent, contradictory and confused activists, as painted by the popular media, here it is argued that the CGM represents a radical democratic project whose theoretical foundations can be found in Hardt and Negri’s (2004) ‘multitude’.

The concept of the ‘multitude’ has sparked debate about the exact meaning of the term and its relevance (if any) to analysing today’s social movements.<sup>4</sup> In this thesis I argue that the CGM represents one key manifestation of the multitude. This is a manifestation that breaks down the logic of pathological modernity in a number of ways. Firstly, the CGM works to both protect and establish non-commercial spaces or new commons, where pathological modernity only comprehends the operations of commodities. This is a form of resistance that challenges the very logic of pathological modernity.

Further, the democratic nature of the CGM promotes a radically different agenda that seeks to alter the foundational character of our society and establish an ‘authentic’ community. This is not a homogeneous notion of community but an open one based on alterity and radical difference rather than borders, exclusion or Hegelian recognition (see Chapter 7).

To follow this argument, I briefly turn to the work of Rosalyn Diprose (2003) and her position that ‘authentic’ community can be established by offering the hand of friendship to those who are ‘different’ – be it the ‘other’ or the stranger. Diprose argues that

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<sup>4</sup> The exact interpretation of the multitude has been the source of many debates. In Chapters 5 and 6 I further elaborate this concept, describing it as representing a potential political project and use it as a framework to better interpret today’s social movements. I also discuss the various debates that have emerged around this issue.

“community is about the sharing of meaning, but not at the expense of difference; community is not a unity of shared meanings that at best tolerates difference, but rather community lives *for* difference” (2003: 36; emphasis in original). To make the point, Diprose draws on the metaphor of the handshake to signify the bond of community. This is extended to the ‘other’ even if we may not recognise, relate to or even understand them. By extending an open handshake, community begins as difference is acknowledged, received and reciprocated.

This claim is central, not only because it brings together different bodies, but because of what is exchanged. I argue the exchange and shared in Diprose’s handshake involves more than just the offer of friendship but includes an offer of hope, trust, a sense of safety, as well as a desire to share intellect. In short it is an exchange and sharing of what I describe as ‘cultural commons’.

A key to this sharing is the concept of reciprocity. Diprose also argues that the hand of friendship must be offered in return. And again, if we build on what the hand of friendship is actually offering, we can see that community will emerge and remain vibrant if the offer to sharing the cultural commons is reciprocated. Importantly, this does not require a common subjectivity, but rather what Oliver (2001) has described as an ‘open space’.

## ***2.2 Why pathological modernity?***

Medical terms have a long association with the social sciences. A term such as ‘contagion’ conjures up specific medical images of the human (physical) body, but is also a powerful description of events that occur in the social body.

The *Medical On-line Dictionary* describes ‘pathology’ as that branch of “medicine concerned with disease, especially its structure and its functional effects on the body”.<sup>5</sup> Here, the ‘structure’ of disease is thought of as the “mode of construction of an animate or inanimate body or system from units such as atoms, ions, molecules, cells, crystals in a fluid, plastic, or solid state” (ibid).

Analogous to the way ‘contagion’ is used to describe the domino effect of collapsing economies, here the structural movement of disease can be used to illustrate how ideologies travel around the social body (IMF 1999). Substituting disease with ‘logic’ or possibly ‘ideology’, we can see how this definition of pathology can also come to represent how ideologies filter throughout the social body. The ideas associated with ideological positions, if successful, infiltrate all aspects of the social body – from the animate to inanimate, from the largest structures (or molecules) to the smallest division or individual (or atom).

Additionally, this branch of medicine is also interested in how diseases come to reproduce or replicate themselves. For example, do the symptoms come from external lesions, structural changes or internal organs? How, for example, do cancer cells divide and reproduce abnormally with uncontrolled growth? Or how do such cells “break away and travel to other parts of the body and set up another site” – a process referred to as ‘metastasis’.<sup>6</sup> This concept, again transferred to the realm of society, can describe the transfer of ideas from one social organ to others not directly connected. We can also attempt to understand how these ideas persist and reproduce themselves, despite the fact that, like cancer, they threaten the very body to which they belong.

From a psychological perspective, ‘pathological’ also relates to behaviour that is habitual, maladaptive, and compulsive.<sup>7</sup> This is a behaviour that does not consider the

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<sup>5</sup> Sourced from: <http://cancerweb.ncl.ac.uk/> - accessed April 2004. The *Medical On-line Dictionary* is published by University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle, United Kingdom (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/>).

<sup>6</sup> Sourced from: <http://cancerweb.ncl.ac.uk/cgi-bin/omd?Cancer+cells> - accessed April 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.yourdictionary.com/ahd/p/p0111900.html> - accessed September 2004.

consequences of its actions and does not alter despite the repercussions. One obvious example is ‘pathological lying’.

Thus, the term ‘pathological’ is used to describe this current stage of modernity because it is a modernity that, like the medical description above, replicates itself by constituting ongoing crises. Further, the behaviour, policies or actions that lead to these crises are habitual and the likely consequences improperly considered.<sup>8</sup>

As noted, the ‘war on terror’ is simply one manifestation of pathological modernity for it is a crisis that continues to replicate itself. This is reflected in many ways, including in the responses of world leaders who have chosen to pursue policies that aggravate the conflict rather than reverse current trends. Examples include the US government’s training of and alliance with Osama bin Laden and the Mujahadeen (and hence Al Qaeda), as well as the arming of Saddam Hussein, and the eventual invasion of Iraq that has since spawned new resistance movements (Johnson 2003). These policies create the breeding grounds for terrorism and replicate the violence that they are attempting to stop.

## **2.3 Another ‘modernity’ or a tool for social research?**

Before elaborating on the characteristics and theoretical foundations of this thesis, it is important to discuss the use of the term ‘pathological modernity’ and place it in context. By adopting the term ‘pathological modernity’, I am not arguing for a ‘new type’ of modernity, rather this term is used to depict certain characteristics of our life experience. Confirmation of this is sought not by empirical evidence alone, but by analysing, observing and reflecting on emerging events and the responses of the various parties involved.

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<sup>8</sup> The issue of pathological behaviour has recently been applied to corporations in the popular media through documentaries such as *The Corporation* based on the book by Joel Bakan (2004). However, the term ‘pathological’ was also used in the Habermasian account of law and modern rationality as a system which regulates the life-world. According to Kelly (2004), the incursion of a pathological rationality into the life-world has pathological consequences.



Similar methodological approaches underpin the main theoretical works used in this thesis – Hardt and Negri’s (2000) *Empire* and (2004) *Multitude*, as well as Beck’s (1992) *Risk Society*. For example, when discussing ‘class’, Hardt and Negri (2004) note that this is not simply an empirical concept but, like ‘race’, defined politically. For Hardt and Negri class is better determined by identifying collective struggles rather than using empirical data alone.

As I will discuss in Chapter 5 Hardt and Negri have, however, been heavily criticised for lacking empirical evidence. For example, both Callinicos (2002) and Aronowitz (2002) criticise Hardt and Negri because their claim that ‘immaterial labour’ now holds a central place within the labour force lacks empirical support. Hardt and Negri respond by arguing that immaterial labour is central not because it represents the majority of the labour force, but rather because of the “growing importance of the immaterial forms of property that it produces” (2004: 115).<sup>9</sup>

Likewise Goldblatt (1996) is critical of the lack of empirical data in Beck’s description of the risk society.<sup>10</sup> Goldblatt accuses Beck of offering only anecdotal evidence, saying that Beck presents interesting insights but fails to empirically confirm the case for a new modernity. Goldblatt acknowledges that while risks and perceptions may have increased, Beck’s acid test that this has fundamentally reorganised society remains to be proven.

In what can only be described as a strange twist, Beck himself has launched his own project to investigate the empirical evidence required to confirm his claims (see Beck et al 2003). As part of this project, Bruno Latour was invited to “test the project of reflexive modernisation” (2003: 35). Beck seems to have turned his attention to empirical evidence more than ten years after authoring *Risk Society*. In this new project, Beck appears to be reflecting the scientific rationality that he earlier criticised.

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<sup>9</sup> In Chapter 5 I discuss the way that Hardt and Negri use the concept of ‘immaterial labour’ as well as some criticisms that have emerged in response to this.

<sup>10</sup> A summary of Beck’s position is detailed in Chapter 3 – Section 3.2.

Latour asks a simple question: “How do we prove that re-modernisation is occurring?” (2003: 35). In reviewing Beck’s work, Latour reminds us that the aim of such writings may not necessarily be to create a new grand narrative but rather to interpret and understand what is happening in the world with the aim of affecting positive change. Latour praises Beck’s attempts to establish a ‘general theory’ – something that could also be used to describe Hardt and Negri’s work. However, Latour questions the need for the provision of empirical proof, noting that he has:

... no special sympathy for the notion of master narratives but neither have I reason to reject them since in the social theory I work with, there is *no other way* to build a society than thrashing out... constantly new interpretations that gathers us together. (2003: 41; emphasis in original)

It is from this position that I contextualise the concept of ‘pathological modernity’. This term is not meant to create a new grand narrative but rather acts as a vehicle to outline important emerging trends. Pathological modernity attempts to bring together various theoretical ideas to draw links and to establish a framework for analysis.

A further aim of this research is to use this analysis to promote progressive change. This is exactly what Latour is encouraging Beck to do rather than becoming embroiled in debates focusing on ‘empirical proof’:

The power of a social theory is different in both cases and should be evaluated differently. Re-modernisation might not describe what has already happened, but it can offer a powerful lever to make new things happen. This is where the difference between descriptive and normative theories breaks down. It makes perfect sense, for me, to propose an interpretation of science, subjectivities and industry that builds Dewey’s public, even though the proof is not all there. After all, this is exactly what the modernist thinkers, from Rousseau to Weber, have always done... To be sure, social scientists are not demiurges, nor do they occupy a vanguard position, but it is also their duty, in the situation of common ignorance

so typical of public space, to offer alternatives to earlier versions of the social link. On that score, re-modernisation is a powerful proposition because it shifts attention from the mainstream... to the discrepancies, cracks, failures and side-effects, and it claims that, with all those bizarre and disconnected phenomena, barely visible to the majority, it can produce a coherent picture of a European world which has outgrown progress. (2003: 46)

This position is also reflected in the work of a wide range of authors ranging from feminist to post-colonial. Researcher Maria Mies takes this position to its logical conclusion when discussing feminist research, arguing “the aim of the women’s movement is not just to study but overcome women’s oppression and exploitation” (1991: 63). Therefore, we do not just report on the world but aim to change it. This is because, according to Ezzy, we are not “objects” but “participants” (2002: 48). Stanfield argues that the “oppressed” have little chance to create their own realities, so the researcher has a role in establishing this opportunity (1998: 348). As a result, there is certainly room to integrate political aspects into research.<sup>11</sup>

Post-colonial writers such as Said (1979) and Mukherjee (1998) also discuss and extend this issue of personal engagement. Such theorists argue for the need to ensure that the different voices of those we study are heard and not just analysed. However, Mukherjee also warns against presuming all the subjects we study are seen as having a single voice. For Said, the production of knowledge always requires the author’s own involvement which has political implications at both a societal and personal level:

For if it is true that no knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author’s involvement as a human subject in his own circumstances, then it must also be true that for a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disclaiming the main circumstances of his actuality: that he comes

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<sup>11</sup> Importantly, I am trying to avoid simple binaries, such as those argued by Franklin (2001), in which you are either being objective or subjective. Rather, I attempt to be detached and ensure scholarly validity, while acknowledging both my cultural influences and political leanings. I discuss the political implications of my position in Appendix A.

up against the Orient as a European or American first, as an individual second. And to be a European or American in such a situation is by no means an inert fact. It meant and means being aware, however dimly, that one belongs to a power with definite interests in the Orient, and more important, that one belongs to a part of the earth with a definite history of involvement in the Orient almost since the time of Homer. (1979: 11)

Like much other interpretive research, this thesis aims to challenge a logic reproduced and unquestioned in everyday life, and seeks to provide a blueprint for change (Raynor and Malone 1998). As I decided to employ participatory research, the relationships formed with the subjects of this thesis will inevitably influence them as I participate in the events investigated (see also Appendix A). Likewise, the interactions will also influence me. These subjects include many ‘victims’ of pathological modernity, including those who have suffered the consequences of enclosure and exclusion including displaced workers and asylum seekers. Mies argues that researchers should work to overcome the “oppression and exploitation” they witness (1991: 63). It is from this position that this thesis is presented.

## ***2.4 Pathological Modernity – a provisional diagnosis***

While the ‘war on terror’ highlights only one manifestation of the many crises facing humanity, it emphasises a number of fundamental experiences of modernity. This section briefly introduces the theoretical foundations of this thesis by outlining what I consider to be the four central dimensions of pathological modernity. To establish the theoretical foundations of pathological modernity I draw mainly on the work of Hardt and Negri’s (2000) *Empire* and Beck’s (1992) *Risk Society*. Though laying a strong theoretical foundation, these works individually do not adequately explain the functioning of pathological modernity. By building on these theoretical perspectives we can, however, gain insights into how pathological modernity operates, constitutes crises, and uses these to expand and reproduce itself.

No single ideology or nation adequately portrays the emergence and operations of pathological modernity. Neoliberalism, for example, is a key component but fails to capture the broader ideological machinations of pathological modernity. Likewise, while the United States plays a central role in the ongoing expansion of pathological modernity, as it does in Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000), it is not the only driver and requires the cooperation of a wider group of actors – such as Sklair's (1996; 2000) 'transnational capital class' (TCC). According to Sklair the processes of globalisation are not attributable to any nation. Rather they are the work of four broad factions which include: the executives of transnational corporations and their local affiliates; globalising bureaucrats; capitalist inspired politicians and professionals; and finally, consumer elites. Specifically Sklair argues that the TCC are working to promote a model of economic globalisation based around specific ideals:

What the TCC does as a class is to give a unity to diverse economic interests, political structures and cultural and ideological formations of a very disparate group. The cultural-ideology of global capitalist consumerism is the value system that keeps the system intact. (1996: 12)

Pathological modernity describes a dominant logic and set of interrelated power relationships that operate through global institutions, governance systems as well as entering the biopolitical sphere. Key here is the process of constituting an ongoing 'state of emergency' that allows crises to perpetuate. These manufactured crises both enforce and expand this dominant logic and the relations of power it embodies. The following four dimensions of pathological modernity are introduced to describe the interrelated nature of these relationships. I expand on each dimension in Chapters 3 and 4.

The first dimension of pathological modernity is a 'Cartesian logic' which is characterised by certainty and an 'eternal right', and driven by a Promethean scientific rationality and free market fundamentalism. Despite these promises of certainty pathological modernity generates uncertainty and risks through the creation of ongoing

crises and insecurity. As will be discussed in Section 3.3, this manufactures a ‘state of emergency’ which causes the wider population to embrace these ‘promises of certainty’ even as they fail to eventuate.

The Cartesian logic has a number of interrelated characteristics which bring together the globalised juridical and political governance structures at the core of Hardt and Negri’s (2000) *Empire*, and the scientism at the centre of Beck’s (1992) *Risk Society*. This is a logic that is globalised and continuously reproduced by international institutions including the World Bank and export credit agencies.

The second dimension of pathological modernity is an operational form of biopower. The term ‘operational’ is used because it embodies both disciplinary techniques of power such as surveillance, with the production of subjectivities that legitimate the Cartesian logic of pathological modernity. This promotes the reproduction of the Cartesian logic throughout the wider population who come to embrace it and its ‘promises of certainty’. Cartesian logic enters the language of the everyday reflecting Cartesian logic’s ‘eternal right’ and becomes ‘normalised’ as the ‘natural state of affairs’.

The third dimension of pathological modernity is ‘pathological reflexivity’. That is, pathological modernity is self-referential, never withdrawing when it constitutes crises but rather dramatically changing form and expanding in areas once outside its domain. As discussed in Section 3.5, this is pathologically reflexive because it is both self-perpetuating and reactionary, rather than self critical and democratic.

The crises created by pathological modernity highlight the contradictions within its own Cartesian logic. However, its pathological reflexivity combines with promises of certainty to allow it to continually expand.

The fourth key dimension of pathological modernity is a ‘frontier disposition’ that continuously expands to enclose non-commodified spaces or commons. This dimension of pathological modernity is directly linked with both Cartesian logic’s free market

fundamentalism and its reflexivity. Here pathological modernity identifies commons as areas of potential conflict that can only be efficiently and appropriately managed through the disciplines of the market. In this way, pathological modernity moves to enclose commons that are freely shared by all and transform them into commodities to be traded.

## **2.5 Resistance and the counter-globalisation movement**

I have noted that the rise of the CGM has paralleled the emergence of pathological modernity. I argue that we can assess the ongoing struggle of this movement using Hardt and Negri's (2000; 2004) notion of multitude. The CGM presents one key manifestation of the multitude, and is an active political agent in challenging pathological modernity and its dominant commodifying logic both establishing new commons and defending existing ones.

In their more recent work *Multitude*, Hardt and Negri expand upon and further discuss the concept of the multitude. They respond to their many critics by solidifying the concept and attempting to qualify it in today's progressive activist movements, such as the White Overalls – see Chapter 5 – Section 5.5. Hardt and Negri follow the growth of the anti-systemic struggles including the first uprising of the Zapatistas, the convergence in Seattle and Genoa and the massive anti-war protests in early 2003. Hardt and Negri believe that we are seeing the materialisation of the multitude at such events.

In the process, Hardt and Negri distinguish the multitude from other 'social subjects' such as the 'people', the 'masses' and the 'working class'. Hardt and Negri argue that these other 'social subjects' of traditional social theory tend to be unitary subjects that 'grey out' difference. The key difference for Hardt and Negri is that the multitude is:

... composed of innumerable internal differences that can never be reduced to a unity or a single identity – different cultures, races, ethnicities, genders and sexual

orientations; different forms of labour; different ways of living; different views of the world; and different desires. (2004: xiv)

Analysing the CGM is difficult because of changes in traditional markers such as those of class, state and political economy – but this also offers new possibilities. In fact, Hardt and Negri argue that in our postmodern times, the defining boundaries between these categories have started to collapse. New forms of political struggle must be conceptualised within a paradigm applicable to the conditions of contemporary society where the prospects for a single unifying agency have vanished – and it is this that is provided by Hardt and Negri's concept of multitude. While many believe that the idea of multitude falls short, I believe that the heterogeneous character of the CGM enables it to be theoretically grounded by the notion of the multitude.

The key to understanding the CGM's agenda is how it unites a number of different social movements, both new and old. In many ways, the CGM seems to have transcended and moved beyond the left-right political divide, identity and class politics. It is multi-dimensional, heterogeneous and defies traditional structures. It includes formal organisations (like AID/WATCH and Friends of the Earth), as well as individuals and informal 'affinity' groups and networks. As the movement develops a multifarious personality, it has witnessed the fusion of different groups highlighting alternative platforms. For example, former one-dimensional environmentalists are now making the link between the environmental crisis and the issues of debt and poverty, global economic structures and colonialism on which this crisis rests (see Arvanitakis and Healy 2001). Just as important are the links between these groups and third and fourth world organisations and movements – something I discuss in Chapter 5 – Section 5.4.

In discussing the multitude, Hardt and Negri argue that the agenda for radical change emerges because the movements involved are 'working in common' to build a 'language in common' that allows the desire for liberation to be communicated across borders and boundaries. Although I agree, I build on this by arguing that the key to effective political agency is the establishment and reciprocal, non-commercial exchange and sharing of



*commons*. This establishes a radicalised open community based on difference that promotes the further formation of the multitude. This is a community that is “democratic and autonomous, outside of political representation and hierarchy” (Hardt 1996: 5).

Here we can turn to the counter-globalisation movement for an example – specifically the groups working for refugee rights. The continued imprisonment of refugees has been a long contested issue. While the Australian government has continued to pursue a policy of exclusion and marginalisation, resistance movements have appeared in many different forms challenging this position. These resistance movements range from lobbying organisations such as Chilout<sup>12</sup>, support networks such as Rural Australians for Refugees<sup>13</sup>, to more militant groups, such as No-one is Illegal<sup>14</sup>, involved in the Woomera breakout in 2002<sup>15</sup>. Though the relationship between these groups has not always been harmonious, they have worked together ‘in common’ to build a ‘language in common’ in their struggles against the detention of refugees.

While these groups range in size, strategies and membership, they offer a physical manifestation of Diprose’s ‘hand of friendship’ to those held in detention. What is being offered however, goes far beyond the physical hand or the ‘language in common’, and enters into an open sharing of *cultural commons* – a sense of hope and trust that is not limited to recognition. These types of non-commercial relationships break down the dominant logic of pathological modernity. By offering an exchange and sharing of cultural commons, where walls exist, the CGM creates windows. Pockets of resistance may appear futile in the current environment but, in reality, the erosion of the logic that limits our choices to passports and detention centres, attacks the politics of exclusion at its very core. And it is here that the CGM operates and we see new commons emerge.

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<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.chilout.org/> - accessed February 2005.

<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/> - accessed February 2005.

<sup>14</sup> No-One is Illegal (NOII) is discussed in detail in Chapter 5 – Section 5.3.

<sup>15</sup> The Woomera breakout refers to the events surrounding a group of protesters that held a vigil at the Woomera Detention Centre in the Australian desert. The aim was to protest the Australia government’s treatment of refugees. On 29 March 2002, this group of protesters assisted a break out of detainees. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/2069478.stm> - accessed October 2004. Follow up protests were held at the Baxter Detention Centre during Easter 2005 (see [www.baxter05.info](http://www.baxter05.info) - accessed March 2005).

## **2.6 Concluding comments**

This chapter introduced the concept of the ‘crisis of the whole’ and how it is constituted and reproduced by pathological modernity. One important manifestation of the crisis of the whole detailed here is the ‘war on terror’. This is because it is a conflict continually promulgated by a series of crises that are caused by the very parties involved. The ‘war on terror’, however, provides only one example of this crisis which underpins our experiences of modernity.

In the chapters that follow I further detail the separate dimensions of pathological modernity which were introduced earlier. These dimensions cross all spheres of life and provide insight into why experiences such as the ‘war on terror’ and ongoing environmental degradation act to compel the logic behind pathological modernity rather than challenge it. To do this, I draw together the theoretical frameworks of both Hardt and Negri’s (2000) *Empire* and Beck’s (1992) *Risk Society* before turning to discuss the movement that directly confronts the Cartesian logic.

# Chapter 3: Pathological Modernity

## 3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2 the term ‘pathological modernity’ was introduced as the theoretical framework of this thesis. This chapter outlines the first three dimensions of this framework.

The dynamic of pathological modernity is highlighted in the most recent book of anti-nuclear campaigner, Dr Helen Caldicott (2004), *The New Nuclear Danger*. Caldicott describes the size and destructive capacity of both the US military and 40 other “nuclear capable” nations which share almost 53,000 nuclear weapons (2004: 1). In summary, Caldicott’s argument is that the end of the Cold War has not marked any easing of nuclear tensions. Indeed, the combination of old and new generation nuclear weaponry with the ongoing threat of terrorism has arguably resulted in a world that has never been closer to nuclear conflict.

Although the doctrine of nuclear deterrence has been discredited, it continues to be pursued in order to achieve a stable geopolitical climate, thereby reinforcing global insecurity.<sup>1</sup> Paradoxically, even though increased military expenditure including that on nuclear weaponry generates insecurity and heightened anxiety, governments continue to bolster the institutions at the centre of the military industrial complex. In fact, military spending remains a top priority for most (if not all) national governments, something

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<sup>1</sup> The contradiction of pursuing global stability through an arms race is well established and has been well documented by various authors including Chomsky (2003), Blum (2002) and Johnson (2003). In summary, each author concludes that such a policy simply increases instability.

dramatically reinforced by the emergence of the ‘war on terror’.<sup>2</sup> As a result, instability continues and is reinforced.

This instability creates a *spiral* of anxiety and geo-political tension leading to even greater military expenditure exemplifying the operations and workings of pathological modernity. From this ‘spiral of anxiety’ emerge solutions that intensify the original crisis. Such logic cuts across all dimensions of life including the social, cultural, political, environmental and economic domains. The result is a multi-dimensional crisis described in Chapter 2 as the ‘crisis of the whole’, threatening the very existence of the planet.

Using the theoretical framework of ‘pathological modernity’, this chapter explains why the ‘crisis of the whole’ emerges and persists. At the core of pathological modernity is a Cartesian logic mediated by an operational form of biopower that is pathologically reflexive. These three dimensions of pathological modernity illuminate a theoretical tradition that privileges individualism, competition and self interest over communal interactions and cooperation and that combine to progress a frontier disposition which acts to *enclose the commons* – something I return to in Chapter 4.

### **3.2 A theoretical framework**

As discussed above, pathological modernity is manifested in many ways including through the ‘war on terror’, Caldicott’s ‘new nuclear danger’ and through global environmental degradation. Although these are specific examples, I argue here that they highlight a fundamental experience of modernity. This is the ongoing creation and proliferation of crises linked by a globalised logic that promises to overcome all challenges but in reality aggravates them.

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<sup>2</sup> Estimates by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) indicate that in 2004 global military expenditure exceeded US\$1 trillion for the first time since the Cold War. Almost half of this figure is attributed to the United States. Sourced from the SIPRI database: [http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex\\_database1.html](http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_database1.html) - accessed May 2005.

The theoretical frameworks that I draw on to formulate the operations of pathological modernity are Hardt and Negri's (2000) *Empire* and Beck's (1992) *Risk Society*. Drawing on these ideas I argue that pathological modernity operates across a number of spheres – cutting transversely through the material/institutional sphere, cultural/bio-political sphere and across time and space.

It is important to note, however, that the works of Hardt and Negri and Beck come from very different traditions and consequently cannot be easily merged. My aim here is not to argue that they are seamlessly coherent but rather to interpret, discuss and elaborate upon some of their central themes. Woven together this way, they enable us to better understand our experience of modernity and gain a multi-dimensional insight into the emergence and persistence of today's many crises. By taking specific themes from these authors rather than looking for simple overlaps between them, I build the framework of pathological modernity.

Before discussing the various dimensions of pathological modernity, I outline the key arguments of the above theorists pertaining to this thesis.<sup>3</sup>

## **Contextualising Hardt and Negri's 'Empire'**

In contextualising Hardt and Negri's arguments, it is important to note that *Empire* is situated between two formative events; the first Gulf War and the Kosovo intervention.<sup>4</sup> Hardt and Negri use the concept of 'Empire' to explain these events, arguing that the logic surrounding them represents the emergence of a new form of global sovereignty.

Hardt and Negri start by describing a new way of conceptualising capitalist exploitation. Unlike Lenin's (1965) classic text *Imperialism*, Hardt and Negri do not rely on the

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<sup>3</sup> I refer to additional aspects of both Hardt and Negri and Beck's works in later sections of this thesis as relevant dimensions of their work arise. The following section merely aims to contextualise the position of these theorists.

<sup>4</sup> As a result, Hardt and Negri ask the reader to "situate the argument" they present, but also emphasise that their discussion reaches well beyond these two events (2000: xvii).

nation-state's desire for capitalist expansion to explain extension and domination. Hardt and Negri's position is that a de-centring of state power makes such explanations unlikely. Rather, Hardt and Negri believe there is a 'trans-nationalisation' of capitalist logic that simultaneously facilitates the demise of the nation-state while preserving imperialism. That is, there now exists imperialism without an imperialist.

'Empire' then, represents a *new sovereignty* underscored by a logic and juridical system that overtakes traditional imperialist strategies and enters the biopolitical sphere.<sup>5</sup>

'Empire' is characterised by a network of relationships of power that asymmetrically grow in all directions. There emerges a system of global exchange based on these biopolitical relationships further embedding Empire's logic.

In some ways, *Empire* expands Negri's (1991) thesis of 'real subsumption' into this new theory of sovereignty.<sup>6</sup> That is, in conditions of real subsumption of *the social* by capital there is no longer an 'outside'. The result is the emergence of a single immanent ontology constituted through a capitalist logic existing everywhere.

This new sovereignty that Hardt and Negri describe as 'Empire' thus knows no bounds and is everywhere. Rather than centred on the nation-state, this is a global postmodern sovereignty. Consequently, the events of Iraq and Kosovo should be viewed not as 'invasions' but as 'police interventions'. The result is that the world is in the process of becoming a 'one world Empire' involving an integrated global capitalist system on a legal and governmental level that regulates all interpersonal exchanges.

Since its publication, a number of events have resulted in increasing debate regarding the relevance of *Empire*, most notably the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks and the 'war on terror'. Much of this debate centres on Hardt and Negri's dismissal of the nation-state

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<sup>5</sup> Based on Foucault's theory of 'biopower', Hardt and Negri present a new form of 'biopolitical production' which refers to a power – in this case 'Empire' – that creates subjectivities. Interestingly, though much of their thesis relies on Foucaultian interpretations of biopower, Hardt and Negri spend little time discussing or contextualising his work. I discuss biopower and Hardt and Negri's brief interpretation in more detail later in this chapter.

<sup>6</sup> The term 'real subsumption' is a Marxist concept but was elaborated by Negri (1991) from this original interpretation and, as noted, is further elaborated in *Empire*.

particularly with the continued rise of the US as a global superpower. For the purposes of my thesis, the importance of Hardt and Negri's text lies in its articulation of a global sovereignty that is both beyond the nation-state and mediated by a new form of biopolitics. As is discussed below, I use this conceptualisation of power to describe the underlying logic of pathological modernity and its claims for certainty and right, as well as its frontier commodifying disposition.

The other important element of *Empire* for this work is that Hardt and Negri argue that we should not resist this globalised 'Empire' or be nostalgic for old forms of order dominated by the nation-state. Rather, Hardt and Negri believe we should embrace Empire's technologies and direct it towards progressive and emancipatory revolutionary change. This is a radical departure from many other authors identified with progressive politics, and borders on an optimism which has resulted in accusations of utopianism. I outline these criticisms and respond to them in Chapter 5 – Section 5.5.<sup>7</sup>

### **Beck's 'Risk Society'**

Though different in many ways, Beck's (1992) seminal text, *Risk Society*, also describes a system of global exchange. *Risk Society* is an expansive thesis that Beck has revisited many times since its original publication. As a result, 'risk society' has become a *framework* now addressed by many authors. There are four important themes from this framework particularly relevant to this thesis.

Beck first argues that 'risk' has become the dynamic thread of our time, underscoring many of the universal problems of modernity. Much like the power relationships in *Empire*, Beck argues that the logic of risk society is not peripheral to, but systematically embedded within modernity itself. Because risks are central to modernity, they emerge from the daily decisions of life particularly in the economic/industrial and political

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<sup>7</sup> Since *Empire*, Hardt and Negri have released *Multitude* (2004). Although having a different focus this new text responds to many criticisms levelled at their earlier work. I discuss the many issues raised in this later text in Chapter 5 including Hardt and Negri's positioning of today's social movements.

spheres. This brings Beck to argue that risks are industrially produced, resulting from decision making in investments and in boardrooms. For Beck this means that “the structuring of the future is taking place indirectly and unrecognisably in research laboratories and executive suites” (1992: 223). Beck states that politics is now limited to legitimating these decisions and if required, ‘cleaning up the mess’ when these decisions go wrong.

The second theme is the response of ‘science’ and scientific experts to the emergence of the risk society. Beck attacks the philosophy and role of an unreflective “scientism”, its instrumental rationality and claims to truth in compounding contemporary risks (ibid: 2). Beck argues that this scientism is ‘deluded’ when dealing with risks because it sees them as technical problems to be overcome by appropriate management techniques. However, constrained by an unreflective cultural heritage, it merely succeeds in amplifying risks. Although unintended, these risks are aggravated to the point that annihilation of the entire planet is possible – much like the nuclear deterrent issue I discussed earlier.

The third theme relevant here is Beck’s use of the concept of reflexivity. This is also discussed by Giddens who notes that reflexivity “consists in the fact social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character” (1995: 90). Giddens argues that reflexivity is a defining characteristic of all human action, and in modernity it takes on a significant and radicalised role applying to all aspects of human life. The individual is thus not unchangeable but can take advantage of changing possibilities and write their own biography (Beck et al 2003; Beck 1992).

Reflexivity also exists within the institutions of modernity which alter their practices with incoming information and changing circumstances.<sup>8</sup> For Beck (1992), reflexive modernisation is a key dimension driving risk society. It describes the changes in the social structure of society occurring because modernity is now self-referential. Beck et al

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<sup>8</sup> Reflexivity has both positive and negative aspects – something I detail later in this chapter.



argue that these changes lead to a “radical transformation of the principles and institutions of modern society” (2003: 1).

Consequently, under conditions of risk society, many aspects of life that were once presumed natural, stable and necessary are now contingent on changing social structures – the fourth important theme here. This includes areas such as science, technology, family, gender roles, social class and occupation. For Beck this opens up the potential for radical change by overthrowing prior ordained boundaries – although he does acknowledge that such possibilities are unequally distributed. Consequently, while this opens up opportunities for some members of society, it also serves to create additional limitations for others.

From the erosion of such structures emerges a process of individualisation which Beck describes as “individuation” (1992: 128). Beck argues that in risk society we see the abovementioned social structures undergoing change while many entrenched inequalities persist. Consequently we see the “individualisation of social inequality” which causes breakdown and isolation for individuals (ibid: 136). The relevance of this for this thesis is that the breakdown of class, family and other structures creates a sense of isolation and individualism resulting in a cycle of competition. That is, the social and political structures that may have once supported communities have dissolved to the extent that each individual must compete for the limited opportunities available.

Though both *Empire* and *Risk Society* have strong theoretical foundations, neither adequately explain the functioning of pathological modernity. By weaving together key themes from each and building on them, I characterise how pathological modernity operates by constituting the crises that allow it to expand and reproduce itself. For example, Beck describes how the globalisation of risks creates crises. By turning to Hardt and Negri, it is possible to understand how the logic that creates these risks continues to permeate and expand rather than retreat. This is because this risk logic is underscored by power relationships embedded within a specific juridical and political system of governance and rationality that has emerged and globalised in our postmodern world.

In Chapter 2 – Section 2.4, I argued that no single ideology or nation can sufficiently explain the emergence and operations of pathological modernity. While neoliberalism, the associated rise of the global market and the cultural dominance of the United States as the sole superpower are important, these factors alone fail to explain the wider ideological phenomena of pathological modernity.

It was noted above that pathological modernity expands by creating and escalating the crisis of the whole. At its core, pathological modernity is dominated by a Cartesian logic that perpetuates this crisis – and it is here this analysis begins.

### **3.3 *Cartesian logic***

The first dimension of pathological modernity is a ‘Cartesian logic’ characterised by certainty and an eternal right primarily in the form of scientific rationality and free market fundamentalism. This logic has a number of closely interrelated characteristics which combine established governance structures and processes that cross both the juridical and political system at the core of Hardt and Negri’s (2000) *Empire*, and the scientism at the centre of Beck’s (1992) *Risk Society* framework.

It is important to note that while I describe various characteristics of this Cartesian logic separately, they are closely interrelated. For example, the market fundamentalism I discuss is based on an economic paradigm historically modelled on the natural sciences. Brauer (2001) for example, describes how the laws of supply and demand are seen by economists as divine and analogous to the universal laws of thermodynamics. This creates a certainty in decision making that is enveloped by a notion of universal and eternal truth reflected by both an unreflective scientism and a quasi-religious belief in markets.

Consequently, the current application of both economics and science is significant in understanding pathological modernity and its drive for certainty. It is with this ‘certainty’ that I begin the following analysis.

## **Certainty and the eternal right**

I have noted that pathological modernity reinforces its own legitimacy and logic by confidently offering solutions to the very crises it causes. The solutions offered by pathological modernity are delivered with ‘promises of certainty’. This is despite the fact that it generates uncertainty through the creation of the crisis of the whole. This process also manufactures an ongoing ‘state of emergency’ which causes the wider population to embrace these ‘promises of certainty’ even as they fail to eventuate.<sup>9</sup> Both Beck (1997) and Gleeson (2000) note that such ‘promises of certainty’ explain the large appeal of today’s dominant paradigms, particularly in times of insecurity. This need for certainty is described by Wynne as a central “cultural aspiration” of modern Western society (1996: 71).

‘Promises of certainty’ are central to understanding the emergence of the crisis of the whole for they lead to the pathological pursuit of policies with little, if any, regard for their consequences. This is a central concern in Beck’s *Re-invention of Politics*, where he describes the emergence of a “constructed and constructive” certainty that absorbs and eliminates questions and reservations (1997: 63). If reservations are raised, Gleeson (2000) argues that certainty is aggressively constructed with a sense of assurance. For example, pathological modernity offers us certainty that a “post-scarcity world awaits us on the other side of economic/market rationality” even though the immediate experience has been shown to be one of increasing instability and scarcity (Goldman 1997: 24).

With ‘promises of certainty’, pathological modernity simultaneously rallies against doubt, uncertainty and precaution. In fact, there emerges an intolerance of doubt,

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<sup>9</sup> The concept of a manufactured ‘state of emergency’ is discussed in detail in Chapter 6 – Section 6.4.

questioning and reservations that in part defines pathological modernity. The policies, processes and institutions of pathological modernity set their course with confidence, and dismiss issues of precaution or concern – despite the emergence of the Precautionary Principle as a key scientific code. For example, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has ruled repeatedly that if the Precautionary Principle cannot be implemented in a manner that is consistent with its trade rules, then it is to be overridden.<sup>10</sup>

Beck (1997) sees an ongoing conflict between the politics of certainty and those who raise doubts. Despite this contest, the dominant discourse of certainty remains and extends beyond the areas of politics, economics and science, to an underlying belief or value system – establishing an all embracing logic that claims to be both eternally right and true. This prompts Hardt and Negri to argue that we are seeing the “crystallisation of a specific set of values... by an authority that produces and reproduces norms” surrounded by an unquestioned “notion of right” (2000: 9-10). This is an eternal right that exists everywhere and throughout time, allowing it to suspend history, presenting a past and future within its own ethical order that is “permanent, eternal and necessary” (ibid: 11).

As a consequence of this eternal right, promises of certainty are pursued analogous to a fundamentalist religion that vehemently protects its belief system, stopping others from contesting its ideas. Contrary to the original values of the Enlightenment that challenged dogmatism, this is a logic that dismisses all alternatives – both historically and in the present – branding them as irrational or naive (Beck 1997; Gleeson 2000). When alternatives emerge, they tend to be considered idiosyncratic, primitive or perhaps, ‘evil’.<sup>11</sup> This is particularly relevant when crises occur and an alternative suite of policies

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<sup>10</sup> The WTO, for example, ruled against precautionary limits for hormone treated beef introduced by the European Union. This occurred as the US claimed that such limits restrained free-markets. This is despite these limits existing to establish precautionary boundaries for any unknown side-effects of hormone treated meats. Regardless of these concerns, the WTO considered these limits to be “non-tariff barriers” (Wallach and Woodall 2004: 68).

<sup>11</sup> President Ronald Reagan’s (1982) reference to former Soviet Union (USSR) and its centralised economy as part of an “evil Empire” is one example here. The phrase “evil empire” was first used in a speech to the United Kingdom House of Commons on 8 June 1982. The term seems to have been used as a way to create a further divide between the two sides of the Cold War with the USA taking the moral high-ground.

is put forward but ignored. Such sentiments are echoed by the theologian Harvey Cox when discussing the dominance of the market:

The Market is... more like the Yahweh of the Old Testament – not just one superior deity contending with others but the Supreme Deity, the only true God, whose reign must now be universally accepted and who allows for no rivals.  
(1999: 2)

This certainty and eternal right combine to promote a process of re-writing history that reflects pathological modernity's self understanding. Davis (1992b) describes this strategy of re-writing history as double oppression – killing off the past, and preventing a new future that may be different. In other words, it has always been and is always meant to be this way. This insight may also explain why authors such as Fukuyama (1989) make claims that the history of ideology has now ended with the reign of capitalism, prompting Crowley (2000) to argue that this is an attempt to convince us that no higher stage can be achieved.<sup>12</sup>

One important example can be found in a recent editorial by the US secretary of defence, Donald Rumsfeld (2004) which justified the United States' decision to invade Iraq based on 'rightness'. Rumsfeld's certainty of this 'just cause' stirs memories of successful US engagements but ignores the disastrous wars and consequences of its involvement in South East Asia. This is followed by a re-writing of history as Rumsfeld outlines the many crimes of Saddam Hussein but ignores the role of previous US governments in both supporting and arming the Iraqi regime:

Americans do not come easily to war, but neither do Americans take freedom lightly. But when freedom and self-government take root in Iraq, and that country becomes a force for *good* in the Middle East, the *rightness of those efforts will be*

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<sup>12</sup> Fukuyama (2002a) has reiterated his claims despite the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the renewed popularity of Huntington's (1998) 'clash of civilisations' thesis and the increasing popularity of alternative forums such as the World Social Forum. I discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 7 – Section 7.2.

*just* as clear as it is today in Korea, Germany, Japan and Italy... (We have) joined a long line of generations of Americans who have fought freedom's fight. (2004; emphasis added)

In instances such as the invasion of Iraq, certainty and the eternal right of pathological modernity create a perpetual cycle of crises. As the institutions of pathological modernity claim they have the 'tools' to overcome these crises, they establish and reinforce their legitimacy with this certainty becoming so embedded that the citizenry demand that these 'tools' are put to effect.

### **Science as the answer**

These elements of Cartesian logic are found in the unreflective 'scientism' described by Beck (1992) which authoritatively offers solutions to the many challenges facing humanity regardless of the consequences. This is a science that pursues policies with certainty and is intolerant of doubts or questioning. This prompts Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (1998) to argue that the scientist in modernity has achieved an authority that historically had been the domain of sovereigns only.

Dryzek and Scholsberg (1999) categorise this perspective as cornucopian or Promethean, citing authors such as Simon and Kahn (1984) and Easterbrook (1995). Central to this argument is an "unlimited confidence in the ability of humans" – especially their technologies and their social organisation in markets – to transcend any obstacles they encounter (Dryzek and Scholsberg 1999: 41). Driven by the above-mentioned certainty and notion of an eternal right, this is combined with a belief that nature can be completely dominated. Here, continued economic growth, innovation and technology are seen as the solutions to any challenge, even those which have emerged as a result of these same policies. This was highlighted in a speech by US President George W. Bush to the Belgian parliament discussing the threat of climate change:

Our alliance is determined to show good stewardship of the earth – and that requires addressing the serious, long-term challenge of global climate change... Emerging technologies such as hydrogen-powered vehicles, electricity from renewable energy sources, clean coal technology, will encourage economic growth that is environmentally responsible. By researching, by developing, by promoting new technologies across the world, all nations, including the developing countries can advance economically, while slowing the growth in global greenhouse gases and avoiding pollutants that undermine public health. All of us can use the power of human ingenuity to improve the environment for generations to come. (Quoted in Mason 2005)

In addition to the unlimited belief in the ability of humans, this Promethean science has a number of characteristics. To begin with, it is “unreflective” as it never considers the secondary or “unintended consequences” of the solutions it proposes (Beck 1992: 174). Beck argues that this logic persists even when the solutions proposed create risks, crises and risk industries that may (and do) threaten the very existence of humanity. This ‘scientism’ is further pursued in a continuing effort to overcome the crises that it itself creates aggravating this spiral.

This Promethean perspective disregards any limitations within, or potential dangers of, the processes employed by scientific institutions. This refusal to acknowledge limitations prompts Beck to argue that science is no longer rational instead relying on dogmatic claims to maintain its central role in decision making. Furthermore, Promethean science promises to overcome all of humanity’s limitations with little (if any) inconvenience to the Western consumerist and market-based lifestyle. For example, rather than encouraging a more precautionary relationship with nature, genetic scientists are investigating the possibility of overcoming the risk of extinction of species by genetically copying DNA with the aim of potentially re-animating even extinct species (Woodford 2001). This means that current consumer ‘lifestyle’ habits do not have to be altered

despite degrading the physical environment because Promethean science will always find solutions.<sup>13</sup>

Promethean science's 'promises of certainty' means that it displaces alternative systems of knowledge by maintaining a claim to a monopoly on rationality and neutrality, despite having its objectivity challenged (Beck 1992).<sup>14</sup> The result is that science becomes analogous to dogma – from being a “taboo-breaker” freeing us from tradition, to establishing taboos that limit alternatives (Beck 1992: 57).<sup>15</sup> This is reflected in the interactions between experts and wider society which are framed in such a way that challenging the authority of science is difficult.

