

**THE RETURN OF INTERPERSONAL
VIOLENCE IN THE BREAKDOWN
OF THE PSEUDO-PACIFICATION
PROCESS**

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Abstract

This thesis argues that orthodox social constructionist and culturalist explanations of the mutation of interpersonal violence in the Anglo-American world over the past three decades need to be challenged. Macro-patterns of interpersonal violence appearing over historical time and social space indicate a direct correlation with changes in political economy. It is argued here that specific forms of physical and sublimated symbolic violence were functional to the development of mercantile and classic industrial capitalism, and thus they were cultivated and harnessed in complex forms across this time period. This suggests that the 'civilizing process' formulated in terms of evolving social relationships and emotional sensibilities is inadequate as an explanation for the decline in the murder and serious violence rates in Europe, and this concept needs to be reformulated in a direct relationship with political economy. The new concept of the 'pseudo-pacification process' arose from an attempted reformulation, which represents the internal pacification of the population as an accidental and rather fragile by-product of capitalism's functional requirements. Current rises in the rates of murder and serious interpersonal violence in vortices appearing in the shift from the classical productivist economy managed by interventionist state politics to a consumer/service economy managed by neo-liberal politics suggests that indeed the aetiological connection between political economy and violence rates needs to be returned to the foreground of criminological theory. The putative 'sensibilities' at the heart of the civilizing process are more likely to be emotional attachments to the rules and affectations that evolved as protective insulation for the brutally competitive practices that energise the capitalist economic project, and they are in danger of disintegrating as the pseudo-pacification process loses much of its functional value in the consumer economy and begins to break down.

To Christine, Christopher and Alexandra, who gave purpose to a drifting life.

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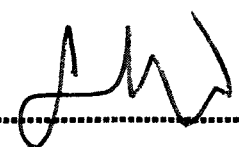
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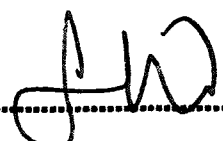
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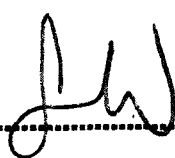
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Chapter 1: Introduction

INTRODUCTION

1. Summary of the contribution to knowledge represented by the published work.

This PhD submission comprises eleven pieces of independent work, published between 1997 and 2005 in a number of peer-reviewed academic journals and two edited collections. The original concepts of 'visceral cultures', 'visceral habitus', 'dimorphic violence', 'exlimination', 'anti-nirvana' and 'the pseudo-pacification process', along with some supporting concepts that will be introduced later, were formulated specifically for this thematic body of work, which is basically an attempt to explain the increase of rates of serious interpersonal violence and murder in specific geographical locales in the Anglo-American West since the 1970s. Other national cultures are beyond the scope of this work, as are the specialised fields of domestic and homophobic violence, which have their own specific literature and their own empirical and epistemological problems that need to be resolved before they can be integrated in a macro-study such as this. Despite this, the thesis is an attempt to explain the deep underlying politico-economic and cultural conditions in which serious and fatal forms of interpersonal violence have shown a common tendency to increase.

The project grew out of my nagging dissatisfaction with the broadly social constructionist discourses that dominate the study of violence. Many experienced social scientists are now converging around the idea that the notable increase of interpersonal violence in the Anglo-American world in the 1980s and 1990s – which

still seems to be occurring in specific locales – was real, not just a phenomenon conjured out of thin air by media sensationalism, the politics of fear or changes in recording practices (see Reiner 2000; Dorling, 2004). I did not set out to suggest that social constructionism and other phenomenological discourses have no place in the debate, but simply that, so far, they have been unable to deal convincingly with the stark macro-social patterns of rates of very real physical violence across historical time and geographical and social space. I noticed that if this remains unexplained, or its existence is denied in a flurry of phenomenological relativism, the resulting vacuum tends to be all too enthusiastically filled by reactionary political explanations. This problematic relationship between political philosophy and social scientific epistemology was raised in the first article (Hall, 1997). I was also aware that, at the broadest level, these patterns can be represented by the ‘civilizational curve’ across European history, in which rates of serious interpersonal violence and murder persistently decreased from the late 14th century to the mid 20th century – despite the expansion of organised inter-state violence – and then shifted into a series of rather splintered, uneven rises in the 1970s and 1980s in specific nations and geographical locales (see Eisner, 2001; Hall and McLean, forthcoming). To be more specific, since 1945 rates of serious interpersonal violence and murder have been significantly lower in the social market economies of Canada and Western Europe than those in the free-market economies of the USA and Eastern Europe. To me, this suggested a close connection between violence and political economy, which I have discussed in more detail in articles 5 and 11 in this collection (although I have discussed it in much finer detail in an article currently under review (Hall and McLean, forthcoming) and a book due for publication shortly (Hall and Winlow, forthcoming, June 2006)).

The recent shift to neo-liberalism in the USA and Britain correlated with notable increases in serious interpersonal violence and murder rates, which, in the 'new deal' and 'social democratic' periods between 1945 and 1980 had been at one of the lowest points in the histories of both nations. Western European societies with 'social market' economies have retained relatively low rates since 1945 right through to the present day (Eisner, 2001), but I was aware that as Britain moved closer to the free-market economic model in the 1980s, rates spiked upwards quite alarmingly, and, despite recent decreases in property crime, they have remained at high levels in localised areas of permanent recession (Hall, 1997,2002; see also Dorling, 2004; Reiner, 2000). The USA experienced even more alarming rises in economically disadvantaged locales in the same period, which occurred after a period of slower rises since the mid 1960s (Hall, 2002; Zimring and Hawkins, 1997). This empirical basis suggested to me that localised vortices characterised by high interpersonal violence and murder rates have been appearing at the same time as major shifts in political culture, the economy and the state structure.

Shifting my attention to the beginning of the historical downward trend in European interpersonal violence and murder rates, I noticed that it coincided with the second and most dynamic developmental wave of the disruptive, unstable yet socially reconstructive market-capitalist economy, beginning at various times between the 14th and 17th centuries and arriving at the lowest rates in the post-1945 social democratic era. This coincides precisely with Norbert Elias' (1994) timeline in his work 'The Civilizing Process', with historian Ted Gurr's (1981) well-known empirical survey of the English murder rate since the 14th century, and also with Eisner's (2001) duplication of Gurr's work in Europe. However, as an explanation, I regarded the

'civilizing process' as problematic. Elias portrayed it as a blind, evolutionary process with no generative origin, economic function or teleological purpose. To me, a firm and convincing aetiology was virtually absent, and in its place stood a tacit implication of some sort of vague Kantian moral orientation towards pacification and a quasi-Durkheimian orientation towards social harmony, which I criticised as a vague and unexplained *sociotropism* (Hall, 1997). This is unsatisfactory, because it does not explain the tight correlations between micro-fluctuations in the general curve – which were not emphasised – and periods of disruption and change in politico-economic forms.

According to Elias, the State's monopoly of the means and entitlement to violence, the maintenance of social interdependencies (or 'figurations') and the inculcation of behavioural codes as 'manners' were all essential prerequisites for the pacification of the population. For me, however, he consistently downplayed the connection between these prerequisites and the logical needs of the developing capitalist economy, and he also ignored the paradoxical facts that throughout the capitalist project, social and interpersonal relations in many ways became more fractious than harmonious, yet murder and serious interpersonal violence still decreased (with the possible exception of domestic violence), and the population's top and middle strata benefited economically as the uneven physical pacification of the population allowed trade and industry to flourish. This fractiousness, which by the late 18th century had engendered amongst the ruling classes a well-documented fear of revolution, suggests that Elias' apparent claim that some mysterious evolutionary *sociotropic* force is behind this does not hold water, and he did not establish the direction of causality or the nature of the dialectical dynamics between the social and the economic. In fact, Fernand

Braudel (1985) and Max Weber (see Holton and Turner, 1989) have already discussed at length the importance of the economy in Early Modern Europe as the bedrock for the establishment and maintenance of social interdependencies, and perhaps we do not need to be reminded that various Marxist and critical theorists' arguments posited the productive needs of the developing capitalist economy and the class struggle within it as the motor of historical change and the generator of all things superstructural. I do not claim to provide the final answer in this long-running chicken-and-egg debate, but I do claim that the portrayal of the 'needs' and dynamic relations of the social, the values, meanings and practices of culture and the agency of actors – shaped and energised by the nebulous notion of a moral orientation towards pacification and peace – as more aetiologically important than the logical imperatives of the developing capitalist economy cannot go unchallenged.

I became increasingly convinced that European capitalist civilization was not driven by some nebulous orientation towards pacification. After all, it is not a prerequisite: civilizations have flourished in the past whilst retaining physical brutality as an everyday practice. Rather, to me it seemed that the development of capitalism as a socio-economic and cultural form was facilitated by the modification and redistribution of what I named pre-modern *exliminating practices* (see Hall, 2000); the stimulation and harnessing of transgressive impulses that are fuelled by mimetic anxiety to the project of competitive individualism and the complex quasi-democratic redistribution of the rights and means of physical and symbolic violence. Capitalism and its agents needed respect for property rights so that commodities, including land and agricultural produce, could be owned, protected, transported and traded with some degree of security. However, competition also became ever more functionally

vital as capitalists sought to reduce costs, increase demand and expand and accelerate the circulation of commodities. Non-violent competition in production, trading and culture depended upon the cultivation of sublimatory channels through which visceral human energy could flow into competitive interpersonal and social structures to create a dynamic force that could be harnessed to economic growth. My formulations suggest that sublimated violence was injected into systems of symbolic exchange to expand desire beyond basic human needs, harnessing it as the socio-cultural fuel for capitalism's economic engine. Thus I concluded that the traditional dimorphic form of violence had been split, and the sublimated symbolic form was gradually democratised to energise the economy, whilst the physical form was taken out of arbitrary private hands and allocated specialist functions.