While Hardt and Negri (2000) do not discuss science per se, Empire's globalised juridical and political processes promote a specific logic, reflecting much of what Beck describes in the globalisation of scientific norms that underpin the risk industries threatening our existence. This Promethean belief in science is complemented by a quasi-religious belief in markets.

### **Free market fundamentalism and hyper-commodification**

Like Promethean science discussed above, the unwavering belief in 'the market' echoes the certainty of Cartesian logic's eternal right and has come to define much of today's dominant paradigm. McQueen describes this as “economic correctness” (2000: 1), while Cox argues that we are seeing an unquestioning belief in the “comprehensive wisdom [of the market] that in the past only the gods have known” (1999: 3).<sup>16</sup> Joseph Stiglitz, a

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<sup>13</sup> This belief was highlighted by US President George Bush's (Sr.) statement at the Earth Summit on the environment (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) that the “American way of life is non-negotiable”, which appeared to echo the general position of most other Western nations. This is despite the disproportionate use of the world's non-renewable resources by Western countries and the consequent impacts on the environment. The Promethean institutions of science offer solutions that do not require a review of 'our way of life'.

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion on the objectivity of science, see the seminal work by Kuhn (1968).

<sup>15</sup> However, Beck (1992) refuses to see the wider population as passive agents arguing that this dominant position of the expert is continuously challenged. I discuss this issue in Chapter 5 – Section 5.5.

<sup>16</sup> This 'religious' belief in the markets is also found in James' description of “high-end” market consultants as “priests” (1997: 2).



former chief economist of the World Bank, discusses the International Monetary Fund's belief in free market supremacy as a type of religious and ideological fervour based on "dogma" (2002: 134). Combining such observations with Milberg's (2001: 407) position that the "metaphor of the market" is now the defining logic of the economy, I argue that a *free market fundamentalism* has emerged.

The source of this belief is to be found in the neoliberal theories of which Milton Friedman's work is a key example. Bonanno notes that various versions of the liberal tradition have emphasised the need for markets to function *within* the wider perspective of society, and without such cultural bases "...the functioning of economic institutions is highly problematic" (2000: 315). Friedman's (1982) work, however, diverged from this position in arguing that market relations should take primacy over any 'other' human relationship and activity. Friedman argued that the market is not only superior to alternative decision-making mechanisms regarding the improvement of human and social conditions, but market decisions should in fact be seen as the *only* means of decision making.

In this view, Bonanno (2000) notes political freedom is dependent and, in fact, secondary to economic freedom. Bonanno argues that Friedman's position is 'the market' is an end in itself, as it is the pre-condition for a free and democratic society. Such sentiments have been repeatedly echoed by the President of the United States, George W. Bush. In a speech delivered at the White House paying tribute to the freedoms resulting from free markets, President Bush stated:

...when government attempts to substitute its own judgments for the judgments of free people, the results are usually disastrous. In contrast to the free market's invisible hand, which improves the lives of people, the government's invisible foot tramples on people's hopes and destroys their dreams. (Bush 2002)

The need to embrace 'free market reforms' is continuously re-emphasised as the 'central answer' to a more prosperous and democratic world. For example, in a speech on the

advantages of greater global economic (neoliberal) integration, Australia's federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, dismissed concerns that the benefits and costs of globalisation are being unequally shared when he argued that increased global relationships and economic growth is "a road to prosperity for all" (2001: 9). A month earlier the economics editor of *The Australian* argued that free trade policies invariably lead to economic growth that would eventually benefit all – even the most marginalised (Cuthbertson 2001).<sup>17</sup>

This type of quasi-religious belief is pursued with a certainty that continuously dismisses doubts. This is despite growing evidence of the many failings of free market policies. For example, the University of Texas' Inequality Project found that free market policies are a key factor in the ongoing rise of inequality both within and between nations (Galbraith and Kum 2002). Esteva (1997) also argues that such free market policies ignore historical events which have embedded economic inequalities and concentrations of wealth – even though such inequalities have become a defining feature of the global economy.

The belief that the market is both superior to and should *take primacy over* 'other' (human) relationships has a number of important implications. The first is that all human exchange is seen to be driven exclusively by self interest (Milberg 2001). Consequently, all human relationships are based on the pursuit of self gratification. This follows from how 'economic-man' or '*homo economicus*' is at the base economic models and assumed to drive human behaviour generally. This is a view of individuals who act to obtain the highest possible level of satisfaction without considering the wellbeing of others, something that Jacobs (1997) describes as 'methodological individualism'.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> This position persists and was again highlighted by high profile government back-bencher Malcolm Turnbull, and his calls for dramatic changes to the taxation system. In essence, Turnbull argues that the wealthier sections of society should receive tax cuts to stimulate economic activity which indirectly assists the lower socio-economic segments – something known as the 'trickle-down effect'. Sourced from: <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2005/s1451486.htm> - accessed September 2005.

<sup>18</sup> The concept of *homo-economicus* remains the dominant form of modelling human behaviour and has spread to fields beyond economics including law (see Fineman and Dougherty 2005). This remains the case despite its many assumptions having been continually questioned, challenged and dismissed.

In addition, nothing remains outside market logic. From this, it follows that everything is tradeable within the market and can therefore be considered a *commodity*. This has resulted in the continued expansion of market logic into all spheres of life leading to the phenomenon of ‘hyper-commodification’. Prominent activist and physicist Vandana Shiva (2000) describes this as the standardisation of the life-world through commodification, giving all living matter a universally accepted dollar-value. Here we see many things that were once considered outside the ambit of markets now assigned a market price. Every aspect of life must be ‘cut and spliced’ into efficient categories, measured, assigned a value, managed and traded in an orderly manner. As Cox notes:

It is sometimes said that since everything is for sale under the rule of The Market, no thing is sacred... [though not quite true], in principle, however, in the theology of The Market, there is no reason why any relic, coffin, body, or national monument – including the Statue of Liberty and Westminster Abbey – should not be listed. Does anyone doubt that if the True Cross were ever really discovered, it would eventually find its way to Sotheby’s? The Market is not omnipotent – yet. But the process is under way and it is gaining momentum. (1999: 3)

Like Promethean science, Mirowski believes that this market fundamentalism produces “genealogies” which subsume and displace alternatives including legitimate notions of communal or common ownership (2001: 433). These ‘other’ social forms are rejected while the market is given primacy and every possible rival account of exchange is ruthlessly undermined.

For Mirowski this also draws together the economic and scientific against the non-economic or non-scientific. It is here that the interaction between Promethean science and the markets becomes most obvious. Milberg argues that market dynamics are rooted “in nature, rendering them autonomous and determined by the natural ‘laws’ of supply and demand” (ibid: 411). Milberg feels that this link between the impersonal and objective with the ‘natural’ makes the analysis of markets scientific. For economists such as Friedman (1982) this confirms the argument that markets must be independent of *all*

other social forces. Any attempt to embed markets within wider social phenomena has been largely ignored by economists (Barber 1998).

The final implication of free market fundamentalism is a belief that unless a proper market valuation is assigned, resources will be undervalued, over-utilised and the source of potential conflict. This places non-commodified spaces (or commons) in a precarious position and we are thus seeing an ongoing enclosure of commons, something discussed further in Chapter 4.

Before discussing the next dimension of pathological modernity – an operational form of biopower – it is important to identify how Cartesian logic is expanding through processes of globalisation.

## **Globalising the Cartesian logic**

It is in globalisation that we see the juridical and political processes described by Hardt and Negri (2000) emerge to globalise Cartesian logic's 'promises of certainty' and eternal right, Promethean science and free market fundamentalism – from the local to the global and back again. For Hardt and Negri, these global juridical processes promote a "single supranational figure of legitimacy" (2000: 9). For Beck (1997) this globalisation is of a specific rationality that remains blind to risks, unintended consequences and side-effects.

Cartesian logic works through the processes of globalisation to intensify and spread its reasoning and hence, promulgate the 'crisis of the whole'. However, the relationship between pathological modernity's Cartesian logic and the processes of globalisation is multifaceted rather than one-way, as the crisis also works to intensify the processes of globalisation.

The globalisation of Cartesian logic strengthens the existing social, political and legal frameworks of pathological modernity. One example of the globalisation of Cartesian

logic is the emergence of a global derivatives market. The globalisation processes of both fiscal risk management and market mechanisms overlap in the sphere of financial derivatives including forward rate agreements, options, swaps and swaptions<sup>19</sup>. Though originally designed to manage risk, these instruments are now extensively used to pursue profit through speculation. In turn, new financial instruments are constantly introduced to manage the new risks created – emphasising the cyclical logic of risk and counter-risk promoted by pathological modernity. Speculative instruments now dwarf the financial assets on which they are based and threaten the stability of the global economy as they represent 97.5 percent of all cross border transactions (Stillwell 2000). This has been described as “casino capitalism” with speculators attempting to gain quick profits by gambling around the clock on the direction of exchange and interest rates (Round 2000: 19). In turn, the global economy is constantly at risk of financial meltdown due to being exposed to over speculation.

This globalisation of Cartesian logic goes beyond any group of institutions, however, and reflects the very ‘norms’ that define modernity, ‘progress’ and even ‘development’. This logic is globalised and ensures a smooth space for capital, its managers and Promethean science. This smooth space includes juridical and political measures that protect markets and promote appropriate property rights including intellectual property. These are at the base of the global norms further promoting the processes of globalisation.

This is a process that continues despite the creation of further risks and crises. Despite creating and globalising risks such as speculative financial instruments, the global institutions at the centre of this logic actually use these ‘risks’ to reassert their authority. Global institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF promote the use of financial derivatives, despite the risk to financial stability. This in turn confirms their role as global financial watchdogs.

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<sup>19</sup> Swaptions are options on swaps which give the holder ‘the right without the obligation’ to enter into a swap rate agreement at a future date. Swaptions were originally a ‘risk management’ instrument used for hedging against interest rate volatility. However they are now another mechanism for speculation. For more details on the use of such instruments as well as other financial derivatives see Jarrow (1996).

Rather than questioning this process, it eventually becomes ‘normalised’. That is, we the population have accepted these processes as ‘normal’, established as ‘the way the world is’ and they thus cannot be challenged. The crisis of the whole is not considered as some kind of ‘state of exception’, but the ‘norm’ (Agamben 1998). If we are to understand how this occurs, Agamben argues that we must come to understand the operations of biopower. This takes us to the second dimension of pathological modernity.

### **3.4 Biopower**

The second dimension of pathological modernity is an operational form of biopower. I use the term ‘operational’ because it is a form of biopower that combines both disciplinary techniques of power such as surveillance, with the production of subjectivities to legitimate the processes of pathological modernity. This allows the ongoing reproduction of Cartesian logic throughout the wider population, who not only accept it, but come to *embrace* it and its ‘promises of certainty’. Cartesian logic enters the discourse of the everyday, becoming accepted as the ‘natural state of affairs’ and is therefore ‘normalised’.

#### **Understanding ‘operational’ biopower**

Traditionally, conceptions of power are thought of as “capacity” – something that individuals, groups or institutions may possess (Hindess 1996: 7). Tanesini (1999) points out that this revolves around the power of a sovereign or king and their ability for coercion. Stemming from the Hobbesian school which defined power as *man*’s present means to obtain some future apparent good, this is a conceptualisation of power as a kind

of material ‘stuff’.<sup>20</sup> Power is conceived as a quantitative capacity, made up of a combination of many individuals.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to this position, Foucault (1980) described *relational* conceptions of power which emerged under conditions of modernity. Such conceptualisations of power exist in the relationships *between* people. Consequently, power becomes embedded in the practices of the everyday, being constituted by and through individuals, discourse and articulated across the social body. This understanding of power abandons ‘traditional’ approaches as it resides within our own body, subjectivity and desires. It is from this that the concept of ‘biopower’ emerges.

In *History of Sexuality, Volume I*, Foucault describes biopower as a form of “life administration” (1980: 136). This is a form of power that, according to Renault (2004) represents the political control of life. Biopower allows us to analyse the technologies of power employed towards the political object of the ‘population’ which is central to the broader modern political project of control that Foucault later referred to as ‘governmentality’. Here the aim of biopower is to connect the population with the issues and aims of national policy including production (Marshall 1999).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> A number of variations on this perspective have emerged. For example, ‘elite theorists’ such as Mills (1959) argued that power at both the national and local level is concentrated in the hands of the elites who are neither accountable nor responsible for their actions. In contrast, pluralists (including Dahl 1957; 1958) argued that power is neither as concentrated nor used as irresponsibly as the elite theorists maintained. Pluralists felt that power may be unequal but it does not follow that it is concentrated in the hands of some unified elite.

<sup>21</sup> There are obvious limitations to this perspective for it implies that the outcomes of conflicts are invariably determined by the ‘quantities of power’ available to the contending parties. Further, it indicates that the power of a ‘sovereign’ is greater than the power of any single subject, for it combines the power of many individuals (Hindess 1996).

<sup>22</sup> Gaby (2004) notes that biopower can have sovereign or deductive aspects that benefit nation-states such as laws and taxes. Here, productive aspects of power emerge and are directed towards the growth, maintenance and development of the national population through means of health, education and social welfare. Such a broader discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Although there are various interpretations of ‘biopower’,<sup>23</sup> I am interested here in how power penetrates human relationships and subjectivities or the *bios*.<sup>24</sup> In this thesis, I use Hardt and Negri’s (2000: 25) position that biopower must be understood as “plural” because as Agamben (1998) argues; it enters both the social body and individuals.

This interpretation of biopower underpins a great deal of Hardt and Negri’s work in both *Empire* and *Multitude*, where it is argued that we have seen “an absolute and total reordering of social subjectivity and social life as a whole under a unified sovereign power” (2004: 161). Lazzarato echoes this when discussing the operations of today’s corporation, which he argues is no longer interested in producing objects (or goods), but rather “the world within which the object exists” (2004: 288).

Though Hardt and Negri’s insights are valuable, they spend little time discussing their interpretations of biopower, though in *Multitude* (2004: 18-25) there is a more detailed examination. Here it is my intention to build on Hardt and Negri’s brief discussion and argue that by understanding the contemporary operations of biopower we can gain insight into the operations of Cartesian logic and, hence, the ‘pathological’ elements of modernity.

## **Normalisation and the eternal right**

An important aspect of pathological modernity’s operational form of biopower is the process of ‘normalisation’. For Tanesini (1999) this explains how the wider population comes to *consent* to power relationships, accepting these as ‘normal’.

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<sup>23</sup> For example, Race (2005) focuses on the issue of biopower and how it shapes the ‘human body’. According to Cooper et al (2005), biopower remains much debated and usually focuses on what it is not rather than what it is. While I also acknowledge various interpretations of biopower, my focus here is to investigate how the logic of pathological modernity is embraced through the production of subjectivities.

<sup>24</sup> Here I use Agamben’s description of *bios*, which indicates the way of living that can be thought of as “proper” to individuals or groups (1998: 1). This can be contrasted with *zoe*, which simply expresses living and is common to all human beings.



Foucault (1980) argued that a ‘normalising society’ is created as power relations come to be reflected in everyday discursive practices.<sup>25</sup> Eventually these discursive practices come to colonise “the procedures of the law” (Foucault 1977: 38). This ensures that power relations reproduce themselves as they seem ‘normal’, natural and inevitable, establishing the material conditions that define ‘everyday reality’ (Hardt and Negri 2000). According to Mills (2004), the individual then ‘materialises’ as an object of the technique of power which has established these societal norms. This form of power is “expressed as a control that extends throughout the depths of the consciousness and bodies of population... across the entirety of social relations” (Hardt and Negri 2000: 24). Here power is dispersed, indeterminate and constitutes identities as it is “distributed throughout the brains and bodies of the citizens” (ibid: 23).

Reflecting this, the subjectivity of the population becomes standardised and deviations from the norm consistently risk punishment (Tanesini 1999).<sup>26</sup> This explains how both a population and the individual come to control their own actions even if far away from the view of any established authority. As this filters throughout society, we do not need to be observed by others as we observe ourselves (Agamben 1998:10).<sup>27</sup> Agamben (1998) employs biopower to explain how the ‘state of exception’ has become normalised.<sup>28</sup> Agamben argues that once structures such as ‘concentration camps’ – be they those of

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<sup>25</sup> To explain this point, Foucault (1980: 140-42) used the emergence of capitalism, arguing that biopower was an essential element in its rise to dominance as it introduced technologies that created bodies and subjectivities for production and other economic processes. Capitalism also uses biopower to enter the body and mind, producing desires that came to reflect the aspirations of capital. The discourse and relationships within capitalism are now a normal part of our world. In the post-Cold War era alternatives are rare and at the margins.

<sup>26</sup> Here, power is actively produced through relationships. Many of the relationships discussed by Foucault related to both the techniques and rationalities of governmental power. Foucault (1977) regarded government in its most general sense, arguing that it extends within a broader framework which embraces the government of oneself and a household, and includes the associated human sciences and institutions – something which Hardt and Negri echo.

<sup>27</sup> Agamben (1998) explains that Foucault split his studies in two; political techniques (or the macro) and technologies of the self (micro). Agamben feels that this was done for illustrative purposes as the two concepts intersect.

<sup>28</sup> Agamben’s focus here is ‘the camp’ as a means of dealing with the ‘state of exception’ arguing that it emerged as a response to the crises created in modernity. Agamben invokes the space of the camp which he argues produce a biopower that removes prisoners from the world – physically but also culturally/emotionally. The state responds in this way to refugees because they highlight the limits of borders – see Chapter 7. Though Hardt and Negri (2004: 18-25) discuss the ‘state of exception’ in their discussions of biopower, they largely ignore Agamben.

Nazi Germany or modern camps used for refugees and asylum seekers – were only built under exceptional circumstances. This exception is no longer distinguishable as it has become part of the everyday (Jenkins 2003).<sup>29</sup>

Likewise, the ‘war on terror’ has allowed governments to increase surveillance of citizens and introduce oppressive laws. More importantly however, is that under the ‘war on terror’ the population continually monitors its own behaviour, practicing a sense of self-censorship (Mitchell 2003). The uncertainty caused by the ‘war on terror’ – driven by pathological modernity – means that the population actually embrace these conditions and we observe only limited criticism. Rather than backlash, the result is that the structures of pathological modernity are reinforced and normalised.<sup>30</sup>

Another element of normalisation relevant to this thesis emerges in the ways that societies *organise power* (Foucault 1977). Under conditions of pathological modernity, we have seen the dominance of markets and Promethean science which organise and express themselves as *the* authority. This highlights how normalisation and Cartesian logic’s claims of ‘eternal right’ reinforce each other. The dominant subjectivity involves social practices, moral codes and discursive norms embraced and reactivated of their own accord and that simultaneously form the individual subject. These influence our behaviour, mould our thoughts and desires, and establish what is considered “natural” and “right” (Danaher et al 2000: 125).

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<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, Foucault (1988) makes a similar observation when discussing war – arguing that war never seems to exhaust itself.

<sup>30</sup> Agamben’s (1998) warning of a generalised ‘state of exception’ seem to have materialised through laws like the USA PATRIOT Act 2001 (the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism: H.R. 3162, S. 1510, Public Law 107-56). This is a legislative law enacted in the United States in response to the 11 September 2001 Terrorist Attacks. Such laws act to promulgate the process of self-censorship and there is fear that such provisions could see a permanent instalment of martial law.

## **Pathological modernity and operational biopower**

In this section I have argued that through the processes of normalisation, Cartesian logic reproduces itself. This occurs particularly as the population summons pathological modernity to deal with the crisis of the whole, providing it with legitimacy, authority and self-validation. This is a form of control to which the population consents as pathological modernity promises truth, certainty, peace and stability.

Through an operational form of biopower, pathological modernity comes to regulate all human interactions and establish rules over what has been described as ‘human nature’; that is, that we are all atomised, competing individuals reflecting the methodological individualism described earlier. This makes communal ownership unsustainable and clearly defined property rights essential (Milberg 2001). This is the basis of free market fundamentalism, and as discussed above, is at the base of concepts such as progress and development, as well as driving decision making at all levels of government (Jenkins 2003). As Giroux notes:

Under the reign of neoliberalism, capital and wealth have been largely distributed upwards, while civic virtue has been undermined by a slavish celebration of the free market as the model for organising all facets of everyday life. (2003: 4)

For Walby (2004) this translates into the production of a neoliberal subjectivity, where the rationality of the market is dominant and extended to areas of life beyond the economic. Areas that were once outside of ‘free market’ logic are now included as we continuously reproduce this logic. Little escapes as this enters our desires and produces our subjectivity. We demand the certainty offered by markets (and science) and thus encourage pathological modernity to enclose all before it. This includes arenas which have been (inappropriately) identified as areas of potential dispute such as the commons at the base of our society (see Chapter 4).

Despite being at the centre of the crisis and causing instability and anxiety, pathological modernity is called on to intervene and bring certainty. This legitimates acts of oppression against potential external and internal enemies. By calling for interventions, the population legitimises the actions and power relationships of pathological modernity, enlarging the “realm of the consensus that supports its own power” (Hardt and Negri 2000: 15).

Finally, this form of biopolitics is globalised as it is reflected within global institutions. The world’s international financial institutions for example, should be considered within the “dynamic of the biopolitical production of the world order” (Hardt and Negri: 2000: 31). For these organisations consistently promise certainty and stability if free market reforms are embraced, confirming the legitimacy of these institutions within the global order. This reflects the mutual legitimacy discussed earlier. Global power relationships emerge that demand interventions, while these interventions confirm the effectiveness of such relationships even if they fail to be effective. This is a version of power that rests on the *consent* of those over whom the power is being exercised providing the *legitimacy* of sovereign power.

Pathological modernity can also use this legitimacy to expand, even when its own policies fail. In this way, pathological modernity uses the crisis of the whole for its own ends, making it *pathologically reflexive*.

### **3.5 Pathological reflexivity**

The third dimension of pathological modernity is ‘pathological reflexivity’. That is, pathological modernity is self-referential, never withdrawing, rather altering, expanding and learning from its failings and contradictions. Although the contradictions of pathological modernity are highlighted through the creation of the crisis of the whole, rather than retreating, this crisis allows Cartesian logic to expand through its promises of certainty. This section looks at the reflexive dimension of pathological modernity.

## **An internal contradiction... sounds like Marx?**

In the section above, I presented an overview of Beck's arguments associated with reflexive modernisation. For Beck the potential for radical change in risk society emerges because we become reflexive and challenge the meaning and worth of modernisation itself. That is, both individuals and the institutions of modernity critique the very assumptions that they are based on, including concepts such as progress and development.

To highlight this, Beck (1992) draws upon the contest over scientific knowledge, which has emerged between the institutions of science and those demanding science be both more accountable and open to alternatives. The result is that we see a 'de-monopolisation' of the rationality of science rather than the end of science or scientific processes. For Beck this questioning encourages greater emphasis on the potential and actual side effects and erodes the blind faith associated with science. This challenges a core pillar of modernity, creating a new subjectivity which provides an opportunity for progressive change.

It is possible to look at the emerging water and salinity crisis in Australia and the many associated debates as an example of reflexive modernisation. In response to the degradation of important river networks such as the lands surrounding the Murray River, Megalogenis (2002) notes that various levels of government, scientists, the local community including businesses and farmers, as well as green groups, are responding in a cooperative manner. It is likely that Beck would celebrate this interplay as part of the 'de-monopolisation' outlined above. Even farmers who are gaining most in the short-term from over-using the river's resources are now learning that it is their own practices previously encouraged and subsidised by government bodies, that are responsible for the salinity crisis. For Beck then, this would also show how both individuals and institutions have become reflexive.

In his many works, Beck celebrates the potential for progressive transformation under the conditions of reflexive modernisation. This sentiment is echoed by Lash and Urry (1994) who argue that reflexive modernisation offers the possibility for individuals to reflect critically upon their social conditions, and provides the potential for change. Likewise, Gleeson (2000) sees reflexive modernisation as representing a *progressive* undermining of the social authority of many of the institutions of modernity.

The potential for such change emerges within the systemic contradictions that Beck identifies, creating cracks in the armour of industrial modernity. These cracks are caused by both the unintended consequences of risk society as well as the various oppositional politics that respond to these, including social and resistance movements.

These unintended consequences become the “new motor for change” as they travel beyond borders and on occasion threaten the entire planet (Beck 1997: 30). Such side effects come to “devalue capital, destroy trust, make markets collapse, confuse agendas, and split apart staff, management, trade unions, parties, vocational groups and families” (ibid: 31). This creates new reflexive social forms with the potential for beneficial change.

Here I agree with Gleeson (2000) that such claims reflect Marx’s declaration that it will be the internal contradictions of capital that will bring about its own demise. The many unintended consequences of risk society escape the grasp of modern institutions and ‘short-circuit’ the established forms of social and institutional networks, giving rise to the potential for massive and transformation. The issue, however, is whether this transformation is likely to be progressive or reactionary.

## Pathologically reflexive

As noted, there is a tendency for Beck, Gleeson and others to celebrate reflexive modernisation as a potential force for an alternative politics. My position here is that the conditions of reflexivity do not necessarily signify progressive change alone, but are more likely to encourage the opposite. Beck does warn of potential reactionary elements to reflexivity, acknowledging that the flux caused by the erosion of traditional boundaries has the potential to give rise to negative elements. Likewise, Latour (2003) also considers this point, arguing that ‘reflexivity’ does not mean that people necessarily lead a more conscious life, just that it is now possible to do so. I argue that Beck falls short in enunciating this darker side. The reactionary element inherent in modernisation means reflexivity is a “double-edged” sword (Gleeson 2000: 122). Thus, we see the continuous struggle between opposing forces that push for progressive or reactionary change.

The crises and many developments that have been described above do not threaten the dominance of Cartesian logic, but provide pathological modernity with an opportunity to re-invent itself. In this way, pathological modernity is *pathologically reflexive* as it learns and expands in response to the crisis of the whole.

This position can be illustrated by returning to the events surrounding the ‘war on terror’. As noted, the rise of Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden owe much of their emergence as terrorists to the policies of previous United States administrations. Western governments, led by Washington, believed that they could “use the (fundamentalist) Islamists to punish the Soviet Union for invading Afghanistan” (Kremmer 2004: 15). However, it was the very success of this effort that appeared to have empowered the jihadis, who Kremmer notes “refused to be pensioned off”, to declare war on their former patrons (ibid). The recent memoirs from Richard Clarke (2004), the Bush Administration’s former chief terrorism official, highlight how the crisis so created, was actually ignored.

Rather than retreating, it is possible to see how pathological modernity expands its logic through the billions of dollars spent on the ‘war on terror’ and the conflict in Iraq. This is

underscored by Washington's 'drive to war' and obsession with toppling the regime of Saddam Hussein while ignoring the threats so created (Marquis and Stolberg 2004). The invasion of Iraq has created new terrorist networks inside the country feeding Al Qaeda propaganda and facilitating the recruitment of new members. In this way, Kremmer argues, we continue to see the West "pouring fuel onto the fire of terrorism" and creating an ongoing cycle of violence, rather than addressing its root causes (2004: 15).

While I do not disagree that reflexivity provides the opportunity for new alternative movements to emerge – which I discuss in Chapter 5 – the instability created also provides the means by which pathological modernity reasserts its own authority. As a consequence, I argue that pathological modernity pathologically reproduces itself crisis after crisis. Pathological modernity is similar to capital, being reflexive, malleable and flexible, establishing new fields of influence even in failure (McQueen 2001). Even the emergence of opposition movements provides the opportunity for pathological modernity to expand its logic by co-option – further legitimating its operations. This position in some ways reflects the stance of Hardt and Negri, who believe the forces of Empire wage war against alternative movements that emerge in response, coming to dominate them and eventually reappropriate their power (2000).<sup>31</sup>

Again, specific examples can be found by looking at the 'war on terror'. The export of armaments has been assisted by institutions such as export credit agencies (ECAs). While assisting host nation exports, ECAs have promoted militarisation which in turn has created states that are seen as threats. As a result, we have seen the manufacture of an emergency situation with the response being a greater need for the military and security industries. These in turn become a key part of the global economy helping fuel growth and create in Weber's terms, an economic 'iron cage' that modern society locks itself into. While this crisis highlights the contradictions of pathological modernity, it also shows how the crisis expands promoting industries that further drive the crisis.

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<sup>31</sup> In Chapter 5 – Section 5.4, I discuss how social movements have pluralised governing structures at an international level and therefore a 'complex multilateralism' emerges. This simultaneously provides opportunities for both longer term progressive change as well as co-option.



While Beck et al's (2003) claim that reflexive modernisation replaces simple modernist politics, they inadequately address how reactionary elements predominate and persist – often with the support of the broader population. For the crisis caused may actually work to re-emphasise and re-establish power relationships, often in more discreet and potentially more potent forms. Under these conditions, pathological modernity continues to expand into new areas including through enclosure of non-commercial commons.

### **3.6 Concluding comments**

On the 7 July 2005 the 'war on terror' escalated again when London experienced simultaneous subway and bus explosions. Newspaper columnist Richard Bennet (2005) noted that it is becoming increasingly difficult to argue that even if the invasion of Iraq was not the sole motivation for these attacks, it must be a major factor. Despite this, US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld continued to reject any such suggestions. In the meantime, the number of US troops killed in Iraq jumped to 1,800 along with untold Iraqi civilians.<sup>32</sup> There continues to be a denial of the links between these events, with the US President claiming that the ongoing death toll and terrorist attacks has more than ever committed his Administration to the war in Iraq (Pickler 2005).

It is within such cycles of violence that the operations of pathological modernity are manifest. This chapter has presented three of the dimensions of pathological modernity, highlighting how the crisis of the whole is constituted. The 'war on terror' is merely one example.

The three dimensions of pathological modernity also explain the production of a specific biopolitics that creates Waldby's (2004) neoliberal subjectivity. Market fundamentalism promotes an atomised and competitive individual that is disconnected from broader society. In combination with the promises of certainty and its reflexive character, this

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<sup>32</sup> CNN News Update: <http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/08/04/rumsfeld.iraq/> - accessed August 2005.

allows pathological modernity to expand, establishing a frontier disposition. Under these conditions, pathological modernity moves to commodify non-commodified spaces – or commons. This leads to the fourth dimensions of pathological modernity – an aggressive enclosure of the commons. It is to this that I turn next.

# Chapter 4: The Commons

## 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 introduced the fourth key dimension of pathological modernity – a ‘frontier disposition’ that continuously expands to enclose non-commodified spaces or commons. This dimension of pathological modernity is directly linked with Cartesian logic’s free market fundamentalism. This chapter both develops the concept of ‘commons’ and expands on this process of enclosure – finalising the theoretical critique described via the notion of ‘pathological modernity’.

I begin my analysis with the traditionally accepted definition of the commons as ‘physical’ (such as the atmosphere and oceans) and ‘institutional’ (infrastructures of provision that serve the broader public interest such as universities). However, I also extend the notion of ‘commons’ to the social or cultural sphere, developing the concept of ‘cultural commons’. In concentrating on four specific cultural commons, identified as hope, trust, safety and intellect, I argue that they display analogous characteristics to the physical commons. Under conditions of pathological modernity, the commons – be they physical, institutional or cultural – are enclosed and commodified leading to forms of exclusion and scarcity that contribute to the emergence of the crisis of the whole.

In presenting the cultural commons, I argue that their free and open exchange and sharing represents a fundamentally different value system to that of pathological modernity and is central to the formation of an ‘authentic’ community – something I detail in Chapter 7. Before expanding these arguments, I will first define the concept of ‘commons’.

## 4.2 Defining the commons

While references to the commons can be traced back to ancient Rome, clearly physical commons such as the atmosphere, oceans, air and water existed long before the concept was ever defined. According to Barnes et al (2004), the Romans distinguished between three basic types of property:

- i. *res privatae*: consisting of things capable of being possessed by an individual or family;
- ii. *res publicae*: including things built and set aside for public use by the state, such as public buildings and roads; and
- iii. *res communes*: natural things used by all, such as air, water and wild animals.

This was codified in the Institutes of Justinian, the grand summation of Roman law, which said: “By the law of nature these things are common to mankind – the air, running water, the sea, and consequently the shore of the sea” (quoted in Barnes et al 2004).

Reid (1995) notes that during the Middle Ages in the United Kingdom the commons were shared lands used by villagers for foraging, hunting, planting crops and harvesting wood. This, according to Barnes et al (2004), was enforced by the Magna Carta in 1215 which established forests and fisheries as resources available to all.

The commons have therefore traditionally been defined as the elements of the natural environment that we all share, including forests, the atmosphere and fisheries. These are aspects of the environment that historically no-one owns but we all enjoy. Using this traditional conceptualisation, Reid (1995) defines the commons as being ‘physical’. However, even physical commons have both tangible and intangible elements, such as the *pleasure* or *enjoyment* derived from visiting a forest within a national park or swimming in the ocean.

Within this category it is also possible to identify the ‘biodiversity’ or ‘genetic’ commons. These include classifications such as the human genome that makes us a unique species as well as including the world’s broader biological diversity (Shiva 2000; Latham 2000).<sup>1</sup>

Bollier argues there are also “institution-based” commons (2002: 20). These are the publicly provided infrastructures of provision that serve the broader public interest that I identify as ‘institutional commons’. Examples of institutional commons include universities that provide free public education, health centres that offer care for the broader public good, the infrastructure that allows our society to function (such as the water delivery and sewerage systems) and even public space.<sup>2</sup> In many ways, these later examples reflect the second category of property (*res publicæ*) in ancient Rome. Again, these have both tangible and intangible dimensions.

Bollier (2002) and Lessig (2004) extend this concept to include information and knowledge communities that also rely on both infrastructures of provision (such as the internet) as well the availability of open, equitable and sustained access to ideas in order to thrive. Examples here include literature, music, the performing and visual arts, design, film, video, television, radio, community arts and sites of heritage.

According to *The Ecologist* (1996), all categories of commons have a number of definitive characteristics. These are:

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<sup>1</sup> The definition as well as a number of broader issues concerning ‘genetic commons’ were debated during the drafting of the agreed Bonn Guidelines on Access and Benefit (2002) – cited in Pearce (2002a). Pearce notes that concerns have been raised by activists regarding these Guidelines, who see them as allowing national governments to sell monopoly rights to bio-prospecting of genetic resources. The fear is populations that require such resources for their livelihood will be excluded from accessing these genetic commons.

<sup>2</sup> The argument that such institutions can be thought of as commons is based on a particular conception of the welfare state. My position here is not to defend the welfare state or argue that ‘the state’ is the paragon of resource management. Likewise, I am not attempting to argue that the infrastructures of provision for the public interest are commons – a position that seems to reflect that of Bollier (2002). Rather, I am presenting such examples to highlight how once communally owned and managed institutions that were open and relied on cooperation have been marginalised simply because they are not privately run and profit driven.

- i. True commons cannot be commodified and if they are, they cease to be commons. Under such conditions, commons become commodities;
- ii. While neither public nor private, commons tend to be facilitated by local communities, although in many societies the government ‘manages’ them.<sup>3</sup> Commons are inherited from past generations and any governing body holds them in trust for the public as well as for future generations. However, commons cannot be exclusionary for if they have exclusionary fences or borders erected around them they become private property;
- iii. Rather than scarce, commons are abundant. In fact, if facilitated and managed properly commons can overcome scarcity; and
- iv. Commons can be understood to be ubiquitous, functioning all the time.

Combining this with certain intangible aspects of the commons, *The Ecologist* offers a broader definition than Reid:

...the commons is the social and political space where things get done and where people have a sense of belonging and have an element of control over their lives... [providing] sustenance, security and independence (1996: 6-7).

These are what a *community* shares and can include the need for trust, cooperation and human relationships. These are the very foundations of what makes ‘a community’ rather than merely a group of individuals living in close proximity to each other.

This notion of community can be contrasted to the atomised *homo-economicus* at the base of the free market fundamentalism of Cartesian logic (see Chapter 3). Rather than being driven by self interest and competition, the notion of the commons is based on communal and altruistic cooperation. For communities to use and maintain the commons, cooperation, collaboration and communication is required (Hardt and Negri 2004). This

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<sup>3</sup> Here the term ‘manage’ is used in its most generic sense meaning to direct or control the use of something. Unless otherwise specified, there are no financial implications intended.

understanding of the commons thus involves people operating on a collective rather than individual basis.<sup>4</sup>

## The cultural commons

In this thesis, I expand *The Ecologist's* conceptualisation of the commons into the 'cultural' sphere. The commons can also include certain human factors such as a shared desire for safety and trust, the sharing of intellect and cooperation. These are aspects of culture that our society shares and, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, promote an 'authentic' community.

I identify four cultural commons – trust, hope, safety and intellect – as particularly significant.<sup>5</sup> Briefly introduced here, they are elaborated later in this chapter:

- i. *Trust* can be thought of as confidence in a person or system. This confidence is expressed as controlled faith in the "probity of another" or "in abstract principles" (Giddens 1991: 34).
- ii. *Hope* is the second cultural commons and is based on a belief that a better world is possible. Hope exists both on a personal and societal level – though these are interrelated (Zournazi 2002; Hage 2003).
- iii. *Safety* can be understood as *both* a sense of peace and an absence of fear. It can be thought of as mediated by a sense of belonging that allows members of communities to interact with each other without fear (Rustomjee 2001).
- iv. *Intellect* is defined as the open sharing of ideas not driven by commercial gain. This is the public or non-commercial space that allows sharing of information including scientific knowledge and cultural resources (Lessig 2004).

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that my position is not to argue that we have a simple binary between self interest and altruism. Rather, it is to compare the utility driven and self-interested individual at the centre of pathological modernity with a more holistic understanding of how communities manage the commons. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 7.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that I do not argue that these are the *only* cultural commons. Rather, these are the four identified and detailed for the purposes of this thesis.

These cultural commons have similar features to the physical commons described earlier. That is, as commons they must be openly shared, available to all, and if managed appropriately will remain abundant and ubiquitous. Further, to remain commons they cannot be withheld or they become private property and as a consequence, exclusionary.

The cultural commons operate on the biopolitical level and represent a form of biopolitics that promotes the *potential* for greater cooperation. They produce relationships that are non-hierarchical and inclusive, allowing communities to work together to overcome scarcity, crisis and fear (Hardt and Negri 2004). Importantly, Hardt and Negri actually use the term “biopolitical commons” though they do not expand on exactly what they mean (2004: 207).<sup>6</sup> Here the cultural commons describe the social relationships which operate on a biopolitical level and that allow communities to function cooperatively rather than compete – something I return to in Chapters 6 and 7.

Radin (1996) argues that the dominance of free market ideology means that everything has a price and can be traded – including commons. Any attempt to control this, is seen as “paternalistic and interfering in free decisions” (Bollier 2002: 24). In fact, where commons exist, there is a broader market-led belief that exploitation and even conflict must follow. This philosophy has led to aggressive forms of enclosure including commodification and is fuelled by an acceptance of the ‘myth’ of the ‘tragedy of the commons’.

### **4.3 The tragedy of the commons**

In Garret Hardin’s (1968) original work the concept of the ‘tragedy of the commons’ is focused on the physical (environmental) commons. Based on a belief in the dominance of *homo-economicus*, Hardin argues that humanity inevitably exploits resources that are not

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<sup>6</sup> As I will discuss in Chapter 6 – Section 6.2, Hardt and Negri’s focus revolves around the concept of ‘working in common’ rather than ‘commons’.



assigned clear property rights including commons. Hardin concludes that “the survival of the commons depends on ‘mutual coercion mutually agreed on’” (1968: 31).

Hardin argues that some kind of ‘administrative elite’ should undertake this ‘coercion’, though under conditions of pathological modernity this appears to have been replaced by the disciplines offered by ‘the market’ and its proponents. One example can be found in Sklair’s (2000) writings on the Transnational Capital Class (TCC – see Chapter 2 – Section 2.4). These are those elite managers, policy advisers and politicians that actively promote the agenda of neoliberalism and free market solutions for all areas of life. The TCC offer the market as the means to better manage the commons.

Though the managerial justification for the enclosure of the commons can be found in Hardin’s 1968 essay, Hardt and Negri (2004) believe that the commons were essentially destroyed with the advent of private property. Such a position echoes well established arguments by Thomson (1963) who described the commodifying tendencies of capital including the enclosure of the commons. Fiedler (2000) confirms these sentiments, noting that the conditions for industrialisation and a market economy were created by capital through the colonisation of common lands and common modes of production. Bollier meanwhile, argues that the aggressive enclosure of commons was initiated by the frontier wars that came to define the birth of the United States as a nation, and were an extension of its “frontier constitution” (2002: 70).

As a result, much of what has traditionally been thought of as commons has disappeared. Today there is very little left in our physical world that is shared, and there is little understanding of forms of ownership that do not rely on defined private property rights. Consequently, Bollier (2002) believes that both the concept and term ‘commons’ have become unfamiliar in the modern world. In fact, the majority of economic textbooks state that if private property rights are not or cannot be appropriately defined then market failure will result.<sup>7</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3, this is seen as potentially leading to conflict between competing interests.

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<sup>7</sup> See McTaggart et al (1999) for a one-dimensional perspective on this topic.

Goldman (1997) notes that while Hardin's position was never based on empirical evidence and has been continuously 'debunked', the assumptions underpinning it persist and continue a long neoliberal tradition that suggests we must commercialise to get the best out of people. As a result, these assumptions are continually applied to commons.

This was highlighted in a recent debate in Australia over indigenous communal-owned lands. Senior members of the federal government including the Minister for Health, Tony Abbott, and the Prime Minister, John Howard, argued that communal land ownership continues to hold indigenous communities back from economic development (Wood 2003; Metherel 2004a). In fact, Tony Abbott branded native title as "economically useless and called for it to be replaced" (Wood 2003: 13). Such a process, according to the Prime Minister, would be likely to breed "a more entrepreneurial" culture (Metherel 2004b: 7). These discussions have been welcomed by senior Australian Labor Party (ALP) officials including the ALP's national President Warren Mundine, himself an indigenous Australian (Karvelas 2004), although disputed by many other indigenous leaders (see Yunupingu 2005 for example).<sup>8</sup>

Similar proposals have been presented to Pacific Island nations as a path out of their 'economic woes'. Conservative commentator, Helen Hughes argues in an influential report that economic recovery was only possible for the Pacific Island nations by:

...abandoning communal land ownership for individual property rights; deregulating..., eliminating protectionist measures, freeing up labour markets and downsizing and privatising the public sector. (2004: 15)

Much like Australian indigenous land ownership, communal land ownership in the Pacific is seen by critics such as Hughes as the source of economic backwardness and

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<sup>8</sup> Such concerns were confirmed in a report commissioned by Oxfam Australia in August 2005 which found that there exists no "evidence to suggest that individual land ownership is either necessary or sufficient to increase economic development" for indigenous Australians (Altman et al 2005: 5). Rather, it appears that such a move would further disadvantage indigenous Australians.

corruption. According to Hughes, such challenges can only be overcome by imposing appropriate private property rights and implementing free market reforms.

## Cultural Implications

There are a number of important cultural implications that follow Hardin's 'tragedy of the commons'. To begin with, there is the implication that the community cannot manage communally based resources. This type of argument contains a clear *cultural statement* that 'human nature' means that we are 'greedy' and dominated by self interest. As *The Ecologist* notes, the original belief presented by Hardin is that profit is the only "operating social value" (1996: 13). The general argument then is that environmental destruction should be blamed on the selfishness of people (Goldman 1997).

The second implication that follows is that the commons are always areas of potential conflict. That is, under market logic a lack of private property rights means that 'resources' are subject to constant dispute. We must therefore be protected from ourselves in this view or all resources, both physical and institutional, will increasingly become scarce and conflict will follow. In a society dominated by commodity fetishism and materialist goals, we are discouraged to believe we have anything in common beyond self interest (Bollier 2002).

This creates a cycle of competition that is reproduced in the culture of the population. That is, the manufactured scarcity creates a culture driven by competition and exclusion. This is elucidated by Ostrom and Thrainn in terms of the "prisoner's dilemma" – 'if I don't others will, so I better get in first' (1990: 3). The perspective inherent in the prisoner's dilemma has important cultural consequences for the institutional commons. Here citizens discard public institutions in favour of private ones because there is a general feeling that others are doing so and neglect is likely to follow. The abandonment of public institutions is facilitated by the government's purposeful disregard of them, creating 'spirals of neglect'. After ignoring the need to increase resources to public

institutions, the government justifies further neglect by the fact that citizens are abandoning these organisations – a process driven by neglect in the first place.

Such a complex cycle can be found in trends regarding public and private schools.<sup>9</sup> In Australia we have seen increased public funding for private schools and a decline in spending on public schools. The result is that there is a perception that the public education system is being abandoned and parents are left with the decision to support public education (a commons) at the risk of their children not receiving an education equivalent to that offered by private institutions. The government has used this ‘choice’ made by parents in favour of private schools to justify further cuts to the public school system – continuing this spiral of neglect. Similar parallels can be drawn from other institutional commons such as hospitals where ‘the free market’ is continuously presented as the solution to all problems.

### **Promoting pathological modernity’s frontier disposition**

This culture of competition, greed and conflict leads to an institutional reliance on market forces and the profit motive. The natural extension of this is to commercialise the commons to prevent their over-exploitation from greed. Consequently, it is argued that the “actions of the world’s majority who blindly think they have the freedom to overgraze, over-consume and over-breed” can only be disciplined by market forces (Goldman 1997: 4).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The issue of funding within the Australian schooling system is strongly debated between pro-public and pro-private school lobby groups. Each present different ‘statistics’ to reveal the ‘true’ figures – see for example Centre of Independent Studies (<http://www.cis.org.au/IssueAnalysis/ia13/ia13.pdf>) compared to the Australian Council of State Schools (<http://www.acsso.org.au/>). Here I am responding to a general trend of increased funding to private schools at the expense of public ones identified by Burke (2004a). Source: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/03/15/1079199148841.html?from=storylhs> - all accessed December 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Hartmann has extended this position by arguing that we have seen the emergence of “the greening of hate” (2004: 1). That is, environmental problems have been blamed on the over-breeding of the poor particularly in the Global South, rather than any over-use of the resources within high-income nations.

The notion that the privatisation of the global commons is *the key* to their protection is a recurring theme in much of the neoliberal literature (see Pearce 2002b; Ostrom and Thrainn 1990). For example, a 2002 report from Britain's Royal Society criticises government-run conservation programs, development aid, protected areas and even plant gene banks, and claims that it is time "for capitalism to take charge" (quoted in Pearce 2002b: 10). According to the report, the environment should be "parcelled out to the private sector, with market forces influencing everything from cleaning up our rivers and the atmosphere to protecting forests and soils" (ibid). Likewise, discussions about the rising levels of soil salinity around Australia's rivers prompted leading corporate figures to demand that Australia's rivers be run "like a business" (Peatling 2002: 8).<sup>11</sup>

A similar approach has also been taken to 'institutional commons' which Sexton (2003) argues includes institutions such as publicly funded universities serving the public interest. Dugger (2000) argues that while universities have had a long-term relationship with the private sector, there is now an imbalance between private ownership and those resources that are communally owned and managed with the aim of serving the public good. This means that institutions such as universities and health facilities are potentially no longer provided for the public interest but have become profit driven. The growing number of business/university relationships is turning students into "consumers, education into training for jobs, professors into hired out consultants and researchers, and campuses into corporate research and profit centres" (ibid: 45). For Sexton (2003) this means that universities are now threatened by the tragedy of the commons.

Again the justification for this can be found in the need to open institutional commons to the disciplines of the market. For example, the rhetoric that has emerged around publicly funded universities echoes that of Australia's rivers in that they must be run "in a business-like fashion" (Nelson 2003). This follows an ongoing reduction of public funding by the Australian federal government, forcing universities to chase private sector funding and investment (NTEU 2003a; 2003b). This situation will be furthered by the proposed reform agenda labelled *The Nelson Review* which was current at the time of

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<sup>11</sup> See also Chapter 3 – Section 3.2 for a brief discussion of Australia's salinity crisis.

writing (NTEU 2003a).<sup>12</sup> Again the logic is clear; universities are unable to function as commons. This change means that infrastructures once provided for the public interest are now being transformed into centres for private research and profit, and opened up to the free market.

### **Commons under pathological modernity – manufacturing scarcity**

Based on the above discussion I argue that for the commons, life under pathological modernity is precarious and subject to the constant threat of enclosure and commodification. While there has always been a tension between the commons and the market, the privileging of free market fundamentalism by Cartesian logic has seen marketisation explode, leading to what Barber (1998) regards as the commodification of everything. Lessig (2004) argues that this has created an imbalance between the market and other forms of organisation to the point that, according to Bollier, today we no longer even “recognise the existence of commons” (2002: 6).

Bollier notes that the disappearance of the commons has been dramatic, particularly as current political structures are unable to either manage or promote such a concept. This lack of ability to deal with the commons – both institutionally, and as will be discussed, culturally – is no accident but rather a consequence of Cartesian logic’s frontier disposition. This reflects pathological modernity’s reflexivity as it continues to identify new frontiers to commodify. Goldman (1997) highlights this point by arguing that the answer is always seen to be the need for market oriented policies even when markets fail.

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<sup>12</sup> In 2002, the Australian Government conducted a review of Australia’s higher education system beginning with a discussion paper titled *Higher Education at the Crossroads*. This paper raised a number of questions regarding the role of the Australia’s universities and prompted some 355 submissions from a variety of stakeholders in. The discussion paper coincided with the Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson, establishing a Reference Group. The entire process became known as *The Nelson Review*. For more details regarding the process and the ongoing results, see the Department of Education and Training papers (<http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/review.htm> - accessed March 2005) and the response from the Australian Students Association ([http://www.sjp.ac.lk/careers/edreform/austr/a\\_dest\\_austr/hecrossroadstasmania.htm](http://www.sjp.ac.lk/careers/edreform/austr/a_dest_austr/hecrossroadstasmania.htm) - accessed March 2005).

This commodification, privatisation and enclosure of the commons create a crisis of scarcity. Consequently, *The Ecologist* argues that we are not seeing the tragedy of the commons, rather a “tragedy of enclosure” (1996: 15). This position can be confirmed by following the basic laws of ‘supply and demand’ economics that characterises the trade of commodities. For the scarcer commodities are, the higher their value will be. Accordingly, to maximise profits it suits the *owners* of resources to ‘manufacture scarcity’ (Farhat 2001). This does not occur when the commons operate; rather it occurs when commons are enclosed.

This creation of scarcity where once abundance existed is central to the creation of the crisis of the whole. For example, Farhat (2001) argues that one of the most pressing environmental crises today results from the ongoing erosion of the earth’s genetic resources. This is causing a myriad of environmental and social problems including a declining diversity in food crops that offer less protection from disease and pest infestation. The cause of this decline is related to the commodification of plants and seed varieties that were once openly shared as commons but are now traded as commodities. This dramatically reduces their availability and results in scarcity.

However, this is not just a scarcity of natural resources and other physical commons, but scarcity in the broader sense. This is a theme identified by Bauman, who argues that we are witnessing the disappearance or a scarcity of the “public sphere” (1999: 69).<sup>13</sup> This has obvious links to Habermas’ focus on the structural change of the public sphere under the contemporary era of state capitalism and the increasingly powerful positions of economic corporations in public life. In *The structural transformation of the public sphere*, Habermas argued that economic and governmental interests have taken over the public sphere, while citizens have become content to be (primarily) consumers of goods, services, political administration and spectacle.

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<sup>13</sup> Bauman is describing the public sphere as the area of legitimate public discourse. Bauman’s position is that we are seeing the colonisation of the public sphere and a re-definition of the “notoriously mobile boundary” between the public and the private (1999: 70).

This enclosure of the public sphere is continuous, recurring and takes many forms. For example, in response to former US anti-terrorist official Richard Clarke's criticisms of its reaction to the 2001 terrorist attacks and general lack of policy in this area (see Chapter 3 – Section 3.5), the White House organised a multi-level assault on his *personality* rather than on “the substance of his contentions” (Allen 2004: 39). This is evidence of the crisis in the public sphere identified by Bauman (1999: 69) where the focus on policy (or *Politics*) has become subsumed by the issue of personality (or *politics*). That is, enclosure of the public sphere has seen *Politics* replaced by *politics*.

This privatisation and erosion of the public sphere has continued at an increasing pace as a result of the ‘war on terror’. According to Lessin and Clark, the enclosure of the public sphere has spilt-over into the “sanitisation of war” with the White House administration instigating a media blackout to prevent “images of lifeless and broken bodies from the cameras and the consciousness of the American people” (2004: 1). Furthermore, there have been recent accusations that the Bush administration, in cooperation with its key ally Saudi Arabia, is quietly seeking to silence *Al-Jazeera*, the Arab satellite news station (Cornwell 2005). This appears to be in response to that station's coverage of the war in Iraq which, according to reports, has “incurred Washington's ire” (ibid: 1).

The effects of commodification also enter the biopolitical sphere producing neoliberal subjectivities and altering relationships with those around us. This subjectivity is accompanied by an acceptance of a ‘natural order’ in which everything is a commodity; human nature is ‘greedy’; the commons are an area of potential conflict; and there are no viable alternative visions to manage resources apart from the market. The wider population reflects the operational biopower discussed in Chapter 3 by summoning pathological modernity to bring certainty and ‘market disciplines’ to the undisciplined operations of the commons in a bid to avoid conflict. The language of commodification becomes the ‘eternal truth’ of this natural order. The result is that communities are re-ordered into *markets*, and commons are thus transformed from shared, abundant and open spaces that are democratically negotiated, to *commodities* that are scarce and traded based on competition and utility maximisation.



The natural order of pathological modernity has become a substitute for democratic decision-making. The result is that the decisions made by communities and individuals are caged within Cartesian logic. Such limitations are discussed by Žižek (2002) who argues that democratic ‘choices’ are always constrained within rigid boundaries involving ‘progress’ (Beck 1997), ‘economic growth’ and ‘consumer choice’ (Hamilton 2003).

This changing subjectivity not only normalises the enclosure of physical and institutional commons, but also encloses cultural commons. It is this enclosure of cultural commons that I discuss in the following section.

## ***4.4 Enclosing the cultural commons***

### **Trust and anxiety**

As noted, *trust* is the first of the four cultural commons identified in this thesis. Giddens describes trust as “confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles...” such as technical knowledge (1991: 34). Trust is “bound with contingency” as it carries connotations of reliability (ibid). In this way it is not the same as faith but is derived from the link between faith and confidence.

For Giddens, trust is the essential element that defines modern society; we trust technicians to ensure the plane we are in appropriately functions and that builders will properly attach a roof so that it does not collapse. Just as importantly, we trust the stranger who is walking down the street or sitting on the train near us to ‘behave like a stranger’; that is, ignore and not threaten us. In reality, we have no reason not to trust the stranger unless they are acting aggressively.

Uslander (1999) extends this, arguing that community and civic involvement is directly related to *levels of trust*. If a community is to function then some basic level of trust must exist. Pusey's (2003) research confirms this point, arguing that trust in both others and government is related to how well a community's social structure is operating. Much of this reflects Robert Putman's (1995) well established position regarding how trust is central to 'decent' communities. Expanding the logic of the stranger, we can only live in a community if we trust those around us even if we do not know them.

Trust holds many characteristics of the physical commons described earlier. For example, if openly shared, it is an element of life that continuously expands becoming abundant. It is something that is open and available to all. It is for these reasons that Putman argues trust is inexhaustible.

In the face of pathological modernity however, the commons of 'trust' becomes enclosed and commodified. When trust is commodified a growing sense of 'anxiety' or 'dread' results (Giddens 1991). As trust is at the base of any 'authentic' community, this dramatically alters the basis of our society. For we no longer trust 'the stranger' to do the right thing such as *behaving* like a stranger and not threaten us. In such an environment, there is a tendency to want to be surrounded by only those we 'recognise' as being 'like us'.<sup>14</sup> In an environment characterised by a culture of competition over increasingly scarce resources, there is a sense of anxiety that others will defeat us if we do not aggressively compete or act pre-emptively.

An example can be drawn from private neighbourhoods and gated communities that have emerged as trust is replaced by a sense of anxiety (Davis 1992a; 1992b). There is no longer a sense of trust towards the broader community and as a result, neighbourhoods are privatised to include only those who can pay to reside within them. According to Atkinson and Flint (2004) and Gleeson (2004), this is a trend that continues globally. As

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<sup>14</sup> This issue of 'recognition' is discussed in Chapter 7 – Section 7.2, with reference to forming communities with only those who we consider as being 'like us'.

privatised and gated communities expand, Davis argues that we are seeing the emergence of “fortress cities” (1992b: 159).<sup>15</sup>

Gleeson (2004) describes this loss of trust as leading to a “commodification of community” with the concept of community itself becoming a commodity. The emergence of exclusive (that is exclusionary) residential communities are now “master-planned” and “mainstream suburban products” which are marketed to a “discerning clientele” (ibid). Here, Gleeson notes, the principal product is ‘exclusive community’ which is often “emblazoned on billboards of new estates” (ibid). These are no longer simple ‘house-and-land’ packages, but rather are marketed as “giddily utopian promises of happy, wealthy and secure futures for all who take the chance to share the new suburban dreaming... or ‘privatopias’” (ibid).

Additionally, the rise of anxiety leads to demands by the broader population for certainty and security, further expanding the logic of pathological modernity. This reflects the operational form of biopower discussed in Chapter 3. For example, Marr and Wilkinson (2004) argue that a growing sense of anxiety can at least partly explain Australia’s increasing focus on border security and, as a consequence, ‘exclusionary boundaries’. These policies were in part accountable for the re-election of the conservative federal government – which took advantage of the growing sense of geo-political instability caused by the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States to further build a sense of anxiety toward refugees. Refugees were painted as ‘undesirable’ for their willingness to ‘throw children overboard’ and identified with the threat of terrorism – both claims that were never substantiated (Marr and Wilkinson 2004).<sup>16</sup> We have seen increasing acceptance of, and support for, the draconian border protection policies employed by Australia and other Western nations even where there is little evidence that refugees pose any security threat.

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<sup>15</sup> Gleeson (2004) notes that although gated communities are mainly a North American phenomenon, they are increasingly emerging in Australia. The opening of Australia’s first gated community in Australia was the Gold Coast’s Sanctuary Cove in 1985. Although outright gated communities remain relatively rare in Australia, they have started appearing.

<sup>16</sup> The ‘children overboard’ incident is discussed in further detail in Chapter 7 – Section 7.2.

Such enclosure of the cultural commons of trust also impacts institutional commons. As previously discussed, the institutional commons of public education should be available for all to access. However, the neglect by governments of public institutions has been accompanied with confirmation that, according to Burke (2004b), private schools in the wealthiest parts of Sydney are often better funded by government – see Section 4.3. The result is abandoning of public institutions in favour of private ones facilitated by this neglect as parents develop a sense of anxiety that their children will not receive an adequate public education.

In this way, pathological modernity transforms trust into anxiety and establishes exclusionary boundaries. This has created growing tensions within the Australian community, causing what Diprose (2003) describes as a sense of moral implosion. This reflects Putman's (1995) argument that declining levels of trust ultimately cause community breakdown. In some cases this has led to violence and allowed the federal government to implement even more rigorous 'law and order' policies to quash challenges to its authority.<sup>17</sup>

## Hope and material aspirations

*Hope* is the second of the cultural commons I examine in this chapter. As noted, hope exists on both a personal and societal level although these are closely interrelated. Hope is driven by both societal and individual beliefs that a better world is possible. Hage (2003) believes that in this sense, hope allows individuals to define a meaning for their lives. Lingis (2002) argues that hope involves a vision that is outside oneself. In secular societies, hope is faith without certainties – it moves out of the religious sphere and is found in struggles for justice and political activity – an idea also supported by Zournazi (2002).

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<sup>17</sup> One example is the Woomera 'breakout' discussed in Chapter 2 – Section 2.5. These refugees can be seen as being the victims of the deterioration of trust within Australia. The incident led to violent clashes between protesters and police. See Mottram's (2003) description: <http://www.abc.net.au/am/stories/s774964.htm> - accessed December 2004.

Hage argues that in ‘decent’ societies we witness a “surplus of hope” that allows for it to be freely distributed (2003: 17). Hope is something that cannot be consumed but is shared. Hage is inspired by Bourdieu in his description of hope, and goes on to argue that the “key to a decent society is above all this capacity to distribute... opportunities for self-realisation, which are none other than what we have been calling societal hope” (2003: 16). Such hope relates to our sense of being with other people, it is non-commercial and moves beyond the personal to the political.

Like other commons, if openly shared and freely available, hope can spread throughout a community. Rather than diminishing when openly distributed, Hage (2001) argues that hope actually expands and becomes abundant. Consequently, Stephens (2003) argues that hope promotes optimism, renewal and human resilience.

In the current environment however, Zournazi argues that we are witnessing declining levels of hope which are replaced with a focus on individualism, competition and consumerism. This is a “negative hope” which is targeted towards economic security and success (Zournazi 2002: 14). In such a world, there is a sense of uncertainty, insecurity and competition, as we feel threatened that hope is limited and will be consumed by others. Socially then, hope is transformed by competition and a sense of exclusion. This prompts Hage, Zournazi and Taussig to argue that under such conditions hope is re-worked into a negative frame and has a ‘dark side’.

To make this point, Taussig argues that in a highly commodified world hope “masquerades as envy” as it is overtaken by commodity fetishism and materialism (2002: 63). When a community becomes focused on consuming rather than imagining that a better world is possible, Taussig believes hope is displaced, changed or even undone and becomes something else – possibly resentment and greed.

Elaborating this position, I contend that pathological modernity works towards the commodification of hope and, in the process, turns it into ‘material aspirations’. This is

not simply a dark side to hope, but its total transformation from an internal ‘sense’ to externally focused aspirations driven by self interest and utilitarianism which can only be fulfilled by the ‘free market’. Here, hope is enclosed and becomes something that is both exclusionary and competitive. Citizens compete for the limited opportunities that exist in a world that demands material success. This is the case for both individuals (as part of individualism and competition) and nations (as exclusionary borders are established).

An example of this is provided by the emergence of the ‘aspirational voter’ within the western suburbs of Sydney which became a focus of debate following the ALP’s loss of the 2001 federal election and their failure in 2004. Like the cultural implications of the tragedy of the commons, the ‘aspirational voter’ confirms the notion that we are all driven by competitive ‘self interest’.<sup>18</sup> Morton argues that “aspirational politics assumes that our hopes are purely private hopes” and that such a politics projects a “‘me first’ set of values” (2001). Something reiterated by former federal opposition leader, Mark Latham, in his positioning of the ALP as the party that can promote “prosperity with a purpose” by assisting all Australians to climb the “ladder of opportunity” (2004: 4).

The self interest implied in this phrase serves to define these voters as solely interested in the advancement of themselves and their families. This is equated to a concern with economic management, interest rates and ‘consumer choice’ in areas like education and health care. This turns the desire for a better future for their children into the sort of private and individual interest that appears to neatly fit within the neoliberal agenda and logic of pathological modernity.

The emergence of the aspirational voter also provides an example of how pathological modernity re-writes history. Research undertaken as early as 1990 found that the residents of Western Sydney were demanding access to public infrastructure services

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<sup>18</sup> The debate around the aspirational voter is one that also focuses on the changing nature of specific Sydney suburbs – something that is beyond the scope of this thesis. What is relevant for my thesis is the use of the term to justify a ‘me first’ set of policy prescriptions (Morton 2001).

including public schools and public space<sup>19</sup> – that is, elements of our society that can be described as ‘institutional commons’. Rather than being aspirational, such demands sit within the realm of any decent community. However, these calls for communal infrastructure of provision or commons have now been re-written as ‘aspirational’ to reflect the ‘me first’ set of values described by Morton (2001). This echoes the commodification of community described by Gleeson (2004), with residents competing for ‘wealth generation’ rather than building communities.

The way the shift from hope to material aspirations changes our culture is highlighted by *Sydney Morning Herald* economic commentator Ross Gittins. In discussing a speech delivered by the former deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia, John Phillips, Gittins describes the attitude that has come to represent much of today’s business ethics and values: “If it’s legal, it’s OK” (2002: 35). For Gittins, this attitude, and the capitalist culture that establishes it, orchestrates an “upsurge in competition” and a “preoccupation with monetary rewards” (ibid) – read material aspirations. All this reflects the ‘culture’ at the base of Garret Hardin’s original work. Gittins describes an incentive-driven and competitive world, where “dollars count as points” in some bizarre game of accumulating wealth rather than bringing joy or hope (ibid).

Though the focus for Gittins is on the economic implications of such business ethics, he concludes that there are also broader repercussions, as we live in a world that is rapidly eroding the ethical behaviour which allows communities to function. For, as Taussig (2002) notes, all aspects of a community rely on a certain level of trust and hope to operate including ‘the market’, and if these disappear, then community itself is under threat.

Enclosing the cultural commons thus dramatically alters the nature of our culture – reflecting the foundational change discussed earlier. Once hope disappears, we no longer believe a more just or equitable world is possible but focus on the competing aspirations

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<sup>19</sup> This was the clearly stated position of NSW Labor MP for Liverpool, Paul Lynch, who argued in parliament for such services as a way to ensure a functioning community particularly for Western Sydney (NSWPD 2001).

that capital monopolises. When we lose hope we focus solely on material acquisition including the purchase of the commodity of community or the ‘privatopias’ described by Gleeson (2004). For those who cannot purchase this commodity, we see a process of exclusion as people are forced to remain outside the fences protecting these privatised neighbourhoods.

## **Safety and security**

The third cultural commons examined here is *safety*, and can be understood as both a sense of peace and an absence of fear. Safety is mediated by a sense of belonging, which Rustomjee (2001) argues allows members of communities to interact and function rather than become isolated, which can eventually result in communal disintegration.

Like other commons, safety does not need to be purchased and is available to all. If openly shared it becomes abundant. This sense of safety has elements of trust – for if we feel ‘safe’ beside the stranger, then we ‘trust’ they will do us no wrong.

However, if ‘safety’ is withheld or made available to only those who can buy their way into ‘secure’ spaces, it becomes scarce. This enclosure of the commons of safety reflects pathological modernity’s frontier disposition. Safety is no longer a commons but is fundamentally transformed into the commodity of ‘security’. Here ‘safety’ becomes something that can be traded and purchased.

In contrast to the sense of safety that is available to all, *security* can only be purchased through a greater expenditure on military forces, security organisations and the establishment of the abovementioned private neighbourhoods. This scarcity of safety leads to demands for security becoming “endemic” and is driven by a belief that we live in an “age of insecurity” (Neocleous 2001: 7).

This separation between ‘safety’ and ‘security’ is also alluded to by Hardt and Negri who identify “two forms of security” (2004: 31). The first form emerges through cooperation,



and echoes what I describe as ‘safety’; the other is a notion of abstract enemies that serve to legitimise violence and restrict freedoms. This later position is analogous to Neocleous’ arguments that that security involves a “specification of fear” that establishes a state of insecurity which brings about calls for greater security (2001: 12).<sup>20</sup> The result is that the concept of security is something that has now expanded beyond military meanings. In addition, the wider population demand increased security reflecting pathological modernity’s operational form of biopower.

This is underscored by Davis, who presents a bleak account of what happens when ‘security’ replaces safety within communities. Davis describes how the wealthier neighbourhoods of Los Angeles “cower behind walls guarded by... private police and state-of-the-art electronic surveillance systems” (1992b: 154). This has been accompanied by “totally secure” shopping malls and the militarisation of city life (ibid). The result is a merging of architecture and police apparatus. To make the point, Davis quotes an article from *Urban Land* magazine on new urban designs:

A downtown can be designed and developed to make visitors feel that it... is attractive and the type of place that ‘respectable people’ like themselves tend to frequent... A core downtown area... (that includes) offices and housing for middle- and upper-income residents... can assure a high percentage of respectable, law-abiding pedestrians. (1992b: 160)

This *Foucaultian nightmare* means that not only is the population’s subjectivity altered by the emergence of demands for security, but the populace can be observed everywhere and at all times. Thus, we see pathological modernity enclosing the commons of safety and establishing exclusionary boundaries where once public streets existed. The result has been the destruction and extinction of “truly democratic urban space”, with secured mega-malls replacing the once shared public footpaths and public squares (ibid). While

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<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that this contradiction is identified by Neocleous as contributing to the permanent ‘state of emergency’. The concept of a manufactured and perpetual ‘state of emergency’ is pursued in Chapter 6 –Section 6.4.

not discussing Foucault, Davis outlines how the public are constantly monitored to ensure that people ‘act appropriately’, and that ‘undesirables’ are excluded or incarcerated.<sup>21</sup>

Such changes have wider repercussions. To begin with, private zones such as malls inhibit political activity and replace democratic spaces such as public streets. This privatisation of public space is another form of political enclosure, for the private owners of shopping malls have the right to limit or refuse any material or people from entering their confines.

Hardt and Negri (2004) make similar observations noting that security is actively reshaping our environment both locally and internationally. They discuss this dominance of security arguing that in the international sphere security has replaced the concept of war.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, Hardt and Negri argue that security has become a form of biopower now charged with the task of producing and transforming social life both locally and on the global level. Whereas security was once an “an element of social life”, it now rules over life (ibid 18).

Importantly, Neocleous makes links between ‘security’ and markets in two ways. The first relates to how security has come to be considered analogous to the protection of property. As Neocleous notes, liberalism has come to refer to “the liberty... of private property” (2001: 9) with markets having to be secure to allow trading in property. The second link between security and the markets raised by Neocleous reflects how security has become focused on access to “private protective services” (2001: 15). The result is that security is now one of the “greatest commodities of our time” (ibid). Security is therefore, a commodity to be traded through private gated communities, private security firms, high-tech alarms and surveillance systems. Davis quotes a private security

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<sup>21</sup> In a later study, Mike Davis notes that various events including the 1992 Los Angeles riots, “declining factory jobs, deep cuts in welfare and public employment, a backlash against immigration workers, the failure of police reform, and an unprecedented exodus of middle-class families” have reinforced these trends (1999: 362).

<sup>22</sup> Hardt and Negri elaborate this position, noting that security has replaced defence: “whereas ‘defence’ involves a protective barrier against external threats, ‘security’ justifies a constant martial activity equally in the homeland and abroad” (2004: 21). That is, as security has replaced war and defence, it signals a lack of distinction between inside and outside.

organisation which argues that: “We’re not a security guard company. We sell a concept of security” (1992b: 174). And to promote this commodity, fear and insecurity must continue to be manufactured.

It should also be noted that once pathological modernity encloses the commons of safety, the process of exclusion follows. This is reflected by Neocleous who identifies the emergence of a “fortress mentality” which forces us further into our privatised and secured neighbourhoods (2001: 15). When safety is enclosed, ‘pieces’ that do not fit are either “devalued or discarded” (*The Ecologist* 1996: 60). For example, Davis describes the removal of “safe-zone” areas for the inner city homeless in Los Angeles as an attempt to exclude them from the city (1992b: 164). A similar exclusion of *undesirables* occurred in both Sydney and Atlanta while each city was hosting the Olympic Games (see Boland 1999 and Murphy 2000). This is a model of security that has also been exported to the Global South with Zimbabwe’s President, Robert Mugabe, recently displacing the urban poor by levelling slum areas that are the homes to hundreds of thousands (see Vincent 2005 for more details).

But for Davis the ultimate act of exclusion is found in the belief that security can only be found in mixing with “like-minded people” – that is, with those that we *recognise* as like us (1992b: 178).<sup>23</sup> Davis describes campaigns to “take back the streets” establishing enclaves that people must seek permission to enter: something akin to the enclaves built during the Vietnam War, when the US army attempted to separate the Vietcong from the rest of the population.

Again the enclosure of the cultural commons of safety has institutional repercussions. Davis notes that even public amenities such as parks, libraries and public toilets are shrinking. For example, access to public parklands has become increasingly limited with the introduction of expensive and thus exclusionary entry fees. At the same time, we see the building of new (privatised) cities, with private roads, private housing estates and

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<sup>23</sup> As noted earlier in the chapter, I return to this issue of ‘recognition’ and forming communities with those who are ‘just like us’ in Chapter 7 – Section 7.2.

their own private police force. The ability of pathological modernity to expand exclusionary private property rights becomes increasingly evident with the establishment of high security rubbish bins to stop the homeless from obtaining discarded food. This in effect, places property rights even on those things that have been discarded.

Finally, it is possible to see how security allows pathological modernity to be reflexive and intervene. Demands for greater security has led to increased interventions and a more aggressive protection of private property. The need for security is self referential, increasingly creating the need for greater security. Like the commodification of other commons, the turning of safety into security “subsumes political processes and democratic procedures” (Neocleous 2001: 15).<sup>24</sup>

## Intellect and Intellectual Property

The final cultural commons identified here is that of *intellect*. Here, intellect is defined as the open sharing of ideas not driven by commercial gain. This ranges from research material freely available on the internet and ‘open source software’, to the open discussion of research progress at conferences.<sup>25</sup> Intellect is shared with no commercial transaction undertaken. Lessig argues if a society wants intellect to expand, it must be freely and openly shared to allow others to “build” on it (2004: 30).

Based on the work of Bollier (2002) and Lessig (1999; 2001; 2004), I argue that the development of knowledge is driven by the free sharing of ‘intellect’. Intellect is not a commodity that is ‘owned’ by any individual, but something that is developed, enhanced

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<sup>24</sup> It is important to note that I am not arguing that there was some mythical time when fear did not exist. Rather, I am presenting a process of exclusion and scarcity that is at the base of the crisis of the whole. The issue, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, is not that we need to return to some non-existent past, but rather overcome this scarcity and promote abundance as a way of breaking the logic of pathological modernity.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Open source software’ refers to both software and its source code that is available freely to study, change, exchange and improve its design. It includes software with source code in the public domain. There are open source licenses that limit how this can occur, creating guidelines on its usage, modification and redistribution. For example, some licenses may state that any innovations from the free code must also be distributed openly and without charge. Other licences allow for partial commodification. The most notable example of open source software is Linux. For discussion on the success of open source software see Weber (2004).

and freely shared. This process makes intellect abundant and as such, it needs to be understood as a commons. Like other commons the sharing of intellect does not exclude but welcomes wider community participation, exchange and sharing.

In contrast, the commodifying logic of pathological modernity treats ‘knowledge’ as a scarce commodity, turning intellect into ‘intellectual property’ (IP). Intellectual property is defined by IP Australia, the federal government agency responsible for granting rights on patents, trademarks and designs, as representing “the property of *your* mind or intellect”, and in business terms, “*your* proprietary knowledge” (IP Australia 2003; emphasis added). According to IP Australia, intellectual property can be anything from design, invention, trademark or “the practical application of a good idea” (ibid).

For proponents of intellectual property, IP is a key component of success in business today. Intellectual property is seen as “the edge which sets successful companies apart”, and is essential in protecting what is considered to be ‘your’ property in an environment where world markets have become increasingly competitive (ibid).

Intellectual property rights are part of the wider property rights that have come to define one of the key organising principles of modern economies which, according to McTaggart et al (1999), also include real property (such as land and buildings) and financial property (such as shares). Such property rights allow owners to use, disperse, sell, trade and profit from their intellectual property. In this way, it is argued that intellectual property rights are essential to promoting further innovation and progress, as they provide financial rewards and incentives to their owners. If not enforced, so the argument goes, there is little incentive for and effort invested in the development of knowledge as people will spend all their time protecting their property.

As intellectual property rights have become a key organising institution of modernity, the principle underlying it is rarely challenged. For it makes perfect ‘sense’ that if someone invents an idea, then they have the right to claim it as their own and prevent, or charge for, its use.

The freedom to establish and trade property rights is central to free market economies. In fact, such market freedoms have been extended to represent wider human freedoms more generally (see Bollier (2002) as well as my discussion in Chapter 3). Intellectual property is thus seen to be like any other commodity that can be traded. The owner of the commodity has the right to withhold the use of their intellectual property, and unless appropriately compensated, can seek legal action and financial damages from those who use ‘their property’.

In contrast to the position that intellectual property rights enhance knowledge, I echo Bollier’s sentiments that IP has the opposite effect. That is, intellectual property rights actually stifle research and the development of knowledge. These processes of commodifying knowledge turns intellect, the development and free sharing of knowledge, into a commodity that is withheld unless its ‘owner’ receives appropriate (financial) compensation. As with other commodities, the scarcer it is the higher its potential value. This process is driven by pathological modernity’s Cartesian logic and reflects the ongoing commodification of ‘everything’ – see Chapter 3.

### ***Intellect not Intellectual Property***

To better interrogate this concept, I will use the example of the sharing of intellect amongst academic communities. According to Bollier, only a generation ago academic researchers regarded the patenting of their discoveries as unseemly – “a contemptible affront” to their mission of serving the public (2002: 135). Bollier gives a number of examples where researchers refused to patent either their discoveries or techniques, including John Salk, Albert Sabis and John Endes who did not seek to claim ownership of ‘their’ polio vaccine.

Importantly, Bollier does not romanticise these researchers as either saintly or naïve. Rather, he argues that the basis of academic communities and knowledge formation is the

free exchange and sharing of ideas, research tools and data to allow for peer review, rigour, ethics and scrutiny.

This is the *intellect* that is shared amongst the community of academia. Realistically, research can only exist by acting as a ‘building block’ for peers within that community. That is, knowledge rarely emerges randomly or in isolation but relies on the sharing of ideas to build and expand. Knowledge is expanded by the critical feedback received, both positive and negative, which emerges from non-commodified peer review and discussion. This non-commercial process works to enhance knowledge and intellect more generally. Though it is unlikely that the process of financial exchange or payment would end critical review, it would lead to exclusion as only those individuals or institutions who could afford to pay for this process would participate.

If intellect is treated as a commons, it is openly shared, non-exclusionary and available in abundance. In contrast, if commodified, it is likely to suffer from scarcity. While this does not dismiss the concept of ownership, it means that intellectual property is a secondary factor when considering the expansion of knowledge – a point echoed by Lessig (2004).

This thesis for example, is not my intellect alone, but (hopefully) at least referential to that of the broader academic community, and possibly that of wider society. For it not only represents the original work undertaken, but is inspired by a number of key theorists, strengthened by reviews and feedback from broader academia as well as the wider community. It is unlikely to have been completed if such open, non-commercial sharing had not been established with each of these actors.

I argue that the commons of intellect represents one of the foundations of the academic community. This community is established and maintained by the process of non-commercial reciprocity – a position that builds on the work undertaken by Marcel Mauss (1967) and further discussed in Chapter 7 – Section 7.4.

## ***Intellect to Intellectual Property***

Despite this, the commons of intellect is something that is either dismissed or rarely considered in policy making. Today it is usually argued that only the assignment of ownership rights can promote innovation – reflecting pathological modernity’s tendency to dismiss alternatives. This is an enclosure of the commons of intellect transforming it into ‘intellectual property’.

This type of enclosure continues to expand. In 1980 for example, the US Supreme Court set a wide reaching precedent by granting the first patent on a living organism (Anderson 2000). This has been extended to patents being placed on human genes and proteins. According to Westphal (2002), this practice is now commonplace. One example is the patenting by Myriad, a genetic research organisation, over any “diagnostic or therapeutic use of BRCA1 and BRCA2 and the proteins that they code for” (ibid: 29). These are the genes used to assess a woman’s risk of breast or ovarian cancer. The result is that a single biotechnology corporation has claimed property rights on two human genes, so that other diagnostic labs cannot test people or undertake research without financial compensation. Westphal’s investigative report published by the *New Scientist* notes that biotechnology organisations are increasingly aiming to obtain a monopoly on specific genes.

This type of action moves towards breaking down the possibility for the cultural common of intellect and creates a crisis of scarcity in this field of research. In fact, as Westphal notes, soon after Myriad obtained a US patent in the mid-1990s, it was successful in stopping most testing in US labs. Since 1980, many organisations such as Myriad have been attempting to use patents to establish exclusionary borders, in this case intellectual property rights, where there once existed a world that did not recognise them. Despite rhetoric that appropriate private property rights are required to promote research, Westphal notes that:



Generally speaking, it's widely acknowledged that once someone patents a gene, researchers interested in finding diagnostic tests or therapies based on that gene will shy away from it for fear of infringing the patent. (2002: 30)

Defenders of these policies dismiss concerns that such practices limit access and cause exclusion. In fact, authors such as McTaggart et al (1999) argue that research and development could not proceed without patents or appropriate private property rights because they promote financial returns on investments. Interestingly however, this response cannot explain why innovation occurred long before patents became commonplace, including the research gains made by the abovementioned researchers who discovered the polio vaccine. In fact, as the evidence shows in the case of BRCA1 and BRCA2, patents seem to have the opposite effect – restraining research and development rather than promoting it.

As noted, such enclosure is no longer unique. According to Geoffrey Duyk, an ex-academic and current CEO of another biotechnology firm, the story of Myriad is “the story of agribusiness versus the family farm and *amazon.com* versus the corner book store” (quoted in Westphal 2002: 32). Similar trends are evident in the areas of seed technologies where the race is on for biotechnology companies to gain the upper hand by discovering the genetic make-up of foods and grains, and then placing a ‘life patent’ on these genetic commons.

## **4.5 The Commons/Commodity Typology**

Over the last two chapters, I have analysed both pathological modernity and the commons. In so doing, I have described the expansion of pathological modernity through the ongoing enclosure of the commons and subsequent hollowing out of the public sphere. In contrast to this enclosure, in the following chapter I discuss a global movement that has emerged to both defend and establish new commons.

A central theme of this thesis is that this contest over the commons is a pivotal conflict between pathological modernity and many of today's social movements. This is a conflict between those who regard the commons as being both open and abundant, and Cartesian logic's demand for their commodification. The divergent characteristics between commons and commodities are summarised in Table 4.1.

To better explain this conflict, I now introduce a typology that highlights the divisions and trends that are emerging. Before doing so, it is important to acknowledge that any typology is a simplification and generalisation of the arguments presented. Likewise, it is unlikely that any typology has the ability to cover all cases and situations. This typology can, however, be used to underscore the processes highlighted throughout this thesis, helping illuminate my theoretical position.

Further, it is important to note that I am not attempting to draw simple binaries between the different categories. Rather, the purpose is to highlight that there are relationships between the groupings I have identified. As Davis (2001) notes, binaries often act to simplify complex phenomena. For example, any transaction that takes place should be considered along a continuum divided between the exchange of commodities and the sharing of commons via non-commercial reciprocity. As I detail in Chapter 7, any exchange may have elements of both. We can thus see the commons operating within the market system as well as outside it. Rather than drawing binaries, my purpose is to describe a 'continuum'.

**Table 4.1: Commons/Commodity Characteristics**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Commodities</b>	<b>Commons</b>
Availability	– Scarce and enclosed	– Abundant and open
Motivation	– Private profit/financial	– Broader societal goals and benefits. These are non-financial
Access	– Limited to those with capital who can ‘buy’ their way in	– Optimally open to all
Political inclinations	– Democracy through the markets, that is a neoliberal market democracy	– Direct management of shared resources – not based on access to wealth
Managed	– Deregulated: In the post-Washington consensus, the government acts as a facilitator to enable the market	– Regulated by local communities and, where appropriate, government authorities
Property	– Private property rights including strict adherence to intellectual property	– Establishing and protecting communally owned, non-private resources including ‘intellect’
Market	– The market exists in its own right, and is equated to freedom and democracy	– The market is integrated within society and if appropriate, markets are excluded
Laws	– Universal	– Neither universal nor local, rather containing elements of both. Laws are negotiated democratically
Borders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Porous borders as they are freely open to those with the right capital but closed for others</li> <li>– The borders of pathological modernity constantly expand with everything outside subsumed. What is left is the ‘non-space’ for ‘non-people’ – the garbage dumps. These are the people and places that no-one wants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Open borders and free movement which are negotiated directly with local communities</li> <li>– Commons are created that become open, extinguishing any notion of inside and outside</li> </ul>

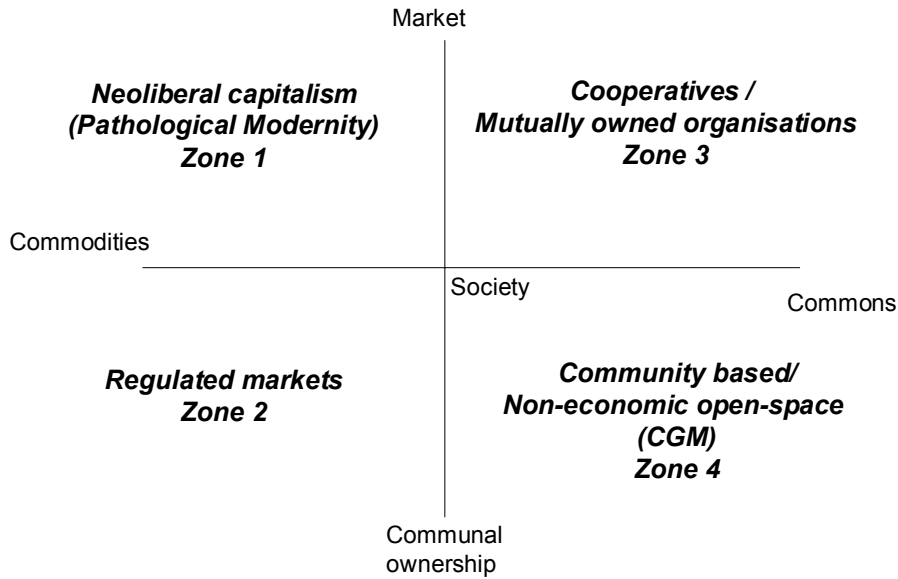
## Establishing the typology

The commons/commodity typology draws two broad distinctions and is thus divided along a classic x-y axis format – see Figure 4.1. This first (x-) axis is the division between commodities and commons described throughout this chapter. On the extremes there exist ‘pure’ commons and commodities. On the commons side, this may include physical, institutional or cultural commons. At the other extreme, there are pure commodities such as foreign-exchange transactions.

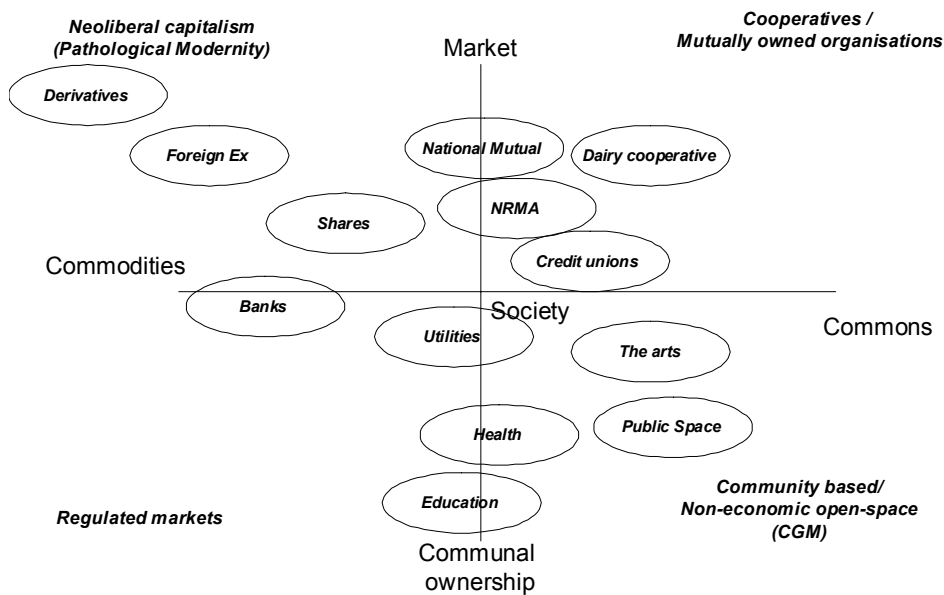
The second (y-) axis presents two key organisational principles available to society. In the middle of the y-axis is a balance between communal and market solutions, whereas on the ends of the axis, the different organising principles tend to dominate. At one extreme, the free market fundamentalism described in Chapter 3 becomes the *natural order* for organising society. This axis highlights the separation of the ‘market’ from both the economy and wider society as the market becomes a “metaphor for the economy” (Milberg 2001: 407). The four zones of the typology are summarised in Table 4.2.

In addition to the examples noted in Table 4.2, others have been added to the typology to present a broader overview in Figure 4.2. These examples are *specifically* drawn as ovals to signify my position that no group or ‘cluster’ fits comfortably or easily within any single zone. Even if it is possible to place a cluster wholly in a single zone, the point at which an individual example fits within the cluster varies significantly.