I coined the term *pseudo-pacification* to describe this process because pacification was not encouraged for its own sake, because of the existence of some suppositious human orientation towards it, or indeed to serve the Platonic ideal of 'civilization'; rather it emerged as an accidental by-product of the logical needs of the transition through mercantilism to the classical capitalist form. However, my formulation does not preclude human agency. Alert individuals and micro-communities throughout the late medieval social structure recognised the relationship between the pacification of interpersonal relations and wealth generation – indeed it had been for a long time received wisdom to scholars of the so-called 'Golden Ages' of Athens and Rome (see Gibbon, ([1788]1972) – and they were active in the establishment and maintenance of what became capitalism's primary hegemonic project; the dream that if we pacified our interpersonal relations and competed vigorously but civilly in the marketplace we would all become richer and more secure (see Hall, 2000). In the classical capitalist

era a balance was struck between the satisfaction of needs by product innovation and the stimulation of consumer desire by social symbolism, so some temporary stabilisation of the dynamic was achieved. To me, the heart of capitalist civilization did not seem to comprise of values, but rather a set of rules and affectations intended to insulate and harness the barbaric underlying values and desires that drive the economy.

I then moved on to analyse the unfolding of the pseudo-pacification process in industrial capitalism's socio-political structures. Throughout early and high modernity, the uneven and rather unreliable normative redistribution of symbolic and physical violence across the occupational, class and gender structures laid the ground for the imbalanced cultural depositing of visceral 'roughness' and polite 'refinement'. The establishment and reproduction of different forms of what I named the *visceral habitus* was based upon occupational, regional and class positions connected to the functional use of toughness and violence in heavy manual production, internal social control and the militarism required by the imperialist projects that grew out of burgeoning inter-state competition. This created a complex configuration of occupational and cultural norms that encoded and loosely allocated and systematised the use and value of violence across these social axes. There were sporadic signs of individual and sub-cultural resistance, but in the main capitalism and its agents secured one of their vital requirements; the *visceral habitus* together with the pseudo-pacification codes that could harness it for functional use. As a significant majority of females were functionally 'feminised' by the 19th century, the *visceral habitus* tended to be delegated to dispensable males, and my thesis also offers an explanation of how and why it was normatively distributed and manifested in diverse codified forms

across the class order, from the vestigial upper class militarism and the ruthlessly Darwinian (or more precisely Spencerian) bourgeois 'business masculinity' (see Connell, 2003) to the classic proletarian 'hard man' (see Winlow, 2001; Emsley, 2005) and the yeomanistic 'muscular Christian' (see Beynon, 2002) that is still to be found as a mainstay of traditional conservative masculine culture in some nations.

My contribution to the knowledge in this field might also help to explain why the formation of a truly oppositional proletarian movement in the era of classical capitalism was so difficult. Throughout its historical development, capitalism cultivated a culture of atomised competitive individualism across Europe, especially Britain and later the USA, which comprised dynamic structures of sublimated violence energised by the constant stimulation of the immutable neuro-chemical propensity for anxiety and discontent, along with the provision of its temporary comforts: material objects and status as the appeasement of mimetic rivalry. As my work unfolded it seemed to me that the system of symbolic exchange posited by Baudrillard (1998) as the basis of advanced capitalism's consumer phase – which was later formulated more rigorously and usefully by Pierre Bourdieu (1984) as a structure of 'symbolic violence' utilised by actors struggling for cultural and symbolic capital in fields of social power relations – was actually installed at the very beginning. This had been hinted at much earlier in the work of Thorstein Veblen (1994), who saw 'conspicuous consumption' as a re-worked vestige of a core cultural tendency within the pre-modern barbarian mentality of the famously vicious warriors of Europe (see also Elias, 1994). The original disruptive and destabilising actions of the early bourgeoisie, manifested in legally-driven socio-economic change such as the Enclosure Acts, the repeal of the Usury Laws and constant modifications to the Poor

Laws and Criminal Laws, were not only instrumental power strategies. They also acted as early practical demonstrations of what the creation of anxiety could actually do to 'free' people and how they would respond, and they stimulated and cultivated the fear of poverty, humiliation and socio-cultural insignificance as the human energy at the heart of capitalism's remarkable economic dynamism. Long before Foucault's (1977) panoptical laboratory was conceived in the scientifico-utilitarian mind, capitalism's psycho-economic laboratory was up and running, and its results were driving a relentless logical process that shaped the dynamic relations and emotional sensibilities of everyday life. This offers an interesting perspective on what thinkers as diverse as Freud (1979), Adorno (2005), Deleuze and Guattari (1983) and Mestrovic (1993) have seen as the barbaric cruelty and interpersonal enmity at the heart of capitalist culture, which exists as a powerful and dynamic current underneath the pacified physical lives, sanitised interactional codes and fragile sensibilities of its subjects. Tragically, 20th century socialist movements, in their efforts to create a more ethical economic dynamism, could find no substitute for it.

In advanced capitalist Anglo-American societies, pacification and seduction – and hyper-incarceration if necessary – must now be maintained in mainstream culture to prevent the overheating of the fuel of sublimated hostility and the return of violence, as firstly a peripheral irritant attached to vandalism and crime, and then an unmanageable corrosive force as corruption, crime and violence become more central to our politico-cultural lives, and finally a move into unknown territory. Focusing on the move from the first to the second stage of this process, my concept of *anti-nirvana* (Hall et al, 2005) refined the standard critical idea that consumerism's relentless stimulation of desires and underlying psychic energy – in a way that the tension

produced can never be resolved and thus satisfaction never attained – and explained how this tension plays a significant part in the eruption of both instrumental violent crime and non-instrumental hostile violence in socio-cultural spaces where the *visceral habitus* is a dominant cultural form. Eruptions of physical violence are now more likely as the old masculine tasks to which it was coded and harnessed are in terminal decline in the mechanised and hyper-pacified consumer/service economy.

The various strands of my thesis can now be brought together in what is probably my major contribution to the explanation of rising and mutating violence in specific areas of the advanced capitalist landscape: *the breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process*. Full-blown classical liberal capitalism can only allow the existence of an economically harnessed, socially divided and ultimately atomised *multitude*, never a *people* founded upon mutual interests and reciprocal care. In its current consumerist phase, the intensity of competitive symbolic exchange must be relentlessly increased, and thus contemporary forms of pseudo-pacification must increase their efforts as the traditional sublimatory channels of physical agricultural-proletarian labour, militarism and aggressive labour politics – themselves vital practical and symbolic activities that absorbed so much stimulated hostility – for the time being sink into terminal decline. As the reader shall see in article 6 of the main body, the pseudo-pacification process required huge effort and expense in its functional heyday. Now, however, as the tasks to which its various cultural forms were harnessed become less diverse and vital, its cultural and institutional infrastructure is no longer a prudent investment as capitalism enters an era of diminishing returns, and the repressive aspects of its codes become in many cases an impediment to economic growth in the consumer economy, it now approaches its protracted breakdown.

2. A critical appraisal of the published work.

Throughout the research, my theoretical approach was grounded in empirical data. From the beginning, I conducted interviews with persistent young offenders in zones of permanent economic recession, and participant observation of their everyday meanings and practices revealed identification with the neo-liberal cultural norm of atomised, competitive individualism alongside a deep nihilism that poured scorn on even the possibility that alternative, ethical ways of being could exist (see Horne and Hall, 1995 for a selection of the data). Rather than ‘otherness’ and potential ‘resistance’, what was being shunned, criminalised and incarcerated by mainstream culture was its own *double*, an impolite, visceral and impatient form of hyper-identification with core bourgeois values (Hall and Winlow, 2005a; 2005b), a semi-feral mimetic imitation shorn of the insulation created by the rules of politeness and civility, the escapees from the rules that had evolved in the *pseudo-pacification process*.

My first major exploration of what eventually became the *breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process* was the relationship between what I named *visceral cultures* and the drift of young men into violence and criminality (Hall, 1997). It was based upon a critique of the uncritical naturalism at the heart of left-liberal conceptions of social equality – reliant as they were on what I conceptualised as *sociotropism* and the *natural citizen* – and an exploration of the lifting of repression and the adjustment of opportunities and discourses in consumerism. The liberal Enlightenment had taken for granted what it was attempting to create – the reasonable, conscientious, civil and sociable individual – as a natural apriori category rather than a fragile product of

temporary socio-economic arrangements. For many liberal commentators, 'freeing' the individual by de-stabilising redundant fixed identities is all that is needed to ensure progress. I argued that this discourse was hampered by a neglect of practical experience, emotional sensibilities, habitus and the body, and it mistook transgression for instrumental strategies of conformity to consumer capitalism's fragmenting and reconstructing landscape. This one-dimensional ontology ignores the destructive side of human nature, and how that can manifest itself in the transition of what I called, in a modification of Bourdieu's (1984) concept, the *visceral habitus* into a new world to face redundancy and humiliation. Prof. Ian Taylor, in his seminal and celebrated work *Crime in Context* (1999), saw this as a useful explanation for the drift of young men of the former working class into more serious forms of criminal career during the deindustrialisation process of the 1980s. It was regarded by Dr. Keith Hayward (2004) as one of the better accounts of the rise of violent crime during the decline of the productivist community, and Prof. William de Haan and Prof. Ian Loader (2002) cited it as one of the more convincing arguments claiming much criminological theory is inadequate because of its lack of study of the emotions and the body.

However, most violent crimes are committed by young men, and in the next selection (Hall, 1999) I mobilised the ideas of previous work in an exploration of the growth of persistent youth crime in British society since the 1980s. It laid the ground for my later work on the recruitment of *visceral being* into the new criminal hierarchies. Some of the 'children of freedom' are not living up to expectations, and I highlighted the inability of liberal social engineering programmes in the 'fight against crime' as evidence. On a philosophical level, I also explored the poverty of Left Idealism and its quasi-pedagogical projects of changing meaning to free the pre-existing rational

individual or modifying discourses to cultivate new subjects. I argued that it would be more useful to look at the abrupt devaluation of a durable *habitus* in the shift to consumption and service industries and the drift into emergent criminal markets and distribution industries. This piece was chosen, alongside a number of classic articles on youth and crime, by Prof. Nigel South for the *International Library of Youth, Crime and Deviance* (1999). For him, it represented a 'strikingly original argument' and a stark and powerful contrast to idealist notions of violent crime as proto-political transgression and resistance.