**Figure 4.1: The Commons/Commodity Typology**



**Figure 4.2: Examples of Commons/Commodities**



**Table 4.2: The zones of the Commons/Commodity Typology**

<b>Zones</b>	<b>Description of Zones</b>	<b>Examples of Zones</b>
<b>Zone 1:</b>  <b>Market-Commodity</b>  <b>Pathological modernity</b>	<b>Pathological modernity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– It is in this zone that pathological modernity operates reflecting the characteristics of neoliberal capitalism</li> <li>– Here the free market operates with little or no involvement from external influences. Both markets and commodities are seen to have little (if any) connection to wider society</li> <li>– The central goals are profit and returns on investments</li> <li>– The image of the individual is one of atomised <i>homo-economicus</i>. A functioning community occurs only when each individual pursues their own self interest</li> </ul>	Capital markets; financial derivatives and foreign exchange
<b>Zone 2:</b>  <b>Commodity-Society</b>	<b>Regulated markets</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This zone places markets within the broader context of society and community. Here it is acknowledged that markets need to be regulated to meet both economic and broader social goals</li> </ul>	Financial institutions such as banks; privatised utilities such as electricity and the infrastructure for the delivery of water
<b>Zone 3:</b>  <b>Market-Commons</b>	<b>Cooperatives/mutually owned organisations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This zone places community-based resources within the market context. Resources may be used for the sake of financial gain or profit, but this is placed within the context of broader communal aims</li> </ul>	Financial cooperatives such as credit unions and other mutually owned organisations including agricultural cooperatives
<b>Zone 4:</b>  <b>Society-Commons</b>  <b>CGM<sup>26</sup></b>	<b>The commons</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Community-based and non-commodified space. This is the zone in which the CGM operates. This is a space that excludes ‘the market’ and is not driven by economic or financial motivations</li> <li>– Communal or societal aims dominate</li> <li>– The individual is seen to be both part of the broader community while maintaining their singularity</li> <li>– An open and ‘authentic’ community is established by achieving this balance</li> </ul>	Public goods managed specifically for the public interest such as hospitals and water, as well as public space and national parks

<sup>26</sup> As I will argue in Chapter 6, the key intellectual thread that unites the counter-globalisation movement (CGM) is that it attempts to both defend and establish commons. It is for this reason that I present the CGM ‘dominating’ in Zone 4. I expand this typology to reflect the role of the CGM in Chapter 8.

This point regarding clusters can be better explained by drawing on an example. To begin with, ‘health’ is a broad cluster that includes both private and public health care providers. Many hospitals are managed by government-owned organisations with the prime motivation being to *serve the common good* (McAuley 1998). As such, they are available to all and primarily aim to serve broader society – and thus fit within Zone 4.<sup>27</sup> Here the common good is seen to consist of establishing functioning social systems, institutions and environments that benefit all (McAuley 1998). However, each health centre and hospital within the public realm will have different philosophies and some may have greater communal links than others.

This can be contrasted with privately run health care organisations. Such organisations have multiple motivations which include both the provision of health care *and* obtaining a profitable return for investors. This is highlighted by one of Australia’s leading private health care providers, the Mayne Group. Mayne’s mission statement describes the company’s goals as including “building on the success of our health care products and services to meet the needs of all our stakeholders”.<sup>28</sup> These stakeholders include both consumers (or ‘patients’) of its ‘health products and services’, as well as its investors. For this reason, Mayne’s website provides information about its health services alongside ‘investor’ information including current share price and investment strategies.

Operating within this regulated market place, such privately run organisations place priority not only on profits but also on the health of their customers – two goals that Mayne considers intimately related.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, the cluster of health spreads across Zones 2 and 4.

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<sup>27</sup> For example, the State Government of Victoria’s ‘Metropolitan Health Strategy’ (2003) places the needs for the community at the centre of the public health sector.

<sup>28</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.maynegroup.com/97.asp> - February 2005.

<sup>29</sup> A list of the legislation administered by the Australian federal Minister for Health and Ageing including that which directly effects private health providers is listed on the following site: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-eta2.htm> - accessed February 2005.

This close interrelationship between profits and caring for the health of consumers highlights the continuum identified above. As such, I have attempted to avoid simplified binaries such as ‘public is good’ and ‘private is bad’. It may be argued for example, that private health providers provide an important service to the broader well-being of society as they may fill the gap left by the public system. What becomes problematic, however, is if this gap is purposely widened by neglecting institutional commons such as health provision.

Figure 4.2 also portrays the close link between society and the economy. Here the economy is observed and managed within the context of broader societal goals. This is in contrast to the market fundamentalism characterising Cartesian logic.

As noted, the central distinction between the zones is the differing methods of organising communities and society more generally. Within Zone 1, markets are the key organising principle and represent both freedom and democratic processes since *individualised* consumers and investors use these mechanisms to set preferences. In general, the market is seen as the central organising tool for all dimensions of life not only resource allocation and (almost) nothing exists outside its influence.

In contrast, Zone 4 is characterised by collective and inter-communal agreements and organising models. This is an inclusionary rather than exclusionary zone. Resources are managed by local communities and participants are treated equally. The market mechanism is applied only where it is considered appropriate and always within the context of the community. In fact, in this zone many resources are considered to be outside the realm of the market.

It should also be noted that Zones 2 and 3 are sites of intense contestation, conflict and change. It is here for example, that debates around the issue of privatisation take place. In these zones more than the others, the clusters appear to be in a constant state of flux. The debates surrounding the WTO’s proposed General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) provides some insight into this. This agreement came into force in 1995 and can



apply to all services including banking, telecommunications, health, education and water. GATS treats all such services as tradeable commercial goods and any social aspects of such services are considered to fall within the market (Wallach and Woodall 2004).

GATS has been a site of intense debate. This agreement was prompted by transnational service corporations who wanted to expand their markets and by governments increasingly reliant on the private sector for the delivery of social services (Wallach and Woodall 2004). In response, organisations that form part of the counter-globalisation movement, including AID/WATCH, AFTINET and FOE Australia, actively work to stop such enclosure from proceeding, considering it an encroachment of the market into areas outside its domain. These organisations are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, with this important aspect of their work detailed in Chapter 6.

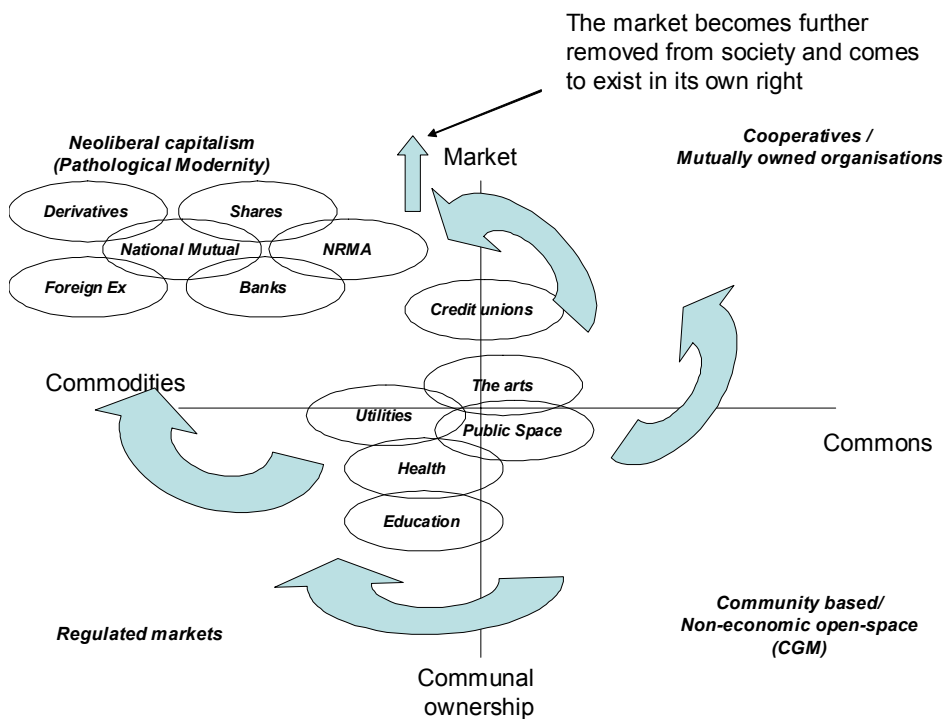
## **Enclosing the commons**

Under pathological modernity, commons are constantly under threat as two simultaneous processes emerge. The first of these is the separation of the economy from society. This reaches a point where ‘the market’ becomes a metaphor for the economy as realms once considered outside its domain are slowly subsumed (Milberg 2001). The second is pathological modernity’s frontier disposition moving towards an ongoing commodification and enclosure of the commons. Both these processes are portrayed in Figure 4.3.

The central theme that emerges in Figure 4.3 is the hollowing out of Zone 4 and the subsequent expansion of Zone 1. That is, because of pathological modernity’s frontier disposition, increasingly fewer resources are considered outside the market’s domain and Zone 4 shrinks while Zone 1 inflates. The result is that many commons that were once seen as being beyond the realm of the market, have now been commodified and an imbalance has emerged between the market and other forms of ownership (Lessig 2004; Barber 1998).

The result of the enclosure then, is that we are seeing many of the clusters moving from Zone 4 towards Zone 1 either directly (through aggressive privatisation programs) or through stages (such as partial privatisation and public-private partnerships).<sup>30</sup>

**Figure 4.3: Enclosing the commons**



It is important to note that I am making no attempt to assign a ‘time scale’ to this typology. The changes that are taking place are current and both the mode and speed of change within each of the clusters presented varies extensively across time and space. The experience of each sector within different nations would also be significantly different. For example, the banking sector in Australia moved relatively quickly from Zone 2 to Zone 1, while other sectors, such as education, have experienced a slower

<sup>30</sup> Public-private partnerships (or PPPs) can be defined as any collaboration undertaken between public bodies (including local councils or state and national governments) and private companies (Osborne 2000).

transition. Though water privatisation has not yet occurred in Australia, it is common elsewhere in the world and is now an ongoing process likely to continue.

Health care for the purpose of broader social goals can be used to highlight the hollowing out of Zone 4. The issue of privatising the Australian health care system and its consequences is discussed by Brooks (1999). Noting that this is a global trend over the past few decades, Brooks describes how private hospitals have stepped into areas that were once dominated by public providers. This has been driven in part by the decision of governments to reduce funding in areas that were once priorities as a result of the dominance of conservative budgetary fiscal policies since the late 1980s – this is the ‘cycle of neglect’ I described in Section 4.3. According to Monbiot (2003), such trends are continuing and are pursued throughout the health system including in the area of medical research.

In addition to institutional effects, this also has important impacts on the cultural commons. One way to interpret this is to look at how such a process encloses and commodifies the sharing of knowledge and intellect. As discussed in Section 4.4, this removes intellect from the commons (Zone 4) as it becomes intellectual property (represented in Zone 1). Knowledge is no longer shared in pursuit of the public interest but driven by the profit motive. This promotes a further hollowing out of Zone 4.

## **4.6 Concluding Comments**

The enclosure of the commons – be they physical, institutional or cultural – creates major societal transformation. In this chapter I have described how the cultural commons of trust, hope, safety and intellect are transformed into commodities. This has occurred as pathological modernity has moved to colonise the biopolitical sphere as it alters and produces new subjectivities predicated on greed, competition, exclusion and scarcity.

While I have described the enclosure of the commons, this is a process constantly being challenged. In Chapters 5 and 6 I discuss the role of social movements in both defending and establishing new commons. I begin in Chapter 5 by looking at the heterogeneous characteristics of the counter-globalisation movement. In Chapter 6 I argue that the unifying logic that links this movement is its desire to both defend and establish new commons. This characteristic of the movement brings it into direct conflict with pathological modernity.

Once I have outlined these arguments I turn to the broader implications of the conflict over the commons before returning to and expanding this typology in Chapter 8.

# Chapter 5: Counter-Globalisation Movement

## 5.1 Background

*On a sunny Sunday morning on 31 March 2002, I was one among some 1,000 protesters gathered at a train station in Sydney's south-west to raise concerns about the Australian government's treatment of refugees. We marched the few kilometres from the station to the Villawood detention centre, a 'prison' that is home to a number of refugees as part of Australia's mandatory detention regime.*

*Although the protest was not large, what followed made it amongst the most moving and most memorable I have attended. While the protesters congregated at the gate of the detention centre, the refugees gathered together some 50 metres away. Between us stood a line of security guards, police on horseback and barbed wire fencing. While facing each other, the refugees started chanting 'freedom, freedom, freedom'. Almost in immediate reaction, we (the protesters) responded with the same chant... 'freedom, freedom, freedom'!*

*The twin chant echoed around the suburb, and the emotion of the two crowds perceptibly increased. While the guards and police had initially looked confident that they had the situation under control, there was a visible change in their demeanour. This was despite the fact that the large police and security presence, as well as the structural design of the centre, meant that it was unlikely events would escalate.*

*The determination of both the detainees and protesters grew. It may sound irrational, but it felt that the two groups drew closer together as the chants continued.*

*A number of protesters climbed on top of one of the barricades and started waving placards. The tension increased for approximately 15 minutes before the guards dispersed the refugees and the police further increased their presence.*

*We stayed for a while longer even though the detainees had been moved out of view. A number of speeches were made contrasting the free movement of financial capital with the plight of refugees who are detained for many years in centres such as Villawood. It was noted that many refugees have been forcibly deported back to their country of origin where they have suffered further human rights abuses.<sup>1</sup>*

*About an hour later, we dispersed and headed back to the train station. We walked as a group and, in contrast to the carnival atmosphere on the way to the protest the crowd was sombre, visibly affected by the experience. At the same time it was clear that while we felt some despondence at the plight of the detainees, there was also an element of hope because it felt as though in some small way we had connected with the detainees – even across the barbed wire.*

*While this was occurring, someone drove past and hurled abuse at us, yelling ‘keep the bastards locked up’. The emotional effect of this was palpable.*

This chapter aims to analyse the diverse group of protesters that organise and attend such events and theoretically ground them as political agents. I argue that the protesters described above form part of a global movement that has raised public consciousness about globalisation, war and conflict, as well as the treatment of refugees. The fact that this movement appears both disparate and disconnected means that it has been criticised, praised, and assigned many descriptions.

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<sup>1</sup> In a research report, the Edmund Rice Centre identified that the outcome for many refugees forcibly deported from Australia was “death, disappearance, torture, imprisonment and other serious violations of human rights in overseas countries” (Glendenning et al 2004: 1).

Although this group of actors has been labelled the ‘anti-globalisation’ movement, I argue the term ‘counter-globalisation movement’ (CGM) is more appropriate. I call them this because they present a qualitatively different form of globalisation to that of the dominant paradigm which in this thesis I have described as ‘pathological modernity’.

This chapter outlines the broad characteristics of the CGM and argues that its political agency can be grounded by Hardt and Negri’s (2000; 2004) theory of the ‘multitude’. The CGM represents one, albeit significant, manifestation of the multitude. Chapter 6 follows and presents the CGM’s unifying logic which, I argue, is a desire to ‘work in common’ to establish new commons or non-commodified spaces (Hardt and Negri 2004). As a result, the CGM comes into direct conflict with pathological modernity as it is a vehicle that challenges its commodifying logic.

Hardt and Negri’s discussion of the multitude in *Empire* has sparked a number of debates around the exact meaning of the term, its interpretation and relevance (if any) in analysing today’s social movements. Before turning to these debates and presenting my argument regarding the relevance of the multitude, it is important to gain some insight into the character of the CGM.

## **5.2 The anti-globalisation movement?**

On 11 September 2000, I attended an ‘anti-globalisation’ protest in opposition to the World Economic Forum (WEF) held at the Crown Casino, Melbourne. During the protest, I was pushed out of the way by a police officer who called me a “prick”. This occurred as other members of the police stomped and kicked a number of peaceful *sit-down* protesters who presented no physical threat but were attempting to stop a bus filled with delegates from entering the Forum. Some six months later, at the May Day protests in front of the Sydney Stock Exchange, I witnessed members of the police force

specifically target female protesters, dragging them by their hair so as to provoke an aggressive response by male protesters and justify more forceful interventions.<sup>2</sup>

Such police violence is usually ignored in the mainstream media where the ‘anti-globalisation’ protesters are usually identified as the aggressors when such incidents flare.<sup>3</sup> ‘Peaceful demonstrations’ tend to be described as the exception, though the violence, if any, is often instigated by the police or largely symbolic as it is directed towards property such as the windows of fast food outlets.<sup>4</sup>

This type of reporting often aligns with how the globalisation debate has come to be defined as simply a clash between ‘inevitable progress’ and violent trouble-makers described as naïve, anti-development or luddites (Harvey 2001; McCormick 2001). The mainstream media focuses on the perceived violent tendencies of the protesters, their funny coloured hair and some of their more controversial slogans. The result is that many issues raised by the protesters are ignored or dismissed, detracting from the underlying debate about the very nature of globalisation.

While violence frequently comes under the media spotlight, the focus of this chapter is on the broader practices of the protesters themselves that, I argue, embodies an active political agency. Though often dismissed and simplified as ‘anti-globalisation’, I believe that the CGM is a complex and dynamic movement that creates a rupture in the logic of pathological modernity.

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<sup>2</sup> Though this may sound like a conspiracy, such tactics were confirmed to me ‘off the record’ by a former senior police officer.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the Barrett Report discussed the media reportage at the WTO protests held in Melbourne, 11 September 2000: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~gcforum/BarrettReport.htm> - accessed March 2004. Likewise, Kingston (2002), in analysing the anti-WTO protests I discuss later in this chapter, describes how political manoeuvring in the media established an atmosphere of violence before the protests even began.

<sup>4</sup> For example, reports emerged that it was the police who were responsible for the violence against ‘anti-globalisation’ protesters at the G8 Summit in Genoa, Italy – see Boudreaux (2001).



Despite each protest I attended (and analysed) being different, there were many commonalities.<sup>5</sup> On one side of the protest line are anonymous rows of riot police dressed in black. The masses of police (violently) swarm as necessary to disperse the ‘threatening’ crowd, although the nature of this threat is never defined.<sup>6</sup> Such state-based police forces act as part of an international network defending the representatives of global capital. Regardless of the values or subjectivity of individual police officers, a single logic tends to dominate. The nature of these officers is, metaphorically speaking, reflective of both the faceless and uncompromising nature of capitalism.

On the other side, we have a ‘multitude’ of groups and individuals representing multiple ‘logics’ and subjectivities, although later I argue that there is a significant coherence within them. In contrast to the police, the protesters are heterogeneous in character and display a sea of colour, noise and performance<sup>7</sup> – presenting everything from clever (and not so clever) slogans, dancing, singing and chanting, with varying colours to represent the affinity groups or ‘blocs’: red, yellow, green, pink, white, orange and black. The concerns that each of these groups represent is broad, ranging from the treatment of refugees to radical reform of the global financial system.

In this chapter, I argue that such protests represent a manifestation of the conflict between pathological modernity and those who refuse or work to disrupt its logic. In contrast to pathological modernity’s Cartesian logic, the CGM is motivated to establish non-commodified and democratic spaces. This desire is one of the main focuses of the CGM and represents a ‘counter’ logic to that offered by pathological modernity. It is because of this alternative logic that I argue that the CGM is better described as ‘counter’ rather than ‘anti’.

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<sup>5</sup> That is, the theme of each protest varies to some degree typically focusing on different issues. For example, the protest at the WEF focused on the unaccountable nature of the organisation and the collusion between corporations and governments. The Stock Exchange protest aimed to at highlight the limited governance of global financial transactions.

<sup>6</sup> An example of this ‘undefined’ threat was highlighted by Isikoff and Hosenball (2004). Isikoff and Hosenball note that one of the major concerns raised by the Central Intelligence Agency during the Athens Olympic Games was the ‘threat of disruption’ posed by ‘anti-globalisation’ protesters, although the reason for this was not explained.

<sup>7</sup> The issue of protest and performance is an important element of the CGM raised by Torgerson (1999) and Szerszynski (1999) which I discuss in Chapter 7.

### ***5.3 Why counter rather than anti?***

Since the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1999, we have seen the growth of the protest movement that I have termed the ‘counter-globalisation movement’. What this movement represents has been the subject of a great deal of debate, ranging from its identification as a potential ‘niche’ market for a new product range (Ham 2000), to its portrayal as a prime example of “postmodern politics” (Gill 2000: 131). Gill positions the movement in this way because it is multiple, diverse and engaged in radically challenging modernist political practices and structures.

There are thus many ways to analyse this movement. Klein (2001b) argues that it represents a pro-democracy movement while Moore (2003) looks at the rise of such social movements as the emergence of a second global superpower. In contrast, others dismiss the position of the movement as being confused and “muddle headed” (Ham 2000: 26) and even “anti-poor” (Norberg 2003: 108).<sup>8</sup> Others, such as Ferudi (2004), see the movement as nothing more than a lifestyle choice with no substantive political alternative to offer.

Previously, I have linked the CGM with the broader environmental movement and argued it represents a ‘third wave of environmentalism’ (see Arvanitakis and Healy 2001). This extended Beder’s (1996) position that since the Second World War there have been two broad waves of environmental social movements. The first wave dominated the 1960s and 1970s, and can be characterised as anti-business and anti-development. This first ‘limits to growth’ phase began with Rachel Carson (1962) and was reduced to its essentials by the Club of Rome (1972).

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<sup>8</sup> Norberg’s (2003) central argument is that the capital controls promoted by the ‘anti-globalisation’ movement will limit access to capital for poorer nations and ultimately harm the poorest. Norberg argues that “free trade and mobility . . . make the poor richer and the rich also richer, but the rich do not grow richer as fast as the poor do” (2003: 128).

The second wave began in the 1980s and centred upon the principles of sustainable development, mainstreaming environmental issues by an insistence that economic growth and environmental protection were not mutually exclusive but rather reinforced each other. Being thus 'pro' rather than 'anti' development it achieved the support of both government and industry, a stance perhaps inconceivable to those of the first wave (Beder 1996).

My position was that a third wave emerged as it has become increasingly obvious that the many environmental disasters facing the world today are inextricably linked with issues of debt, poverty and current global economic structures. In response, we have seen a fusion of different groups highlighting alternative platforms. This is the merging of movements including environmental, human rights, labour rights and debt campaigners into a more integrated platform. As such, I characterised this as the 'third wave of environmentalism'.<sup>9</sup> While this conceptualisation sought to describe how these actors had become unified as they made links between their specific agendas, I now believe the proposal that 'environmentalism' is the unifying characteristic of the CGM is inaccurate and unduly limiting.

The CGM represents a wide range of both formal and informal actors. Within this movement, we see groups who identify themselves as environmental, labour, women's or human rights organisations, but their concerns tend to be multi-dimensional. This merging of concerns includes a radically different understanding of the potential of the global processes that have come to be defined as 'globalisation' (Kingsnorth 2003).

Though the dictum of the CGM is often 'another world is possible', there is no single unifying 'agenda for change' (Mertes 2004). The most obvious commonality of the movement is its heterogeneous character and multi-dimensional nature. The CGM is distinguished by diversity and plurality, but underpinned by various commonalities that I

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<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that we have seen the emergence of coalitions to work around specific campaigns – such as the green and pink bans (see Burgman 2003). However, there is no sign of the CGM exhausting itself or disappearing despite a number of such predictions, particularly after the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York (Bygrave 2002).

expand on later in this chapter. These commonalities include a desire for global democracy and the opening up of non-commodified spaces or commons.

We can contrast this with the position of pathological modernity that ‘there is no alternative’. As discussed in Chapter 3, pathological modernity is underscored by a logic that dismisses all forms of alternatives both historically and in the present. For example, Fukuyama (1989) describes the ‘end of history’ as the point where capitalism has totalised all social relations. The globalisation of capital markets and the atomised and disembedded individual have become the logical end-point of the neoliberal experiment. This is an end-point that, according to Fukuyama, cannot be challenged as it has overcome all contradictions that existed in other systems of government.<sup>10</sup>

But rather than the end of history, the emergence of the CGM and its vision of counter forms of globalisation mean that we are seeing the “end of the end of history” (Klein 2001b: 19). Although the collapse of the Soviet Union has led to a perspective that only one path of progress is possible, we have simultaneously seen the emergence and proliferation of social movements challenging this position (Mertes 2004). This is a trend that continues as evidenced by, amongst other things, the growing popularity of the World Social Forum (WSF) which brings such movements together.<sup>11</sup>

This refusal to accept a single dominant logic, as represented by pathological modernity, reflects the heterogeneous character of the CGM. Rather than being anti, an analysis of the movement confirms that these actors represent an alternative vision of globalisation. The ‘counter’ nature of the CGM is corroborated by examining four central groups forming part of the Australian CGM. These groups organised a number of counter-events that took place when an informal meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was held in Sydney (Australia) on 14-15 November 2002. These counter-events included a mass protest, educational and outreach seminars, and the political lobbying of federal

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<sup>10</sup> A more detailed discussion of Fukuyama’s (1989; 1992) various arguments and theoretical position are presented in Chapter 7.

<sup>11</sup> Callinicos and Nineham (2005) describe the increasing popularity of the annual World Social Forum (WSF). The fifth WSF, which met in Porto Alegre, Brazil, between 26 and 31 January 2005, included 200,000 participants involved in 2,500 activities.

politicians which focused on the effects of Australia's 'free trade' policies on neighbouring nations.<sup>12</sup>

## **Organising the anti-WTO protests – November 2002**

In this section, I analyse four representative but divergent groups to illustrate my claim that the movement I describe is 'counter' rather than 'anti' globalisation in nature. These groups play a significant role within both the Australian movement and broader international networks. The analysis considers three 'formal' NGOs (AID/WATCH, Friends of the Earth, Australia and AFTINET) and one informal, grassroots organisation (No-One is Illegal).

These groups were chosen for a number of reasons including the fact that they have significant reform agendas that are simultaneously local and globally focused. Further, all four groups worked to establish a loose coalition called 'No-WTO' – the focal point of the following analysis. They were fundamental in organising the protests, as well as the political lobbying and public outreach strategies that this coalition adopted. Additionally, I have personally worked with each of these groups in different capacities.<sup>13</sup>

On 14-15 November 2002, the WTO scheduled an informal ministerial meeting in Sydney, for 25 member nations. The aim of the meeting was, in part, to begin preparing the agenda for a full sitting of WTO members scheduled for September 2003 in Cancun, Mexico.<sup>14</sup>

In response to this meeting a network of both formal NGOs including church-based organisations and, informal groups and individuals formed the abovementioned

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that I was involved in the organising collective that planned these events.

<sup>13</sup> In Appendix A, I further justify why these four groups became the focus of my research.

<sup>14</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.aftinet.org.au/bulletins/bulletinarchive2002.html> - accessed February 2004.

coalition.<sup>15</sup> The No-WTO coalition worked to highlight what it considered to be the undemocratic and unrepresentative nature of the WTO which, it was claimed, promoted a ‘one size fits all’ form of globalisation involving dramatic forms of commodification and enclosure.<sup>16</sup>

## *AID/WATCH*

The first organisation examined here is AID/WATCH<sup>17</sup>, which is a not-for-profit activist organisation monitoring and campaigning on Australian overseas aid and trade policies.<sup>18</sup> Registered with the Australian Taxation Office as an ‘environmental organisation’, AID/WATCH raises concerns about Australia’s development assistance programs noting that “development projects can have detrimental impacts on local communities when the donor country imposes decisions without appropriate assessment of social, cultural and environmental needs” (ibid). As a result, although many of its campaigns have an environmental focus, the analysis and critique offered by AID/WATCH is broader and more complex.

Though highly critical of official development assistance (ODA) and global financial flows, AID/WATCH does not advocate the cessation of either. Rather, its aims are to:

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<sup>15</sup> For example, the No-WTO included ACMICA (Australian Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs); ATTAC (Association for the Taxation of financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens); Direct Action Collective; Education Bloc; Free Movement of People March; National Union of Students; No One Is Illegal; NSW Greens; Orange Bloc; Queer Bloc; Red Bloc/ Socialist Alternative; Refugee Action Collective; Stop WTO Christian Coalition; AID/WATCH; Friends of the Earth; Resistance; Green; Bloc; Sydney Network for Peace; Focus on the Global South; Community Action Against Homophobia; No War in Iraq Coalition; Palestinian Social Forum Working Group; Action in Solidarity with Asia and the Pacific; Latin America Action Group; North-side No War Group; Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition; Communist Party of Australia. Sourced from <http://www.nowto.cat.org.au/mediac.php> - accessed February 2004.

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.nowto.cat.org.au/campaign-resources.php> - accessed February 2004. In contrast to claims by the mainstream media, this critique of the WTO is both well researched and documented. For a detailed analysis of the WTO that was often quoted by groups such as the No-WTO Coalition, see the Jawara and Kwa (2003) who are former lobbyists at the organisation. A summary of this report was made available by AID/WATCH at the time of the No-WTO protests.

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that between 1999 and 2001 I was the Campaign Director of AID/WATCH. Since this time I have maintained a close association with the organisation and currently serve on its Committee of Management, which is essentially a Board position.

<sup>18</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.aidwatch.org.au/index.php?current=5> - accessed April 2003.

...work with partner groups... [in] researching and evaluating project impacts in order to lobby the Australian Government to prevent potentially damaging programs... we believe increased awareness about the reality of international aid and... projects will lead to truly beneficial programs for local communities.<sup>19</sup>

Additionally, AID/WATCH is an important player in a number of international networks including ECA Watch, which works to harmonise the environmental and social standards of the world's export credit agencies (ECAs). This network cooperates with partner organisations to transform the operations of ECAs to provide low-cost sustainable technologies to low-income nations that promote human-sensitive and environmentally sustainable development paths of a local community's choosing.<sup>20</sup>

At the WTO protests, AID/WATCH promoted a more consultative and democratic approach to trade negotiations that would place the world's poorest and displaced at the forefront of considerations. AID/WATCH representatives also argued that specific elements of human communities, both social and natural, should be considered outside the realm of commodification and excluded from the trade negotiations of the WTO.

In summarising AID/WATCH's position, this is an organisation that endorses increased levels of global interaction, although in a qualitatively different form to that promoted by pathological modernity. Rather than the globalisation of a single logic that promises to overcome all challenges, AID/WATCH promotes the rights of individual communities to democratically choose and facilitate their own 'development' path.

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<sup>19</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.aidwatch.org.au/index.php?current=5> - accessed April 2003.

<sup>20</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.eca-watch.org/> - accessed January 2005.

## *Friends of the Earth, Australia*

Friends of the Earth (FOE), Australia is also an ‘environmentally’ registered organisation, and another central player in the CGM within Australia. Historically, FOE Australia has been a vital part of the activist community, with Cam Walker, the group’s Campaigns Coordinator, being a central figure in organising the S11 protests in Melbourne to blockade the WEF (see Arvanitakis and Healy 2001). Based in Melbourne, FOE Australia representatives attended both the strategy meetings of the No-WTO coalition as well as assisting in organising various events associated with the Sydney protests.

FOE Australia is a national member of FOE International, a global network of affiliated groups operating in more than 60 nations across the Global North and South. This is the world’s largest federation of environmental groups, with around 5,000 local groups and an individual membership totalling more than 1 million.<sup>21</sup>

FOE Australia’s areas of interest include both global and local matters encompassing campaigns such as trade, refugees, nuclear arms and processing, indigenous rights, sustainable agriculture and arid lands management.<sup>22</sup> The organisation is also an ardent critic of the ongoing commodification of society and the patenting of living material which it sees as an enclosure of the biological commons.

The various global campaigns involving FOE Australia include promoting a global response to climate change although it has raised concerns about the slow progress and market-orientated solutions offered by the Kyoto protocol.<sup>23</sup> FOE Australia is also a leading advocate of reversing the debt cycle between wealthy and low-income nations through ‘ecological debt’. This is a position which argues that wealthy nations are deeply indebted to low-income nations because their wealth has emerged from the inappropriate exploitation and expropriation of the low-income world’s natural resources through

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<sup>21</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.foe.org.au/mainfiles/foei.htm> - accessed April 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.foe.org.au/nc/index.htm> - accessed January 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.foei.org/climate/faq.html> - accessed January 2005.



centuries of colonialism, neo-colonialism and continuing imbalanced power relationships.<sup>24</sup>

An analysis of both FOE Australia's affiliations and policy positions confirms that it is also an organisation promoting greater cooperation amongst different sections of society across nations. As a result, it too should be described as 'counter' rather than anti-globalisation.

### ***No-One is Illegal***

The third group to be examined is 'No-one is Illegal' (NOII), which is a loose network of groups around the world using the *kein ist mensch illegal* (no one is illegal) idea which developed at Documenta X in 1997.<sup>25</sup> The NOII group is a Melbourne-based collective "acting to question borders in all their forms".<sup>26</sup>

While the current focus of NOII is Australia's treatment of people who arrive in the country without papers, they attempt to address broader questions such as: "Why are there borders? Do we need nations? Is a global community possible? How can we remove the barriers between us?" (ibid) The organisation argues that "while there are few borders for trade and the movement of capital, restrictions on the movement of people are being tightened" (ibid).

NOII uses various methods of working to confront these issues including civil disobedience, non-violent direct action and artistic interventions. A key aim is to confront

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<sup>24</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.foei.org/ecodebt/> - accessed January 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Documenta X is a five-yearly art show held in the provincial German town of Kassel (see [http://www.documenta12.de/archiv/dx/english/frm\\_home.htm](http://www.documenta12.de/archiv/dx/english/frm_home.htm) - accessed November 2004). According to Gregston (1997) it is a 'Mecca' for art lovers and the 'avant-garde'. The event began in the mid-1950s with the aim of rehabilitating German art condemned by the Nazis as 'degenerate'. From the exhibition the NOII group formed through the inspiration of a number of artists. The aim of the collective was to merge art and politics and, amongst other things, promote the rights of displaced peoples and question borders in their many different forms.

<sup>26</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.antimedia.net/nooneisillegal/aboutus.htm> - accessed February 2005.

and contrast their peaceful and open policies with the state's violent methods of protecting its exclusionary borders.

At the November 2002 protests, NOII combined with the affinity group known as 'State of Emergency', discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, to form the 'orange bloc'. In essence, this group argued for greater control of capital while opening borders, full rights to all migrants and the immediate closure of immigration detention centres. An analysis of NOII's position shows that it is one of attacking the commodification of border protection which has made the detainment of refugees both a politically expedient strategy and profitable enterprise. Promoting the free movement of people while placing limits on the movement of capital, NOII is another group promoting counter-globalisation.

### ***Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network***

The fourth organisation illustrating the 'counter' rather than 'anti' nature of the CGM is Australia's leading fair trade advocacy group, the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET).<sup>27</sup> AFTINET does not attempt to stop the processes of globalisation, but rather advocates an alternative globalisation agenda.

For example, AFTINET calls on the Australian government for more international commitment to the UN arguing that there "is a wealth of international law developed through the United Nations (UN) on human rights, labour rights, cultural development, the rights of indigenous people, the environment and health and safety".<sup>28</sup> AFTINET goes on to say that "we reject a 'fortress Australia' protectionist strategy and welcome the development of fair trading relationships with all countries" (ibid). The position of AFTINET is that trade and investment policies should be based on local conditions with monitored regulatory international standards. Such standards should not prioritise

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<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that I was a founding Board member of AFTINET. I am no longer associated with this organisation in any formal capacity though I remain a supporter.

<sup>28</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.aftinet.org.au/about/aboutaftinet.html> - access April 2003.

‘economics’ over social or environmental issues and should be decided through democratic and accountable processes.

AFTINET may be considered more ‘conservative’ than the abovementioned groups as it has significant strategic and financial links with established organisations such as the organised union movement and church groups. Additionally, AFTINET also has close links with international groups in both the South and North such as Focus on the Global South and the Council of Canadians.

Unlike AID/WATCH, FOE Australia and NOII, AFTINET does not engage in more confrontational forms of protest such as non-violent direct action, but prefers traditional approaches to campaigning such as political lobbying and public education. Despite this, it ‘works in common’ with the broader activist community, organising forums, outreach programs, protests and political lobbying.

Although this is only a broad overview of these four groups, it confirms that rather than being ‘anti’ they present an alternative vision of globalisation (see also Table 5.1). As noted, each of the four organisations is intricately involved in international networks that promote greater cooperation. This is a globalisation reflected by the broader CGM that is qualitatively different to that formed by the Cartesian logic of pathological modernity.

Importantly, while these four organisations are different in many ways, there is a significant consistency in their fundamental vision of politics. This is something that is not limited to the above groups but reflected throughout the broader movement. It is this vision to which I now turn.

**Table 5.1: Overview of Organisations Analysed**

Organisation	AIDWATCH	FOE Australia	NOII	AFTINET
Formal/registered NGO	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Main focus of the organisation	Overseas development and environmental sustainability	Environmental sustainability and social justice	Border protection	Trade
Multi-dimensional – working to make links between their main focus and other issues	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Networks include:	The Australian Council for International Development; AFTINET; ECA Watch; Climate Action Network Australia and; Jubilee – Drop the Debt Campaign. AID/WATCH also has a number of ‘partner’ organisations in the low-income world	There are 12 local Friends of the Earth groups and three affiliate members as well as Friends of the Earth International	A loose global collective emerging from Documenta X	As at December 2004, AFTINET had 90 affiliate organisations and were part of a global fair trade network. There are also international links with organisations including Focus on the Global South
North/South relationships	Formal/Informal	Formal/Informal	Informal	Formal

## ***5.4 The underlying vision of the CGM***

Although above I described the CGM as both a heterogeneous and dynamic group of actors, I also argue that there is a significant coherence in their underlying political vision. As an emerging multi-dimensional movement, the task of identifying both this vision and its influence is complex.

It is important to note that this complexity has opened up a number of debates around the CGM and its relevance in today’s globalisation processes. This is compounded by the fact that the CGM is often viewed as having a somewhat contradictory agenda –

something I respond to in Chapter 7. Despite this, I argue that there are a number of broad qualities that characterise the CGM. It is important to underline that rather than attempt an exact definition of this dynamic movement, I am attempting to identify the key themes and characteristics unifying it. It is to these characteristics that I now turn.

## **Characterising the CGM**

### ***Heterogeneity***

The first characteristic of the CGM is heterogeneity in its agenda and make-up as it is formed by a broad group of actors (Kingsnorth 2003). This gives rise to a multi-dimensional approach to globalisation that brings the CGM into direct conflict with the single Cartesian logic informing pathological modernity.

The CGM is not a handful of actors based in wealthy industrialised nations only, but consists of many groups and countless individuals across the world. That is, the CGM is not limited to large transnational organisations such as FOE International, Greenpeace or Amnesty International, but includes both individuals and hundreds of groups varying in size, reach, resources and influence (Kingsnorth 2003). These range from the large Western orientated and well-funded organisations to the landless peasants movement that has emerged in low-income nations like Brazil.

The result is that the CGM crosses borders, cultures and dialects. Consequently, O'Brien et al (1999) argues that this is a group made up of a number of movements, prompting Mertes to describe this as a “movement of movements” (2004: xi).<sup>29</sup> I believe that this heterogeneity is an important strength of the CGM as it encourages both a multi-dimensional agenda, and also facilitates alliances and broader insights into the many challenges facing the world today such as poverty, conflict and environmental destruction.

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<sup>29</sup> Within the CGM there are a broad range of movements with some that may not even identify with this broad group of actors. This means that even the term ‘CGM’ is open to disagreement.

As an example of this heterogeneity, I turn to the four groups discussed previously. Although only NOII focuses on the issue of borders, the other three groups are strong advocates for a more just refugee regime and promote a more open Australia as articulated in their broader campaign work. Both AID/WATCH and NOII have drawn links between the enclosure of human space through camps and the simultaneous continued opening of borders for capital.<sup>30</sup> FOE Australia also promotes refugee issues adding an ‘environmental’ dimension to this debate by looking at ‘environmental refugees’. Additionally, many of the positions employed by these groups are informed by their networks based in the South – something I discuss in greater detail below.<sup>31</sup>

Analogous to Dobson’s (1995) description of the environmental movements ‘different shades’ of green, this heterogeneity reflects the CGM’s many different perspectives and their ability to work in many different ways. As is discussed in Chapter 7, this dialogue of different perspectives correlates to Torgerson’s (1999) heterogenous ‘green political sphere’.

This emerges clearly in AID/WATCH’s role within the ECA Watch coalition which is working to reform the world’s export credit agencies (ECAs).<sup>32</sup> The need for dramatic reform identified by ECA Watch is a consistent theme amongst the coalition but the shape this takes varies considerably between different groups. AID/WATCH (1999) has chosen both a consultative approach and provided a systemic critique that argues that ECAs in their current form should be disbanded.

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<sup>30</sup> In addition to No-One is Illegal, each of the other three groups I describe have supported the end of mandatory detention, the closure of detention camps and open border policy. See websites listed in each group section for further details.

<sup>31</sup> Further, the four groups described above are also involved in the current global anti-war movement – drawing links between the current conflict in Iraq and the neoliberal policy agenda, climate change and the ‘war on terror’. In fact, AID/WATCH has organised a number of seminars on this topic. For example, ‘War: Business gets their piece’, held on Wednesday, 30 April 2003, at the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Sydney. Also see the WSF’s (2005) *Call to action of the anti-war assembly*.

<sup>32</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.eca-watch.org/> - accessed January 2005.

### *A systemic analysis*

Through this heterogeneity, the CGM offers an underlying critique highlighting the systemic character of many of today's fundamental challenges including environmental degradation, war and conflict, increasing inequalities and mass dislocation (Kingsnorth 2003). As such, O'Brien et al (1999) argues that the CGM challenges the prevailing economic paradigm and articulates demands for a new politics to overcome the various crises I have described as the 'crisis of the whole' (see Chapter 2).

This critique is, therefore, not solely focused on institutional reform but embodies a more foundational approach to dealing with the various failings of modernity and the crisis of the whole. However, this does not limit the movement to a single approach to reform as the heterogeneity discussed above promotes multiple ways of working.

This systemic analysis permeates through the movement and is strengthened by its heterogeneity. At the annual fifth World Social Forum, for example, Foltz et al (2005) describe the 200,000 participants discussing a wide range of systemic issues crossing all spheres of life including war, refugees and displacement, and the regulation of global capital. These challenges are seen as fundamental rather than peripheral issues.

This characterisation of a 'systemic analysis' offered by the CGM is common amongst authors such as Starr (2000) and Kingsnorth (2003). Again, this position of the CGM places it in direct conflict with the Cartesian logic of pathological modernity.

### *Globalisation from below*

The third characteristic is that the CGM drives "globalisation from below" (Brecher et al 2000) and has emerged to challenge the globalisation 'from above' represented by the agents of pathological modernity described in Chapter 3. O'Brien et al (1999) agree, arguing that the rise of (global) social movements has altered the character of

international political economy. They argue that the interaction between global social movements, transnational corporations, national governments and multilateral economic institutions has transformed the nature of global economic governance, establishing a ‘complex multilateralism’.

According to Cohn et al (2000), this new multilateralism is altering the power relationships between transnational corporations, transnational capital, the state, sub-national governments and social action groups. In this regard, ‘complex multilateralism’ is altering the way governments and once ‘untouchable’ multilateral economic institutions such as the World Bank and IMF devise policy and deal with broader civil society, thus leading to more pluralised governing structures (O’Brien et al 1999).

Although O’Brien et al (1999) feel these pluralised governing structures have only resulted in institutional modification rather than substantive innovation, this should not detract from the relevant changes achieved which include broader consultation. Rather than dramatic changes, complex multilateralism reflects the *potential* for pluralised governance structures. This means that in the longer term greater change is possible.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that such ‘complex multilateralism’ also reflects the ability of pathological modernity to be pathologically reflexive – see Chapter 3 – Section 3.5. While innovation and broader consultation has established the potential for greater communication and negotiations between the various groups of players, it also opens the movement to co-option (Iqtidar 2004; Malhotra 1999). The heterogeneity of the movement however, means that while some interactions remain open to co-option, other strategies act to counter this.



There is, however, another important dimension to globalisation from below that emerges and has been described as ‘leading from behind’.<sup>33</sup> That is, developed-nation based organisations such as the four described above are now seeking guidance and leadership from those in the low-income world. This is not some polite or ‘politically correct’ consultation, but rather a clear recognition that the people from the low-income world have a radically different experience of the processes of globalisation. This involves an acknowledgment that people from low-income nations are more vulnerable to the effects of neoliberal globalisation and better placed to guide responses to it.

This reverses traditional roles of leadership that placed wealthy and better resourced NGOs at the forefront of strategic responses. That is, while privileged NGOs based in wealthy nations may continue to have the highest profile internationally, their strategic positions are increasingly set by grassroots organisations based in low-income nations.

This is a position that is not limited to links between movements in the North and established organisations in the South. Strategic directions are also being set by the displaced and people from the ‘fourth world’ (Castells 2000; Waterman 1999). That is, nations within nations such as Bougainville or the Kurdish peoples of Turkey and Iraq. Examples include the work of AID/WATCH and FOE Australia with the former East Timorese diaspora (Goodman 2000), working with landless peasant movement in Brazil and the Zapatistas of Mexico, as well as the Bougainville Freedom Movement – something I return to in Chapter 8.

### *Establishing new commons*

The fourth and, in some ways, the central characteristic of the CGM is that it works to both defend and open new commons, further placing it in direct conflict with pathological

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<sup>33</sup> The concept of ‘leading from behind’ is a strategic position employed by AID/WATCH. My research confirms that this strategy is becoming a trend within a number of campaigns. For example, the ‘drop the debt’ coalition based in the low-income world (known as Jubilee South) has been influential in establishing the position of FOE International and other debt campaigners based in the Global North. (Pers. comm. Liam Phelan, former campaigns director, AID/WATCH, April 2003.)

modernity. As is discussed in Chapter 6, this emerges as a central intellectual thread underscoring the political position of the four groups analysed above as well as that of the CGM more broadly. This characteristic ranges from protecting physical and institutional commons through anti-privatisation campaigns, to establishing places of safety, hope, trust and the free sharing of intellect.

These commons create a rupture within the Cartesian logic of pathological modernity by establishing non-commodified spaces in the physical, institutional and cultural spheres. This is achieved by both defending existing commons, as well as by establishing new non-commodified spaces. This tendency of the CGM must be considered when attempting to theoretically ground the movement's *potentiality* – something I discuss in greater detail below (see Section 5.5).

### **How do we characterise the CGM: A class or a movement?**

Given the complexity outlined above, it is challenging to attempt to theoretically ground the CGM and assess its potential. Is it a new class, a new social movement, an example of identity politics or a new phenomenon?

According to Burgmann, the study of social movements and collective action is a crowded space, with many disputes over the “exact definitions” of the “global protest movement” (2003: 2). In this section I will review a number of attempts to locate the CGM from different perspectives. Due to brevity, this review will be limited to three areas particularly relevant to my thesis: Marxist class politics and its extension through critical theory, new social movement theory, and Beck's (1992; 1997) notion of sub-politics.

## *Marxist class politics and critical theory*

To begin with, there are a number of attempts to ground the CGM within a class-based analysis. Prominent Marxists such as Alex Callinicos (2002) argue that the issue of socio-economic class remains a central element of today's global social movements.

Acknowledging the complex character of today's movements, Callinicos argues that all struggles involve both continuity as well as discontinuity from the past. That is, while new elements emerge within the global protest movement, the issues of class and class struggle continue and remain central.

This echoes earlier work by Carroll and Ratner (1994) who argue that we have witnessed the emergence of 'new' classes. Carroll and Ratner attribute the counter-hegemony movements we are witnessing to the structural effects of capitalism, and argue that the most apt description can be found in Gramscian postulations around 'class struggles'. Even though they discussed this issue prior to the high profile emergence of the CGM, Carroll and Ratner's analysis is still pertinent today.

Burgmann (2003) agrees that a class-based analysis remains relevant, although she notes that this position has become increasingly unpopular. Observing contemporary protests and grounding much of her work on Fredric Jameson's (1991) analysis of the absence of class consciousness in 'postmodern late capitalism', Burgmann argues that we are witnessing the emergence of a new working class movement. This conclusion is drawn by studying "vocabularies and verbal frameworks" which encourage the participants and observers at protests to "think about the structures of global economic power in ways that invite class analysis and class resentment" (Burgmann 2003: 287).

The influence of critical theory continues to resonate when analysing the emergence of global social movements. For example, Kellner (1990; 1999) links critical theory with new social movements and existing political struggles. Kellner argues that class remains an important ingredient in understanding the materialisation of both progressive *and* reactive globalised movements. Likewise, Marxist social thinker, Boris Frankel (1998),

contends that today's social movements can achieve little unless they converge with the more central struggle of the working class against capitalism.

What is important for the purposes of this thesis is that while these authors insist on the ongoing prominence of a class-based analysis, they also acknowledge the changing nature of the contemporary movements I have described. Though I agree that the issue of class has some relevance, I argue that focusing on this limits our understanding of the CGM.

### *New social movements and identity politics*

Others disagree with a position giving prominence to class. For example, Inglehart (1997) essentially denies the relevance of class whatsoever to new politics and social movements. Others, such as Pakulski and Waters (1996) have announced "the death of class".

Class-based analysis has been replaced by 'identity-based politics', which have emerged from 'new' social movement theorists such as Touraine (1995a; 1995b) and Melucci (1996). According to Pichardo (1997) the dominance of the new social movements' paradigm emerged because the predicted Marxist revolution appeared unlikely to eventuate. This led to a shift away from writing about the 'working class' as theorists reformulated alternative positions which attempted to respond to the perceived deficiencies of Marxism (Laclau and Mouffe 1985).

However, like many of those giving primacy to class-based analysis, many theorists favouring identity acknowledge the need for flexibility and do not reject class outright. Castells (2000) for example, argues that labour is largely irrelevant in these new movements. Despite this, Castells does acknowledge that new labour movements with multi-level agendas *are* important to 'new' social movements. Waterman (1999) echoes these sentiments arguing that although new social movements do progress beyond labour

struggles, they cannot afford to neglect links with the labour movement, which remains an important agent.

The central claims of this paradigm are that a shift to a post-industrial economy provides a basis for different identities and new patterns to social life (Touraine 1995a; Melucci 1996). As a result, social interaction is less shaped by the class structure of industrial capitalism, and more by cultural models (Melucci 1996; Calhoun et al 1997).

The struggle between these new social movements and capitalism has also altered along with the changing nature of society and the emergence of globalisation (Castells 1997). Castells argues that these new social movements have developed new forms of networking and of decentered organisation that not only contest postmodern capitalism, but actually reflect it. Castells describes this as the emergence of a 'network society'. It is this latter perspective of changing structures and identities which holds particular relevance to my work in this thesis.

### ***Beck's sub-politics***

A third approach specifically relevant to this thesis is Ulrich Beck's (1992; 1997) discussion of 'sub-politics'. Similar to the new social movement theorists, Beck (1992) also sees the changing life experience of late-modernity altering relationships in ways that remove people from class identification. This is simultaneously accompanied by an increasing sense of individualisation as we can no longer rely on traditional structures such as class for support.

Beck's position is that we are seeing the rise of a "new social space" that is no longer tied to traditional classes or identities (1992: 97). From this 'new space' emerge new cultures and sub-cultures. Beck describes this as a 'sub-politics' which has developed as formal politics has become increasingly remote and irrelevant to both social movements and the broader public. However, Beck does not argue that classes and traditional identities simply disappear.

The importance of Beck's thesis is in the identification of how 'sub-politics' has materialised away from the formal political sphere because of a disconnect with formal politics. This has occurred as democratic decision making has been overtaken by an emphasis on progress, development and economic growth. As a result, people no longer feel it is possible to influence decision making and have increasingly turned away from formal party politics and look elsewhere to exercise political influence.

For Beck, this has given rise to a new political culture reflecting the complications of late-modernity including the blurring of traditional markers including class. Therefore, we require an understanding of today's informal politics going beyond class and identity while maintaining elements of both.

In many ways, Beck considers this a positive development but also warns that if these changes are ignored the result could be increasing disempowerment and a further disjuncture between the formal and informal political spheres, creating the potential for social upheavals. Despite the many crises that Beck describes (see Chapter 3), he believes that within sub-politics rather than parliaments we see the *potential* for a differential politics and an alternative society.

Though each of the above positions presents valuable and important insights into the nature of the CGM, I believe that the heterogeneous character of the movement means it is necessary to seek a more sophisticated characterisation. Any one-dimensional definition or categorisation simply repeats the mistake of those who have tried to present a hegemonic interpretation of complicated events (Tilly 1979). The CGM is not beyond recognition, but as it is made up of a variety of different movements (Tarrow 1998; Mertes 2004), requires a more complex conceptualisation (Castells 2000; Carroll and Ratner 1994).

As a result, I argue that we should neither totally dismiss nor accept the various positions presented above. My position here is based on the belief that the above positions fall short since they do not present the complex nature of the heterogeneous CGM. For example, Burgmann (2003), Callinicos (2002) and Kellner (1999) confirm that some class characteristics remain relevant when looking at the role of labour in the CGM. However, the multifarious nature of the CGM means that a class analysis needs to be combined with identity politics analysis while acknowledging the movement's decentered, globalised and 'network' nature (Castells 1997). The CGM must also be understood as operating both inside and outside the traditional political sphere (Beck 1992) and regularly transforming its shape and tactics (Starr 2000).

In addition, the above theoretical positions do not elucidate why such complex groups would choose to work together. For example, neither class nor identity may articulate why construction workers, environmentalists and church based organisations would work together around the issue of debt relief. In fact, a number of the agendas exist that may place such groups in conflict but, perhaps paradoxically, they continue to work together. Despite this, we have seen coalitions form and maintain their work for alternative agendas.

This complexity confirms that one-dimensional definitions run the risk of limiting our understanding of the CGM. That is, if we insist on a one-dimensional analysis to define the CGM, then it is likely that we will either ignore relevant actors or be unable to understand changing positions. For example, as the 'leading from behind' example indicates, indigenous and post-colonial campaigns are now increasingly coming to define the work of the CGM – something not evident when it first emerged (Kingsnorth 2003). This is thus a complex form of political struggle that cannot be conceptualised by any single unifying agency.

This indicates a requirement for an alternative theoretical interpretation and points to the potential to ground the CGM within Hardt and Negri's (2000: 2004) 'multitude'. Both the heterogeneous and dynamic aspects of the CGM can be encompassed by the multitude

because, as will be discussed in the next section, it can be thought of as a ‘potentiality’ (Hardt and Negri 2004; Virno 2004). That is, it is a force that neither takes a final shape nor stops changing, but remains a potential force driven by a desire for liberation and a global democracy. This provides an alternative critique for oppositional politics that links diverse interests and multiple identities, and directly challenges the position of pathological modernity.

## **5.5 Debating the multitude**

### **What is the multitude?**

What exactly is the multitude? In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri (2000) discuss the multitude at length, but fail to provide a clear definition – something for which they have been criticised (see Brennan 2002; Wood 2002). Hardt and Negri tend to present the multitude in expansive terms, describing it as “a broad category that includes all those whose labour is directly or indirectly exploited by and subjected to capitalist norms of production and reproduction” (2000: 52). As noted in Chapter 2, Hardt and Negri see the multitude as both the “the productive force that sustains Empire” while at the same time calling upon its destruction (ibid).

In their more recent work *Multitude*, Hardt and Negri (2004) review, further refine and expand the concept of the multitude. In what appears to be a response to their many critics, they attempt to solidify the multitude and qualify it in terms of today’s progressive activist movements.<sup>34</sup>

At the time of writing, *Multitude* (Hardt and Negri 2004) had only recently been translated into English and, as a result, a broad range of responses to this work had yet to appear in the wider literature. However, the critiques and discussions that emerged following *Empire* remain relevant when assessing the ‘multitude’ as a theoretical concept

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<sup>34</sup> For example, see Hardt and Negri’s (2004) discussion of the anti-WTO protests in Seattle.



for grounding the political agency of the CGM. Before outlining Hardt and Negri's latest discussion of the multitude, I will review these earlier critiques as well as Hardt and Negri's responses. For the sake of brevity, I summarise the key criticisms of the multitude into five broad categories.

Firstly, the multitude is dismissed as a mere 'renaming' or simple extension of the proletariat of Marxism (see Seth 2002; Arrighi 2002). Panitch and Gindin agree, but, take this one step further suggesting that the over-reliance of the multitude on 'immaterial labour' means that we are merely presented with a "virtual proletariat" (2002: 55). In other words it is seen as nothing particularly new.

Secondly, Hardt and Negri's definition has been criticised for being too vague (see Tilly 2002; Panitch and Gindin 2002; Arrighi 2002). Consequently, the multitude's political agency as a revolutionary subject is seen as exaggerated. Tilly (2002) specifically questions the definition and role of the multitude, which is intended to rise, and eventually re-appropriate and transform imperial means of control which Hardt and Negri (2000) summarise as 'Empire' (see Chapter 2). Tilly notes that the multitude is not made up of workers or even persons but of "productive, creative subjectivities of globalisation" (2002: 28).

Wood agrees, criticising the multitude as simply a representation of some "mystical" subject which is, at best, an abstraction and, at worst, vacuous (2002: 81). Wood suggests that the central message raised in *Empire* is that old struggles are now irrelevant. The struggles for better work conditions and refugee rights, for example, are replaced by the conception of the formless and disorganised multitude which is everywhere and nowhere, and is somehow meant to break through Empire and deliver liberation.

Linked to this is a third category of criticisms presented by Callinicos (2002) and Aronowitz (2002), who argue that Hardt and Negri overstate their case by the dismissal of political parties and organised labour in favour of the mystical and insurgent multitudes. Callinicos (2002) argues that Hardt and Negri seem happy to keep the

multitude vague as an oppressed, exploited, anonymous and amorphous mass with no specific location. As such, Hardt and Negri's tendency to ignore organised labour is seen by Arrighi (2002) to stand in the way of alternative organising and action rather than offering any kind of emancipatory project. For such authors, not only is the multitude an empty conceptualisation, but it impedes established struggles.

Balakrishnan (2002) concurs, feeling that Hardt and Negri develop no sustained program for assisting the injured of the world. Balakrishnan contends that the rejection of the organised working class in favour of those "on the margins" as a revolutionary force finds its expression in an understanding of capitalism that is "devoid of any objective developmental tendencies" (2002: xv). Like Carroll and Ratner (1994), Burgmann (2003) and Callinicos (2002), this critique supports the understanding that the working class is central to any understanding of current struggles.

The fourth criticism emerges from Brennan (2002) who argues that Hardt and Negri ignore the world's colonised peoples and their struggles against imperialist and colonial forces. Brennan attacks this position as neglectful, arguing that it provides insight into the "value hierarchy" of Hardt and Negri's political position (2002: 97). That is, they remain Eurocentric in their analysis and ignore struggles in the low-income world. As a result, Brennan feels that all Hardt and Negri have to offer is a "sprawling thesis of the multitudes, the subjectivity of labour, biopolitical control, and the creation of alternative values" (ibid).

Finally, Quinby (2004) and Brennan (2002) accuse Hardt and Negri's multitude of representing a type of 'endism'. Both Quinby and Brennan argue that the multitude is presented as the 'end point' of Hardt and Negri's utopian project. I believe that this misunderstands Hardt and Negri's position something I discuss in more detail below.

## Characterising the multitude

In *Multitude*, Hardt and Negri (2004), work to counter the above criticisms. They begin by ‘conceptually’ defining the multitude as “internally different, multiple social subjects whose constitution and action is based not on identity or unity... but on what it has in common” (ibid: 100).<sup>35</sup> In fact, it is this focus on ‘working in common’ that for Hardt and Negri (2004) is the central concept of the multitude. This is the idea that all those who work under the rule of capital but refuse its rule or reject its logic – share a potential to resist its domination.<sup>36</sup> These are the people who, Hardt and Negri argue, produce and resist in *common*. For Hardt and Negri believe that the multitude operates by discovering this common: “our communication, collaboration, and cooperation are not only based on the common, but they in turn produce the common in an expanding relationship” (2004: xv). This is a new form of biopolitical production – beyond the economic sphere – touching all aspects of social, cultural and political life that rejects the sovereign power of Empire and desires global liberation.

Hardt and Negri see the multitude as something radically different to rather than simply a renaming of the proletariat (as argued by Seth 2002 and Arrighi 2002). They argue that it includes all those who struggle against injustice and can become the material basis of a real *common project*. What makes the multitude unique, rather than merely a re-shaping of the proletariat, is that it is:

...composed of innumerable internal differences that can never be reduced to a unity or a single identity – different cultures, races, ethnicities, genders and sexual orientations; different forms of labour; different ways of living; different views of the world; and different desires. (Hardt and Negri 2004: xiv)

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<sup>35</sup> Hardt and Negri (2004: 186) distinguish between ‘the common’ and ‘commons’. I will address the link between my interpretation of the multitude and the commons in more detail below. See Chapter 6 – Section 6.2.

<sup>36</sup> How this is likely to occur remains somewhat vague though Hardt and Negri (2000: 396) do offer an agenda for change. Again, I will address this issue in more detail in Chapter 6 – Section 6.2.

This allows us to see the multitude as a network of multi-dimensional groups. As a result, the multitude should be distinguished from other “social subjects” such as the “people”, the “masses” and the “working class” (ibid). In contrast to the multitude, these other social subjects tend to be thought of as unitary subjects that ‘wash out’ difference.<sup>37</sup> In fact, Hardt and Negri feel that relying solely on single-dimensional definitions such as the working class tends to be exclusionary.

This is not a rejection of organised labour, as argued by Callinicos (2002) and Aronowitz (2002), but actually connects it with other struggles for liberation. As a result, rather than considering the multitude as ‘exclusive’, it includes the working class, organised labour, more formalised activist groups (including NGOs), the displaced, the colonised, and the wide variety of social justice movements that challenge today’s dominant paradigm. That is, the multitude *does not privilege* the struggles or agenda of a specific group of agents. Rather than being Eurocentric as claimed by Brennan (2002), Hardt and Negri (2004) place these various struggles on an equal footing.

This also underscores the ‘political’ organisation of the multitude. The multitude is not marked by hierarchical or sovereign power relationships (Hardt and Negri 2004). This translates to a tendency for radical democracy for there is no ‘representative’ group to speak on its behalf. Each individual, organisation and network speaks for itself and is linked by the ‘common’ desire for democracy and liberation – this is Hardt and Negri’s ‘common’.

Hardt and Negri also consider Wood’s (2002) criticism directed at their ‘over-reliance’ on immaterial labour which, they argue, has a central place within the multitude.<sup>38</sup> In responding, Hardt and Negri note that immaterial labour is central not because it quantitatively represents the majority of the labour force, rather because of the “growing importance of the immaterial forms of property that it produces” (2004: 115). Immaterial

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<sup>37</sup> For Hardt and Negri (2000: 103), a central issue here is the relationship between the nation-state and the multitude. As the nation-state represents a single unity, it is directly in conflict with the multitude. Every nation-state then, must work to transform the multitude into ‘a people’.

<sup>38</sup> Also see criticisms by Panitch and Gindin (2002) above.

labour has become increasingly important because it “creates immaterial products, such as knowledge, information, communication, a relationship, or an emotional response” (ibid: 108). This occurs as most (if not all) aspects of life are becoming informationalised.<sup>39</sup>

This growth in immaterial labour is not a dramatic departure for social theory. In discussing the dynamics of modernity Giddens (1991), for example, describes the many debates that revolve around conceptual and institutional transformations occurring in late modernity. Giddens sees the transformation of a system based on the manufacture of material goods to one concerned more centrally with information resonating with the emergence of the ‘immaterial labour’ that Hardt and Negri describe.

Hardt and Negri also respond to claims that the multitude is a vague and mystical concept with no application to today’s struggles for liberation (see Tilly 2002; Panitch and Gindin 2002). In so doing, they undertake what may be described as a partial ‘backtrack’ as they ground the concept of the multitude in many of today’s anti-hegemony struggles. In addition to the more radicalised groups such as the ‘White Overalls’,<sup>40</sup> they also acknowledge the work of the broader activist community. This is starkly different to the criticism of *Médecins Sans Frontières* and Amnesty International in their earlier work, where they argued that such groups promote Empire’s form of sovereignty. Hardt and Negri, however, do not retreat from their position that the ‘rights-based’ approach echoed by these later groups continues to bolster Empire by validating its interventions.

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<sup>39</sup> A key struggle for Hardt and Negri is emerging over ‘seed ownership’. These changes are not seen to be inherently ‘good or evil’ – but the primary point is that the “process of agricultural change and the struggle over rights are increasingly dependent on the control and production of information... this is one way that agriculture is being informationalised” (Hardt and Negri 2004: 113).

<sup>40</sup> The ‘White Overalls’ (or *Le Tute Bianche*) are a direct-action group, named after the uniform its members wear to protests. The organisation is non-hierarchical and open to anyone who wants to join but stresses non-violence. The White Overalls attempt to highlight the violence of police-based actions by attending public demonstration in suits that are padded with foam and rubber tyres, jumping towards police lines in an almost comical manner (Klein 2001a). The group promotes “freedom of movement” and “citizenship rights”, which include universal income and free use of production technologies, as well as the removal of patent or copyright regimes – see <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/links/whiteoverallsfi.htm> - accessed April 2005.

Placing the growth of anti-hegemonic struggles within the concept of the multitude, Hardt and Negri (2004) follow the trajectory from the first uprising of the Zapatistas, through to the convergence in Seattle, Genoa and the massive anti-war protests in February and March 2003. Hardt and Negri see the materialisation of the multitude at such events as they bring together diverse groups who ‘work in common’ to break down the dominant and hegemonic paradigm of ‘Empire’.

### **The multitude as a political process – not an end point**

It is also important to respond to criticisms that the multitude is some kind of utopian dream or ‘end point’. Hardt and Negri (2004) do not seem to directly respond to authors such as Quinby (2004) and Brennan (2002) who, as noted above, accuse the multitude of representing a type of endism. I argue however, that the multitude better represents the potential basis for a new politics rather than some end point. This is the “potentiality” of the multitude described by Hardt and Negri (2004: 4).

Much of this criticism seems to arise because Hardt and Negri (2000: 2004) provide an optimistic analysis of the current globalisation processes as offering (almost utopian) opportunities for liberation. For some, such as Arrighi (2002), this is interpreted as a sign of supporting the current status quo. Wood (2002) seems to take this to an extreme arguing that Hardt and Negri feel that utopia is here and systemic struggles are over.

But while ‘optimistic’ in the *potential* for change, Hardt and Negri emphasise that we are not necessarily better off under current conditions as hierarchies remain and new forms of exploitation emerge. The post-Fordist world has seen the move to flexible, mobile and precarious work which reflects our relationship with neoliberal capital. Therefore, these notions should not be confused with the utopian dreams of the 1990s New Economy (see Ohmae 1999 for example).

It is because of the potential for an alternative globalisation – a ‘counter-globalisation’ – that Hardt and Negri embrace rather than reject globalisation. Like Marx’s interpretation of capitalism’s creative destruction, Hardt and Negri argue that it is through the processes of globalisation, that we see the condition for global liberation struggles emerge. The multitude works *through* globalisation to create an alternative global society – looking beyond sovereignty – to form a democratic and ‘authentic’ community. As a result, Hardt and Negri believe that there is a need for the multitude to embrace Empire and work through the processes of globalisation.

In fact, the point that the multitude should be considered *a process* is confirmed by reviewing Negri’s (1991) earlier work. Negri argues that the multitude should not be seen as an ideal to be achieved, but the materialisation of human practices based on cooperation, democracy and autonomy. Fiedler (2000) agrees, taking a position analogous to Beck (1992), arguing that within the “very organisation of a social movement” we find clues as to the emergence of a new type of politics. It is a subjectivity through which the process of revolutionary change can take place as it is based on cooperative relationships rather than economic factors alone.

The position of the multitude as political process is also reflected in its abovementioned non-hierarchical political organisation. This structure means the multitude is the physical manifestation through which real democracy can take place. The multitude never transfers its democratic capacity for decision making to any sovereign power, remaining a plurality that resists totalising processes. Rather than offering final solutions, the multitude works towards opening public non-commodified spaces without borders – explaining why Negri (1991) argues that the multitude should be considered anti-capitalist and anti the nation-state.

## The multitude and the CGM

While some of the criticisms of Hardt and Negri's earlier work may be justified, such as their tendency to describe the multitude in expansive terms, I believe that its characteristics are clearly recognisable and reflected by the CGM. In particular this encompasses its heterogeneity, democratising tendencies, lack of hierarchies and that it 'works in common'.

The concept of the multitude is privileged because it includes all those – such as the CGM – that rupture the self-interested, competitive, atomised economic models at the centre of pathological modernity by being open, inclusive and 'working in common'. The multitude incorporates all those who challenge the commodifying operations of the global capitalist network with a view to liberation *and* democracy. As a result, the multitude provides a broader and more meaningful definition than either 'class' or 'movement'.

In addition, the multitude offers a new type of biopolitical production which rejects today's dominant Cartesian logic. That is, rather than a single all-encompassing reform path there emerges a progressive counter-globalisation ethos. This ethos reflects a counter-globalisation agenda that produces a new type of biopolitics – something I detail in Chapter 6 – Section 6.5.

Given this, it is important to consider the insights that Hardt and Negri's multitude offers. Firstly, the concept of the "multiple singularities" of the multitude provides an apt description of the multi-dimensional character of the CGM (Hardt and Negri 2000: 105). The multitude "are singularities that act in common" as an irreducible multiplicity that is both plural and unified (ibid). The concept of the multitude demonstrates that we do not need to choose a single unifying descriptor such as class or identity. Such descriptors may be considered relevant to a degree, but do not have to be mutually exclusive.



Secondly, the concept of the multitude does not demand a unifying definition. Therefore, though there are many individuals and groups who may not identify themselves with the CGM, they work in a democratic space and promote progressive agendas of liberation that echo its position. As such, this diversity that is reflective of the multiform character of the CGM fits comfortably within the multitude and strengthens rather than weakens it.

The multitude also presents us with a way to understand the ‘potential’ project of the CGM. Hardt and Negri (2004) do not argue that the multitude is certain to emerge as a counter force and overcome Empire, but that it has the *potential* to do so. For Hardt and Negri this potentiality emerged at the many anti-war and counter-globalisation protests I discussed earlier this chapter.

However, I believe it is important to add a further characteristic, which is *the intellectual thread that unifies* the CGM and links it directly to the multitude. A recurring theme that emerges here is that the CGM works to both defend and establish new commons while pathological modernity works to enclose and commodify them. While I do not disagree with Hardt and Negri (2004) that the multitude ‘works in common’, I believe that they fall short in describing its alternative project. This project is centred around the facilitation of new forms of community based on the reciprocal non-commercial sharing of commons – something I develop further in Chapter 6.

In summary then, guided by Hardt and Negri I argue that the various characteristics of the multitude provide the threads that link the dynamic movements, groups and individuals I have described as the CGM. Rather than being limiting, this understanding of today’s progressive movements provides an opportunity to represent a heterogeneous agent in all its multiformity. Quite simply if a group promotes diversity and democracy, has a multi-dimensional agenda, is open and promotes non-commodified spaces or commons, it fits within the description of CGM and can be represented theoretically by the multitude.

If however, a group does not meet these criteria, then they fall outside the descriptions I use. This does not dismiss other ‘progressive movements’, their influence or relevance, but they are not necessarily part of the CGM.

The multitude then, provides an important insight into how we can comprehend the operations of today’s social movements, and specifically the CGM. I have presented the multitude in this way because it underscores the *potential* project of the CGM in its struggles to overcome the crisis of the whole created by pathological modernity. This potentiality emerges constantly and while it is most obvious at the protests I described earlier, it takes many different shapes and forms such as the free sharing of intellect through ‘open source software’ and the free exchange and sharing of the other cultural commons I discussed in Chapter 4. In fact, as I argue in the next chapter, the CGM is the prime vehicle for countering the enclosure and scarcity manufactured by pathological modernity.

## **5.6 Concluding comments**

*One day, I was standing with a group of protesters in front of the Sydney Stock Exchange in a symbolic protest. We were holding placards highlighting the damage caused by daily financial speculations. The money invested knows no loyalty, is not tied to any community, makes communities vulnerable and is now disconnected from society.*

*I was surrounded by a sea of colour as the various protesters represented different blocs. Though there were many chants, signs and placards, the re-occurring theme was ‘another world is possible’. This is not an isolationist, exclusive or individualised world. Rather, this vision is of a world that revolves around liberation, cooperation, democracy and working in common. This is a counter vision of globalisation.*

Though the project of describing how the CGM works is difficult, characterising it is even harder. Its multiple dimensions, multifarious nature and the way it works on many levels make any attempt to characterise it challenging. But this multiplicity is its very strength, and it is here that we can acknowledge the relevance of the heterogeneous multitude.

It is because any single definition of the CGM falls short in describing today's social movements that I turn to the multitude. The CGM, I argue, presents a significant manifestation of the multitude highlighting how the theoretical position presented by Hardt and Negri (2004) emerges in today's counter-hegemony struggles.

The *multitudes* of protest are a manifestation of a democratic space that creates a rupture within the logic of the dominant paradigm I have described as pathological modernity. One fundamental way that this rupture occurs is by the CGM 'working in common' to create non-commodified spaces or commons. It is to this that I turn next.

# Chapter 6: The CGM and the commons

## 6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, I analysed the counter-globalisation movement (CGM) and argued that it presents a manifestation of Hardt and Negri's (2000; 2004) multitude. This involved characterising the CGM as heterogeneous, multi-layered and complex. Further, I introduced my argument that the distinguishing intellectual attribute that unifies the CGM is its tendency to 'work in common' through a desire to both defend and establish new commons.

This chapter aims to further elaborate the relationship between the CGM and the commons. To achieve this I extend Hardt and Negri's claims of the multitude 'working in common' to include the CGM's work to establish 'new commons'. While agreeing with Hardt and Negri's (2004) position that the multitude 'works in common', I argue that this understates the role of the multitude in establishing 'authentic' communities which break down the dominant logic of pathological modernity. This is a project that is centred on differing conceptualisations of 'authentic' community, which I detail in Chapter 7.

The relationship between the CGM and commons is analysed using a specific case study and employing action research methodology (see Chapter 2 and Appendix A). Rather than ethnographic, this research was actively participatory. The particular case study analysed here was a convergence and conference called the 'State of Emergency' (SOE) held in Brunswick, Victoria. At the SOE, the participants attempted to constitute a non-commodified space that reflected the various attributes of both the physical and cultural commons described in Chapter 4.

Before continuing, I begin by briefly reviewing Hardt and Negri's (2004) position with the aim of extending their concept of 'working in common'.

## **6.2 Extending the common to the commons**

### **Hardt and Negri's 'working in common'**

As discussed in Chapter 5, Hardt and Negri's (2004) conceptualisation of the multitude is based around a project for radical democracy on a global scale. They argue that the multitude is a *potentiality* that can work through the processes of globalisation and achieve this global democratic venture through its demands for equality, freedom and inclusiveness. Hardt and Negri's position is that the democratic demands of today's social justice and counter-hegemony movements must be global, and therefore work through the processes of globalisation to achieve liberation.

As I have argued, this echoes the 'counter' nature of many of today's social justice movements. In attempting to theoretically position these movements, I presented the multitude as a way of understanding the CGM's heterogeneous, non-hierarchical and democratic character. As will be discussed throughout this chapter, I believe that the CGM is a *potential* vehicle for overcoming the crisis of the whole by establishing non-commodified spaces that promote abundance rather than scarcity.

For Hardt and Negri the central feature that connects the heterogeneous multitude is that it comes to live, communicate and 'work in common' (2004: xiv). Hardt and Negri identify two dimensions that allow the multitude to 'work in common' and achieve its potential for a global democracy.

The first dimension emerges as the economy takes an 'immaterial' form as it moves to a post-Fordist structure. This, in turn, produces changes that lead to the increasing

qualitative importance of immaterial labour described in Chapter 5.<sup>1</sup> Immaterial labour begins to ‘work in common’ as it learns to collaborate, cooperate, develop communication networks and eventually creates a “common language” (ibid). This creates a space where the multitude discovers a ‘commonality’ while maintaining its heterogeneous character – see Chapter 5 – Section 5.4.<sup>2</sup>

The second dimension that Hardt and Negri identify and which promotes the multitude to ‘work in common’ is its ‘political’ organisation. As discussed in Section 5.5, this political organisation is neither hierarchical nor representative, rather it has a ‘common’ theme of democracy and liberation which places all struggles on an equal footing. That is, the heterogeneous actors in the multitude work together to promote a non-hierarchical as well as a heterogeneous form of global democracy.

To provide an example of how the multitude comes to ‘work in common’, Hardt and Negri (2004) turn to the evolution of the internet. Along similar lines to those identified by Bollier (2002) and Lessig (2004), Hardt and Negri describe the development of the internet through an open sharing of information. That is, despite both the original military aims of the internet and attempts to keep it a wholly commercial enterprise, the multitude ‘worked in common’ to establish a non-commercial and non-exclusionary communication network. Importantly, this was achieved through the non-commercial sharing of open source software. This is one example that creates “new circuits of cooperation and collaboration that can stretch across nations and continents and allow an unlimited number of encounters” (Hardt and Negri 2004: xiii).

For Hardt and Negri this ability for the multitude to ‘work in common’ has important consequences. To begin with, ‘working in common’ establishes a new form of biopolitics which comes to touch all aspects of life as it begins to operate *beyond* the sphere of immaterial labour. That is, ‘working in common’ is not limited to the immaterial

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<sup>1</sup> In Chapter 5, I noted that this aspect of Hardt and Negri’s work has led to criticisms that they over rely on ‘immaterial labour’ – see Seth (2002), Arrighi (2002), and Panitch and Gindin (2002).

<sup>2</sup> In an earlier work, Hardt (1996) describes the process of a common vocabulary of the Italian radical left emerging in this way.

economy, but comes to reflect *all* the relations of the multitude and how it works together to achieve liberation.

This new biopolitics further promotes democracy and liberation as it establishes the *potential* for greater cooperation. That is, while the multitude ‘works in common’ for liberation, a new biopolitics is formed that encourages the multitude to further cooperate. Hardt and Negri see this new form of biopolitics at the base of ‘working in common’ as having the potential to provide a way out of the “fear, insecurity and domination that permeates our world” facilitating the ultimate goal of global liberation and democracy (2004: xii).

Hardt and Negri argue however, that the multitude’s ‘work in common’ is constantly under the threat of commodification – something reflected in the commodification tendencies of pathological modernity. As discussed in Chapter 4 – Section 4.3, this is a contest that is well documented. Commodification continually risks the liberation project of the multitude. Again the internet provides an important example because it is not only a major organising tool for many social justice movements both globally and locally but also an important ingredient for post-Fordist exploitation. The internet is constantly being enclosed through commodification resulting in exclusion.<sup>3</sup>

### **‘Working in common’ to establish new commons**

While I do not disagree with Hardt and Negri, I believe that, in some ways, their position understates the alternative project of the multitude. For the CGM not only ‘works in common’, it is also centred on the creation and non-commercial reciprocal sharing of ‘commons’. This non-commodified sharing, I argue, breaks down the logic of pathological modernity.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, McDonald (2004) describes how Chinese authorities have moved to close down public internet cafes because of concerns that there will be access to “unhealthy information online”.

But where do the commons differ from Hardt and Negri's 'working in common'? To understand the difference, I reiterate that the key for Hardt and Negri is that the political agency of the multitude emerges by 'working in common'. However I argue that to understand the full potential of the multitude in breaking the logic of pathological modernity, this concept needs to be further elaborated. While the notion of 'working in common' brings the multitude together, an 'authentic' community is only formed by the open and non-commercial creation and sharing of the commons – be they physical or cultural.

Again the internet can provide an appropriate example. Bollier (2002) emphasises that the internet emerged as a commons because of the open sharing and non-commercial sharing of open source software. The developers 'worked in common' to establish a 'common' language that eventually became the 'world wide web' that exists today. Bollier presents Linux as an example of a common that is built on cooperation and has been highly successful and flourished noting that "the remarkable success of Linux and other open source software exemplifies the power of a larger... [non-commercial]... economy, the internet" (2002: 30). This has emerged because of "an unwritten ethic amongst internet users" that people will share their discoveries and receive help on a non-commercial basis (ibid). Not only did the sharing of open-source software play a significant part in the innovative technologies that came to be the internet, but so did the non-commercial sharing of *intellect* – a cultural commons.

This is a position that, to a degree, is echoed by Hardt and Negri (2004) when they refer to both Lessig (2004) and DiBona et al (1999)<sup>4</sup> in their discussion of the internet. Here, Hardt and Negri describe how the sharing of commons results in a great deal of innovation that is reflected in how the internet operates today. The internet is in part, due to a sharing of the commons, a community that is "democratic and autonomous, outside of political representation and hierarchy" (Hardt 1996: 5).

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<sup>4</sup> In many ways, the position of DiBona et al (1999) reflects both that of Lessig (2004) and Bollier (2002). That is, that the open sharing of software leads to greater cooperation amongst developers, which ultimately leads to ongoing innovation and inclusiveness.



It is in such examples of cooperation that we see the multitude emerge to establish new commons. However, the extent to which the CGM as a manifestation of the multitude establishes and protects commons is not limited to virtual (internet) communities. As will be discussed later, the CGM works to establish commons in both the physical and cultural spheres. For example, in Section 6.3 I describe how the anti-privatisation work of organisations such as AID/WATCH and FOE Australia work to defend institutional commons. Additionally, these organisations have campaigned to stop the forced removal of peoples from their ‘land’ commons.<sup>5</sup>

Like ‘working in common’, the creation and sharing of commons also involves a new form of biopolitics. As discussed in Chapter 4, the cultural commons of trust, hope, safety and intellect inverts the dominant paradigm of the self-interested individual at the base of pathological modernity’s Cartesian logic. This is a new type of biopolitical production that generates a desire for liberation, heterogeneity and non-commodified relations. We no longer see competition, but cooperation. This opens the multitude to multiple worlds and futures thereby rupturing the fundamentalist single-mindedness of pathological modernity.

It is within this tension of ‘commons/commodity’ that, I argue, the central conflict between pathological modernity and the CGM/multitude takes place. This is the contestation between the multitude’s desire to establish non-commodified democratic communities confronting the commodification logic of pathological modernity which, driven by its frontier disposition, attempts to increasingly enclose them.

It should be emphasised, however, that to conceive the multitude as merely defending the commons is to underestimate its project for democracy and liberation. As noted, in

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<sup>5</sup> For example, AID/WATCH has organised a number of events in cooperation with organisations based in India and elsewhere to highlight the forced removal of villages from the Narmada region in India to make way for a large dam. For more information see <http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/narmada/intro.htm> - accessed March 2005. At the time of writing, AID/WATCH had also organised an Australian tour of PNG activists to discuss the importance of communal land ownership and its potential enclosure. The tour also aimed to assist the PNG representatives to connect with the Australian indigenous community who, as I discussed in Section 4.3, are facing similar challenges. Sourced from: <http://www.aidwatch.org.au/> - accessed September 2005.

addition to countering attempts at enclosure, the multitude is driven by its potentiality to ‘work in common’ for the purpose of establishing *new* commons. This establishment of new commons occurs in many different ways and under different conditions. It is to this that I turn next.

### **6.3 *The counter globalisation movement – establishing new commons***

In assessing how communities operate, Lietaer (2001) speculates that community breakdown may be contagious. In a world where the logic of individualisation, exclusion and the ‘enclosure of the commons’ is being globalised, he may be right. That is, when a society becomes increasingly focused on the atomised and competitive individual, and continually ignores communal matters, we see increased levels of isolation that, according to Lietaer, lead to ghettos of exclusion and even violence. These are complex problems that are constituted through, rather than solved by, a focus on economic growth and individual wealth.

These processes of exclusion and individualisation are embedded within the logic that I have defined as pathological modernity. This creates a spiral of competition aptly described by Hardin’s (1968) ‘tragedy of the commons’ which places communally-based resources under the constant threat of enclosure and commodification, and creates a sense of scarcity. Under such conditions, open and non-commercialised commons become scarce which leads to a process of commodifying the commons and allows pathological modernity to expand its frontiers.

Pathological modernity promulgates the belief that that there are no viable alternative visions of society. As a result, a ‘natural order’ is established where, in its extreme, everything is reduced to being a commodity for trade and everyone is assumed to be ‘naturally’ self interested. This ultimately leads to a general sense of scarcity and a

culture embracing market-based solutions even where once they were not acceptable (see Chapter 3).

Despite the prominence of this ‘individualism’, this is a paradigm that is continually being challenged. Commons are constantly defended through ‘anti-privatisation’ campaigns and, as discussed below, new commons are constantly emerging. This creates a ‘rupture’ in the logic of pathological modernity that occurs when non-commercial relationships are established based on a shared humanity and cooperation.

An analysis of the CGM confirms that the establishment and protection of commons is the intellectual thread that unifies this dynamic and heterogeneous movement. While the various characteristics identified in Chapter 5 highlight the diversity of this movement, I argue that this relationship to the commons is a unifying element serving to connect its many actors. It is for this reason I extend Hardt and Negri’s (2004) concept of ‘working in common’ to ‘establishing new commons’.

In this section, I describe how the CGM works both to protect existing commons as well as establish new ones. I begin by examining institutional commons before turning to cultural commons.

## **Institutional commons and the CGM**

As noted, my fundamental argument is that the role of both protecting and establishing commons is an intellectual thread that unifies the CGM. This position is supported by continuing the examination of the four groups analysed in Chapter 5; AID/WATCH, FOE Australia, AFTINET and NOIL.

To begin with, AID/WATCH’s ‘Right to Water’ campaign raises concerns about the ongoing privatisation of water including rainwater.<sup>6</sup> In 2001 AID/WATCH commenced a

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<sup>6</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.aidwatch.org.au/index.php?current=2> – accessed March 2005.

review of the policies and programs of international financial institutions, investigating their relationship to private water corporations. AID/WATCH identified a consistent policy recommendation to solve people's lack of access to safe drinking water by privatising community assets and instituting user-pay systems. This arises because official development assistance (ODA) funds and loans to low-income countries privilege multinational water corporations and thus focus on privatisation and water delivery for profit.<sup>7</sup>

This prioritisation of user-pays and profits results in the exclusion of a wide section of the population from a resource once openly available. In response, AID/WATCH argues that water is a commons, not a commodity to be sold and available only to the highest bidder.<sup>8</sup>

AID/WATCH also works with FOE Australia, AFTINET and other organisations and individuals – both locally and internationally – in defending institutional commons through anti-privatisation campaigns. Here, we see actions which aim to protect commons by stopping or blocking enclosure. A recent example emerged during the WTO protests described in Section 5.3. The No-WTO coalition raised concerns regarding the commodification processes of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) in the current WTO negotiations. FOE Australia specifically argued against the privatisation of public services including health, education and water provision (see also AFTINET 2002b).

Such protection of the institutional commons echoes throughout the literature, work and campaigns of the CGM and is fundamental to its logic. This was highlighted by the 'Porto Alegre Manifesto' released by the WSF (2005) in January 2005 which demanded that the privatisation of common goods, particularly water, cease immediately. Likewise,

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<sup>7</sup> These conclusions were supported in a recent study undertaken by Naomi Klein (2005). Klein concluded that privatisation is the *only* solution offered to the poor by the world's international financial institutions.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that AID/WATCH does not specifically describe water as a commons but rather a right that should be open to all, managed by local communities and that should be outside the realms of commodification. This description sounds very much like water as a commons. The concept of commons is not foreign to AID/WATCH, which has campaigned specifically around the patenting of living organisms or the life commons – see Farhat (2001).

the work undertaken by the Anti-Privatisation Forum in South Africa is specifically aimed at protecting institutional commons from privatisation (see Ngwane 2004).

## **The CGM and cultural commons**

The work of the CGM is not limited to the defence of physical and institutional commons but also enters the realm of cultural commons. While AID/WATCH's campaign around water and the ODA has a strong institutional focus, it also has important cultural implications. For example, AID/WATCH and FOE Australia argue that the governments of the North must acknowledge the debt owed to the South for ongoing expropriation and exploitation of natural resources – something that has been described as 'ecological debt' (see Chapter 5 – Section 5.3). As a result, AID/WATCH believes that organisations such as ECAs should be promoting the transfer of appropriate, low-cost and sustainable technologies from high-income to low-income nations. While this has important institutional consequences, it is also a form of 'gift giving' which opens up non-commercial relationships that build both a sense of trust and hope, as well as a free sharing of intellect.<sup>9</sup>

This conceptualises the physical, institutional and cultural dimensions of 'sustainability' and 'development' not as a commercial transaction driven by the profit motive but something to be openly shared and thus, if managed properly, abundant and available to all. That is, 'development' is not merely linked to accumulation, economic growth and monetary wealth. Rather, 'development' is achieved through the open sharing of resources, technologies, intellect and knowledge – from North to South as well as from South to North. Development is not seen as a privilege of the few but re-defined to encompass abundance, sustainability and the sharing of the 'commons'.