After a while it became obvious that I was neglecting the tyranny of the symbol, which of course had become increasingly important in consumer society, so I embarked on an examination of the triumph of what I called *lightweight being* in today's consumer service economy (Hall, 2000). This being is reflexive, unstable, adaptable, yet viciously competitive, seeking to transcend all limitations in the acquisitive search for economic success and the freedom and pleasure that this allows. Its expansion has been made possible by the increase in independence from physical labour in a competitive symbolic environment, and this process seems to be moving towards a true democratisation and social fusion of the dimorphic form, as the vestigial elements of what I then named the *heavyweight being* of the former era tend to revert back to minimally controlled viscerality in attractive opposition to codified competitiveness. For me, the emergent power of *lightweight being* in this environment is the product of competitive agency reconstructing relations of domination. Modernity was a complex reconfiguration of the rights and abilities to use both dimensions of what I called *dimorphic violence* – the physical and the symbolic – as social structuring forces. The elite's private right to use physical violence as an

instrument of domination and social ordering had been abolished and monopolised by the state, whilst their right to monopolise symbolic violence was partially democratised and set loose amongst civil society's competitive agents to fuel capitalism's increasingly important consumer dynamic.

For me, the gradual absorption of the population into a life of over-dramatised hyperbole, made possible by the expansion of communications technology, sent the value of the symbol specialist soaring, whilst the physical specialist became exploited and then largely redundant as much organised physical work and violence were mechanised or relocated abroad. The symbolising elite beat back the threat of collective labour and violence in their Sorelian combination, and keen *parvenus* joined the opening ranks of what I named *the eternal priesthood*, history's perennial symbol specialists, intensifying the competitive dynamism. In part, this was a re-enchantment of the world by a symbolising elite that had partially lost its influence during the decline of traditional religious culture and the rise of the muck'n'brass grind of industrial modernity. Here, I was formulating the beginnings of the concept of the *pseudo-pacification process*, and its breakdown into symbolic terrorism, a sublimated, symbolised variant of the Hobbesian warre of all against all. *Lightweight being* is a defensive mode of adaptation, not resistance or transgression. This was commissioned to appear in a special issue of the journal *Parallax* on the subject of violence, alongside articles by Slavoj Zizek (2000) and Georges Bataille (2000). It was chosen, again, to provide a contrast to the more liberal-humanist contributions of Aronowitz (2000) and others.

In an effort to apply my ideas to current issues, I wrote a short article focusing on the end of productivism, the development of the night-time economy and the increase in interpersonal violence (Hall, 2001). Here, I argued that the old repressive codes that had – in combination with the state monopoly of violence and the maintenance of figurational interdependencies in a relatively stable ‘social market economy’ – held the *id* in check had become impediments to the expansion of the commodity market in the era of manufactured hedonism. The current globalising economy has forced the West into various economic strategies based on hi-tech manufacture and the expansion of consumption, funded largely by a fragile ‘bubble economy’ of consumer debt, an inflated housing market and reciprocal service work. The commodity market has moved towards the colonisation of all aspects of leisure time, and the night-time economy in Britain has become an important source of profit, turning over something in the region of £30 billion per annum. 75% of recorded street violence is occurring in the under-policed night-strip, and our ethnographic work (by this time I had begun working with ethnographer Dr. Simon Winlow) suggests that this ignores a very large dark figure of unrecorded violence. The durable *habitus* of traditional masculinity has returned to reproduce itself in a liminal environment where the *id* is stimulated by manufactured hedonistic illusions, and alcohol diminishes the control of super-ego and ego. This was commissioned to appear alongside other acknowledged authorities on violence in a special issue of *Criminal Justice Matters*, and it was a useful exercise in the application of my developing ideas to current issues.

I was becoming aware that the concept of masculinity I was developing in my work did not square very well with most popular sociological conceptions, so it required further elaboration. The piece that I researched and wrote to address this problem

(Hall, 2002) was selected alongside another article written by Prof. Tony Jefferson (2002) as the pivot of a special issue of *Theoretical Criminology*. My article is currently (November 2005) # 9 on the list of the most-read articles in the world's top rated criminological journal. Dr. David Gadd and Dr. Stephen Farrall (2004) cited it as a useful way of presenting alternatives to cognitive theory in the exploration of men's violence, Dr. Pamela Davies, (2003) saw it as a useful way of linking gender to economy, Prof. Richard Collier (2004) and Dr. Katherine Williams (2004) cited it as an important work in best-selling introductory criminology textbooks, and Prof. Jock Young (2002) cited it as an example of how criminological theory is now at the cutting edge of many fields of social theory. It was a rather strident critique of the very popular concept of *hegemonic masculinity*, and it elicited an equally strident response by Prof. Robert Connell (2002), the principal architect of the concept in the 1980s.

This work was an attempt to mobilise my developing ideas in a critique of the *hegemonic masculinity thesis*, an influential discourse in the study of the relationship between men and violence in advanced capitalism. For me, *hegemonic masculinity* was a rather problematic transposition of the Gramscian version of hegemony from the class order to the gender order. It was rigidly embedded in the early feminist notion of male violence as simply an instrument of gender domination, an entitlement reproduced culturally as an abstract right and enacted in situations where authority was challenged. This ignored the empirical fact that most murder and serious violence is 'dominant' male upon 'dominant' male (Hall, 2002). The concept also ignored the complex splitting, reconfiguration and sublimation of violence in the shift from feudalism to capitalism. To me it seemed that visceral male cultures had been

functional, and thus systematically cultivated by those who claim to be 'civilized', whilst these symbol specialists wielded real hegemonic power and influence. I suggested that working class visceral masculinity and femininity were both products of this genuine class hegemony, and had been made redundant at the end of the productivist era. Thus 'subordinated' masculinities, which throughout modernity's class order had not necessarily been subordinated at all, were asserting themselves more audaciously in an era based on the symbolism of pacified commodity exchange.

Connell defended his idea in a response in the same issue of the journal. His defence was quite strident, but even in the midst of it he acknowledged that my ideas were valuable to the project of furthering knowledge in this field:

'Hall's discussion of the 'pacification' of social relations in the development of capitalism is interesting and suggestive.....[t]his discussion traces the development of techniques of social organization and control that certainly reduce violence in one direction, but augment it in another. For the very societies that were being 'pacified' internally (and we should not exaggerate the smoothness or success of this project) were simultaneously launching projects of global conquest and, from time to time, increasingly destructive wars against each other' (Connell, 2002:95-6).

In 2002 I began to work regularly with Dr. Simon Winlow. We had found that my theoretical formulations and his ethnographic research (see Winlow, 2001) complemented each other very well. By now it was becoming apparent to both of us

that, in an effort to throw off the unfashionable category of political economy, many liberal-culturalist discourses were downplaying the link between economic marginalisation and violence and unfairly misrepresenting the role of the post-war social democratic state in helping to maintain historically low rates of violence. The next piece (Hall and Winlow, 2003) was an attempt to apply my ideas to this problem. Since the neo-liberal revolution of the 1980s, the British state, unlike the social market states of Western Europe and Scandinavia, has been unable to maintain its productive economy. This fostered nihilism, cynicism and disaffection amongst many young working class people who found the new occupations of the so-called 'knowledge economy' to be arcane and unattractive. This has combined with the remorseless distractions and sanitised politics of mass-mediated consumerism to erode faith in the ability of political movements to manage socio-economic conditions. Alternative criminal markets have emerged in locales of permanent economic recession, creating an atmosphere of intimidation, increasing incidents of violence and seriously eroding the quality of life, and the habit of positing these phenomena as either mass-mediated exaggerations or examples of organic resistance in the interstices is actively counter-productive to the return of oppositional politics in Britain. Although the state has been chiefly an organ of the business classes, from the late 19th century to 1979 the very presence of the labour movement as a powerful representative of working class interests helped to stabilise communities and channel individualised intra-class hostility into collective politics. Low intra-class crime and violence was the result, but the return of higher rates of violent crime and the minimal-punitive state accompanied the reclamation of political economy by the neo-liberal business classes, a partial return to the privatised politics of the 18th century. This article was seen by Daniel Esser, from the LSE Development Studies Institute,

(2003), as a timely reminder that public security and violence reduction are irreducibly social issues, and by Dr. Gabe Mythen and Prof. Sandra Walklate (2005) as a useful argument suggesting that social 'risks' are differentially distributed across existing class cleavages.

The next piece (Hall and Winlow, 2003) was commissioned for a special issue of *Criminal Justice Matters* on gender, crime and violence. Following on from my critique of hegemonic masculinity and combining it with Dr. Winlow's (2001) ethnographic exploration of proletarian 'hard-men', this explored the problems of cultural and relational reductionism, and the centring of gender relations rather than the extraneous political forces that create and manage the crucial underlying socio-economic and cultural conditions in which gender forms construct themselves. The *visceral habitus* is unlikely to be cognitively 'contested' and 'renegotiated' as a symbolic form because it has been grounded in historical reality and exists as a durable and reproductive *emotional continuity* in conditions that encourage its reproduction. It will continue to exist and reproduce itself in those conditions where the contestation of its form is irrational and not an emotional requirement. The problem of positing symbolic relations and culture as the bedrock of society means that we cannot escape the cultural reductionist trap until we decipher the relationships between culture, meaning, emotion and extraneous forces and processes.

In *Barbarians at the Gate* (Hall and Winlow, 2004), I again combined my theoretical formulations with Dr. Winlow's ethnographic data to criticize cultural reductionism and explore the relationship between violent crime and *pseudo-pacification* in more detail. Because it has heuristically wrenched relational processes of meaning-

generation from capitalism's historical process and its mutating realities, culturalism has unwittingly bought into neo-liberalism, supporting gesture politics that have consistently proven to be ineffective and counter-productive. It sees the symbolic flotsam and jetsam produced by the manufactured 'fake revolts' of post-war youth culture as signs of culturo-political transgression, and buys into the eviscerated liberal 'abstract rights' discourse. The dominance of culturalism prevents the growth of the sort of politics that would engage in the economic management of areas in which the durable *visceral habitus* is likely to be reproduced, and intervene in consumerism's mass-mediated systems of symbolic exchange, which are the main vehicles for the dissemination of hegemonic projects. Violent crime is not resistance; it is hyper-identification with and hyper-conformity to the values propagated by competitive individualism, the business ethic and the ever-expanding spectacle of consumer dreams. As the project of political solidarity collapsed and former working class communities fragmented into potentially hostile micro-communities and individuals, the ancient connection between the joy of violence and the removal of threat and anxiety returned. A major mimetic shift occurred: displaying no sign of irony or parody, many young inhabitants of these former communities were beginning to identify almost exclusively with the violent, barbaric individual as a genuine contemporary role-model rather than a romantic relic. This alerted me to the fragility of the civilizing process and helped to confirm the value of my concept of the *pseudo-pacification process* and its potential breakdown as the foundation stone of our work. Here I decided that indeed it might be possible that, at least in the West, what we regard as an immutable benignity and yearning for peace at the core of the human psyche might be an accidental by-product of a specific phase of the capitalist project. There are indeed direct connections between capitalism's economic logic and its

social relations, cultural values, criminal practices and violence, and this work was immediately cited by Dr. Roy Coleman (2005) as a timely reminder that urban inequality, crime and violence are now linked in unique ways in the socially divisive 'branded' consumer city.

This galvanised us into arranging more ethnographic research. In the collection of data for the next article (Hall et al, 2005), we are grateful for financial help from Northumbria University, and eternally grateful for the help of researcher Craig Ancrum, a former Northumbria student and now a lecturer in criminology at the University of Teesside. We wanted to explore the mimetic relationship between violent young criminals, mass-media imagery and imagination. In localised crises of working class masculinity, these young men were identifying with and seeking guidance from media images of successful 'gangstas'. Working with the data gathered by Mr. Ancrum, under the supervision of myself and Dr. Winlow, what struck me here is how much many of the young men from these areas despised their fathers, chiefly for their inability to continue fending for themselves in a changing economy, and thus preferred these fictional role-models. We encountered yet again the sort of bleak cynicism, instrumentalism and nihilism that some other researchers can't seem to access or don't want to talk about. The abrupt 'liberation' from unrewarding work had, paradoxically, propelled these young people into the core values of capitalist culture; fulfilling the promises held therein is their all-consuming dream. We found no concept of collective solidarity or liberation *from* capitalist culture at all, and the only significant differences between these young people and the mainstream were chaotic (although not necessarily brutal) biographies, and the absence of the measured sublimation of ambition, respect for the law and respect for the feelings of others in

the practicing of strategies for personal success. This is a product of the past and present experiential realities that the history made by the agents of the collective dream has laid down, not just the negotiation of meaning in the relational present. The implication is that if politics cannot significantly change advanced capitalism's localised 'deposits of the real' by regulating the brutality of the market and intervening in consumerism's symbolic system, it cannot prevent the reproduction of this form. The market demand for violent imagery is, for these young people, a product of the quest for the affirmation of an identity emerging as a self-recoding modification of a *visceral habitus* in specific locations in the *breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process*, thus again emphasising my concepts as the foundation stones of what is being increasingly acknowledged as an important and original theoretical position in the criminological discipline.

The next step (Hall and Winlow, 2005a) was an exploration of the psychology of male violence in the *breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process*. Once again, it was based on Dr. Winlow's ethnographic data and my theoretical concepts. *Anti-Nirvana*, another one of my original formulations, explains how the basic anxiety systematically fostered by consumer capitalism as a fuel for its economic dynamism can manifest itself in a variety of forms, some passively conformist and some violently conformist, which are shaped largely by the sublimation-desublimation axis and differences in localised cultures and biographical experiences. This is what appears as 'malleability', 'difference' and 'innovation' to culturalists, yet our research suggested that atomised competitive instrumentalism remains as a deeply lodged common drive in all but the most beaten individuals, who simply withdraw and languish. The collective defence of mutual class interests, rewards, rights and

privileges has been replaced by the desperate individual quest for material and symbolic functions in the consumer/service economy. Thus anxiety is intensified, because the means of resolving increased psychic tension have actually shrunk rather than expanded as many forms of productive work and alternative symbolic value have disappeared. Concomitantly, these desires have displaced human needs, and the psyche is stimulated by the consumer spectacle's relentless symbolic interplay, and can only be fleetingly satisfied by the acquisition and display of its symbols. This is currently # 9 on the list of most-read articles in the international journal *Crime, Media, Culture*.

The final piece (Hall and Winlow, 2005b) is a streamlined synopsis of our 'work so far', for a social policy journal, again written chiefly by myself. It explores some of the basic implications for social policy, and affirms our argument in support of stable socio-economic life and the attenuation of the symbolic stimulation of consumerism as crucial requirements for the reduction of violent crime. The current social management's fixation with 'cognition' is partly a desperate attempt to deal with the 'third nature' (see Wouters, 1999) emerging from the sociogenetic and psychogenetic processes of advanced capitalism. The super-ego is less reliable as a mechanism of internal control, so the accent is now placed on rational consequentialism and the utilitarian assessment of personal risk. This piece focused on violence in the night-time economy, consumer capitalism's lucrative 'liminal zone', as one of the principal indications that we are in the first stages of the *breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process*. We reinforced the claim that alcohol is not a cause of violence, rather a disinhibitor, and I took the opportunity to reinforce the political point that runs throughout the whole project: if Anglo-American societies want to reduce their

violence rates, the political institutions governing agencies of social policy should revisit advanced capitalism's consumer economy as a principal site in which the reproduction of violent cultural values, meanings and practices takes place.

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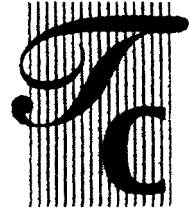
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Chapter 2

Visceral Cultures and Criminal Practices



Visceral Cultures and Criminal Practices

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Abstract

This paper will claim that capital's historical process produces durable forms of violent criminality because intense phases of this process constitute specific cultures at the emotional level as 'visceral being'. As the productivist era recedes, the globalizing neo-capitalist market-place, based on circulation, consumption and social administration, is currently establishing itself as the principal form of economic life. Because these activities demand ever more eviscerated and domesticated forms of life, visceral cultures, once functional in the productivist era, are now finding themselves redundant. Some individuals and micro-communities heavily committed to this obsolete way of life are finding little alternative but to invest what have become very durable emotional dispositions as cultural capital in the field of criminal practice. Because the ontological foundation of these forms of life is viscosity, the liberal administration's politico-legal regulation of symbolic interchange, provision of equalized opportunity or encouragement of active citizenry can have only limited ameliorative effects on escalating levels of violent crime. Mutating forms of violent criminality are the products of historical material processes; they are susceptible to human intervention only if politics moves beyond its current role of managing market forces to one of direct engagement with the central systems of capitalist value and logic that drive these processes forward.

Key Words

domestication • market • politics • postmodernism • violence
• viscosity

Violent crime: some reservations about the liberal democratic solution

The liberal enthusiasm for engineering the conditions for social progress within the dynamics of Western capitalism has been sinking rapidly into melancholic disillusionment over the last 20 years. Despite a century of administrative tinkering, John Hagan (1994) tells us that violent crime levels in the USA are 'staggering' and public faith in systems of justice is at an all time low. Elliot Currie (1997) reminds us of the alarming escalation of violent crime in former command economies—Eastern Europe, Russia, China—which are currently embracing the forces of the market. Even those nations of the old capitalist world which were noted for low levels of violence in the post-war era, such as Holland and Britain, have experienced notable statistical increases since the mid-1980s. As a general explanation, the old Left-Idealist notion that this increase is simply an exaggeration constructed by the ideological activity of the Right in order to justify authoritarian governance and cultural domination, is beginning to look unconvincing. Supported by the growing suspicion that much mundane violent activity might be consistently under-reported and under-signified rather than exaggerated, and reinforced further by the ethnographically revealed 'lived experience' of many victims, increasing violence has begun to establish itself as a genuine problem in social scientific discourse (Sparks et al., 1977; Stanko, 1990; Lea and Young, 1993; James, 1995).

The need to revise decades of complacency or denial has revealed a dearth of theoretical explanations (Gross, 1982), galvanizing the establishment into producing what might pass for some fresh ideas. Although recent attempts made by mainstream social science to re-theorize violent crime have been nuanced according to their various 'leftist', 'centrist' or 'rightist' stances, the general focus has been on the possibility that vital socio-cultural institutions are being eroded and stultified by the incursion of market forces into every aspect of life. Some have remained true to their classicist faith in the ability of these abstract forces, if they are given free reign and backed by utilitarian legal regulation (Wilson, 1975, 1992; Clarke, 1980; Wilson and Kelling, 1982), to arrange more convivial forms of social life on our behalf. However, in the troubled 1990s many more are drifting over to a more centre-left conception of the market as an unstable, unpredictable authority that *always* requires some form of regulation. In the current retreat from revolutionary politics and the consequent scramble for the middle ground, much mainstream political and social theory has conceded the point that the commodity market is a universally vital institution because of its practical ability to organize economic activity and create what is, compared to preceding historical epochs, an extraordinarily high level of material wealth (Hutton, 1995). The market is essential, they say, but if we are to substantially reduce levels of crime and violence, equally so is its social regulation (Taylor, 1997; Currie, 1997).

Again, criminological conceptions of the nature and focus of this essen-

tial regulation vary, but there has been a general concentration on poverty, inequality, social exclusion and hegemonic cultural domination as the probable primary causes—or at least precipitatory conditions—of violent crime in market-driven societies (Wilson, 1987; Scraton and Chadwick, 1991). Currie (1997) mobilizes these arguments succinctly, depicting an emergent global market-place whose forces invade and colonize every aspect of the social world, eroding regulatory communal institutions and forcing upon us an aggressive, instrumental 'dog-eat-dog' way of life that, in various tacit and overt ways, encourages the personal use of violence as an available means to the only acceptable ends.

These socio-cultural conditions and the sorts of antagonistic human behaviour they encourage are more often than not seen as the products of unjust social relationships which are structured principally by the struggles of active human agents (Thompson, 1963; Ignatieff, 1978). Consequently, left-liberalism has tended to centralize the role that mainstream politico-legal and ideological struggle plays in the way socio-economic life is arranged in the midst of market forces, and how this struggle is difficult for the relatively powerless because of the dissonant power imbalance in the relationship between the *polity* and the *demos*. A standard form of liberal critique has emerged from this basic position: because there is not enough democracy, the voices of the powerless are simply not heard. Institutions whose task is to administer the essential activity of political communication are failing to organize the representative practices necessary to establish egalitarian communicative relationships among a plurality of interest groups in civil society. Instead, politico-legal institutions have been developed primarily to reproduce the power of the dominant culture. Because subordinate groups tend to be substantively excluded from fully participative citizenship, their voices go unheard and therefore the market cannot be regulated by political intervention in specific ways that could liberate them from the conditions that might precipitate violent criminality.