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<sup>9</sup> The concept of 'gift-giving' as a form of non-commercial reciprocity that is fundamental to the establishment of 'authentic' communities is discussed in Chapter 7 – Section 7.4.

Likewise, No-One is Illegal (NOII) works to establish new commons by focusing on processes of enclosure. This is done by specifically attacking the borders and fences that are established by pathological modernity that excludes those without capital. Such borders also create a culture of scarcity as they promulgate the belief that there is never enough to share (Hage 2001). The activists associated with NOII view the Australian community as a commons open to all not just those who have the capital to pay the minimum entry price. In this way, they open commons of trust, hope and safety beyond the borders that limit or restrain their availability.

Such work operates on both an institutional and cultural level. While the Australian government has continued to pursue a policy of exclusion and marginalisation towards refugees, resistance movements have appeared in many forms to challenge this position and offer trust, hope and safety. As noted in Chapter 2 – Section 2.5, these resistance movements range from more radical groups such as NOII, involved in the Woomera breakout in 2002, to lobbying organisations and support networks such as Chilout and Rural Australians for Refugees. The position presented by such groups is one of abundance, cooperation and sharing, not scarcity, competition and exclusion.

Rather than being limited to a small group of actors, however, this process of reclaiming, protecting or establishing commons is central to the CGM. Szerszynski (1999), for example, analyses contemporary ‘environmental’ protests with a specific focus on ‘Reclaim the Streets’ (RTS).<sup>10</sup> Szerszynski argues that such protests operate at a level he describes as the “semiotics of the everyday” as they move to reclaim public spaces (1999: 5).<sup>11</sup> Szerszynski also contends that these protests spill into the cultural sphere when he argues that they are not only about reclaiming public space but also the ‘life-world’. This is an opening of non-commercial space or commons both in the physical and cultural (life) spheres.

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<sup>10</sup> The Reclaim the Streets collective is made up of various groups that come together to ‘reclaim public space’. There are many such collectives around the world and they come together in a sporadic fashion. See <http://www.reclaimthestreets.net/> - accessed December 2004.

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that while Szerszynski (1999) uses the label ‘environmental’ to describe the protest, he also argues that such protest groups are not single issue organisations but present multi-dimensional agendas.

These examples can thus be understood as an expansion of the commons driven by the CGM's global desire to establish a non-commercial and 'authentic' community. Through such practices, the CGM creates a radically different world that sheds the logic that limits our choices to commercial exchange, passports, the camp or detention centres and attacks the politics of exclusion and scarcity at the very core of pathological modernity. It is here new commons emerge.

This is a new biopolitics that creates abundant, open, 'authentic' and democratic communities (see Section 7.4). This form of biopolitics promotes the abundance of the cultural commons rather than the manufactured scarcity of pathological modernity. Here, new commons are established and shared openly by all rather than limited to those with capital. In my work within the CGM, I witnessed the establishment of both physical and cultural commons in many different ways. One specific event highlighting this took place in Brunswick, Melbourne, at a convergence known as the 'State of Emergency'.

## **6.4 Case study: the State of Emergency and the Politics of Paradox**

*We gathered at the front of a disused warehouse in Brunswick, Melbourne. Like previous gatherings I had attended, there were a multitude of individuals and groups present. While standing around and speaking to them, I realised that the diversity of those at the convergence meant that once again, no simple or single definition would suffice.*

*Led by the State of Emergency (SOE) organisers, we entered the warehouse through a previously locked door... tentatively at first. Once inside, it became clear that others from the SOE collective had already entered the space and*

*started cleaning up. There was also graffiti on the walls that announced 'Welcome to the State of Emergency'.*

*Within the hour, the cleaning had progressed and a roster for various duties had been organised. A few hours later, the disused warehouse had been transformed, sleeping quarters had been established, a café was set up, a screen and movie theatre were prepared and bathrooms had been cleaned.*

*What was once enclosed space surrounded by high fences and locked doors had been reclaimed and transformed. It was now an open and public space that had all the characteristics of a commons.*

*This was not limited, however, to the physical space. Over the next four days the participants worked in common to establish trust, hope, a sense of safety as well the free and open sharing of intellect.*

This convergence raises a number of questions. Why would a group of people re-appropriate private property in this way? What is the point of taking over a disused warehouse to live there for four days even though participants had somewhere else (more comfortable) to live? Why would protesters undertake such actions when they may be illegal? By understanding why this occurs, it is possible to gain insight into how the CGM breaks down the logic of pathological modernity.

## **Background: State of Emergency – 21-24 May 2004**

On 21 May 2004, a group of about 500 people reclaimed a disused warehouse in Brunswick, Melbourne. Though the exact location of the warehouse was kept secret until that morning, the venue had been identified a number of weeks earlier and a website was established that informed people of the event.<sup>12</sup> Local residents however, had been

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<sup>12</sup> See: <http://stateofemergency.nomasters.org/#> - accessed March 2004.



contacted regarding the nature of the event to ensure that any concerns they had could be dealt with.<sup>13</sup>

The collective that organised the event called themselves (and the event for that matter) ‘State of Emergency’ (SOE) which they described as:

... a bunch of loosely connected people based in Melbourne who have worked together around things like: undocumented migration and freedom of movement, squatting and social centres, anti-capital and anti-state action, media activist projects and other struggles. We organise using principles of autonomy and self-organisation. (SOE 2004)

The aim was to reclaim the inner-city warehouse, occupy it as a place of residence (or ‘squat’) and turn it into public space – for four days only. Once it was reclaimed those present spent almost eight hours cleaning the disused venue turning it into a liveable space that included a bar, cafe, cinema, dance room and a general meeting-place for the conference and sleeping accommodation.

This event provides an important case study for a number of reasons. To begin with, it involved a number of people associated with NOII and FOE Australia.<sup>14</sup> Second, it reflected the heterogeneous character of the CGM as a wide range of people and organisations from various backgrounds including indigenous representatives were present. The third reason was that these groups worked in common in both organising and running the event. That is, a common language and means of communication were established to allow the diverse group of actors to work together.

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<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that I attended the SOE convergence as an actor interested in the workings of such gatherings. There were a number of academics present who attended the event and like me, took part in the processes of ‘reclaiming’ the space. A few hours after entering the building the owner arrived and called the police, who attended soon after. At this point, the organisers discussed the aims and goals of the event. After inspecting the warehouse, the owner asked the police to leave and gave permission for the event to proceed as planned.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that there is close relationship between those active in NOII and SOE which was consolidated at both the State of Emergency conference and the WEF protests described in Section 5.3.

Finally, and for my purposes centrally, SOE reclaimed private space and turned it into public space that was open, safe and based on trust and hope. The reclaimed space allowed those present to establish new commons both in the physical and cultural spheres. This appeared as a unifying theme of the SOE even though the term ‘commons’ was not specified by the organisers. Before discussing this further, however, I will provide some background regarding the concept of ‘state of emergency’.

## **The State of Emergency**

The concept of ‘state of emergency’ was described by Walter Benjamin (1940) who argued that a sense of crisis was no longer the exception but has become the norm. The state of emergency allows the sovereign power, which by Benjamin’s time was the state, to identify potential enemies and respond to them pre-emptively. Benjamin felt, however, that this occurred because the potential for resistance is constant and the sovereign was continuously vulnerable. In response to this vulnerability, the sovereign is constantly prepared to eliminate any real or perceived threats and, as a result, the state of emergency becomes constant.

As noted in Chapter 3 in describing pathological modernity, Agamben (1998) used analogous reasoning to extend this concept by describing ‘the camp’ as the norm rather than the exception. The arguments of Benjamin and Agamben, in combination with Beck’s (1992) *Risk Society*, amount to a broad declaration that ‘crisis’ is now the norm rather than the exception – a situation I described as the ‘crisis of the whole’.

The operations that Benjamin and others describe facilitate pathological modernity’s expansion through its promises of delivering certainty. Pathological modernity manufactures panics that promulgate crises. Benjamin’s position that the state of emergency is not the exception but the rule, and permeates throughout our society, is reiterated in the concept of pathological modernity. For example, the idea that there are links between refugees and terrorists, though never established, has become an element

informing Australia's mandatory detention of refugees (James 2005). Bourke (2004) argues that Australian society is historically infused with a fear of the 'other' that is used, in part, to justify the internment of its unwanted visitors. In this way, the state of emergency promotes fear and justifies exclusion.

The SOE collective aimed to directly confront today's 'state of emergency' by breaking down its logic. The collective argued that this rupture could occur through "our resistance, our desire, our need to seize control of the conditions of our lives and our city" (SOE 2004). The means of confronting the exclusionary and security policies of the nation-state was by *refusing* its manufactured 'state of emergency' and establishing a 'different world' that is simultaneously inside and outside its logic.

This attempt to establish a different world that sits both within and outside the logic of the state of emergency is achieved by working in common to establish commons that promote cooperation and abundance rather than fear, exclusion and scarcity. The mechanism for establishing this is found in the political space of the CGM. For reasons I expand on below, I identify this space as the 'politics of paradox', and which I detail in Section 6.5.

## **SOE establishing new commons**

The SOE provides an insightful case study because it crystallises the many characteristics of the CGM. Through the politics of paradox it is possible to identify how the common emerges to promote the creation of new commons. However, it specifically highlights how the CGM was manifested at the SOE in the establishment of new commons in both the physical and cultural spheres. This is a theme that permeated throughout the SOE.

We can begin by analysing the SOE's reclaiming of physical space. In the case of SOE, a private space was reclaimed and the doors opened to all who desired to enter, turning it into a public space. This was part of a broader declaration of intent which was to "reclaim

our worlds and our lives... [and] resist private property, to create an autonomous space” (SOE 2004). The SOE targeted a private and exclusionary space for this specific purpose.

This new public space established rules ‘in common’. That is, in a collective and open manner, all participants agreed how the space was going to function. For example, there were some areas that were designated male or female, while others were shared.

A public café was also established and much of the food served was reclaimed from dumpsters.<sup>15</sup> This food was provided to the participants for the cost of a donation for those who could afford to make one, and free to those who could not.

In addition to reclaiming the physical space, SOE also reclaimed ‘virtual space’ by establishing a community radio station (Emergency Radio) which produced live broadcasts of workshops. As a result, what originally existed as private property and commercial space was transformed into a commons available for all to use. An Indy-media web-station was also established to allow those who could not attend to participate via the internet through open chat rooms and web-casting.

These can all be interpreted as commons because non-commodified spaces were established. Returning to the characteristics of the commons identified in Chapter 4, it can be seen that such actions fit within the definition provided: that is, they were open, non-exclusive and managed locally. This was a space that promoted abundance rather than scarcity.

The physical reclaiming of private property such as this warehouse, also symbolically connects to broader social justice struggles, particularly of those who have historically experienced exclusion such as indigenous peoples. Displaced peoples, such as Australia’s indigenous population, have long tried to reclaim private land that was once considered

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<sup>15</sup> This ‘reclaiming of rubbish’ highlights the way in which consumable food is discarded unnecessarily. Importantly, even this discarded food is now being privatised elsewhere in the world – a trend that may eventually reach Australia. For example, Davis (1992b) describes how the Los Angeles area is dotted with new security bins which lock up garbage. Davis argues that this is in an attempt to stop the homeless from searching for food and equates to an ‘enclosure of garbage’ – see also Chapter 4 – Section 4.4.

communal.<sup>16</sup> As a result, at the SOE there was a ‘Welcome to Country’ ceremony by a local Aboriginal elder who established relationships between the aims of SOE and indigenous land rights. Accompanying the ‘Welcome to Country’ was Annette Xiberus of the Wurundjeri people, who discussed the need to reclaim private or exclusionary space and re-establish it as communal. It was also argued that the claims of indigenous peoples are often about opening the enclosure of colonial pasts.

While the physical reclaiming of the warehouse underscores the role of the CGM in establishing new commons, the implications for the cultural sphere were much broader. The SOE warehouse was established as a place where the cultural commons were openly exchanged and shared, for there was hope, trust, safety and intellect. These were freely open to all, shared, and as a result, came to exist in abundance.

For example, though it was a ‘safe place’, there was no ‘security’ in the meaning established in Section 4.4, as there were no perimeter fences or security guards. The space relied on those in attendance to openly share and exchange their state of safety. The organisers also emphasised that the reclaimed warehouse was a ‘safe’ place, based on trust and cooperation for all those who entered. There was to be no aggression and all were to have an equal say.

Such a sense of safety was established and freely shared because trust existed between the participants. I trusted the other people to share openly, keep me safe and to meet the obligations to which we had agreed. In return, they trusted me.

There was also a sharing of hope. The hope emerged because there was a belief that events such as SOE create a rupture in the logic of exclusion which the participants were confronting. A different logic emerged that relied on cooperation rather than competition, on promoting the commons rather than enclosing them.

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<sup>16</sup> The debate over whether indigenous lands should be communally owned or available for privatisation emerged in mid-2004. While the Howard government sees the privatisation of lands as an economic solution to indigenous poverty, others including Galarrway Yunupingu (2005) have argued it is a threat to Aboriginal culture and will lead to even further exclusion and displacement. See section 4.4 for more details.

A sense of hope was also underscored by the fact that SOE was a celebration of both the diversity of the participants and the potentiality that this other world represents. The attendees felt that the event should be viewed as a celebration: that an alternative world is indeed possible and could emerge through our actions. SOE also celebrated the role of ‘civil society’ in reshaping society in many progressive ways that are frequently not recognised. In analysing similar protests, Szerszynski (1999) echoes such conclusions by stating that they deliberately and overtly recode public space, and as such, contemporary protests often look like a carnival that attempts to expose commonly accepted codes and celebrate alternatives. This is a reclaiming of the life world involving a new form of biopolitics.

There was also an open sharing of intellect as we openly shared ideas, experiences and our research. Research papers were written specifically for the event and freely distributed. From this sharing, a number of collaborative and innovative projects began to develop. There was no commercial exchange and, as a result, the cultural commons of intellect existed in abundance.

Events such as SOE highlight the manifestation of the CGM, and by extension the multitude. They demonstrate how we can work in common to establish new commons. This is achieved through the political processes of the CGM – processes that I describe as the ‘politics of paradox’ – and which crystallised at the SOE.

It is important to note that this openness did not rely on ‘recognition’ (in the Hegelian sense of its meaning – something discussed in detail in Chapter 7), as it was not only those that we recognised to be ‘like us’ who were invited. Rather, it was open to anyone who was willing to openly share commons with those present. This mirrors the activists within the CGM who offer the hand of friendship to refugees – and all that is expected is a returned hand. It is this important aspect of the SOE that I believe established an ‘authentic’ community – a discussion that will be expanded in Chapter 7.

## 6.5 The CGM and the politics of paradox

By using the SOE event as a case study, the politics of the CGM and, by extension the multitude, can be analysed. Though I have used Hardt and Negri (2000; 2004) to theoretically position the CGM as a manifestation of the multitude, I look elsewhere to discuss how the *potentiality* of the CGM emerges and takes shape. In doing so, I identify a ‘politics of paradox’ that directly challenges the ‘politics of certainty’ framed by an ‘eternal right’ within the Cartesian logic of pathological modernity.

This term is used to emphasise the paradoxical position often presented by the CGM’s political agency. The aim here is to explain how the CGM can have multiple dimensions that may appear contradictory – yet are not. An example is how the CGM ‘works in common’ to establish new commons while simultaneously emphasising its heterogeneous character and multiple singularities.

In contrast to pathological modernity’s ‘promises of certainty’ the politics of today’s social movements are difficult to describe. In a political environment characterised by rigid boundaries, certainty and binaries – perhaps epitomised best by George W. Bush’s (2001) assertion that ‘you are either with us or against us’ discussed in Section 2.1 – the paradoxical politics employed by the CGM challenges conventional political processes. Although I have described the characteristics of the CGM, explaining its workings requires an alternative approach to accepted political discourse in order to avoid the interpretation that the CGM reflects the status quo. For this reason I turn to the post-structuralist writings of Roland Barthes, Szerszynski’s (1999) discussion of the ‘theatre of protest’, and Torgerson’s (1999) ‘green political space’, to describe the politics of the CGM.

To begin with, Torgerson (1999) argues that there exists a heterogeneous green political sphere that allows groups with different opinions, ideologies and methods of operating to come together. This is a space that does not demand certainty or consensus but rather promotes diversity and a ‘multitude’ of positions. In fact, Torgerson’s arguments appear

to resonate with Hardt and Negri's (2004) abovementioned position that the multitude 'works in common' but maintains its multiple singularities.

While concentrating on the 'environment' movement, Torgerson's description of a particular 'political space' has, I believe, wider implications and can be used to understand the workings of the CGM more broadly. This 'space' can be seen wherever disparate groups or individuals come together to work in common, be they defined broadly as environmentalists, unionists, human rights activists, student groups or feminists. The importance of such a political space has also been emphasised by Chico Whitaker, a founding figure of the World Social Forum in a meeting organised by the Sydney Social Forum (pers. comm. 16 May 2005). Whitaker argued that we can only find political solutions when a space is established which brings together people without representation and where multiple positions rather than consensus is recognised.

This political space is characterised by a different way of 'doing' politics or, as Szerszynski describes, "a way of performing politics otherwise" (1999: 15). I have witnessed this space come to life on the streets during protests and blockades, in discussions of the implementation of the Tobin Tax<sup>17</sup> at the Sydney Social Forum (SSF), in the meeting rooms of more formal organisations such as AID/WATCH and AFTINET, as well as at events such as SOE. I believe that this is the type of political space that describes the processes of the multitude 'working in common' to establish commons including those of hope, trust, intellect and safety.

This is a different way of 'doing' politics that, as noted above, defies traditional definitions. In fact, it may be easier to describe what this politics is not, rather than what it actually is. For it is *not* a representative democracy or a formal consensus voting system. At events such as SOE, however, it manifests itself as something that can be sensed and felt, if not necessarily named.

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<sup>17</sup> Tobin Taxes are taxes placed on cross-border currency transactions with the aim of limiting speculation and currency volatility, and promoting longer-term investment and national economic sovereignty (Patomaki 2001). The vision that exists for such a tax is that the revenue raised would be managed by the UN and directed towards global priorities including environmental and human needs.



Based on action research, I identify five key characteristics of the politics of paradox which allow the CGM to work in common to establish new commons. In this way, the CGM goes beyond challenging the status quo to offer an alternative project; passing Beck's (1997) 'politics of doubt' and establishing the 'politics of paradox'.<sup>18</sup>

### **i. The intrinsic value of politics**

The first characteristic is drawn from Torgerson's (1999) interpretation of Arendt's position that politics has an intrinsic value. That is, the politics employed by the CGM embodies and constitutes a different world that is reflected within the very processes it utilises – politics here becomes “an end in itself” (Torgerson 1999: 168). It is within events such as SOE that a non-hierarchical political space is constituted confronting established power relationships and giving a voice to those overlooked or displaced. This is reflected in Szerszynski's (1999) 'theatre of protest', where the protesters constitute the world they wish to inhabit. The actions of the Woomera protesters can be analysed from this perspective. By assisting the refugees to escape, the protesters created a world that erodes borders and eliminates detentions camps.

Consequently, the very structure and political processes that are employed reflect the form of the 'utopian' world the CGM desires. At meetings like SOE, the CGM aims to remove the limits, relations and structures of power of pathological modernity. By opening the political space to all, and attempting to establish an equal platform based on the non-hierarchical structures discussed in Chapter 5, the CGM aims to reflect these 'utopian' dreams in its politics. This adds weight to my argument in Section 5.5 that the project of the multitude should be viewed as a process or potentiality, not as an end point. This 'potential' is also reflected in Torgerson's (1999) interpretation of the green political space.

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<sup>18</sup> The 'politics of doubt' is a central theme in Beck's (1997) *Reinvention of politics*. In summary, Beck argues that there is a need to build 'doubt' into today's political processes to confront the certainty that dominates – see Chapter 3 – Section 3.2.

This was evident in the planning of the SOE as well as the Sydney Social Forum, whereby ‘workshops’ were not selected by the organisers. All participants were instead invited to hold workshops during the event that were advertised through a central location. This provided an open forum for the voiceless and excluded not only to be heard but also to *set the agenda*. At the SOE, the organisers invited participants to establish the program stating they wanted the event to be “an open space, a space created by the people who enter it” (SOE 2004). Importantly, this is analogous to the concept of ‘leading from behind’ discussed in Section 5.4.

It is thus within the very way that politics is performed that its intrinsic value is acknowledged. In Szareszynski’s (1999) ‘theatre of protest’ the practices embodied by the protesters reflects the world they desire to create. At the SOE a world was established that was based on cooperation, trust, hope and a sense of safety; that is, our actions created a world constituting these commons.

## **ii. Another world is possible**

The second characteristic of the politics of paradox extends this intrinsic value of politics. The politics of the CGM is driven by a ‘utopian dream’ that ‘another world really is possible’. Such a position directly challenges the logic of pathological modernity which dismisses (see Chapter 3).

The potentiality for another world emerges at events such as SOE and at countless protests around the world such as the unplanned street march in Melbourne during the World Economic Forum meeting in 2001, at the Woomera protests in 2002 and the anti-Iraq war protests in 2003. These events embody and constitute this other world. Szareszynski (1999) argues that the ‘theatre of protest’ creates a rupture in the everyday that stops people who are passing by and causes them to reflect and question what is happening. Such actions highlight the chasm that exists between the everyday world and

the one that can potentially exist. The participants do not just want to be left alone to do their own thing but actively aim to disrupt ‘society-as-usual’, bringing with them the message that another world really is possible.

This different world emerged at the SOE. The aim of the SOE was to establish a non-hierarchical democratic space that relied on open discussions of how such an environment was going to function. As discussed in Section 6.4, the SOE also aimed to refuse the ‘state of emergency’ by constituting trust and safety rather than security and anxiety. Like other events which have come to characterise the CGM, Szerszynski (1999) argues that this is echoed throughout the theatre of protest and the way politics is performed.

These events emphasise that another world can be established that reflects the objectives of the CGM. By reclaiming a disused space, the participants at SOE challenged the potential exclusion that exists through strict enforcement of private property rights. In other words, a more just and abundant world can exist without strict adherence to such laws. Such a world is possible through cooperation and promoting abundance. Likewise, by breaking prisoners out of Woomera, protesters imagined and constituted a world without exclusionary borders.

A paradoxical element of this political space is that these utopian desires are not some naïve dream. The political space of the CGM recognises that creating this utopian world is an ongoing struggle through a politics that has an intrinsic value, rather than a final ‘end point’ to be reached as claimed by authors such as Quinby (2002) – see Chapter 5 – Section 5.5. Such recognition does not destroy the struggle or shut it down but activates it. This again reiterates why the multitude represents a process rather than an end point.

### iii. The various 'I's

The third characteristic of the politics of paradox also emerges within the intrinsic value of Torgerson's through a contradictory separation between the protesters acting both as 'activists' (separate from citizens) and as 'citizens' (separated from activism). That is, there is never one 'I', but *various* 'I's as the politics of the CGM recognises that each protester while acting in unison also has multiple subjectivities. This can be contrasted to the single logic of pathological modernity.

The writing of Barthes can assist in providing insight into this paradoxical position of the CGM. The separation of the various 'I's that emerges between 'the activist' and 'the citizen' is reflected in Barthes' discussion of the work of Proust. Barthes notes that the author, in writing, is a different 'I' to the 'I' that is the actual person (1981: 282). The writing 'I' is determined through the 'performance' of writing, something potentially different to the 'I' of the person. This paradoxical concept of partial removal is reflected by Barthes who describes Proust 'the Narrator' as "unknown to himself" (ibid).

Paradoxically, however, while these two 'I's are the same person they are also separated and reflect multiple subjectivities. According to Kouvaros, this is a recurring theme in Barthes' work where the sense of self (or Barthes as the writer) is "both constituted and dispersed throughout the activity of writing" (1998: 114).

Parallels between Barthes' various 'I's can be drawn with Szerszynski's 'theatre of protest' which describe the political space of the CGM. This is the paradoxical separation between the protestor 'I' and the citizen 'I'. The actions of the protesters should not be interpreted as naïve or ignorant but as operating within a space that embraces the act of protest as an actor separated but not removed from everyday society.

In this way, the political positions of the protester are simultaneously embedded within the protest and separate from it. For example, at SOE the participants purposely contravened property laws but, paradoxically, were not necessarily opposing property rights. Such a paradox directly challenges pathological modernity's politics of certainty.

Dominant forms of politics do not (or can not) comprehend how such contradictions make perfectly ‘good sense’ in the politics of paradox. Barthes (1975) describes such a paradox when he reflects on the moment we leave a movie theatre. Here Barthes describes the enjoyment achieved by being both part of and separate from the film. The politics of the protesters must also be conceived in this way: while the chant may be that ‘another world is possible’, the protesters know that it must exist in this world.

#### **iv. An ontological pluralism**

The fourth characteristic of the politics of paradox reflects the multi-dimensional character of the CGM which I discussed in Section 5.4. This further characteristic extends the position of Barthes’ various ‘I’s: to attempt to define the protest in the singular is not possible, because the protesters refuse to accept such definitions. The protesters thus combine, fuse and mutate their various positions to create an ‘ontological pluralism’. Any attempt to give prominence to a single aspect of the protest – or a single ‘I’ – denies the fact that each protester assumes different positions within the organic form taken by the protest.

Again Barthes’ writings illuminate this aspect of the politics of paradox. As discussed in Chapter 5, the heterogeneous character of the CGM means that while some groups or individuals may be described as environmentalists or human rights activists, their democratic tendencies transcends any such description. The flexible characteristics of the multitude reflect its singularities that work in common, though no single feature predominates.

In his discussion of Proust in *Image, Music, Text*, Barthes (1981) further argues that the author is always found within the work. The protesters (or the author) cannot be separated from the protest (or the work), just as I cannot be separated from what I write here either as a writer or an activist. The protest represents a value position that is reflected in the values of the protester – as the values of the protester are reflected in the

protest. Both the value position of the protester and the protest are multi rather than uni-dimensional. It is here the protester's various 'I's materialise to portray an ontological pluralism.

It is clear from Barthes' writing that he has an admiration of both 'Prousts' – that is, both the Narrator and the person. While concentrating on Proust, Barthes' message here is more general for he is offering a description of a multifaceted character. While Barthes may depict one specific Proust, the other Proust cannot be removed from his description. This inability to separate the various Prousts means that any definition which prioritises one characteristic ahead of another is fraught with inadequacies. Barthes may discuss two Prousts but it can be speculated that there are many more. Likewise I believe that there are multiple Barthes; Barthes the activist and 'journalist' writer of *Mythologies* can be separated from both Barthes the author of *Image, Music, Text* interrogating the processes of writing and Barthes the person. Like the multiple Prousts, these various Barthes can be separated but never removed from each other. It is in this way that we can understand the 'ontological pluralism' of the protester individually and the CGM more generally.

This also extends Hardt and Negri's (2004) assertion that the protesters act as multiple singularities that work in common. They maintain their individuality but work in common to create communal non-commodified spaces or commons. We thus have individual actors *working autonomously and concurrently in unison*. This concept of autonomy is also considered by Szerszynski (1999) in his discussion of the Reclaim the Streets protests. Szerszynski describes the high degree of autonomous actions being "more like 'disorganisations' than organisations" while highly effective (1999: 5). To explain this, Szerszynski states that at such protests, there is no party line or pre-defined role but rather each action comes from the "individual's heart" (ibid). Analogous to Hardt and Negri, Szerszynski notes that this represents a utopian vision of how different groups can work together while each one remains autonomous.

In a later examination of Arendt's work reflecting performance and politics, Szerszynski (2003) extends his interpretation of 'performative politics'. Like Torgerson, Szerszynski

turns to the work of Arendt for understanding both the intrinsic value and potential of politics. This is a vision of performative politics that involves “free association and debate, rather than one involving societal plans and projects” (ibid: 218). For Szerszynski this is a path that does not present descriptions of how society ought to be but rather demonstrates how it is possible for people to work together in a way that counters the “relentless instrumentalisation of modern life” (ibid). Such a politics is performed through the heterogeneous and non-hierarchical structure of the CGM and relies on ontological pluralism. This reflects that another world is possible and it can be constituted and embodied by our current actions.

## **v. A way of doing politics otherwise**

The fifth characteristic of the politics of paradox brings the first four together and presents a way of ‘doing’ politics that contrasts with the certainty of pathological modernity. Szerszynski (2003) proposes that this way of ‘doing’ politics accepts the various paradoxes described above and includes elements of uncertainty, reflexivity and critique. In contrast to Cartesian logic, absolutes are treated with suspicion, simple causal relationships are considered dubious and grand narratives are seen as having relevance in historical and descriptive terms only.

Unlike the ‘eternal right’ and truth of pathological modernity with its quasi-religious adherence to free-market economics and Promethean scientism, the politics of paradox displays a multi-dimensional truth. This is a truth full of uncertainty and doubt. Like Barthes’ (1970) recognition that there can not be one truth, this conceptualisation dismisses the notion of ‘the one true truth’ but accepts that truths are culturally derived and situated. This is also reflected within the work of theorists such as Kellner (1997) who neither argue for one truth nor argue against it. Kellner’s paradoxical position is that truth can be universal but in some contexts it can be informed by a particularity.

Again we can turn to Barthes for clues to understand how this is possible. In *Image, Music, Text*, Barthes (1981) describes how Proust has found a different way of writing that is somewhere between an essay and a novel, which he describes as a ‘third form’. This new form lays the foundation for an alternative logic where established lines of definition *do not exist*. To make the point, Barthes discusses a sense of writing that hovers between being awake and asleep – somewhere between consciousness and unconsciousness. Though we may describe this state as ‘half asleep’ and understand the sensation, the English language fails to adequately describe what exists in this state. Barthes describes this as “the impossibility of language” (1981: 281).

Barthes then attempts to discover a new practice or form of writing that uses different methods, styles and pathways. Here, Barthes claims to be looking for a *vita nova* (a new life) in his writing. This is similar to the search of the CGM in their ongoing efforts to identify a politics where power relationships do not play a role, diversity of ideology is welcomed and an ontological pluralism results. This is a politics that is constituted and embodied through the imagining and performance of a different world.

By imagining this different world, the CGM operates with pluralism reflecting a different way of doing politics. For example, one protest sign at Woomera read, “I am ashamed to be an Australian”. Such a slogan is nationalistic in its emphasis on the borders that define the sovereign nation of Australia and its associated identity. However, the act of breaking out refugees from a detention centre is a paradoxical and cosmopolitan one that promotes the elimination of borders. We can therefore identify the protesters as simultaneously nationalistic and cosmopolitan – described by Goodman as “cosmopolitan nationalism” (2002:1). Hence, in the paradoxical political discourse of the CGM, borders are seen to exist but not to be exclusionary.

Likewise, at the blockade of the World Economic Forum in Melbourne described in Chapter 5, affinity groups were formed that were separate entities but worked together ‘in common’. Prior to the protests, each group and individual agreed to follow the broad principles of the blockade which included a concerted effort to prevent entry to, and exit



from, the venue. Included in these agreements, however, was the right of the ‘Green Block’ to break the blockade twice daily by allowing unionised labour to move back and forth.<sup>19</sup>

The politics of paradox becomes possible because of the way in which, as identified by Hardt and Negri (2004), the boundaries of politics collapse within the CGM. One way that this collapse materialises is between the subject (the protesters) and the object (the politics). This allows an alternative world to be established that reflects and embodies the actions of the participants.

## **6.6 Concluding Comments**

This chapter has highlighted the role of the CGM in defending and opening new commons by ‘working in common’. One way this occurs is through the democratic and non-hierarchical political processes that I have labelled as the ‘politics of paradox’. I argue that the protection and establishment of new commons is the central intellectual thread that links the heterogeneous multitude generally, and the CGM specifically.

This can be contrasted with the ‘promises of certainty’ and the lack of alternatives characterising pathological modernity. This places pathological modernity and the CGM in direct conflict particularly around the issue of the commons. While the commons are vulnerable to enclosure under the conditions of pathological modernity, they are promoted, expanded and made abundant through the CGM.

The implications of this contest are much broader however. As will be discussed in the next chapter, I argue that it is the free and open sharing of commons that is at the base of

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<sup>19</sup> The Green Block was dominated by ‘environmental-based’ organisations such as AID/WATCH and FOE Australia but also included a wide range of labour union representatives. The agreement to allow unionised labour in and out during agreed times was made prior to the protests and was important in securing union support for the blockade.

an 'authentic' community. If the commons, be they physical, institutional or cultural are commodified and sold off to the highest bidder, then the essence of the community is fundamentally altered. Consequently, the repercussions of enclosure alter the very nature of communities and, as will be discussed, lead to exclusion and potentially violence.

This conflict emerges through different conceptualisations and understandings of the nature of 'authentic' communities, and it is to this that I turn to next.

# Chapter 7: The Conflict over ‘Authentic’ Community

## 7.1 Background

On the 2 February 2003, Dr Habibullah Wahedy (also known as Dr Habib), an Afghani refugee living in South Australia, left his home, took his shoes off and climbed a telegraph pole – voluntarily electrocuting himself – where his body remained suspended for over twelve hours (Manne 2004). Dr Habib left a suicide note explaining his decision. In his note, he described a sense of isolation and anguish at being displaced from his family which he was forced to leave when fleeing the Taliban years earlier.

According to reports, Dr Habib’s mental wellbeing had dramatically disintegrated both due to this isolation and the ongoing marginalisation of refugees by the Australian government (Manne 2004). Dr Habib felt persecuted by the Australian government when making his refugee claim even though the oppressive political climate he had fled was not doubted.

The harrowing suicide of Dr Habib is, unfortunately, only one example that illustrates the consequences of Australia’s treatment of refugees.<sup>1</sup> The Australian government has withheld from refugees a number of basic human rights in pursuing its policies of mandatory detention, forced deportations and the rejection of refugee claims. Mandatory detention has also meant that numerous refugees have been held in prison cells for years, including newly born children.<sup>2</sup> According to Cohen (2002), these policies have

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<sup>1</sup> The mental health problems of refugees, particularly those in mandatory detention, have been well documented by a number of independent studies. See Minas and Sawyer (2002) for more details.

<sup>2</sup> This was highlighted by the case of Naomi Leong, who was released from the Villawood detention centre after she had spent her entire life in detention. See Glendinning and Kerr (2005) for more details.

reverberated across the world as a number of Australia's positions are increasingly reflected in the policies of other countries.

By following such a path, Australia and other nations have turned even those with 'legal' asylum claims into 'illegals' – in a sense causing the criminalisation of refugees (CARD 2001). The result is that refugees have been persecuted twice – once in their homeland and the second time as 'illegals' by the nations from whom they seek refuge (UNHCR 2002).<sup>3</sup>

At a time of record global economic growth, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that 1 in 300 people globally are either a refugee, an asylum seeker, or an internally displaced person. This equates to 20.5 million people internationally. Reasons for displacement range from war, environmental factors and 'development'.<sup>4</sup> The refusal of entry to and denial of the rights of refugees has been equated to their treatment as 'non-people' (Hage 1996) which, according to Porter (2004), has become a significant characteristic of our time.

We can contrast this persecution and rejection of refugees with the way that both global capital and its managers are embraced. For capital, the world is smooth and open allowing it to move free of any constraints. Hage argues that financial capital has become 'transcendental' as it "...simply hovers over the earth looking for a suitable place to land and invest ... until it is time to fly again" (2001: 4). The nation-state's challenge is to attract capital by working to make potential 'ports' attractive so to draw it in. To make the point, Hage paints a comical, yet bleak picture of nation-states working to establish the right environment to entice capital:

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<sup>3</sup> An example of this 'double persecution' was highlighted by an Amnesty International investigation. The 1999 Amnesty International report found that several women detained at Israel's Neve Tirza prison for immigration offences had actually been kidnapped and sold as 'sex slaves'. The report stated that the inhumane treatment of these trafficked women is compounded by treating them as illegal immigrants. These women are then subjected to human rights abuses as criminals rather than treated as victims of trafficking. Source: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/engMDE150172000> - accessed January 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Here I am referring to the rise of 'development refugees'. That is, people displaced through 'development projects' such as dams and the mining of resources. For more details see the work of International Rivers Network. Source: <http://www.irn.org/dayofaction/2001/010315.srilankadoa.html> - accessed December 2003.

‘Please come here Mr Capital, please invest here,’ every government is begging. ‘Even if you can’t bind yourself to stay here forever, I can provide your multicultural workers with the tallest buildings which offer unbeatable views. I can provide them with the grooviest coffee shops you can imagine, equipped with the latest Italian coffee making machines, the best baristas and the best macchiatos. All of this is guaranteed if you come and invest here, Mr Capital. (2001: 4)

This free movement also extends to the ‘managers’ of global capital – the decision-makers who determine where capital may land. These are the “kings of capitalism” (Bishop 2004: 3) who have been described by Sklair (2000) as the ‘transnational capital class’ (see Chapter 2 – Section 2.5 for details).

## ***7.2 Exclusion and inclusion – debates about community***

The emerging question then, is how can such a contradiction be explained? On the one hand, the globalised world has created a group of non-people – overlooked despite their growing numbers and increasingly close proximity.<sup>5</sup> When this group attempts to move beyond their ‘designated space’, they face borders and fences which are often wrapped in barbed-wire and protected by security forces. On the other hand, the managers of global capital have no restraints, rather they make demands upon nation-states to establish the right environment to fulfil their mobility and many needs.

There are various ways to understand this rejection of refugees and the embrace of the managers of capital. This is frequently analysed from the perspective of whether refugees are a burden or benefit to their ‘host’ communities (Kulman 1990). I argue, however, that

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that while this example concentrates on the plight of refugees, the term non-people can be used to describe marginalised people more generally, including the increasing numbers of poor and homeless in the wealthy nations of the North. Also, in his most recent work, Ritzer (2004) uses the term to describe anonymous workers in service industries such as call centres.

this contradiction can be understood through different interpretations of what an ‘authentic’ community involves. This analysis can be extended to consider how communities are influenced by the CGM and pathological modernity.

In Chapter 6, I outlined the central conflict between the CGM and pathological modernity in terms of a contest over the commons – physical, institutional and cultural. This takes on even greater significance if, as authors such as Gudeman (2001) argue, the open sharing of the commons are essential to establishing and expanding an ‘authentic’ community. If Gudeman is correct, the conflict between the CGM and pathological modernity over the commons comes to revolve around the issue of ‘community’.

This chapter’s focus is on how the conflict between pathological modernity and the CGM crystallises around different interpretations of ‘authentic’ community. I analyse this conflict using two different conceptualisations of community – one based on Hegelian ‘recognition’ and the other based on ‘alterity’.

## **Recognition, exclusion and Fukuyama**

The first understanding of community explained here centres on Hegel’s conception of a dialectical struggle and ‘recognition’. According to Oliver (2001), ‘recognition’ dominates contemporary theory and practice regarding ‘community’. This view defines community through ideas of shared identity, recognition and social formations arising out of mutual beliefs, understandings and practices – all seen to create a stable sense of identity (Taylor 1994). That is, we form communities only with those that we recognise as being ‘like us’.

It is from this position that the related communitarian and libertarian schools of community have arisen. Though there are a large number of communitarian theorists including Taylor (1994) and Sandel (1998), my focus here is Fukuyama’s (1989; 1992)

interpretation of recognition and community.<sup>6</sup> This is because Fukuyama links community with both the modern liberal state and neoliberal economic policies.

In *The end of history and the last man*, Fukuyama combines ‘recognition’ with free markets and presents them as the ‘twin pillars’ of community.<sup>7</sup> In the process Fukuyama sets these ‘twin pillars’ within the democratic nation and the universalisation of Western liberalism and consumer culture to declare the end of ideological history. As a result, alternative understandings of community are dismissed. Reflecting the same point, Taylor argues that liberal democracy has also reached the pinnacle of history as it has “ushered in a politics of equal recognition” (1994: 27). In addition, Fukuyama (1992) relies on expanding markets to extend both recognition and freedoms more generally. Given these positions I use Fukuyama’s argument as representative of pathological modernity.

Fukuyama’s first pillar of community involves recognition. Fukuyama argues that ‘man’ has passed through a series of primitive stages of consciousness on ‘his’ path to the present.<sup>8</sup> Fukuyama turns to Alexandre Kojeve’s interpretation of Hegel to argue that no real ideological progress has been made since the time of the French revolution. Fukuyama’s account of the evolutionary process begins with an analysis of the ‘first man’ and his battle for recognition. This need for recognition leads to a battle between ‘men’: winners come to dominate while the losers submit as slaves. The master/slave relationship causes a contradiction however, as the master is only recognised by the slave who the master considers ‘less than human’. Accordingly, this drives historical development as the slave works and innovates in search for recognition.

This leads to an ongoing dialectic between the master and slave, and results in historical development which finds an end point in the modern liberal nation-state. That is, the

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<sup>6</sup> Although throughout this chapter I am critical of Fukuyama’s position, I also acknowledge his contribution to these debates. Most notable are his attempts to bring together Hegelian thought with neoliberal individualism and the nation-state.

<sup>7</sup> Importantly, though Fukuyama has reviewed his position a number of times particularly after the New York terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, the essence of his argument remains the same (see Fukuyama 2002a; 2002b).

<sup>8</sup> Throughout his work, Francis Fukuyama uses the term ‘mankind’ and ‘man’ – rather than humankind and humanity – which I believe is reflective of the ‘exclusionary’ nature of his arguments.

contradiction is resolved as recognition is achieved or granted through ‘citizenship’. In part, this confirms for Fukuyama that the liberal democratic state cannot be improved upon – it has resolved all prior contradictions because, as citizens, all human needs for recognition are satisfied.

Fukuyama’s second pillar is that of ‘rational’ self-interest and materialist desires. This is also achieved through the success of the liberal nation-state and associated liberalised markets. Expanding markets driven by self interest provide the opportunity to fulfil all the material desires of individuals.

The nation-state that appears at the ‘end of history’ rests on these ‘twin pillars’ of recognition and free-market economics that facilitate both recognition and wealth accumulation. Fukuyama’s position is that the liberal state builds an effective and *functioning community* because it both *recognises* all citizens since they are ‘human beings’, and allows them to pursue their *rational self interest*. This permits an elucidation of the relationship between liberal economics, advanced industrialisation and liberal politics.<sup>9</sup>

According to Fukuyama, this functioning community is homogeneous insofar as it creates a classless society based on the abolition of the distinction between master and slave. It overcomes this previously established division by granting and also protecting the rights of citizens. Such rights are only problematic if they ever become self-contradictory.

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<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that Fukuyama’s position re-confirms Friedman’s (1982) arguments that I outlined in Chapter 3 – Section 3.2, which directly link the freedoms of the market with freedom and liberation more generally.



## Limitations of recognition

In responding, I believe that there are a number of fundamental limitations to Fukuyama's position that 'authentic' community is based on the twin pillars of recognition and markets. For the sake of brevity, I place these limitations into four broad categories. While these arguments tend to be aimed at Fukuyama directly, they also apply to the communitarian school more generally. I will address each of these issues before presenting the alternative position supported by this thesis.

### *i. Exclusion – accepting only those we recognise*

The first criticism is that 'recognition' establishes an inside for the privileged and an outside for 'others'. This is because such a community only comes to accept those who it can relate to and recognise. Consequently, while Fukuyama argues that recognition by peers fulfils the first of the 'twin pillars' of community, others remain sceptical. For Hage (2001; 2003) and Diprose (2003) rather than being a key to social harmony, recognition simply promotes exclusion.

Both Hage and Diprose's concerns can be illustrated by reviewing the Australian government's position on refugees. In analysing the Australian government's policy, conservative political commentator Gerard Henderson (2004) observes that John Howard's position can be simply understood because the Prime Minister lacks any 'understanding' of the plight of asylum seekers – that is, he fails to 'recognise' their predicament. Henderson also reminds us that this echoes Howard's position towards 'Asians' a number of years earlier when he remarked that Asian immigrants needed to be limited to ensure the maintenance of social harmony and cohesion. Such an interpretation of community is continuously used by Western governments to protect the "values and security" of their own identity (Diprose 2003: 37) – something that Henderson confirms in his analysis of the Howard government's position.

We can contrast this with the treatment of transcendent capital and those who deliver it. The opportunities that capital promises such as employment and ‘global city’ status are both desired and *recognised* by the government as well as the broader public. These are the opportunities that facilitate economic prosperity and markets, which are at the heart of the freedoms promoted by Fukuyama, Friedman (1982) and others (see Chapter 3 – Section 3.3). This is reinforced continuously through a globalised media which constantly reminds us that this is what we should aspire to. In this way, we ‘recognise’ remote figures such as Donald Trump, Richard Branson and other ‘CEOs’ who we are unlikely to ever meet (Haigh 2003). As a result, we may even aspire to emulate their feats by accumulating wealth. But our neighbours with the funny hats, religion, language and extended family – who Hage refers to as “black bastards” to make his point – remain unfamiliar and unrecognisable (2001: 4).