As a glowing illustration of this structured power imbalance, many of those criminologists who invoke the principles of radical liberalism and democratic socialism present the iniquities of the legal system. Much effort is expended demonstrating empirically the ways in which it is undemocratic, unaccountable and not at all successful at dispensing justice fairly. The main reason for this failing is that, from the very beginning of the dual project of enlightenment and capitalism, the rationalized secular legal system was developed principally to represent, support and reproduce dominant interests (Parker et al., 1989; Worrall, 1990; Brown, 1991). There is much truth in this critique, but honest criminological evaluations of concrete attempts to democratize the justice system, and return an important element of social power to civil society through the encouragement of 'participative citizenship', have produced depressing results. Systems of informal justice, for example, may have been a useful adjunct to the strategies of professionals in the formal justice system, but they have proved ineffective in their attempts to reconvene communicative social

relationships by devolving power, facilitating active citizenship and strengthening cohesion in the community. The upshot of the more critical evaluations of the informal justice movement (see Abel, 1982; Matthews, 1988) is that the existence of some sort of 'natural impulse' towards just and convivial communal solidarity—what we might call a *sociotropism*—tends to be taken for granted by its supporters.

Many critical evaluations of socio-legal engineering in 'high-crime areas' have not revealed opposition to the external authority of bourgeois culture at all, but rather distinctly apolitical, internally directed practices of crime, violence and antagonism; a view supported by convincing evidence that most violent or 'aggravated' crime is intra-class (Lea and Young, 1993). So intense was the conflict, suspicion and alienation in some troubled urban areas that most attempts to bring communities together have tended to exacerbate the conflict rather than orchestrate moves towards harmony (Finestone, 1976; Robins, 1992). From evaluations of the complex lineage of community initiatives concerned with crime and disorder, from the early Chicago Area Projects through to the current jumble of social micro-surgeries, two consistent and resonant findings have emerged; first, that these measures can aid community solidarity and reduce violence, aggression and intimidation only in those urban areas where the situation is not too serious in the first place; and second, that they are ineffective in high-crime areas, such as those investigated by Campbell (1993, 1995) and Robins (1992), where the situations are sufficiently malignant to engender concern from all political positions.

Undeterred by the sobering sagacity of this sort of critical evaluation, the liberal humanist mythology seems to have gathered its strength and carried on. It motivates, for instance, Cohen (in Nelken, 1994) to suggest that the marketizing states in Eastern Europe—the same places wherein Curry (1997) detects widespread 'social disintegration' and the 'endemic social pathology' of gang violence—could provide an opportunity for critical criminology to involve itself in the establishment of 'humanitarian, integrative control strategies'. Pavarini (in Nelken, 1994), echoing the 1960s radicalism of Christie and Alinsky, still insists that criminology's task is to encourage 'communities as a whole' to make their own decisions in the midst of market forces. Because they reaffirm themselves even more vigorously at a time when capital's storm of techno-rational 'progress' is gusting harder than it has done for over a century, ripping old productivist communities up by their roots and scattering their seed into the Diaspora, the beliefs that sustain this left-liberal optimism seem to be based upon a very robust and authoritative metaphysic.

The 'natural citizen' as transcendental signifier

What sustains this faith? I have little argument with radical criminology's basic premise that some sorts of dominating forces are at work in the

fabrication of violent crime. However, I do want to take issue with what I consider to be a tacit idealist—but also part rationalist and part romantic—metaphysic underpinning the left-liberal discourse; namely, that an inextinguishable yearning for autonomous participation in liberal democracy or the establishment of egalitarian forms of self-government fuels the emancipatory struggles of subordinate groups. This sort of assumption carries the corollary that if the repression of the dominant culture's institutional apparatus is lifted, the forces of justice will be found in potentially creative and sociable cultures waiting in a condition of latent autonomy in civil society, and that these forces might actively oppose, or at least deflect, the colonization of their world by the logic of the market and the culture of the commodity (Jefferson, 1994; Stanley, 1996).

The phatic communication of this conception of the 'oppositional struggle for justice and community' against the invasive market culture of the bourgeoisie has underpinned much of the historical and critical work of liberal-humanist sociology and criminology in the post-war era. A diluted, culturalized variant of Marx's more precise, conjunctural concept of 'class struggle', it has become a transcendental signifier in left-liberal and humanist Marxist discourse, a metaphysical first principle, of which any undermining is considered heretical. However, the lack of rigorous, reflexive, appraisal accompanying its establishment could create the suspicion that this supposed 'orientation to harmonious community' might be an ideological device constructed to support internal metaphysical comfort and external proselytization, not a concrete presence in the practical world.

Throughout history we can detect as many variations on this theme of a natural unifying-civilizing tendency as there have been people thinking and writing about it. It pervades the Enlightenment world from the 'adventitious ideas' of the Cartesian soul, through Rousseauian 'nobility' and Kant's 'deep moral nature' to the Sartrean 'authentic self'. I have described the metaphysical basis of this elsewhere as a '... vulgar form of Rationalist Idealism' located at the dawn of the Enlightenment project (Hall and Horne, forthcoming), a sort of romanticized Cartesianism. Liberalism has expended much prelectorial effort convincing itself that, underneath the horrors of modernism, industrial capitalism and imperialism lies the essentially reasonable, convivial and rational person, the icon of the Enlightenment project. Faith in this metaphysic at least matches the strength of the Christian creation myth of the 'fallen'—and thus eternally sinful—human nature that underpins the opposing tradition of conservative ontology. It is a faith so deep that, in the wake of the technologically inflated slaughter and genocide of the Second World War, Western culture was prompted not to question but to reaffirm the axiom that somewhere underneath all of this must be the eternal glow of the ember of humanity. Universal human rights were declared in 1948, based on the assumption of equivalent universal *desires* for tangible forms of edification and consummation—security, work, justice, education, culture, community. The equitable distribution of these rights among fundamentally rational, sociotropic individuals was to

precipitate the sort of tolerant sociability that was to be the basis of the New Jerusalem; to realize it, we needed, above all else, to open channels of democratic *communication*.

Interestingly enough, this metaphysical principle was also imported into the ostensibly more rigorous terrain of leftist criminology. What is hoped might happen if, for instance, Parker's (1989) courtroom ever became less absurd and oppressive, or Brown's (1991) magistrates more consistent, or Kinsey's (1986) police more democratically accountable, is an almost instantaneous reflexive response from those freed from the oppression of power imbalance and a return to a natural state of sociability. The idea seems to be that more equality, justice and fair democratic representation would promote better education, inter-cultural tolerance, improved social services and greater opportunity in the labour market. It might well do so, but the concomitant inference was that this emancipatory project, carried out in the shadow of unstable market dynamics, might begin to erase over 300 years of deep, ontological formalizing, might significantly transform the material processes of social reproduction, and might quickly begin to produce new generations of benign, willing citizens; an assertion that has to raise suspicions in the most mildly sceptical intellect.

Let us for a brief moment assume that this myth holds true. If so, what exactly is the nature of this malevolent thing that engulfs the latent conviviality of 'sociotropic being', eliciting in some of its oppressed subjects the response of violence? It is, of course, the cultural repression and political subjugation of the powerless by the powerful. The liberal-left orthodoxy that has dominated radical discourse in the 20th century has been at pains to centralize social division, but it tends to posit the processes of power differentiation and cultural formalization at the level of communication, discourse and symbolic interchange, where representational oppression and politico-discursive power imbalance become the root of the problem and, as such, the site of political manipulation.

From social constructionism to deconstructionism, the idealist continuum has conceptualized the violent criminal as some sort of mediated abstraction in a rhetorical strategy evolved by the signifiatory power of dominant collectivities. The fecundity of this meta-narrative has allowed the propagation and cross-fertilization of many conceptual offspring: the violent criminal could be either a labelled form in a universal process of symbolic interaction (Becker, 1963); or a product of their own isolated, rationalized justifications (Sykes and Matza, 1957); or a 'folk-devil' in the mythology of the dominant culture (Cohen, 1973); or an ideological/hegemonic construct of the dominant culture (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Box, 1983); or a projection of the 'fears of the respectable classes' (Pearson, 1983, 1985); or a constituted subject/object of professional discourse (Worrall, 1990); or one of the transcendental signifiers of a conservative-reactionary system of thought (Young and Rush, 1994). These variations have characterized the left-liberal and humanist Marxist discourses in criminology for over 30 years. Writers like Hall, Box and Pearson would

probably be the first to point out the importance of material processes as part of the constitutive basis of the problem. However, their insistence on ideology and symbolic interchange as the principal reconstitutive and reproductive mechanism within a synchronic relational structure is problematic. As I will argue in detail later, it is much more likely that the primary force that motivates and reproduces most forms of life constituted in capital's productivist era is neither structural nor ideological, but *visceral*.

The sanitisation of the future in affirmative postmodernist criminology

Despite the civilizational undulations of Western history, the progressivist edict still retains its authority in liberal thought. Whatever conjunction of forces and combination of circumstances defines the historical context, there must always be possibilities of constructive dissent and benign forms of 'new life' striving for a qualitatively better future in the interstices of the old order (Harré, 1979, 1983; Stanley, 1996). While there was the vestige of a materialist current in Foucault's earlier conception (1977) of the 'habitualized' delinquent as an *embodied* product of 'disciplinary technology', this still rather fashionable formulation, however, has lost its material current altogether in the triturating and sanitizing processes of affirmative postmodernist criminology. Quite simply, the dismissal of that element of Foucault's work which stressed the *economic function* of the disciplinary society has allowed an overestimation of the autonomous objectifying/subjectifying power of 'regulatory discourses' (Burkitt, 1991), thus marginalizing the material formalizing processes of the rationalized capitalist project itself. We must suspect that the liberating power of 'discursive reconstruction' (see Henry and Milovanovic, 1996; Stanley, 1996) might be equally overestimated.

For example, Stanley's discussion of the relationship between contemporary urban culture and legal regulation furnishes us with a concise and rather revealing rendition of the 'affirmative' version of the postmodern metaphysics of social change:

The simple identification from the physical sciences that if a force is operative then a counter-force is produced suggests that the forces operative in the city in terms of regulation, order, colonisation and territorialisation generate the counter-forces of deregulation, disorder, de-colonisation and de-territorialisation.