This may then help explain the abovementioned contradiction that allows the modern nation-state to ignore the plight of over 20 million displaced people, while offering tax incentives, attractive planning laws and other enticements to draw capital and its managers. Likewise, it may also help explain why millions of dollars are spent on security to entice these managers, and on locking up refugees who are seen to impose a threat to this security. (This process also provides another example of how the commons of safety is commodified to become security – see Chapter 4: Section 4.4.)<sup>10</sup>

## ***ii. Who does the recognising?***

The second criticism that can be levelled at Fukuyama is that ‘recognition’ revolves around one individual or community judging whether another is *worthy* to be recognised and, therefore, accepted. Cornell (1992) and Diprose (2003) remind us that it is usually

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<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that in a world of increasing technological capability, national borders are progressively controlled by non-human mechanisms. The emergence of ‘biometrics’ as a technology that controls borders by only accepting those that the technology is programmed to recognise, adds a new element to the concept of recognition (Fuller 2003). For the process of entry is now mediated through a (non-human) third party that can be programmed to further limit recognition and access. With this, we further lose even the basic acknowledgment of a shared humanity as the ‘judges’ are now one step further removed from it.

the dominant group doing the recognising and, thus, the judging. For Oliver (2001), this is a symptom of oppression as it reinforces hierarchies since one group is making *all* the judgements. Those wishing to be recognised must ensure that they meet the value judgements of the dominant group. As a result, it ultimately fails as the basis for community.

As an example, we can turn to the work of communitarians such as Taylor (1994), who argue that the presumption that all cultures have equal worth is by no means unproblematic. This position allows Taylor to set a 'value hierarchy' by which to judge different cultures. This also allows Taylor to shift the emphasis from what may be problematic about the internal workings of a 'community', to what criteria we can use to judge 'other' communities and, therefore, who to allow in from the outside.

Both Young (2000) and Cornell (1992) argue that this process of one group 'recognising' another ultimately leads to 'exclusion'. If you make decisions on who to include then you are making decisions on who to exclude. That is, by establishing a 'value hierarchy' with regard to different communities, it is possible for communitarians such as Taylor to limit entry to only those who are judged worthy. Recognition then rather than expanding community tends to limit it.

### ***iii. Recognition and homogenisation***

The third criticism extends the above two and relates to the 'homogenisation of difference'. Since the dominant group judges and reinforces its position, both Oliver (2001) and Cornell (1992) argue that such a process ultimately homogenises and defaces differences.

This echoes earlier work by Adorno (1989), who raised concerns about the homogenisation process of those already on the inside. Specifically discussing the issue of the 'non-conformist', Adorno sees the 'citizen' who diverges from the norm or

dominant subjectivity as being under threat. The result is the attrition of the non-conformist, leading Cornell to conclude that the result is the “annihilation of individual difference and... the end of the dissenter” (1992: 46).

This concern about the uniformity of subjectivity is extended by Diprose, who argues that recognition is based on the concept of “forging commonality through rational minds” (2003: 37). That is, there is an assumption that the body of community is already “unified and coherent” *prior* to the arrival of ‘some outsider’ who then threatens this stability (ibid). Analysing the ‘children overboard’ incident, Diprose notes that those supporting the communitarian position would see the refugees as having a subjectivity that threatens the “stable and singular subjectivity” of the Australian nation (ibid).<sup>11</sup>

The result is that there is no acknowledgment that meanings expressed by either the individual or the community can be multifaceted and open. Rather, subjectivity is seen to be uniform across the community and those who do not ‘fit’ should be excluded.

#### ***iv. The liberal nation-state and exclusion***

A fourth set of criticisms that may be levelled at Fukuyama’s twin pillars idea, can be found in its reliance on the liberal nation-state which, according to Connelly (1999) further explains the process of exclusion and homogenisation. Though not discussing Fukuyama’s work, Connelly appears to challenge his position on the classless nation-state by drawing a direct link between the liberal state, homogenisation and exclusionary politics.

Connelly reminds us that the nation was originally related to “biological race” (1999: 74). It is hardly surprising then that race is invoked when there are calls for national unity or

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<sup>11</sup> The ‘children overboard’ incident refers to the claims made by the Howard federal government that a group of asylum seekers had thrown their children over board in order to ensure that the Australian navy intervened to provide asylum and safe passage to Australia. This statement was made during the federal election campaign and was, in part, responsible for the re-election of the Howard government. For a detailed analysis and description of these events, see Marr and Wilkinson (2004).

when the aspirations of a nation are threatened. With race now generally dismissed as a myth or fable, the stability of what holds a nation-state together is also questioned. As a result, Fukuyama's assertion that the nation-state is the pinnacle of recognition has questionable foundations.

The result for Connelly is that the nation can only be "kept pure" through "selective memory" (1999: 75). That is, the 'myth' represented by the 'pure' nation is constantly 'polluted' by events which must be ignored. This usually involves the population embracing a sense of forgetfulness, particularly of any violent and exclusionary past, and homogenising a complicated and diverse history. This can then be used to exclude those who threaten visions of unity and a single, stable subjectivity.

In many ways Secomb's (2002) 'haunted community' echoes this point in his description of communities that are haunted, troubled and ultimately preoccupied by a past they refuse to reconcile or even acknowledge. It is possible to speculate on links between Prime Minister John Howard's treatment of refugees and his government's refusal to apologise to Australia's indigenous community for past crimes and injustices caused by colonisation and subsequent government policies such as assimilation and protectionism. If we extend Henderson's (2004) arguments about Howard's lack of recognition towards refugees to include Aboriginal Australians, we may also be able to gain an insight into his refusal to apologise to them. The Aboriginal community may be seen as a threat to the stability of Australia's history, which has been seen as being one of 'mateship' and 'peaceful settlement' (Reynolds 2001).<sup>12</sup>

This makes it possible to understand how refugees 'threaten' the purity of the nation. Hardt and Negri (2000) argue that the world's growing number of refugees act as a symbol of the nomad directly challenging the logic of the nation-state. Though perhaps

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<sup>12</sup> All this takes on greater significance under conditions of globalisation and the "accelerated tempo" that brings faster and even great changes to nation-states (Connelly 1999: 85). Under such conditions, Connelly sees the purity of the nation – both its image and its borders – as constantly under challenge. Here, Connelly argues that this purity, and therefore the nation, is found to be hollow. This leads to escalating demands on the mythologies that are meant to bind a nation together, and an increasingly violent response to those that threaten either the nation's mythologies or perceived purity.

romanticising refugees, their importance to Hardt and Negri is symbolic: the refugee is seen to forsake claims of permanent borders and accumulated wealth in a bid for a peaceful life elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> As the refugee moves around the world, both the purity of a nation's borders and its cultural heritage are directly challenged and threatened.

Since the nation is 'threatened' by these nomadic figures, the response is commonly to use violence and exclusion to protect its borders. This continues until borders are re-established and once again respected. In many ways, the need for borders is also reconfirmed by pathological modernity's manufactured emergencies that create refugees, and thus require the need for increased security and the development of 'internment camps' (see Chapter 6 – Section 6.4).

### ***7.3 Alterity and community – a radical departure***

A radical departure from 'recognition' is the school of thought that argues that community is propelled by *alterity* or essential difference. This school has its origins in the theoretical positions presented by, amongst others, Levinas (1981), Nancy (1991), Derrida (2001), Oliver (2001) and Diprose (2003). These authors have differing interpretations of this broad position, although in essence they argue that we are propelled towards each other because we are 'absolutely different'. That is, we are motivated to form a community with the 'other' who is unique or radically different, rather than (solely) with those we recognise as 'like us'.

This position holds that each individual is radically different or unique, but can only exist in relation to others who are also radically different. The unique individual here is radically different to the one presented in Hegelian dialectics and extended by Fukuyama.

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<sup>13</sup> In an unpublished paper Ingrid M. Hoofd (2004) from the National University of Singapore criticises a number of organisations and authors for romanticising the plight of refugees. In this thesis, the figure of the 'refugee' is presented symbolically as someone who directly challenges the limitations of borders in search of a peaceful life elsewhere and is not intended to simplify the many reasons why people seek asylum. See Kulman's (1990) discussion for example.

The individual exists within a community not as a ‘self-atomised being’ seeking recognition and accumulation but rather through the sharing of difference as a fundamental expression of uniqueness (Werhane 1996; Milberg 2001). When we interact with others, a new subjectivity is born, not driven by a violent dialectic as argued by Hegel, rather because we have experienced the ‘other’ (Levinas 1981).

An ‘authentic’ community is formed from different individuals who might not understand each other’s subjectivity but rather exist in *reciprocal relationships* that maintain community. Such a conceptualisation of community is formed through the alterity, subjectivity and agency of myself and ‘others’ being maintained rather than subdued. For, as Levinas (1981) notes, the only thing we have in common is our difference. This results in a heterogeneous rather than homogeneous community as the individual is never irreducible to a uniform subjectivity. In contrast to the individualism at the base of neoliberalism, individual singularity can only be expressed through communal interactions – that is, I rely on the ‘other’s’ difference to express my own, and they rely on mine.

Further, there exists an ethical obligation not to alter this difference. That is, there is a reciprocal responsibility between myself and the ‘other’ to both preserve and promote (each others and our own) difference. Cornell (1992) believes this care for difference is not carried out at the expense of the self, but rather, for its own sake. This means that while I may benefit from the uniqueness of the ‘other’s’ difference – as I am a response to it – I preserve the difference for its own sake rather than for personal gain.

It is possible to draw links between this concept of radical difference or alterity and the description of the CGM I presented in Chapter 5. There I discussed how the complexity and various movements constituting the CGM mean that it is not possible to provide a simple definition of the CGM. Rather, it can only be described through a number of broad characteristics. The CGM establishes an ‘authentic’ community by promoting a reciprocated difference. It does not represent a homogeneous group but rather is heterogeneous – and this heterogeneity is its strength.

## Interpreting alterity and community

This interpretation of community has a number of important implications. The first is raised by Oliver (2001), who argues that human relationships should not be analysed from the perspective of Hegel's struggle between master and slave. This argument is extended by Young who emphasises that we must stop assuming that all debates begin with the "assertion of self-regarding interest" (2000: 82). In this view, it is not recognition or self interest that links us to the 'other' but rather an inclination towards difference *for its own sake*.

For both Oliver and Young this is a matter of 'human nature'. In contrast to Fukuyama's position, these two authors argue that we are not naturally war like, hostile or competitive. Nor, as pathological modernity's Cartesian logic asserts, is human nature motivated by self interest only. This has wide implications particularly regarding humanity's desire for open rather than closed communities as well as how we interact around elements such as the commons.

The second implication highlighted by Oliver and also Diprose (2003) is that, for communities to function, they must be open rather than exclusionary. Oliver, who promotes the need for a dialogic approach, believes that we must rethink relationships that form a community in terms of 'openness' because the bonds of community are actually strengthened by this difference and an openness towards it. Diprose summarises this position by stating that the 'other's' alterity affects and inspires us. For Diprose, the difference that promotes a vibrant and 'authentic' community is "the other's difference that I cannot grasp but that initiates my movements towards the other and towards the world" (2003: 41).

Young (2000) also argues that this sense of openness leads to an inclusive democracy. Presenting a model of 'structured difference', Young attempts to apply this openness in



practical ‘political’ terms – moving from the local to the global and presenting a form of cosmopolitanism. Analogous to Hardt and Negri’s (2004) position, Young argues that only a truly inclusive society can be democratic. The key point for Young is that the establishment of exclusive sovereign borders can never lead to inclusive democracy. Young further argues that inclusion promotes more practical forms of community. This is because political solutions are more likely to be solved if you have a wider number of perspectives – and thus difference should be considered a political resource rather than a threat.<sup>14</sup>

This idea that community is strengthened from heterogeneity echoes Hardt and Negri’s (2004) arguments regarding the multitude’s multiple singularities. As discussed in Chapter 5, Hardt and Negri are not interested in developing a working class identity politics, and therefore avoid Hegelian ‘recognition’ (Brennan 2002). For Brennan this is a criticism but for Hardt and Negri, this is the only path for promoting a global project of inclusive democracy. As previously discussed, it is from this position that Hardt and Negri describe the multitude.

The third key implication is that any repression of difference and the exclusion that follows, such as the Howard government’s lack of identity or empathy towards refugees, destroys community. This tendency to close communities by denying difference has both external and internal implications; externally it excludes and internally it divides. For Nancy (1991), the decision to deprive someone of community is a crime as it is a violent act against humanity. Cornell (1992) and Diprose (2003) agree, noting that denying community is a form of violence that, even if merely symbolic, eventually generates physical violence. Hage makes a similar point, arguing that the decision to withhold community leads to an “incredible shrinking society” (2001: 4). Levinas (1981) sees this denial of difference as a process of denying the *otherness of the other*. Such a denial then, is a process of ‘totalising’ or forcing sameness where there should be diversity.

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<sup>14</sup> We can see this reflected in the politics of paradox discussed in Chapter 5.

To this end, Diprose (2003) identifies two important consequences in the denial of community that has emerged as a consequence of the West's refusal to offer humanitarian support to refugees. The first is a form of violence which emerges in the oppression and brutal repulsion of refugees. The second is a 'moral implosion' as community breaks down because it is denied alterity. Both 'communities' suffer as a result. Thus, the process of attempting to create a uniform 'Australian community' by exclusion has led to both a loss of meaning and the dissolution of the body of community.

## ***7.4 The sharing of the commons – the essence of community***

Even though the above position presents 'authentic' communities as inclusive, there are two challenges that need to be addressed to avoid limitations similar to those identified with Fukuyama's position. The first challenge relates to hierarchies and how these can be avoided. The second involves asking how is it possible for communities to emerge through difference while avoiding demands for recognition?

In response to these, I begin with the work of Diprose who, as noted above, argues that "community is about the sharing of meaning, but not at the expense of difference; community is not a unity of shared meanings that at best tolerates difference, but rather community lives *for* difference" (2003: 36; emphasis in original). Diprose draws on the metaphor of the handshake – or the 'hand of friendship' – to signify the bond of community, which is extended to the stranger. This handshake represents a social expression and circulation of meaning. That is, by extending an open hand to the stranger, community begins to form as meaning is produced and the expression that follows can promote difference. In contrast, if the hand is purposely withheld and thus not extended, then a type of violence is produced that witnesses community breakdown, moral implosion and the dissolution of meaning.

Central to Diprose's claim, however, is the issue of *what* is exchanged and shared. The handshake that brings together different bodies has an important meaning. I would argue the exchange in Diprose's handshake involves more than just the offer of friendship but also the sharing of hope, trust, a sense of safety, and possibly intellect: that is, a sharing of the 'cultural commons'. When I offer my hand to the stranger who may be a refugee, tourist or a new neighbour, I am offering more than just a physical part of my body. The open hand offers a sense of hope, safety and trust. I may even want to share their intellect or learn from their experience. This may not indicate an invitation to dinner, a place to sleep or even a conversation, but I am presenting my desire to live together in an open, peaceful and authentic community.<sup>15</sup> I may never understand the stranger and they may never understand me but I offer an open community. All I expect in return is the open hand of friendship to be reciprocated.<sup>16</sup>

The issue of reciprocity is central to any such exchange, something that both Diprose and, surprisingly, Fukuyama (1992) acknowledge although in different ways (see below). Diprose (2003) argues that the hand of friendship must be reciprocated for community to be formed. Again, if we build on what the hand of friendship is actually offering, we can see that community will emerge and remain vital if the offer to share the cultural commons is returned. Importantly, this does not require a common subjectivity but an open desire for sharing. This is the 'openness' described by Oliver (2001), Diprose (2003) and Young (2000).

It is important to consider how we respond to the other's response – or what Diprose describes as "tact" (2003: 46). As noted, I have a responsibility to extend my hand to the 'other' and welcome them with tact. Yet this welcome to the other's difference is always

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<sup>15</sup> We can differentiate here the difference between communal hospitality and that offered by the individual. Derrida (1991) argues that hospitality to the stranger can only realistically be offered by a community, rather than through the goodwill of an individual. In contrast, conservative commentators have responded to those who demand more humane treatment of refugees or acknowledgement of indigenous land rights by calling on them to offer their own house or backyard. See for example Jopson's (2003) interview with conservative commentator Michael Duffy.

<sup>16</sup> It is important to note here that the 'hand of friendship' can be symbolic or virtual rather than physical. As discussed in Chapter 6, the hand of friendship can come in the form of a letter or email, attending a protest or other forms that challenge the sacredness of borders.

conditional, as it is two-way or reciprocal. There is no obligation to welcome a body that lacks tact, and therefore negates my expression of existence, presenting a clenched fist rather than an extended hand. According to Diprose, tact dissolves when symbolic or physical violence arises. As a consequence, the reciprocal handshake is also conditional on the way the extended hand is always accompanied by the sharing of meaning providing a horizon to my sense of belonging. If this sharing is absent, then tact is also absent.

Building on this, I argue that an open ‘community’ is established through the reciprocal (non-commercial) sharing of cultural commons. Based on Gudeman (2001) and others, the argument is that the *act of reciprocity* is a way of making community by extending its base or its cultural commons without discrimination. As noted, my specific focus is on the ‘cultural commons’. As a non-commercial act of reciprocity, this is a process that has been described by Mauss (1967) as ‘gift giving’.

## **Contextualising the gift and reciprocity**

There has been much debate about the concept of ‘the gift’ and gift giving since the seminal work of Mauss (1967). Mauss argued there are links between forms of exchange and the social structures that emerge around them. For Mauss, the ‘gift’ is more than a simple exchange of commodities as it rearranges the fabric of society while moving through social relations. For the gift forms a type of obligation and relationship with the parties involved that includes giving, receiving and reciprocating. This transformation, which is dramatically different to that of commercial exchange, is the essence of the gift’s power.

Mauss highlighted that the significance of the gift moves beyond a simple ‘physical swap’. Rather, it is a multi-dimensional exchange that has religious, legal, economic and mythological aspects that are unique to different cultures. Mauss saw the gift as also

representing the identity of the giver and thus having enormous symbolic value. For this relationship to continue, the gift must be returned in an appropriate way.

Two broad schools of thought have emerged that deal with both the concept of the gift and Mauss' interpretation. The first is the neoliberal school of economics and the second is represented by anthropologists. For anthropologists, gift-giving or reciprocity presents "irreducible dyadic bonds" (Gudeman 2001: 461) while gifts continue to be the domain of the atomised individual for economists (Levi-Strauss 1949).<sup>17</sup>

In summary, the position of neoliberal economists is one that argues that all exchanges, including market transactions, require a degree of reciprocity but these are essentially driven by self interest (Gudeman 2000). It is within this tradition that Fukuyama (1992) emphasises the importance of reciprocity. This echoes the discussion in Chapter 3 – Section 3.3 that describes the belief underlying Cartesian logic that all exchanges are driven by self-interested, profit-seeking individuals aiming to maximise their own utility.

Though Fukuyama and others place reciprocity at the centre of society, such reciprocity is driven by self interest rather than by altruism. In *The end of history and the last man*, Fukuyama's self-interested individual exists *prior* to the development of any other social form and works to marginalise other social forms of exchange or sharing including altruism and communal cooperation. This reflects pathological modernity's 'eternal truth' which oppresses alternatives – see Chapter 3 – Section 3.3.

This predisposition of neoliberalism to oppress alternatives is described as producing "moral genealogies" or histories (Mirowski 2001: 432). With particular reference to the way neoliberalism treats 'gifts', Mirowski argues that neoliberalism considers any acts of altruism to be offset elsewhere. For Mirowski, this is explained through the 'futility thesis' which is endemic in neoliberal thought. The 'futility thesis' argues that gifts are impossible because any gift based on goodwill is *offset by the self interest with which it is*

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<sup>17</sup> There is also the position of Derrida (1992), who argues that a true gift cannot require reciprocity, for if it does, it ceases to be a gift. This is addressed later in this section.

*presented*. That is, any relationships that emerge by reciprocal gift giving are dismissed as ultimately self-interested exchange.

This is highlighted by Waldfogel (1993) an economist who employs the futility thesis to explain what he feels is the inefficiency of Christmas. Waldfogel argues that any transfer of resources presented as gifts and therefore not directly ‘chosen’ by the recipient through a market transaction is inefficient. Consequently, any benefits derived by acts of goodwill are directly discounted in terms of efficiency. The futility thesis has also been used to dismiss any assistance to those considered to be living in poverty (Mirowski 2001). According to the futility thesis, any attempt to relieve the poor by way of support will only confirm to the poor their status, thus offsetting the relief efforts.

In contrast, Gudeman (2001) argues that anthropologists interpret the gift as establishing non-commercial and non-market transactions which are lasting two-way exchanges.<sup>18</sup> Gudeman notes that this position sees the gift as “setting in motion a temporal, lasting cycle of obligations, which is reciprocity” (2001: 460). This means we see a three-linked obligation: to give, to receive and to return. Any offering that is unreciprocated thus remains a gift, but breaks the cycle of reciprocity.

According to Mirowski (2001), the gift makes and reinforces mutuality, existing prior to market exchanges. While market exchanges are disconnected from any social ties, gifts are imbued with them. For as noted above, the gift represents, at least in part, an element of the *identity of the giver*. Mauss (1967) in fact argued that a social vacuum had formed in modern society, partly caused by the predominance of market trade, which ignore the gift and its associated exchange of identity. To overcome this, he argued that it was important to reinstate the morality inherent in gift exchanges.

It is important to note however, that the gift/commodity binary acts to simplify the complexity of many transactions. While the two discourses can and do contradict each

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<sup>18</sup> This is a position that draws on the work of Mauss (1967), Malinowski (1925), Levi-Strauss (1949), Polanyi (1968) and Sahlins (1972).

other, Davis (2001) notes that it is more fruitful to consider these positions along a continuum – with commodities on one end and gifts on the other. Therefore, any exchange may have partial elements of both. Mirowski (2001) agrees, arguing that gifts can operate both within a market system as well as to break outside it. In part, this occurs because the market system is so encompassing people are forced to subsume gifts under the system of commodity exchange.

Thus, the gift economy can be positioned as either prior or counter to the market economy. Rather than establishing a simple binary between gifts and self interest, I agree with Davis that the gift can operate both outside and within the market system. A gift then *may* have elements of both – reflecting the position expressed in the Commons/Commodity typology in Chapter 4. Therefore, reciprocity can be understood differently depending on the motivations of those involved (Davis 2001).

## **Refusing the gift**

It was noted in Chapter 3 that a key element of pathological modernity is that it displaces alternative histories. This is reflected in the refusal of neoliberal economics to acknowledge the gift in any other way other than as something motivated by self interest. In a society dominated by self-interested atomised individuals, gifts are seen as simply not possible. The rejection of the gift is based on the belief that self interest is the only possible language of exchange and thus altruism is argued to be non-existent.

This rejection of the gift continues despite evidence that non-market transactions predicated on the gift have long existed and may even outperform the market on its own terms, including that of efficiency. Such a position was highlighted by Titmuss' (1971) seminal study of public blood banks in *The gift relationship*. Titmuss compared public blood-banks, based on non-commercial gift relationships, to privatised commercially-based institutions and found that the public institutions continuously outperformed their private counter-parts in areas such as quality of blood supply and efficiency of access.

Follow up studies confirmed these results including Titmuss' 1997 edition with additional chapters considering the AIDS epidemic.

In spite of such evidence, the rejection of the gift relationship persists on two levels. The first is highlighted in Arrow's (1975) response to Titmuss (1971). Arrow dismisses Titmuss' claims that altruistic giving may increase efficiency. Arrow sees such claims as a direct challenge to the "tenets of mainstream economic thought since the time of Adam Smith" (1975: 20). Thus, for Arrow and others such as Sugden (1982) and Becker (1981), it is impossible that gift giving could in any way prove superior to the market. These theorists argue that even if gifts do exist, they act as deceptively disguised acts of self interest by utility maximising individuals.

A second reason for rejecting the gift involves concerns about the differing power relationships between the giver and receiver. Derrida (1992), for example, argues that not all gifts are based on altruism and can, therefore, be used to cement power relationships. Derrida feels that, in the context of our society, the very act of reciprocity makes the gift impossible. If reciprocity is expected, Derrida believes that we are not seeing a gift because it has strings attached, making it analogous to a market exchange.

In countering these claims I argue that it is important to remember that gifts are moves to establish non-commercial *and* non-coercive relationships. That is, if the gift is either based solely on commercial gain or aims to establish or reinforce power relations then I believe that we are not seeing a gift, rather an exchange of commodities. In other words, reciprocity cannot be forced upon a party. A gift of hope then is offered with no expectations. If the gift is freely reciprocated, then hope expands and the relationship continues. This decision to either offer or return hope must be made freely.

As a result then, a central element of reciprocity is that it is based on *choice* or the desire of all parties to continue the relationship. Consequently, I argue that an ongoing reciprocal exchange is one that is chosen rather than forced. If we are coerced into an exchange, then this is not an exchange of gifts, but rather can be described as a



*commodification* of the gift in order to further embed power relationships. If, like the handshake, we choose to reciprocate, we are choosing to continue the relationship. However, if we choose not to, but make payment instead, then we are altering the nature of the gift and it becomes a market transaction. Again the relationship is commodified.

In response to the neoliberal position of self interest, I agree with Mirowski who argues that we must not conflate “intentionality” with “calculation” (2001: 439). For Mirowski, this is a hallmark of Western thought. The initial gift should be thought of as “a trial and error practice, because the giver operates in a realm of uncertainty” regarding the gifts acceptability and appropriateness, and therefore, never knowing if it will be returned (ibid). If the gift is calculated as an economic transaction by any party, then it becomes a market exchange based on economic gain. The relationship is again commodified and this essentially undoes the gift.

Extending Mirowski’s argument, if there is a decision to base gifts on ‘calculation’, this means that gifts are commodified and, ultimately disappear. Returning to the example of hope, if someone *attempts to offer* ‘hope’ solely for the purpose of calculated self interest, we are not seeing hope but the emergence of material aspirations. This is reflected in each of the cultural commons I have discussed and results in their enclosure. Under these conditions, the gift ceases to exist and communities are replaced by markets.

## ***7.5 The gift and reciprocity – establishing community***

Rather than being based on self interest, I argue that the non-commercial sharing of gifts forms a reciprocal relationship driven by a desire for hope, trust, safety and even intellect. Further, this is a process which actually establishes and expands community. The ‘gift’ that is offered by Diprose’s hand of friendship may not be returned by choice, but if it is, it establishes a sense of community based on the alterity of the other.

My position is based on Gudeman (2001) who argues that reciprocity can be used to

cement a relationship, express affection and mutuality, and move towards establishing a community. In this way, the gift and reciprocity can be a 'strategic' move in terms of community building. Gudeman believes the gift acts as community centred intentionality, rather than self-centred calculation, crossing the borders of community and inviting others in. Further, Gudeman argues that reciprocity does not correspond to any single group of institutions but can be a way of extending the commons and making community. This type of exchange builds a bond of reciprocity and interaction that, according to Simmel (1950), builds a community free from the threat of coercion.

This position echoes the earlier work of Levi-Strauss (1949), who argued that reciprocity is the core of the social contract.<sup>19</sup> Levi-Strauss asserts the universality of reciprocity across all societies, stating it to be the foundation of all human institutions. If there is no reciprocity, there is no society or sense of community. Reciprocity is a primary building block of community perpetuating relationships.

Importantly, however, one "can never know if an offered gift will be accepted and returned" (Gudeman 2001: 469). If accepted, the return signals an inclusion resulting in two overlapping bases (see below) or commons. This is why gifts *do not* have to be identically matched (as in a market transaction), because it signals the exchange and sharing of two different bases. As a result, the gift encourages reciprocity while at the same time maintaining difference and independence.

It is here that I draw the link between the gift, reciprocity, the sharing of cultural commons and the establishment or expansion of community. To begin with, Gudeman

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<sup>19</sup> The issue of the social contract and social capital has also become an important focal point of neoliberalism. Fitzsimons (2000) notes that after nearly two decades of radical neoliberal reform, social problems and community breakdown are endemic in many nations. Arguing that this is because "neoliberalism does not recognise the 'social' or 'community'", neoliberal dominated governments have now introduced 'social capital initiatives' (2000: 2). Fitzsimons quotes former New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger's 1996 speech to emphasise this point. This appears a pragmatic reaction to the failure of social policy and allows neoliberalism to recognise community on its own terms. According to Fitzsimons, social capital allows community to be redefined as "individualised trust" and is seen as producing economic value rather than existing in its own right (ibid). Fitzsimons argues that social capital leads to the reinvention of community. I agree, but argue that this reinvention of community should be interpreted as a commodification of it.

argues that every community has a “base or commons that it shares” which may be something physical (such as water rights), a cultural legacy or, possibly, accumulated knowledge (2001: 466). I would extend this by arguing that this includes the cultural commons identified in Chapter 4.

Describing this base and its importance, Gudeman suggests the ‘base’ of a community is a cultural heritage that brings a community together. A key feature of a community is that it allots or distributes parts of its base or commons for use or consumption. How this occurs is part of the cultural heritage and accumulated knowledge of a community but is “very different from market allocation that works through individual and separate offers and bids” (Gudeman 2001: 466). If this is fractured or commodified, then both the community and social relationships quickly splinter. That is, if the base of the community is commodified then the commons can no longer be freely shared and the community risks being divided.

The exchange and sdharing that crosses boundaries and expands community then, is not simply based on some physical gift, but may encompass this communal cultural heritage or cultural commons. This may include what the community considers to be its most sacred holdings including its cultural commons. This assertion overlaps with Weiner (1992), who distinguishes between two types of gifts: alienable and inalienable. For Weiner, inalienable gifts constitute the core of the ‘community commons’ at the base of one’s identity. By extending these commons through the processes of gift giving, community is expanded.

Central to this position is that an act of reciprocity is “an expression of community” (Gudeman 2001: 467). This is because the distribution or apportionment of the commons is an act of “making and maintaining community” (ibid). So when the giver offers these commons, it is an act of inviting someone into the community. Just as important however, is the reciprocity that invites the original giver ‘out’, blurring any differentiation between the inside and outside, thereby expanding community. Thus, for Weiner the purpose of inalienable gifts is a way of “making kin of non-kin” (1992: 26).

In the process of reciprocity, we see a negotiation that expands community by including others. It is this that Mauss (1967) may have been expressing when he discussed ‘the spirit’ of the gift which can extend community to others, including them as users of the base of community or commons.

Mirowski (2001) agrees and extends this by arguing that the reciprocal exchange of gifts expands this base or commons outside its normal circle or established community. This is an expression that promotes community and the commons, allowing them to expand. Gudeman believes it is this offering of gifts and enacting of reciprocity that expands the shared value of a community and its borders. The gift then moves beyond the material plane and, much like the handshake, becomes a gesture of friendship and desire for reciprocal exchange and sharing.

There are additional implications to this. Firstly, this means that community can be built across time and space. Both Polanyi (1968) and Sahlins (1972) argue that reciprocity allows for both close and distant social relations to be built and maintained as they are stripped of time and space. Thus, “community does not necessarily rise from proximity, nor a common language, religion, culture or even blood... these are secondary factors” (Lietaer 2001: 181). In this way it is not “some stale sociological notion, but a highly dynamic phenomenon that needs to be saved and honoured” (Creative Communities, not dated).

Further, if the gift is reciprocated, it transforms social relationships from atomised to dyadic terms. Gudeman believes the return both accepts “commensality” (2001: 461), yet also signals difference and independence – thus echoing the arguments presented by Levinas and others regarding community and alterity. The community may expand, but it does not become homogeneous, as it is formed through multiple bases – or in the words of Hardt and Negri, “multiple singularities” (2000: 105). In this way, reciprocity is a pragmatic act, incorporating a “tension between separation and unity, self-sufficiency and interdependence” (Gudeman 2001: 468).

But if the gift is not returned, then the original recipient chooses not to be part of that community and expansion of the base ceases (Douglas 1990). While this stops the expansion of the commons and eventually leads to stagnant communities, it can also result in their breakdown. This may occur under two circumstances. The first is through the commodification of the commons which I described in Chapter 4. Gudeman makes a similar point when he suggests that to sell commons converts the realm of social value and well-being into commercial value. For Gudeman, the breakdown of what a people share such as their commons, “fractures their community as quickly as breaking their social relationships” (2001: 466).

For example, Lietaer (2001) links the commodification of human relationships, and by extension the cultural commons, to community breakdown. This has emerged in both the developed and developing nations but proliferates in the more advanced economies of the world. For Lietaer the competition inherent in our culture accompanied with the loss of places to share, and the proliferation of the market into areas once considered outside the commercial realm, has led to mass social dislocation and community breakdown.

The second way that communities may breakdown is through acts of violence. Though the violence may be overt, like Harrison’s (1992) description of how victors in battles claim what was once given in reciprocal exchanges, it may be more subtle as Diprose’s description of the withholding of community to those who ask for a hand of friendship. In an Australian contemporary context, this is most obvious in the withholding the hand of friendship to refugees. These processes destroy *both* the potential for community and the possibility of extending it to others.

### **The multitude establishing community**

The gift and reciprocity also have an additional dimension that goes beyond the expansion of community. Like the operations of the commons discussed in Chapter 4, this process disrupts the market. Here the process of the gift and its reciprocity inverts the

market experience, breaking down the logic of commodification, including that of pathological modernity. This is because the very existence of gifts and reciprocity challenges the predominance of the market as an eternal organising principle. As Gudeman notes, this challenge undermines the belief that “material life must be completely organised by market practices” (2001: 460).

This, however, also challenges the notion of the utility maximising and self-interested individual as the dominant cultural actor. Rather than utilitarian self-interest, there exist non-self interested transactions revolving around the exchange or sharing of “inalienable community commons” (Weiner 1992). This confronts the methodological individualism of homo-economicus used to justify the process of commodification.

This then presents an alternative to the commodification tendencies of neoliberalism and the Cartesian logic of pathological modernity. These are non-market exchanges that require only other inalienable commons in return. Unlike a commercial transaction, the exchange does not stop with the ‘return payment’ but has the potential for an ongoing process of sharing. This allows a community to expand indefinitely.

By viewing community from the looking glass of the cultural commons, we can build on Diprose’s (2003) ‘hand of friendship’. As argued in Chapter 4, true commons are not exclusionary, rather if shared they are inclusive, and remain abundant. Additionally, ‘communities’ can be established locally and globally, and can exist across both time and space. The ‘academic community’ provides one such example: academics do not just belong to the institution in which they are physically located, but also to a wider discipline that is located throughout the world with links to the past and (possibly) to the future. Further, the work that an academic produces will gain from wider perspectives – by discussions with ‘other’ academics (whatever the discipline they study) or the ‘lay public’. Here the work can expand and be abundant. In contrast, if one limits their interaction within only a homogeneous group of ‘peers’, the intellectual pool will always

remain limited. Thus, offering the gift of intellect is not limited to those who are familiar.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the process of enclosure, exclusion and recognition, is the open and free sharing of the commons which builds communities based on alterity and difference. It is the difference of the ‘other’ that we are propelled towards. It is here that the CGM, as a manifestation of the multitude, operates.

Through the CGM, we see the free and open sharing of the commons as gifts that establish and expand community, creating a rupture in the logic and operations of pathological modernity. This rupture threatens the dominance of Cartesian logic and in part explains the ongoing denial of the gift by neoliberalism. In response to the breakdown of Cartesian logic, pathological modernity’s frontier disposition moves to enclose spaces where such ruptures occur. The result is a commodification of the commons, hence extinguishing the potential for the gift.

As I argued in Chapters 5 and 6, there are many agents that cause such breaks in Cartesian logic. Central amongst these is the political agency of the CGM. This movement and its inclination for non-commercial sharing mean that it both establishes new commons and defends existing ones. It is this movement then, which drives the establishment of an ‘authentic’ community which is open and can be contrasted to the enclosure and exclusion promoted by pathological modernity.

## **7.6 Concluding comments**

In this chapter, I have argued that the central conflict that takes place between pathological modernity and the CGM is foundational as it revolves around different

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<sup>20</sup> The concept of the ‘gift’ is not foreign to Diprose (2003), though she uses it in a very different way. It is through “this affective and ethical relation to alterity, my self possession is cut open in a way that not only makes me responsible for the other who moves me, but also opens me to the other through discourse whereby I offer the gift of a common world” (2003: 37).

interpretations of ‘authentic’ community. While pathological modernity encloses the commons and creates exclusion, the CGM attempts to create a rupture in the workings of this dominant ideology. In so doing, it is creating an open, non-commodified and ‘authentic’ community that attempts to welcome the stranger while, at the same time, placing limitations on the commodifying tendencies of capital.

This is the central contestation that continues to emerge and take shape even as I write this thesis. In my final chapter, I bring these various arguments together by discussing the civil war in Bougainville as an extreme example of community breakdown following the enclosure of the commons, and expand the typology introduced in Chapter 4.



# Chapter 8: Conclusion

## 8.1 *The Bougainville conflict*

### Enclosing the commons

In 1999, I worked for a number of months in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (PNG).<sup>1</sup> The Island had suffered from 10 years of civil war and was in the process of rebuilding. McIntosh (1990) argues that one of the central causes of this civil conflict was a dispute over the land associated with the Bougainville Copper Ltd (BCL) mine based at Panguna.<sup>2</sup> My work involved assisting in this re-building process by working with communities after the civil conflict had divided the country

Historically the people of Bougainville considered their lands to be commons with the concept of individual land ownership alien (McIntosh 1990). Following a prospecting licence granted to the Australian based mining company CRA by the Australian colonial government the land was effectively seized. In other words, the commons were enclosed.

In the process of establishing the mine and enclosing the commons, CRA cleared, burnt and poisoned some 220 hectares of the forests surrounding Panguna. The remains from the clear felling were dumped directly into the Kawerong River along with an estimated billion tonnes of toxic and untreated waste which then carried down the Jaba River to the coast, leaving a trail of environmental devastation approximately 35 kilometres long. The

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<sup>1</sup> Bougainville is an island at the far western tip of the Solomon Islands archipelago. Geographically and ethnically part of the Solomon Islands, at the turn of the century the European colonial powers made Bougainville part of Papua New Guinea (PNG). This is despite the fact that Bougainville is 500 kilometres away from the PNG mainland (Dorney 1999). It is a Melanesian village-based society, sustained mainly by food gardens and fishing.

<sup>2</sup> The BCL mine was jointly owned by the PNG government and Australian-based mining corporation CRA. In 1995 CRA merged with RTZ Corporation Plc forming Rio Tinto Plc and Rio Tinto Ltd. Sourced from: <http://www.riotinto.com/aboutus/history.aspx> - accessed April 2005.

fish and animals that relied on the river all but disappeared. The Jaba River became obstructed with tailings and eventually overflowed, turning once vibrant flat lands into contaminated swamps. McIntosh describes the environmental devastation caused by the mine at its worst point as a void six kilometres long, four kilometres wide and half a kilometre deep (McIntosh 1990). I had read and seen photos of the environmental damage caused by the Panguna mine but the real scale of this devastation only became apparent when I flew over the mine and personally witnessed the destruction.

The enclosure of the land not only resulted in environmental devastation but also had significant human and social costs. The first round of mining led to the displacement of some 800 people while another 1,400 lost their fishing rights. The environmental impacts described above resulted in a second wave of human displacement.

According to McIntosh (1990), the majority of the local population opposed the mine from the beginning. When I arrived in Bougainville in 1999, this was confirmed by many of those I met. The indigenous population resisted the encroachment of the mine by undertaking various acts of non-violent direct action. After 20 years of direct action, protests, petitions, lobbying and attempts to negotiate with both CRA and the PNG government failed to achieve any change, the indigenous population forcibly closed the copper mine. At the time Panguna was the world's most profitable copper mine.

The PNG government with the support of Australia responded to the closure of the mine by sending in riot police and eventually the military. The original aim of the military intervention was, according to Sharp (1997), to re-open the copper mine. As the conflict escalated, the local population formed different factions. Eventually an armed group formed which became known as the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) who wrestled control of the island from the PNG government. As the conflict expanded the BRA employed more militant tactics focusing on secession from PNG. Fearing broader regional instability as well as the loss of an important national asset, the PNG government moved to aggressively stop the revolt, at one point even employing mercenaries to destabilise the BRA.

In so doing, the PNG and Australian governments adopted a military strategy with two broad aims. The first was to isolate Bougainville through a military blockade. The blockade lasted some ten years and effectively sealed off Bougainville from the outside world depriving them of medicines, fuel and humanitarian aid. It was designed to force the people of Bougainville to submit and re-open the mine. According to varying reports, the blockade claimed more than 10,000 lives although the final number will never be known.<sup>3</sup> The second aim of the military strategy was to re-capture control of the island. Despite this, central Bougainville with an estimated population of 100,000 people remained in the hands of the BRA.

Regan (1997) describes the appalling consequences of the fighting, which resulted in widespread deaths and increasingly brutal human rights abuses, attributed to both sides. The conflict also led to an estimated 60,000 people being displaced, economic collapse and the destabilisation of what Regan argues was the most effective government in the Pacific Islands region at the time.

## **Pathological modernity and the CGM**

In many ways, this recent unfortunate history of Bougainville provides a condensed summary of the workings of pathological modernity and the enclosure of the commons. The enclosure and devastation of physical commons not only displaced thousands of people, it also turned them into ‘non-people’, destroying their identity and breaking links to their matrilineal traditions and lands.

The enclosure of the commons also created a crisis that almost toppled the PNG government. In fact, Dorney (1999) argues that the decision by the PNG government to

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<sup>3</sup> This figure was estimated by John Newsom a field officer with Credit Union Foundation Australia (CUFA). John has worked for decades within both Bougainville and PNG, appearing in a Senate inquiry into the conflict. John employed me to work with him in Bougainville as part of the community re-building project.

employ mercenaries to expedite the conflict led to a temporary coup within PNG when the military seized control of the national parliament. Though resolved, the pathological nature of these events was further underscored when Australia had to increase its military presence in the region.

The enclosure also had wider consequences, most obviously the land conflicts and community breakdown that led to the civil war. As a result, not only were the physical commons enclosed so were the cultural commons of trust, safety and hope. Consequently once peaceful neighbours and communities took up arms and fought each other in violent confrontations.

While the events in Bougainville provide insights into pathological modernity and its processes of enclosure, it is important to acknowledge the response of social movements within Australia and the Pacific. These social movements, linked to the broader counter-globalisation movement, worked to re-establish and open new commons.

AID/WATCH, for example, became a key supporter of the Bougainville Freedom Movement (BFM), which was essentially a government in exile. The BFM emerged as a leading representative of the people of Bougainville advocating that the commons be re-established and decisions about the mine site be radically democratised. As a result, demands were made by various NGOs with the encouragement of the BFM that the land be handed back to the communities who should also receive financial compensation.

Additionally the BFM, with the support of a number of NGOs within the Pacific, rallied to break the military blockade. This involved volunteers using small sea craft under the cover of darkness to deliver much needed medical supplies. In 2003, Marilyn Havini, a key activist within the BFM, acknowledged AID/WATCH's role in assisting in the delivery of humanitarian supplies to the people of Bougainville.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Marilyn Havini acknowledged the role of AID/WATCH at the launch of a book to mark the role of women in overcoming the conflict in Bougainville. The launch was held at the NSW Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney, 31 March 2004.

## Opening the commons

While the material assistance offered by regional NGOs was important, so was the ‘hand of friendship’ offered by AID/WATCH and various other individuals and organisations to the people of Bougainville. This hand of friendship, as discussed in Chapter 7, was not based on Hegelian recognition, but extended to the stranger (see Section 7.3). With it came a sense of friendship, hope, trust, safety and even intellect.<sup>5</sup> The hand of friendship was driven by a sense of justice and altruism, not self interest or utilitarianism. By offering this hand, the many organisations involved in the ‘Free Bougainville’ campaign openly shared cultural commons, resulting in an open and ‘authentic’ community being established.