(1996: v)

But what sort of disorder? What is being affirmed here is the traditional hope that 'possible spaces of community and justice' might arise in the

interstitial fissures of a hegemony fractured by the deregulatory effects of its own demands for excess. Stanley's hypothesis, purged of its entertaining hyperbole, is actually quite simple; he hopes that capital—or at least its dominant culture—is in serious crisis because of the tension created by its contradictory needs for social regulation and market deregulation, and in the meantime some alienated urban cultures emerging in the 'interstitial fissures' are beginning to look for something else. However, despite the imaginative exposition of complex, spiralling dialectics, his basic metaphor of capital as some sort of 'structure' in which 'cracks and fissures' can appear is quite simply wrong; it even contradicts his own dialectical elaborations. I have argued elsewhere (Horne and Hall, 1995) that capital is not a brittle structure but a dynamic reticulation of forms, meanings and practices driven forward by a central logic. There can be no 'fissures' in this fluvial plasma, only eddies that produce turbulence until the energy of their contraflow is dissipated.

Standing on this shaky ground, the rest of the analysis is replete with problems. The 'something else' that emergent forms of life are supposed to be looking for is loaded with humanistic baggage; in particular the assumption that many alternative cultures are 'transgressive and subversive' of the dominant hegemony and somehow ethically desirous of 'community and justice'. Some might well be, but Stanley ignores the dualistic *conformity* that also characterizes the contemporary subcultural landscape; the intense entrepreneurial competitiveness and aggression in some forms of life (Robins, 1992; Hall, 1995; Hobbs, 1995), and the eviscerated domestication and apathy in others (Marcuse, 1964; Schiller, 1976; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979). The assumption that neo-capital is in a state of fragmentation, rather than what Jameson (1990) calls system modification, is also problematic. It is perhaps more likely that capital's new order is in the preliminary throes of its development, cultivating among its agents cultures of domesticated transgression so that they can contribute to the exfoliation of the prohibitive old order. Thus the relentless neologistic expansion that the central logic demands is accelerated rather than challenged.

Stanley also assumes that '... transgression is an affirmative function "toward transcendence" in the erosion of the norm ...' (1996: x), rather than a force in the expansion of the commodity market. From the beginning the dialectical process of transgression and transcendence has established itself as the norm; it is not necessarily a form of 'resistance', but in fact a part of capital's central cultural dynamic, which has slipped into overdrive in post-war consumerist culture. Resolute resistance to the capitalist process has been very rare, and up to now it has of course proven rather ineffective.

Postmodernist criminology and sociology, following in the wake of the perceived failure of a unilinear, progressivist, social engineering strategy, has to a large extent rejected political economy and emphasized the more

culturalist concepts of diversity, autonomy and 'multilayered democratic participation' (Henry and Milovanovic, 1996; Giddens, 1990). But this move towards the recognition of diversity has been subjugated to a large extent by the insistent presence of the liberal-humanist first principle, which has deflected the original demands of the likes of Derrida and Lyotard for an admission of the failure of *all* totalizing meta-narratives. Postmodernist criminologists seem to be intent on turning what should be an open-minded intellectual project into this 'affirmative' variant (Henry and Milovanovic, 1996), reworking the liberal-humanist metaphysic into a nostalgic and terminally over-extended sort of ethogenic culturalism.¹ In this narrative, forms of alternative value can be created by the replacement discourses of 'heterotopic' cultures emerging in the interstices of a fragmenting hegemonic order (Henry and Milovanovic, 1996; Stanley, 1996; Young, 1996). Except perhaps for more penetrative theorists like Baudrillard (1993), Mestrovic (1993), and ethnographers like Hobbs (1994, 1995)—whose concepts of 'diversity', rather than this sanitized notion of 'difference', acknowledge the possibility of a genuine, visceral 'otherness' with no real interest in the future progress of human civilizations at all—the collections of 'situated subjectivities' that might constitute a potential 'heterotopia' seem to be simply updated variations of the traditional conception of sociotropic being. Thus affirmative postmodernism drags the 'theories of the margins' right back to the centre, ushering them through the liberal decontamination chamber to create a sanitized vision of the shifting configurations of cultural forms that will populate our uncertain market-driven future.

The sort of reflexivity criminology is currently employing to '... understand itself and its own conditions of existence ...' (Nelken, 1994: 10) is based upon the constant examination and revision of the categories of its own 'gaze'. Yet it seems that radical criminology, in keeping with liberal intellectual culture in general, cannot allow itself to perform the genuinely liberating but uncomfortable move of letting go of the sacred 'first principle' which—although I have highlighted only selected paradigms as examples—seems to underpin its metanarrative. Thus its reflexive strategies can only be skin deep. A continued adherence to this faith disallows the conception of a dualistic will-to-life, one that consists of destructive, unreasonable drives—acknowledged and centralized by so many Western intellectuals from Aristotle to Freud—in tension with the social (or perhaps more accurately *civilizational*) potential for creative rationality and altruism (Eco, 1995; Elias, 1988; Mestrovic, 1993; Keane, 1996). In doing this it has also denied the possibility of violent and destructive cultural forms emerging in the material processes of specific historical periods (Barker, 1993). The disturbing possibility is that the eternal hope of liberal democracy in fact rests upon an impoverished, one-dimensional conception of humanity; a conception that ignores the destructive side of the social dialectic, preferring instead to see pre-existent human beings charged with

the ineradicable philanthropic potential for tolerant, altruistic and co-operative community. We could call this the myth of the *natural citizen*.

Historical process and the constitution of visceral being

There are few theoretical positions from which a challenge to this liberal humanist myth can be made, unless we look again at the possibility that *material* processes might be capable of establishing visceral and durable forms of life. Social science is beginning to reconsider the idea that the visceral—the body and its emotional constitution—is not simply an expressive instrument but a primary motivational force in human life (Wouters, 1986; Bourdieu, 1990; Elias, 1994; Mestrovic, 1997). Although all would agree that the visceral habitus is certainly not natural (i.e. biologically determined) or immutable (Leledakis, 1995), it might well be durable in the sense that it is quite capable of surviving through shifts in the social order (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990; Hall, 1995). If a durable violent habitus has been established in specific locations of the productivist order, it may well be that, under the prevailing material conditions, a more convivial life cannot be engineered at the superstructural level of political organization and representation, or expected to emerge organically from some suppositious ‘interstices’ in a fragmenting social order. The evidence of escalating violence and aggression in the West discussed in the first section of this paper compels us to question the formulation that our progressivist politico-legal strategies—the establishment of a just and tolerant politico-legal mechanism, the readjustment of social relationships, the encouragement of cultural autonomy or even the establishment of a re-inclusionist economic policy—will either elicit participation in democratic politics or encourage the emergence of benign forms of self-government in civil society. Moreover, the shedding of violent, reactionary or antisocial ‘subjectivities’ cannot be considered a likely outcome of this politico-symbolic activity because, as I will go on to argue, the practical ways of life in our past have produced ‘heavyweight’, emotional forms of being with durable drives and dispositions at least as much as they have ‘lightweight’, infinitely malleable mentalistic forms temporarily fixed by a prevailing symbolic order.

If we are to move beyond these suspect formulations then we must also revise theories which tend to disregard direct articulation with the historical material processes through which cultural form is established and the visceral human agents of social reproduction are constituted. By ‘visceral’ I mean driven by specific forms of inculcated will, desire and disposition which are established in the process of adapting to the practical logics of situated forms of everyday life. To begin the construction of a basic framework I think it is necessary to pull back from the current headlong flight into the ether of radical liberalism or affirmative postmodernism and

return temporarily to a fundamental concept that has unfortunately been misappropriated by conservative philosophy; that of 'active disposition'.

It is certainly possible that the situated, embodied individual is something much more substantial and autogenic than the hapless victim of the symbolic representations and practical outcomes of an alliance of fearful and 'undemocratic' authoritarian discourses, and something much more contingent than the 'natural citizens' of affirmative postmodernist theory. This, I would suggest, is particularly true of those individuals and groups who are persistently involved in intimidatory or violent practices. Perhaps it is possible to begin to construct a few theoretical tools with which we can challenge the left-liberal orthodoxy. We could start with some ideas, currently in circulation, based on the individual as situated, embodied, social being in terms of:

- 1 active engagement with material processes (in terms of technology, economy and the production of material life);
- 2 spatial outcomes (in terms of the distribution of cultural forms in geographical locales, within an overall process of uneven development);
- 3 the symbolic order (in terms of the constitution and reproduction of meaning, imagined subjectivities and symbolic values);
- 4 fluvial social dynamics (in terms of the shifting relations of production, reproduction and political representation);
- 5 the ontology of being (in terms of the emotional embodiment in 'visceral disposition', through enforced adaptive activity, of practical logics and cultural form).

This final element of the process of social fabrication has been systematically ignored or devalued by the discourses of left-liberalism, possibly because of its anti-humanist connotations and its superficial closeness to the 'habits of the heart' discourses in neo-conservative social theory (see Bellah et al., 1985). But its absence denies the possibility of a comprehensive analysis of cultural development. In fact it is possible that we are ignoring or marginalizing what could be one of the primary processes that connect culture to economy, and for that reason we will briefly review it in the neologizing context of the transition from capitalism to neo-capitalism.

All of these processes, orders and forms must be placed in the macro-context of a specific historical project driven by capital's remorseless socio-economic logic. Throughout this historical project the social world has evolved through the socio-spatial organization of human life specifically for the expansion of 'abstracted value'. The organization of orderly production, circulation and consumption according to the logic of the commodity market demanded the *domestication* of the population. The external strategies evolved in the service of this domesticating project were complex combinations of naked force, expropriation of resources, state regulation and the dissemination of legitimizing ideology. But what consolidated the organizational potential of these unreliable strategies was the *emotional*

enrolment of active agents and collectivities in the capitalist project. This was a twofold strategy. First, its *repressive mode* relied upon the internalization of external controls (Elias, 1994) and the consequent constitution of 'civilized sensibilities' that would allow orderly participation in the webs of interdependencies which were essential to the production, exchange and consumption of commodities. Second, its *cultivational mode* relied upon the emotional incorporation of human beings into the practical tasks of production, circulation and consumption by culturally valorizing these tasks to the extent that participation invoked feelings of pleasure, satisfaction and pride and exclusion feelings of pain, lack and shame. In the process of domestication not only were human beings forcibly manoeuvred into practical locations demanded by capital's logic but also they became emotionally attached to them because above all else they represented *security*. Value, pleasure and security came to be defined by the 'magic moments' of producing, exchanging or consuming a commodity, and emancipation by occupational ascension through the hierarchies that evolved round the differing functional value of the practical tasks. Any conception of finding combinations of functional value, pleasure and security 'outside' this project virtually disappeared.

Although historical 'becoming' in the development of this project is the general process demanding and constituting specific ways of life, the *spatialization* element of this process is also important. Spatialization in this sense is the distribution of social being as a psychological and affective entity actively forming itself in the process of adapting to the imperatives encountered in the spatial locations deposited by the historical process. This spatio-historical process must be seen as the constitution of active bodies who populate the shifting reticulation of relational fields. Space was organized to meet the urgent demands of capital, especially in periods of crisis or accelerated growth. Those demands were *economic*, driven by the objective logic of the central dynamic which relentlessly sought opportunities for profit, the practical facilitation of social control and the stimulation of increased production and consumption (Soja, 1989). If we suspend for a moment the nostalgic leftist beliefs that this dynamic produced brave 'resistance' from stout-hearted working-class authentics and that this resistance was and is a culturally constitutive and reproductive force, we are compelled to consider the possibility that material survival in these spaces demanded the active constitution and reproduction of cultural forms. They were not the product of resistance but of *urgent, inclusionist, adaptive activity* during these periods of intense change when the basic means of survival and livelihood—the material foundation which made the autonomous political imagination and creative dreams of the future *feasible*—were expropriated.

How can we use these materialist formulations of cultural constitution as the grounding for an explanation for contemporary forms of violent activity? We could begin with a necessarily brief investigation of the *specific locations* of the general spatio-historical process that have constituted those

visceral forms of being whose contemporary empirical appearance suggests a durable disposition to habitual violence.

It is almost banality to insist that the dynamic process which characterized this rationalizing industrial capitalism in its 18th and 19th century heyday demanded the elaboration among its subjects of a whole range of attitudes, skills, dispositions and practices predicated upon the productive imperative. Punctuality, sobriety, conscientiousness and the other 'respectable working-class virtues' (vigorously promoted by the nascent labour organizations and working-class institutions) went along with the specifically job-denoted physical skills of hand, eye or muscle which primary production required. Such virtues, of course, never became universal: but they became the standard, the norm from which departures were acknowledged to be deviant (Thompson, 1963; Hobsbawm, 1975; Procacci, 1978).

It is perhaps less banal to insist that another set of skills were concurrently assimilated by industrial workers, primarily those who inhabited the lower strata of the emerging hierarchy of labour, if we define the term 'skills' to include all special acquired attributes dependent upon a particular set of social and practical imperatives. In the early capitalist context of only patchily mechanized heavy industries ('Fordism' was never a *universally applied* productivist strategy) these skills were those which enabled workers to accept—and ultimately glory in—the intolerable conditions of back-breaking, mind-numbing physical toil. Predominant among these skills were those predicated upon traits of fortitude, persistence and endurance collectively known as 'hardness' (Willis, 1978), a rigidity of thought and sedulous restriction of mental activity (Marcuse, 1964; Willis, 1978) and the sort of ethically untroubled egocentrism necessary to negotiate the intense competition of the casual labour market (Bonger, 1916; Hall, 1995).

Especially in the heavy industrial sector, the production process remained only patchily mechanized throughout the 19th and 20th centuries up to the Second World War, and practical adaptive activity was demanded in occupations which were often characterized by notably harsh and brutal conditions. The possibility exists that, in response to the immediacy of these conditions, durable cultural forms established themselves, developing internally coherent 'practical logics' founded upon physical 'hardness', mental sclerosis and egocentrism (which opposed all political variants of civilized practice) and producing subjects whose fierce devotion to these practices was held in place by the enforced development of a suite of brutalized sensibilities. There is no doubt that it was in the immediate interests of these groups, forced into competition at the bottom end of the labour hierarchy, to actively collude in the establishment and maintenance of both the myth and the reality of their 'hardness'. They staked a claim on this brutal engagement with the only available sectors of the industrial division of labour, and thus internally reproductive visceral cultures that were peculiar to industrial capitalism were born (Hall, 1995).

The naturalization of these forms of being and the generation of dispositions necessary to compete in the intense struggle at the lower end of the labour market were to their immediate practical advantage. They were not initially the product of ideology or labelling (or any other cognitive or communicative process) but of the emergence of enforced logics which quickly established themselves as cultural practices internalized by a process of emotional structuring (Hall, 1995). There is strong evidence to suggest that cultures of 'hardness' are durable, visceral forms with notably strong powers of internal generation and reproduction, and that the physical energy and vigour of human beings caught up in this reproductive process embodies these practical logics and emotional structures in intensely dynamic forms (see Hobbs, 1994, 1995; Horne and Hall, 1995). This process sustains the sorts of dispositions towards unrestricted physical 'hardness' which manifest themselves as sporadic, unpredictable actions of intimidation and violence, erupting constantly—occasionally in spectacular but usually in mundane and quite unsensational ways—against a constant background static of undirected aggressivity.

The excision of visceral being and the free transfer to criminality

The anarchic dynamism of capital, which demands that it should continually remake itself in ever more modern forms, has left behind the conditions and practicalities of its original establishment. The technologies which have been developed in its headlong flight from its own past have virtually rendered production itself moribund, at least in its classic formations. The commodity cycle is to a large degree short-circuited and we have seen the end—at least in theory—of needs and scarcity in the West; which is to say, the end of the desperate quest for raw materials and for manufacturing processes by which these are transformed into commodities—by and within which processes classical capitalism grounded its very being.

Neo-capitalism, in sharp contradistinction, inhabits a technological universe where human work itself has become largely marginal to production and social being is increasingly invested within the cycles of circulation and consumption. The 'post-industrial paradigm' is one in which increasing managerial, bureaucratic and technological investment has superseded the productivist paradigm of a former age. By adopting the term 'post-industrial' to refer to the current configuration of capitalist forces I intend to indicate a process whereby certain fundamental facts of the classical capitalist mode have evaporated and novel, often provisional, forms are emerging in the redirected flow. I do not seek to mark an 'arrival' at any new synthesis, but rather acknowledge a series of points of departure. Over the past generation the capitalist mode has undergone a radical shift in its very bases of operation, its meanings and its forms: it is no longer the case

of the rational remoulding of processes but the radical regouging of the river's bedrock.

One thing has become very clear from the nature and trajectory of this transmutation: the new configuration of forces predicates a new form of social being. The painful struggles of this social being's realization are the concrete base upon which current notions of 'postmodernity' are grounded. But, just as post-industrial capitalism has no place for the monolithic productive engines of heavy industry, so its new form of social being finds the traditional industrial virtues of 'hardness' and sclerotic mental inflexibility, previously tolerated or even tremulously glorified when they were functional to the expansion of imperial capitalist nation-states, embarrassing if not abhorrent. Such a state of being is the Brave New World's concrete, practical 'Other' (Horne and Hall, 1995).

The illustrations alluded to in this essay (see also Horne and Hall, 1995) can be interpreted as a demonstration of how dispositions and practices—we use Bourdieu's (1977) term 'habitus'—which allowed workers to accept and even glory in the intolerably brutal conditions which characterized semi-mechanized manufacture during capitalist expansion throughout the 19th century were not 'socially constructed' by phenomenological or politico-discursive means (and certainly not *consciously* chosen) but materially enforced and emotionally adopted as durable 'ways of life'. This, combined with the complementary habitus emerging from the amoral and conscience-inhibiting competitive struggle forced upon them in the casual labour market (Stedman-Jones, 1971; Hobbs, 1994), necessitated the generation and adoption of voracious, egocentric dispositions. Intensely committed variations of this habitus, still valorized by a productivist economy and at least partially represented by less compromising political languages until very recently, are now beginning to reconstitute themselves by recalling their inculcated strategy of viscosity, but this time as a form of resistance to the efforts of a re-directed world to domesticate them or, failing this, permanently discard them. The illustrations also suggest a strong link between this predominantly—but not exclusively—masculine form of life and a tendency towards violent activity, the depth of devotion to this durable habitus by more emotionally committed members, and the impenetrable strength of the defence strategies unconsciously activated to repudiate the incorporationist inducements of liberal democracy.

These formulations indicate the presence of a number of untheorized and unresearched criminological possibilities. Despite the decline (perhaps moving rapidly towards a complete *disvaluation*) in the utility of arduous physical labour and its attendant habitus, traditional practices continue to be reproduced in a form of life that cannot *emotionally* accept its own obsolescence. Also, because of the sedulous restriction of thought and practice which initially ensured its survival it is tragically denied the sort of reflexivity necessary to engage with the intense struggle for a valorized existence within the mutating social order. In response to the neo-capitalist ultimatum 'adapt or die' there is only ever going to be one answer from

visceral being: it will meet the forces of historical change in the only way that it knows, i.e. head-on. It colludes in its own excision with an unthinking masochism, distancing itself further and further from the rather epicene, specious forms of social being emerging from the present confusion and establishing their places in the altered circuits of neo-capital.

It is difficult to understand how, in a post-industrial, post-imperial context, this form of life can be seen as some variant of a 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1987, 1991; Jefferson, 1994) when neo-capital is now rapidly affirming and rewarding *precisely the opposite sorts of disposition*. To describe it as a remnant of a superseded form of quasi-hegemonic (in Bourdieu's (1984) formulation, 'dominant yet dominated') masculinity might be more accurate, but even then the establishment of 'hegemony' was only a lubricating part of the process of practical adaptation and cultural formalization. Right now, in the throes of excision, it postures ever more wildly and desperately, pumping itself full of steroids, drugs and alcohol, fighting more viciously, swearing more profanely, trying to prove itself even harder than it was before. But the hard, unskilled, graft is virtually gone, as are the fundamental conditions of its initial establishment, leaving the hard lad howling in a desperate wilderness where two of the few places of acceptance and comfort are, first, violent crime and the tradition of *trafficking*, and, second, the 'security industry' which protects mainstream culture from crime. This is an ironic and ignominious fate for the hard men of the mines and trenches, choreographed into this absurd tango around the perimeter fence of neo-capital's pleasure-dome.