My time in Bougainville underscored many of the issues discussed throughout this thesis. Though there were many reasons for the conflict, one of the central causes revolved around the enclosure of the commons. On one side of the conflict, transnational capital supported by the government’s of PNG and Australia moved to enclose and commodify the commons. Coming into direct conflict with this position was the local population supported by global social movements who identified with the counter-globalisation movement. As discussed in Chapter 6, contesting the enclosure of the commons is the intellectual thread unifying this heterogeneous movement. These social movements rallied in defence of the commons as well as working to establish new ones.

As previously discussed, this process of defending and establishing new commons takes many different forms. For example, my work in Bougainville involved working with the local population to formalise various financial cooperatives that had been established by the population during the blockade. These were not-for-profit financial cooperatives that emerged to fill the gap created when the island’s financial infrastructure collapsed. These financial cooperatives became known as *Bougainville Haus Moni* (Pidgin for

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<sup>5</sup> An example of the exchange of intellect was the way that many activists in Australia and New Zealand assisted the Bougainville Freedom Movement through different channels to gain a representative voice for the people of Bougainville both in Australia and at international forums such as the United Nations. See Havini and Havini (1995) for details.

Bougainville Bank) and were created and managed as commons. Consequently, they were open to all, flourished through local management, relied on cooperation and expanded to serve the needs of the population.

Just as important, however, is the open exchange and sharing of funds within communities once dominated by conflict. This had secondary consequences as the financial cooperatives became the vehicles for re-building trust where once there was anxiety, re-establishing a sense of safety, provided a path for new hope and involved the open sharing of intellect so that the cooperatives could flourish. As a result, the open sharing of commons re-established an 'authentic' community. We can contrast this with the crisis manufactured by pathological modernity through enclosure.<sup>6</sup>

## ***8.2 Commons/Commodity typology: re-establishing the commons***

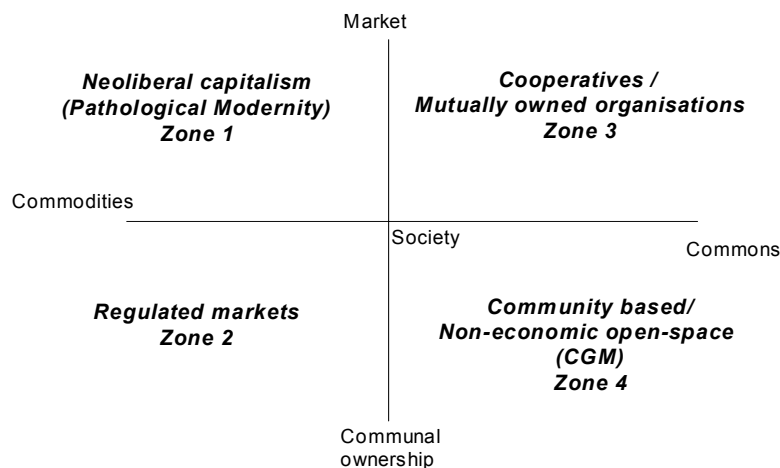
In Chapter 4, I presented a typology that underscored the frontier tendencies of pathological modernity in enclosing the commons (see Figure 8.1). Given the discussion in the previous chapters and the above description of the events in Bougainville, I now extend this typology to include the role of the CGM in defending and opening new commons. As discussed, this happens in many different ways and takes countless of forms. The assistance offered by AID/WATCH and other organisations to the people of Bougainville is merely one example, and others include the State of Emergency

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<sup>6</sup> In May 2005 the first elections were held in Bougainville to elect an autonomous Bougainville Government. The United Nation observer team reported positively on the election process as they were deemed as transparent, peaceful and a success (<http://www.un.org/unifeed/script.asp?scriptId=365> - accessed May 2005). Former Bougainville Revolutionary Army leader, Joseph Kabui, was officially announced the winner. Mr. Kabui had supported the BHM project I was involved in believing it was an important tool in community building. Despite the statement of the observer team, it was also reported that a defeated Bougainville candidate, John Morris, claimed that the poll was subject to massive fraud and intimidation at ballot boxes. At the time of writing, Mr. Morris was set to mount a legal challenge against the result. Despite the uncertainty, the legal steps being following may be considered a positive step away from armed conflict (<http://www.abc.net.au/ra/news/stories/s1385733.htm> - accessed June 2005).

conference (see Section 6.3) and the moves by NOII to tear down borders, both literally and symbolically (see Section 5.3).

**Figure 8.1: The Commons/Commodity Typology**



I have argued that the contest over the commons is the pivotal conflict between the CGM and pathological modernity. In summarising this conflict, I extend the typology to abbreviate the divisions and trends emerging. The typology also highlights how the CGM is a potential vehicle for overcoming both the scarcity and crisis manufactured by pathological modernity.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Zone 4 is free of commodification. As a result, the organising paradigm of this zone is one of direct and equal representation as all institutions and resources are managed directly by the participants and local communities. In this zone, market mechanisms are used only if considered appropriate, and always within the context of the community. Thus, this is an inclusionary rather than exclusionary zone (see Chapter 4 – Table 4.2).

In Chapter 4, I concentrated on the enclosure of the commons. This results from the frontier disposition of pathological modernity and resulted in the hollowing out of Zone 4

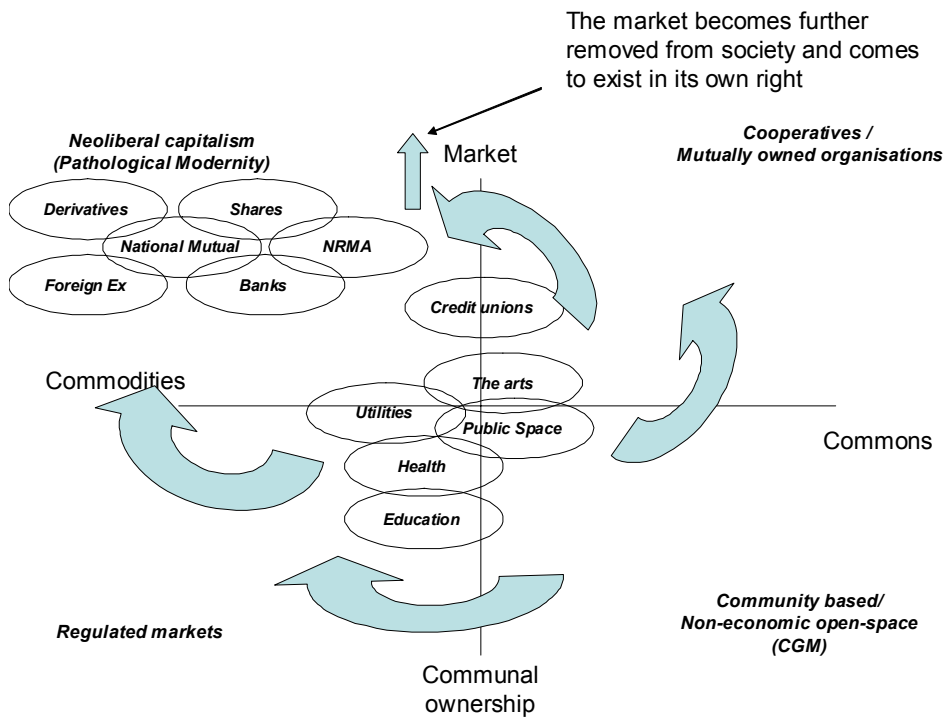
and the subsequent expansion of Zone 1. Observing such processes, I noted that Bollier (2002) has argued that today there is a tendency to deny the existence of commons. This was detailed in Section 4.5, with Figure 4.3 reproduced below to highlight this process (see Figure 8.2). It was also noted that under these conditions, life for the commons is precarious.

In Chapter 6, however, I described the establishment of new commons as the unifying intellectual thread of the CGM in particular, and multitude more generally. The CGM works in common to re-establish non-commodified spaces or commons in areas that the market has enclosed. The project of the CGM is also to create new institutional and cultural commons. These processes expand Zone 4 as presented in Figure 8.3. Figures 8.2 and 8.3 are shown together to contrast these processes.

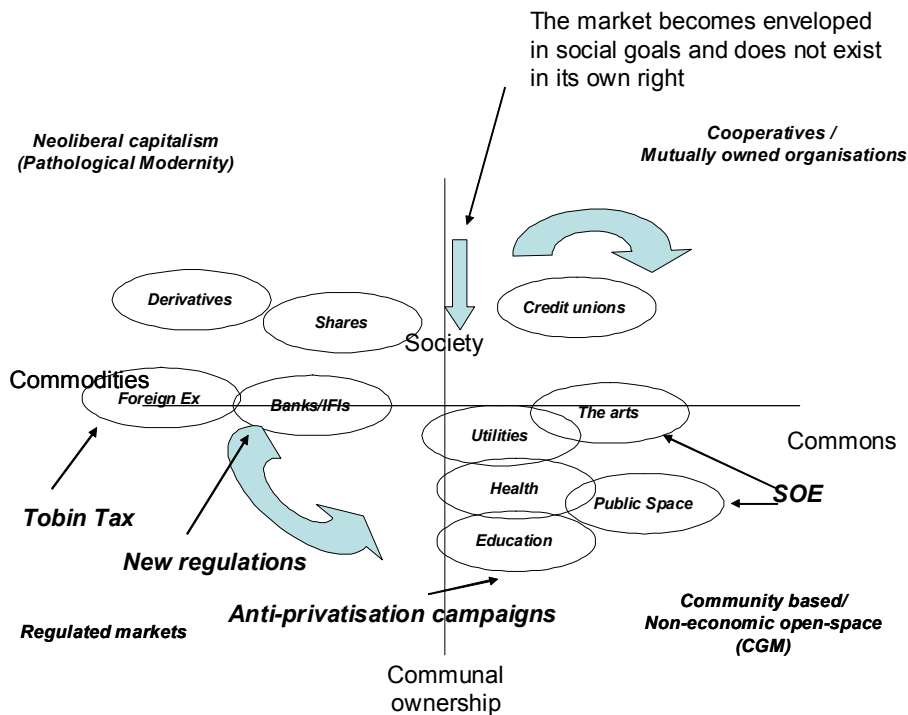
Figure 8.3 also highlights some of the mechanisms used by the CGM in re-establishing commons. These include anti-privatisation movements fought by both national and local communities and organisations such as AFTINET which campaign against the commodification processes of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (see Chapter 5 – Section 5.3); events such as the State of Emergency which operate to open commons in both the physical and cultural realm (see Chapter 6 – Section 6.4); and new regulatory regimes such as the Tobin Tax which attempt to place commodities within the envelope of broader society. Further, organisations such as AID/WATCH campaign for the regulation of international financial institutions such as export credit agencies at various geopolitical levels including the OECD, the national government level and at countless local forums (see section 5.3).



**Figure 8.2: Pathological modernity enclosing the commons**



**Figure 8.3: CGM defending and opening new commons**

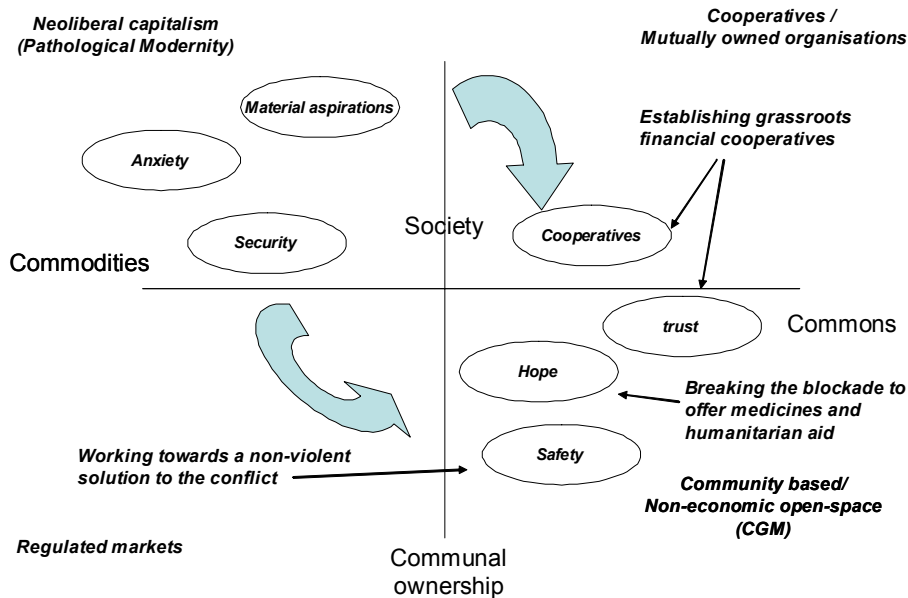


We can highlight the role of the CGM in reclaiming commons by focusing specifically on the SOE convergence discussed in Chapter 6. The space created by State of Emergency operated in Zone 4 as it was open and existed without borders. Just as importantly, there was also a specific focus on the reclaiming of the ‘arts’ including the establishment of a community radio station to allow the free use of ‘airwaves’ currently commercially enclosed (see Chapter 6 – Section 6.4). We also saw the free and open sharing of the cultural commons of trust, hope, safety and the open sharing of intellect. All of this took place without commercial transactions and existed in abundance.

It should also be noted that this involves the market being brought back under the umbrella of broader society. The market is then no longer the principal organising paradigm of communities but exists only within a wider social context. The market then becomes merely one mechanism to promote the allocation of selected resources and is only used in a limited way. Under these conditions, markets do not exist in their own right but operate to serve the needs of the broader community. In fact, many resources and institutions are considered to remain outside the domain of markets.

It is also possible to understand this process within the cultural sphere by looking at the Bougainville example. In this case, the various activists that I identified as part of the CGM worked to re-establish cultural commons. This not only involved physical acts of breaking the blockade to deliver humanitarian assistance, but also the symbolic act of offering the hand of friendship.

**Figure 8.4: Bougainville and cultural commons**



## Bringing the typology together

There are a number of important observations that can be derived from the Commons/Commodities typology. Firstly, it acts as a tool to highlight the trends that I have identified throughout this thesis. The ongoing enclosure, commodification and disappearance of commons have been a slow yet prevalent trend.

This trend also reflects a cultural shift. As discussed in Chapter 4, the clear cultural message delivered by Hardin's (1968) tragedy of the commons is that the broader public cannot be trusted to manage resources. Further, the market becomes accepted as the *one and only* organising principle, receiving wide approval from the broader population. Evidence of this can be derived from the overwhelming support given to the privatisation of once mutually owned institutions such as credit unions, the NRMA and AMP.<sup>7</sup> This

<sup>7</sup> The NRMA and AMP were both successful mutually owned organisations that were privatised in the 1990s. Both de-mutualisations received overwhelming support from former members who were offered

point is reflected by Stillwell's (2000) argument that the privatisation of public goods is accompanied by the commodification of social life as the market becomes the dominant organisational form. Likewise, this reflects Waldby's (2004) neoliberal subjectivity (see Chapter 3 – Section 3.3).

The third conclusion that can be made is that the typology portrays the ongoing dominance of Cartesian logic and pathological modernity's frontier disposition. Simultaneously, it also demonstrates the disappearance of the commons and other places of cooperation. There is a hollowing out of Zone 4 that occurs as the commons are enclosed despite the efforts of the CGM to counter this process.

Finally, the typology also demonstrates the alternative project of the CGM and how it works to establish new commons. As discussed, I argue that this is the uniting intellectual thread that links the heterogeneous groups of actors that I have presented as the CGM. This is demonstrated through the expansion of Zone 4. It breaks down and ruptures the logic of pathological modernity, and is an important potential vehicle in overcoming the crisis of the whole.

### **In summary...**

In this thesis, I have argued that we have seen the emergence of a pathological form of modernity which can be characterised by bringing together and elaborating various elements of the *Empire* and *Risk Society* frameworks. Pathological modernity continues to expand as it promulgates crises across all spheres of life – manufacturing multiple crises that I have termed the 'crisis of the whole'.

There are a number of fundamental characteristics that explain the operation of pathological modernity. A central characteristic is an ongoing propensity to expand,

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'free shares' in the process. Such de-mutualisation follows on from others and joins the privatisation of many other publicly-owned organisations (for example, Qantas, Commonwealth Bank, NSW GIO and Telstra). See <http://www.delisted.com.au/Demutualised.aspx> for details - accessed March 2005.

enclose and commodify commons. These frontier tendencies of pathological modernity mean that the crisis of the whole facilitates its spread while simultaneously giving rise to resistance struggles.

This resistance takes many different forms and works to break down the commodifying logic of pathological modernity. It is here that we see the CGM emerge as an important manifestation of the multitude. But these struggles are not simply a response to pathological modernity, for the CGM establishes its own vision of ‘authentic’ communities. This is the counter-globalisation logic of the movement.

The key contest between pathological modernity and the CGM over the commons includes the cultural sphere. While the CGM works to both open new commons and protect existing ones, pathological modernity works to enclose them. This conflict and its many processes are summarised in the typology above.

The enclosure of the commons has much wider permutations however, particularly as the free (non-commercial) and reciprocal sharing of commons is the foundation of an ‘authentic’ community. Pathological modernity works to redefine the commons from things that are openly shared, to commodities that can be traded. As a result of this enclosure, we see a major transformation of society such as that highlighted in the Bougainville example. This process of commodification alters the very nature of the commons, changing their function in a way that leads to the establishment of exclusionary communities that exacerbate the crisis of the whole.

In contrast to the enclosure and scarcity manufactured by pathological modernity, the CGM works in common to re-establish and open new commons. I have argued throughout this thesis that the desire to open new commons is the unifying thread that links this heterogeneous and complex movement. The movement’s ability to work simultaneously in unison and autonomously means that the project of describing how the CGM works is difficult, defining it is even harder. It is here that Hardt and Negri’s multitude allows us to describe both the potentiality of the CGM and its multiple

singularities. This multiplicity is its very power, and it is here the CGM presents us with the potential to build a new biopolitical subjectivity based on the non-commercial relationships and a radical democracy able to rupture the logic of pathological modernity.

### **8.3 Further research and challenges...**

Throughout this research I have identified various crises manufactured by pathological modernity. Central amongst these is a crisis of scarcity that promulgates a sense of anxiety, demands for security leading to exclusion, the commodification of intellect and a loss of hope which is replaced with material aspirations. I have also argued that a radically different logic is offered by the CGM, which promotes abundance by protecting and establishing new commons. My position is that the CGM has the *potentiality* to overcome the crisis of the whole.

Before concluding, it is important to reflect and identify future areas of research. In doing so, I attempt to establish future directions for both research and activism.

The first area for further research is to consider the potential of the CGM to achieve a sustained project for change. In analysing the CGM, I have attempted to identify the unifying intellectual thread of the movement. It is important to note however, that this is not a movement without challenges and limitations. Despite the many campaigns and events I have identified, the CGM still represents only a *potential* alternative political project.

This potential can be found in the CGM's ability to create a rupture within the logic of pathological modernity by establishing non-commodified relationships. The challenge then, is to consider how to articulate this rupture in a way that better unifies the movement and expands its appeal. At a time of hyper-commodification, the non-commodified subjectivity promoted by the movement is simultaneously at its most precarious, and presents the greatest possibility for rupture and change.

This presents a second future area for research; the need for a reflexive movement that better considers the challenges it faces. Specifically these challenges crystallise when the movement reflects the hierarchies it confronts. For example, Nugent (2002) has identified elements of racism and sexism within certain campaigns that continue to cause tensions within the movement.<sup>8</sup> Though the heterogeneous character and politics of paradox are an important strength of the CGM, such limitations need to be acknowledged and overcome. A discussion of these challenges is beyond the scope of this thesis, which has focused on identifying the movement's unifying logic, but is an important area for further research.

A third area for future research is to reflect on the role of commons. This thesis has looked at how the management and reciprocal sharing of the commons presents a subjectivity that directly challenges of scarcity manufactured by pathological modernity. It is important not to romanticise the commons as either the single solution to challenges facing humanity nor as the *only* solution. The inappropriate management of commons even when communities cooperate can lead to their scarcity.

The next area for further research is to continue to build better links and understanding with the Global South. Despite working and researching in Indonesia, PNG, Bougainville and other low-income nations, I acknowledge the ethno-centric nature of much of my research. Though I have worked with many activists from the Global South and have attempted to articulate their positions, I make no claim to speak on their behalf. Despite the emergence of 'leading from behind' (see Section 5.4) as an important innovation for campaigning, this is an area that should be a priority for both activists and academics.

One way I have attempted to deal with some of these challenges is by founding The Commons Institute (TCI) – see Appendix B for more details. TCI was established in September 2004 as one medium to articulate the research undertaken in this thesis and provide a vehicle for implementing strategic initiatives to achieve sustainable change

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<sup>8</sup> Nugent's (2002) analysis focussed on the Jabiluka anti-mining campaign and confirmed the persistence of racism and sexism within campaigning networks.

with broader appeal. The Institute is working to link up with various anti-corporate activists campaigning against commodification and is part of the global ‘reclaim the commons’ movement in both the Global North and South. At the time of writing, we had forged links with various local and international networks.

The Commons Institute has three broad objectives:

- i. To provide public education and training on the benefits of the commons;
- ii. Conduct research and publish reports on the commons; and
- iii. To investigate the feasibility of establishing a publicly accessible commons register – a place that we as a society can register ‘commons’ – much like private property and patents are registered.<sup>9</sup>

TCI is promoting a multi-dimensional perspective of commons. At the July 2005 Board meeting, the projects listed included open source software, intellect as opposed to intellectual property, defending the water commons from enclosure and working with Philanthropy Australia to promote ‘hope’ as commons.

In addition, TCI has recently acquired a ‘creative commons’ deed. This deed allows for all the intellect of TCI to be “Non Commercial-Share Alike” attribution. Users are therefore free to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work, as well as make derivative works. Maintaining the commitment to open access, all derivative work must also be non-commercial and freely attributed. What is requested in return is an acknowledgement of the work being used.<sup>10</sup>

I believe that CGM opens new commons daily and in many different forms. How this can be used to better unify the CGM and work to overcome the crisis of the whole is an important piece of work that follows on from this thesis, but its articulation is beyond the scope of this thesis. I hope that TCI is one vehicle that may enable this to occur.

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<sup>9</sup> Sourced from: <http://www.mercury.org.au/tci%20home.htm> – accessed July 2005.

<sup>10</sup> See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/> for details – accessed September 2005.



## 8.4 Epilogue

A few days after the trip in the Bolivian mines described in Chapter 1, I was sitting in a café in the town centre of Potosi when a protest took place. Many of the stores closed their windows in fear of what might eventuate. The police took positions to ensure the protesters could not reach the chambers of the local government, stopping their progress a dozen or so metres from the entrance. I watched the events unfold as an outsider. I had earlier made conversation with an elderly indigenous man who was sitting inside the café near me. I turned and asked him if he understood what the protest was about.

He explained to me that the local indigenous people had for centuries been displaced from their common lands. The displaced people had not received any real compensation while witnessing their land devastated through over-use. The indigenous population had generally only been workers, and now the national government was moving to curtail their claims of ownership over their traditional lands. He explained that increasingly, what was once land shared was now a profit-making venture for the few. This was another form of enclosure.

I asked if an outsider like me could assist in anyway. His response was telling, asking me if there were displaced people in my own country. When I nodded, he asked why reaching out to the displaced in Australia was not my priority. I was embarrassed and shrugged my shoulders. In a friendly manner, he told me to first work to solve the problems of Australia and return to Bolivia to help when I was done.

We shook hands and it was at that point that I realised the importance of offering the hand of friendship to the stranger. While this was years before I read the work of Diprose, Hardt and Negri or Beck and formulated the arguments outlined in this thesis, I understood that the hand that was offered contained more than just an extension of the

physical body. In the hand shake, I believe we shared a sense of hope, trust, safety and intellect.

Some months later when I returned to Australia, the federal Howard government announced measures to water down the Mabo and Wik court decisions in a bid to offer certainty to lease holders. This seemed yet a further form of displacement for an indigenous people colonised over 200 years previously. Again enclosure led to displacement and community dislocation. It was because of the hand shake with the stranger in Bolivia that my activism and involvement in social justice issues began in Australia.

The commons offer an alternative project that breaks down the Cartesian logic of pathological modernity. It is through the open sharing of the commons that I argue it is possible to overcome the scarcity at the centre of the crisis of the whole. Through the commons we can achieve an abundance which can be contrasted to the scarcity offered by current dominant paradigms.

TCI was launched some seven years after I shook the hand of the stranger in Bolivia. The ultimate aim of the Institute is to work in common with the broader community to build a common language that confronts the commodifying discourse of pathological modernity. In so doing, the aim is to articulate the logic unifying the heterogeneous and complex CGM and broaden its appeal. It is through the TCI that I attempt to articulate the research of this thesis and confront the commodifying and exclusionary logic of pathological modernity. In this way I am working in common with a global movement to establish a counter logic promoting hope and abundance.

# Appendix A: Research Methodology

## A.1 Introduction

The aim of this appendix is to describe the research procedures employed in this thesis.

The two broad aims of my research were:

- iii. To provide an analysis of the interrelated nature of today's global economic, political, social and environmental problems which I describe as the 'crisis of the whole'; and
- iv. To analyse the intellectual thread that unifies the counter-globalisation movement (CGM).

To achieve the first aim, I developed the concept of pathological modernity in Chapters 3 and 4 as a way of characterising the logic underlying the crisis of the whole. To investigate and understand the intellectual thread that unifies the CGM, I also utilised a participative research methodology. That is, as a researcher I was directly involved as both a *participant* and *observer* in the events discussed in this thesis.

This research approach is informed by feminist insights such as those of Mies (1991) as well as post-colonial authors including Said (1979) and Nandy (1983). As noted in Chapter 2 – Section 2.3, such theorists argue that 'the researcher' should not just observe and report, but actively participate and agitate to overcome oppression and exploitation. For Bergmen (1993) who researched marital rape, this can only be achieved if the researcher achieves empathy with the subjects, becoming part of their lives. The process of research then has the potential to empower the subjects, and can be directly contrasted with the detached observer of positivism (Ezzy 2002).

Importantly for my work, such an approach directly challenges the concept that there is one objective form of inquiry or knowledge (Stanfield 1998). This pluralist approach to forming knowledge also reflects the heterogeneous nature of the very movement I was researching and how it forms knowledge through the politics of paradox (see Chapter 6 – Section 6.5).

My challenge, however, was to utilise such a participative approach, while simultaneously maintaining scholarly validity.

## ***A.2 Research procedures – ensuring validity***

The most pressing challenge that I faced as a researcher was to observe and assess events in which I was a participant and that I directly influenced, while simultaneously maintaining academic validity. This challenge was compounded by the fact that my participation as ‘an activist’ within the CGM pre-dated my observations as ‘an academic’.

One theorist who provides direction on how to achieve a balance between the multiple roles I played is John Cresswell (1994; 2002). Cresswell argues that objectivity, validity and truthfulness are important to *all* research traditions no matter what the researcher is attempting to achieve or the processes undertaken:

First and foremost, the researcher seeks believability, based on coherence, insight and instrumental utility and trustworthiness through a process of verification rather than through traditional validity and reliability measures. (1994: 163)

However, Cresswell (2002) also argues that there are different sets of criteria for assessing the validity of different studies, particularly when comparing ‘qualitative’ with ‘quantitative’ approaches. Cresswell notes that “qualitative researchers have no single stance or consensus on addressing traditional topics such as validity and reliability” (1994:

157). To address this, Cresswell sets out a range of criteria to enable validity and promote scholarly acceptance including: assessing internal legitimacy; accuracy; ensuring the research matches reality; combined with the ability to replicate the specific research approach.

Guided by Cresswell, and also drawing from the work of other scholars that I note below, I employed the following five-stepped process to ensure academic validity. In summary these steps are:

1. To clearly outline the research approach to allow the reader to assess the methodology employed;
2. To articulate the focus of study. This requires a clear expression and justification why each subject was selected by the researcher;
3. To employ both internal and external verification processes;
4. To acknowledge the politics of research. That is, ensure that any political implications of the research are appropriately considered; and
5. To discuss and outline any challenges of researcher partiality. This includes articulating the role of the researcher in relation to the subjects, be they individuals or organisations.

### **i. Outline the research approach**

According to both Silverman (2000) and Cresswell (2002), the first step in achieving academic validity is for the researcher to clearly outline the research approach employed. This ensures that the reader can assess the robustness and scholarly validity of the research.

As I have discussed, the practical aspect of my research involved participatory research. That is, to investigate the CGM, I worked with the various groups I discuss as well as participating in the events described throughout this thesis (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7). In

undertaking this process, I began by undertaking an in-depth literature review. Though I had worked within the CGM, it was only after a literature review that I was able to rigorously observe and reflect on the processes of the movement.

As a campaigner, I took the role of active participant in some meetings (such as the State of Emergency), while at others I was invited as both a presenter and an ‘expert’ in ‘grassroots organising’. At events such as the World Economic Forum protests in Melbourne (2000), the Asian Development Bank protests in Hawaii (2001) and the No-WTO coalition, I actively participated in the relevant organising committees. One of the advantages of undertaking participatory research as a campaigner was that I received invitations to events that were not always open to the broader public. For example, in both 2000 and 2001 I attended strategy meetings of the ECA Watch Coalition where I also I discussed campaign strategy development.<sup>1</sup>

I also attended meetings of the groups that are the focus of my study, and analysed their discourse (both verbal and written) as well as their various strategies. With AID/WATCH and AFTINET I sat on committees and represented these organisations at various forums. Importantly, all the information that I have discussed in this thesis is available in the public domain and I have not betrayed confidences.

In looking for the intellectual thread that unifies the CGM, my research approach involved observation and interpretation as well as participation. As an observer, I took notes on the ‘political space’ that the various campaigners and advocates operated within. I observed the power relationships and conflicts that emerged, and analysed how they were resolved. At such events, I was able to undertake observations important to my final conclusions.

A critical part of this observation processes was the documentation undertaken, which took the form of diary notes. However, as an active participant in the events I discuss,

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<sup>1</sup> I attended these meetings as a representative of AID/WATCH, who is the main representative of the ECA Watch Coalition in Australia. See Chapter 5 – Section 5.3 for a brief description of the ECA Watch Coalition.

many of these diary notes became ‘discussion papers’ for consideration by the wider movement. Such papers acted as important ‘feedback’ mechanisms, confirming or challenging my observations. This was an important element of the verification processes I outline below, ensuring my research matched reality (see step iii below).

Additionally I analysed a wide range of sources during the research. Sources included e-mail lists, letters and newsletters written by activists, information and data provided by the targets of campaigns, as well as various mainstream and alternative media sources.

Reflexivity was also an important part of this process. Some of my research involved reflections after the events occurred, when I had time to review, consider and contemplate what had actually transpired. Much of this took the form of memoirs and played an important role throughout the writing of this thesis. This was particularly relevant due to my long-term involvement within the CGM – playing an important part in the verification processes I discuss below (see step iii).

The information recorded from observations, participation and primary sources was divided into a number of themes. The aim of this process was to identify and segment core themes, reassess the research findings and reflect on these core themes. This is a process described by Tesch (1990) as ‘de-contextualisation’ and ‘re-contextualisation.’ It was from this process that I identified the idea of the *cultural commons* as the intellectual thread unifying the CGM.

## **ii. Articulate the focus of the study**

The second step in ensuring the validity of the study is to clearly articulate the focus of the study. While on a meta-scale, the subject of this research is the CGM, I concentrated on four specific groups because of the size, complexity and heterogeneous character of the movement. These groups were AID/WATCH, FOE Australia, NOII and AFTINET, as well as the No-WTO Coalition (see Chapter 5). Rather than attempting to investigate a

cross-section of the movement or its representatives, I felt it was best to concentrate on these four groups because they were directly involved with the No-WTO coalition – an alliance of some 50 organisations.

Cresswell (1994) argues that is important to justify why specific subjects were chosen. To begin with, both the groups and events selected reflect the paradoxical nature of the movement as they were simultaneously unique and typical. That is, they reflect many of the characteristics evident at other counter-globalisation protests and within the activist community, while at the same time having distinct qualities.

Additionally, I chose these groups because their multi-dimensional focus is ‘typical’ of the movement as a whole (see Table 5.1 – Section 5.3). These groups also have both formal and informal links throughout the Global North and South. They are involved in a wide variety of activities ranging from direct action and protests, to lobbying at both national and international forums.

I also noted in Chapter 5 that I chose these specific groups because I have worked with each of them to varying degrees, as well as being actively involved in the No-WTO coalition. This ensured that the participatory nature of my research was well informed. As such, this presented me with the opportunity to gain an insiders view of how they worked and the activities undertaken. I believe that this is an advantage as it allowed me to navigate through the complex nature of the movement as well as facilitating access to events that were not necessarily open to the broader public.

It is important to note, however, that while I believe that these organisations are representative of the broader CGM, there are literally hundreds of individuals and groups involved with these globalisation debates. Consequently, though I focussed on these organisations, I did not attempt to establish ‘tight parameters’ for this project that limited my focus to only these four groups because activist groups and the movement as a whole continue to evolve. By expanding the analysis beyond these four groups, a greater variety of perspectives were available to strengthen my findings.



However, my close involvement also raises issues regarding the political implications and partiality of my research. Before discussing this, it is important to outline the verification processes I employed to ensure that my research reflected ‘reality’ (Cresswell 1994).

### **iii. Verification processes**

The third step to ensure the validity of my research was to utilise both internal and external verification processes. To begin with, I employed a process of ‘triangulation’, whereby I identified a convergence among different sources of information. As a result external sources acted to provide validity for the primary research undertaken. Merriam (1988) states that one way to achieve this is by looking for a unique interpretation of events, turning to the wider literature and then drawing conclusions which can be assessed through feedback mechanisms (see below). It was through such a process that I could counter-check the identified characteristics and unifying logic of the CGM.

The second verification process was achieved by ensuring an audit process to allow for ‘replication’. Here, I do not mean ‘replicating the events’ that are the focus of this study, rather I am describing the ability to replicate the research approach undertaken. This is achieved by clearly outlining the approach employed (see step i).

The third verification process was to employ long-term observation to ensure that the events researched were not uncommon. Although the research of this thesis was undertaken over a three year period, the events which inspired much of this work began in 1997. In the eight years that my work has taken shape, I have had the opportunity to reassess and re-evaluate the observations made.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, I was able to reassess the diary notes I had kept from meetings that I had attended pre-dating my academic studies. This allowed me to confirm the relevance of the identified themes over a longer time

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that my role as researcher began a number of years after being involved in the CGM as an activist. However, my sustained involvement within the movement over a number of years has assisted my observations and reflections.

period – emphasising the important role that reflexivity played in my developing conclusions (see step i).

The fourth verification process was inspired by Cresswell (1994), who advises the researcher to limit the distance from the subjects to confirm their suitability. As an active participant in the events described, I was able to assess the appropriateness of each organisation chosen for research – as outlined in step ii. This also meant that by undertaking a participatory mode of research, I was able to obtain insights into the CGM rather than relying only on the advice of others, observing from a distance or relying only on secondary and tertiary sources.

A fifth process employed which also promoted academic validity is the utilisation of ‘feedback mechanisms’ (Cresswell 1994). In keeping with Cresswell’s ideas, and to ensure that there were feedback processes in my research, data analysis was conducted simultaneously with “data collection, data interpretation, and narrative reporting” facilitating iteration between data collection and analysis (ibid: 153). In parallel, I also sought verification through peer reviews. This was undertaken at both academic conferences and non-academic workshops organised by activists. In addition to producing various papers, I established The Commons Institute to open my ideas for debate to the broader public – see Appendix B for details.

The final element of the verification process is to clearly identify and acknowledge potential sources of partiality – something I outline below.

#### **iv. Acknowledging the politics of research**

The fourth step I employ to ensure validity is to acknowledge the political implications of my research.

Ezzy (2002) argues that, rather than this aspect of research being unique, *every* project has political implications. This includes ‘traditional’ quantitative research approaches because these commonly reinforce the status quo, as many research projects intending to undertake “value free research” merely re-emphasise dominant interpretations (Stanfield 1998: 438).

Stanfield (1998) argues, however, that a fundamental flaw in many research projects is a failure by the researcher to acknowledge the political implications of their work.

Consequently, Lather (1986) notes that every researcher needs to be concerned with both the quality of their work *and* the political consequences of their research. In every phase, research has consequences that Lather feels are the responsibility of the researcher and should not be ignored regardless of the methodology employed.

Rather than arguing that my relationship with ‘the subjects’ of this research limits the validity of my thesis, my position is that it is simply an aspect of research that needs to be explicitly discussed. Punch (1998) feels that this allows the reader to assess the implications and validity of the research undertaken. As the reader would be aware, throughout this thesis I have attempted to articulate the political inspiration of my research (see for example, Chapter 2 – Section 2.3).

As a consequence, I openly acknowledge that the aim of this thesis is in many ways political as it aims to articulate an alternative logic to that of pathological modernity with the aim of overcoming the identified crisis of scarcity. The relationships I formed with the subjects of my research will inevitably influence both my interpretations and conclusions. As I directly participated in the events investigated, I am also likely to have influenced the groups and people I worked with. Motivated by authors such as Mies,

Stanfield and Said (see above and Section 2.3), I employ participative research with an aim of empowering the subjects of my research and learning from them. I address the likely impacts of this on the partiality of my research in the next section.

## **v. The challenges of researcher partiality**

Given that all research has certain political implications, the final step I have identified in ensuring academic validity is to answer the following question: ‘How should researcher partiality be considered?’ Given that my work is specifically political and I have had long-term involvement with some of the organisations discussed, this question of partiality has additional relevance.

As discussed in Chapter 1, I began my journey of activism in 1997. Since then, I have worked with a variety of organisations including those groups analysed in Chapter 5. Specifically I have been employed by AID/WATCH, been on various steering committees and boards including as a founding board member of AFTINET, as well as being involved in planning various protests and actions.

I believe that my familiarity with the subject matter has proven to be an advantage – echoing the sentiments of Bergmen (1993) and Cresswell (1994). Realistically, only an ‘insider’ can gain entry into this labyrinth and properly undertake research within it. This also allowed me to gain empathy with my subjects and record their perspective appropriately – a point again underscored by Bergmen (1993).

Although being an insider has many advantages, there is an obvious risk of partiality. This is compounded as the various protests I attended as both an activist and a researcher resulted in aggression by the authorities and I was personally amongst protesters jostled and pushed by security forces. Additionally, while working as an activist in both Indonesia and United States, I was the object of surveillance.

Despite such incidents influencing my position, I also undertook measures to ensure this did not negatively influence the validity of my research. The first measure is to openly acknowledge my background and influences. For Church (1995) this process of open acknowledgement is an important method of ensuring validity. Discussing her own research which began while still ‘an activist’, Church notes the first step was ‘field research’ followed by theoretical verification. Rather than a disadvantage, Church feels that this ensures the research is intimately applied to the issues being investigated. Outlining my background, rather than claiming to be an independent observer, is one of the key steps in ensuring that the study maintains its validity.

Potential partiality exists in all forms of research. As Stanfield notes, “...we forget that we carry derivatives of cultural baggage” (1998: 342). Stanfield notes that if research is undertaken that does not acknowledge the biases of the researcher, power structures are ignored compromising the independence of the study. This can emerge in many ways ranging from the subjects a researcher chooses to interview, the events selected for observation, as well as throughout each phase of interpretation and analysis. For Ezzy (2002) all research is biased to a degree and this cannot be avoided, but like the political implications I discussed above, should never be ignored. In qualitative research, “the role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study” (Cresswell 1994: 163).

Thus, due to my previous work as a campaigner and activist, I bring partiality to this study. While a risk, this is not necessarily a disadvantage. Although every effort has been made to ensure detachment, my background will inevitably influence the way I view, understand and interpret events and processes. Thus, even at the outset of the research I commenced this study with the perspective that the political processes employed by activists and campaigners provide a key insight into how plural political spaces function. This may affect my interpretation of events, but by ensuring I openly acknowledge these influences, readers are able to personally assess my observations and conclusions.

The second measure to ensure that my background did not negatively influence my research was that the observations made were informed and supported by a variety of theoretical perspectives. The works of Hardt and Negri and Beck were the two key perspectives used to sustain the legitimacy and validity of my observations regarding pathological modernity. The discussion of the commons was informed by a range of authors including Hage (2001), Davis (1991), Rustomjee (2001), Giddens (1991), Bollier (2002) and Lessig (2004), and *The Ecologist* (1996). Likewise, it was the theoretical work of Hardt and Negri (2004) that guided my interpretations of the multitude. Finally, my formulation of ‘authentic’ communities was inspired by Diprose (2003), Davis (2001), Gudeman (2001) and others.

The third measure taken to ensure that the issue of partiality did not compromise the scholarly quality of my research was to employ the verification processes outlined above – see Step iii. These various processes ensure that that my observations, analysis and conclusions can be assessed and academic validity maintained.

### ***A.3 Concluding comments***

From the time that I sat on that mountain in Bolivia (discussed in Chapter 1), I have witnessed injustices not only in the Americas, but also within Australia, the Pacific Islands, Europe and parts of Asia. Inspired by authors such as Maria Mies, Edward Said and Ashis Nandy (see Sections 2.4 and A.2), I believe that research is a powerful tool that can be used to overcome injustice and exploitation. It is from this position that this thesis has been researched and written.

Like all research, my approach has important implications regarding partiality. This appendix has attempted to deal with these issues by arguing that my position does not compromise the validity of the research but strengthens it, particularly through theoretical verification. I have attempted to undertake a multi-dimensional approach to ensure that

scholarly validity is achieved and maintained. My position as both an activist and transparent researcher should inform readers and allow them to assess my conclusions.

## Appendix B: The Commons Institute

See next page for a sample of the website - Sourced from:

<http://www.mercury.org.au/tci%20home.htm> – accessed September 2005.



**"It is time to draw a distinction between those goods that can be managed by the market  
and those that belong to the community"**

*They hang the man and flog the woman  
That steal the goose from off the common,  
But let the greater villan loose  
That steals the common from the goose.  
- English folk poem, circ 1764*

## The Commons Institute

The Commons Institute was established in recognition that the concept of the commons is currently under threat in our society. Despite being the source of benefit to most communities around the world, including ours, we are seeing the enclosure of the commons. This includes the disappearance of public space and the privatisation of resources such as water that were once considered a human right.

## Explaining the Commons

The commons were traditionally defined as the elements of the environment - forests, atmosphere, fisheries or grazing land - that we all share. These are the tangible and intangible aspects of the environment that no-one owns but everybody enjoys.

But there are other conceptions of the commons. Today, the commons need to be understood within the cultural sphere as well. The commons within this sphere include literature, music, performing arts, visual arts, design, film, video, television, radio, community arts and sites of heritage. The commons can also include 'public goods' such as public space, public education, health and the infrastructure that allows our society to function (such as electricity or water delivery systems). There also exists the 'life commons' – the human genome that makes us a unique species. Though a central government may 'manage' these, realistically we have inherited them and any governing body only holds them in trust for the public as well as future generations.

Click [here](#) for more information

## The global 'Reclaiming the Commons' movement

Naomi Klein (2000: 311) describes the battle over "street culture" as one that has emerged between corporations attempting to commodify it – both physically (through billboards) and culturally (through the co-option of local cultures by the advertising industry) – and "anti-corporate activists" aiming to reverse this commodification as part of a global campaign to 'reclaim the commons'. We see examples of protests organised by groups such as Reclaim the Streets (RTS) that work to reverse this commodification. This reaction is part of a global campaign to 'reclaim the commons'. The Commons Institute is part of the global movement.

Click [here](#) for more information

## What are we doing?

The Commons Institute was established with three broad objectives:

To provide public education and training on the benefits of the commons;

Conduct research and publish reports on the commons; and

To investigate the feasibility of establishing a publicly accessible commons register – a place that we as a society can register ‘commons’ – much like private property and patents are registered.

At this point, the aim is to promote the concept of the commons while at the same time linking with other groups to both protect and reclaim the commons.

Establishing a ‘commons register’ is a longer-term goal. While patents and intellectual property rights can be easily registered, the ability to register ‘commons’ proves more difficult. A viable process for registering ‘commons’ is currently being investigated.

## How can you get involved?

TCI is a community-based organisation that was only established recently. We need your help to begin our work. At this point, we have no tax-deductible status, and simply run on the work of a few volunteers. Any donations will be greatly appreciated.

Depending on your time you might decide to share your skills and expertise. TCI volunteers are the essence of activist and campaigning activities, providing limitless energy and ideas. Your skills are welcome as there is a wide range of needs and activities you can help with: from campaigning and research work to computer, database maintenance and administration.

Click [here](#) to contact us about your further involvement.

You can join the Commons Institute and/or make a donation on our [Membership](#) page.

*Note: All references used can be found at the [Resources](#) page.*

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