In times of recession, 'hard lads' are the perfect 'oily rags' for criminal (or anti-criminal) organizations; the 'psychos' and 'nutters' who will do just about anything, glorying in their abilities to withstand physical pain and ignore danger. Organized car ringers seeking stolen cars need to look no further than the local 'hard lads' to find someone willing to risk arrest, imprisonment, injury or even death for a small remuneration, and there are many willing to undertake the dangerous task of 'policing' drug distribution operations in pubs and night-clubs or collecting debts on behalf of professional criminals. Even within this particular, alternative, criminalized social hierarchy the hard lads usually enjoy low status, doing the work that leaders in the world of organized crime have the sense to avoid. The security industry recruits from the same pool in order to fashion a homeopathic response to escalating violent or aggravated crime. Over the last 15 years the excision of hard lads from the mainstream commodity cycle has become almost complete, and those who cannot disconnect themselves from the configuration of meanings and practices which originally constituted that particular way of life now drift around the periphery picking up what they can; much of it violent and criminal.

The opportunity for positive engagement with the flows and forces of contemporary neo-capitalism in the West has rapidly shrunk. As the productive base recedes, social being is now forced to reinvest itself within the fields of circulation, consumption and bureaucratic administration

(Lash and Urry, 1987, 1994). The 'hard lads' possess no means of generating acceptable cultural capital to invest in this project, while the animated recapitalization activities of the post-proletarian interest groups (particularly liberal feminists and 'new men') tend to *culturally accelerate* the excisionary process. Grounded in the sclerotic dispositions which serviced the harshest and least palatable areas of heavy industry and imperial expansion, these visceral cultures no longer possess any value to the domesticated mainstream of the new order; in whose terms they are, to be blunt, no longer viable forms of life. The attempts by the liberal-left to promote a reflexive recivilization intended to 'emancipate' this form, reincorporate it and help it along the historical road produces a defensive intensification of being more often than compliance and change, spotlighting the 'otherness' of visceral being, further decreasing chances of culturo-economic valorization and thus unwittingly adding fuel to the excisionary fire.

It must be made quite clear that, to these discarded cultures, neo-capital's emergent proto-cultures, no matter how much they beckon, are felt to be a large part of the problem rather than the solution (Horne and Hall, 1995). Lasch's (1995) concept of 'international citizenship' neatly captures the emergence of an expanding, cosmopolitan middle-class, developing new forms of expressive 'cultural capital' which can be transferred into economic capital in the neo-capitalist world. This recapitalization exercise furnishes a reconstituted elite and an attendant service class with a form of mobile, flexible and transferable security based on their ability to sell themselves across the spectrum of interdependent neo-capitalist functions and therefore measure up to the rationalized assessments of the performative principle.² To the visceral cultures of the productivist era, this competitive yet domesticated posturing is felt to be absurd, irreconcilable and quite profane, eliciting non-negotiable disgust and rejection. Sheer visceral repulsion means that this new game can never be played; within the terms laid down by the remorseless culturo-economic logic of capital, the 'hard lads' are in the process of being left behind by history.

Criminology, passion and political regeneration

Radical criminologists have long suspected that the capitalist market-place is inherently criminogenic; now we might suspect that it is inherently *vicious* in its own historically unique way. In a recent article, Elliot Currie urges criminologists to locate the complex causes of violent crime in those mid-range processes that are '... intrinsic to the logic of market society itself' (1997: 154). However, despite its accurate delineation of the 'mid-range' and its penetrative insights into the way these processes establish the conditions in which the potential for violence is increased, this sort of analysis lacks an 'ontology of being', a conception of the way in which human beings are enrolled as *active agents* of these processes. Given the

failure of idealist explanations of enrolment, it can never be complete without an historicized account of the establishment, in the practices of past and present modes of production and market expansion, of specific visceral dispositions; the 'urge to act' which, at a deeper level, constitutes the durable human material without which any social forces, mid-range or otherwise, are mere abstractions, words in sociology textbooks. In this particular case, the 'hard lad' form was the product of an enforced articulation with material life. Its initial valorization and establishment required the adoption of visceral practice as a way of life, sustained in part by a notably stringent and unreflexive devotion to its own form. It is currently undergoing cultural disvaluation and brutal excision from the network of mutating forms which constitute a reforming neo-capitalist social organization. The various ways by which we attempt to define this neo-capitalism—late capitalism, disorganized capitalism, multinational capitalism, the society of the spectacle, the world system, the economy of signs, etc.—all signify daunting and difficult contexts in which the practical logics and emotional dispositions of those forms of social being forged in the productivist era are being severely tested during this current phase of system modification. Some of them are finding themselves regarded, not merely ideologically, but practically and substantively as *atavisms*, or what Jameson (1990) calls 'deselected continuities' in a fluid complexity of mutating forms.

At the heart of this predominantly masculine form, the imperatives of cultural adaptation and recapitalization are cursorily dismissed by the zealots of a 'hard lad' cult characterized by the sort of deep unreflexivity that was essential to their initial establishment and subsequent survival in the productivist-imperialist order. As the inexorable pressure of neo-capital's altered expansionary imperatives grinds away at the socio-cultural order, reactionary intensification of this practically pointless way of life is, in the immediacy of the situation, the only possible short-term response. Yearning for a future defined only by the idealized images of their own past, visceral cultures become trapped in a downward spiral; even some of those hanging on by their fingernails to the mainstream economy simulate (see Baudrillard, 1993) the hostilities of the violent productivist-imperialist life in their Friday night 'lager-gangs' and Saturday afternoon football 'firms'. The visceral disposition is being *functionally* revalorized *only* in the alternative criminalized economy, and to a lesser extent in the privatized forms of regulation that are establishing themselves as a short-term homeopathic response. In the criminal economy, outside the figurations of interdependent relationships on which the civilizing process of mainstream culture depends (Elias, 1994), and therefore free of the demands for a controlled emotional life (the constitution of *conscience* upon which law is made possible), violence is allowed to re-establish itself as a desacralized, cynical and instrumental everyday practice.³ The criminological result of this is the persistent, active involvement of a growing minority of people in violent criminal activity (Wilson, 1987; Hall, 1995; Hobbs, 1995); an

involvement which stretches way beyond the ability of liberal-humanist discourses to understand or manage it.

Standard criminological explanations and liberal social management strategies rooted in the slow-moving—and thus relatively stable—social structures of modernism are proving inadequate in this period of rapid, qualitative and unprecedented change. There was a time when the productivist social order could, admittedly, be conceptualized as a grid-like structure of class, gender and race relationships imbued with social injustice, material inequality and a vast differentiation of political power. However, despite the hierarchy, hegemonic domination and chronic inequality, there was always some sort of functional, valorized place in the order for all of its sibling forms, and therefore incorporative negotiations were never an impossibility. Thus, at least attempts could be made to administer concessions towards social justice and civil rights at the fiscal and legal level. Further, these adjustments could be constituted and managed in the process of democratic politics because there was an adequate level of stability and comprehensibility in the social order. There was a recognition and understanding of social location, cultural form and interests upon which could be based a representational democratic forum that could administer reasonably confident political programmes aimed at temporarily redressing imbalances and injustices.

However, just as the long political struggles and negotiations in the West were beginning to produce results, the historical material engine generated powerful mutative forces, rapidly dismantling the old order and laying down the conditions for new forms of social being, new power relationships and new functional imperatives. In this maelstrom, old cultural conflicts and forms of class and gender politics share the same historical trajectory; they are what Bauman (1992) calls 'retrospective unities . . . [on a] . . . constantly receding horizon', and they become part of the debris that Benjamin's (1970) anguished Angel of History sees pile up behind/in front of him. As their image becomes memory and their deeds become myth they take their erstwhile political champions with them.

We are in a period of our market-driven history where it seems to proceed *despite* political discourse. So, where there is little alternative, and with almost tedious predictability, those 'hard lads' who reject the atrophic existence of welfare dependency filter through and actively enrol in the brutal 'Other World' of *chrematistike*; 'trafficking', with its attendant forms of violent criminality and regulation. Bereft of either the hope or the wish for mainstream incorporation, their dreams saturated with manufactured consumer desires yet their practical being stripped of functional value and cultural capital, excised visceral forms—either hanging on as casual hands in the criminal labour market or floundering in anelpic micro-climates⁴—are nevertheless vaguely aware that their self-appointed political champions lack the stomach for a real fight with a triumphant global neo-capitalism. While the *laissez-faire* discourses of postmodern micro-politics trot out the alibis of domestication, the old revolutionary politics of the

productivist era have been abandoned in favour of tentative market regulation. Except as a playful signifier of excess and radical chic for the voyeurs and professional ironists of the liberal media, viscerality is simply no longer de rigeur in mainstream life; it is evaporating from politics because it has no immediate practical function, therefore no language and no audience except in those emergent market sectors which are constituted, regulated and reproduced by violence.

Neo-capital has opened negotiations with an expanding middle class which is represented by two main groups, what Taylor (1997) identifies as neo-conservative suburbanites (mobilized in localized initiatives like the 'fight against crime') and the 'new social movements' (environmentalists, feminists, human rights protesters, etc.). Both forms of negotiations, as Habermas (1989) and Taylor (1997) concur, are primarily about the *legitimization* and *management* of the general capitalist enterprise. Taylor asks, with the demise of Marxism and Labourism, if there is any alternative to these incorporatist negotiations? At the moment an affirmative answer is difficult to justify; in the process of domestication, politics has lost its passion and passion has lost its politics. While consumer culture, reactionary populist politics, mass media and criminal enterprise grab people unhesitatingly and unashamedly by their guts, the discourses which have somehow managed to appoint themselves as the 'radical opposition' continue to promulgate impoverished and ineffectual forms of communicative idealist-rationalism or laissez-faire culturalism. Both Taylor and Currie call for moves towards a more democratic and compassionate life through the establishment of a political language that is pertinent to the present conjuncture and could therefore re-energize debate in the public sphere. I would concur with that general aim, but I would insist that the focus of the debate must not allow itself to be distracted from a tenacious critical analysis of the power lodged in the abstract logic of the commodity market; a non-human authority whose practical demands can fabricate durable, 'heavyweight' cultural forms.

It is this central formalizing power that criminology is ideally situated to expose and criticize. For too long the debate about this has been held in protective custody by liberal theologians of the *free-market* and *humanist* denominations, who seem determined to affirm and celebrate anything that moves in the cultural world while denying anything that threatens their respective utopian visions. Criminological theory must be careful never to collude with the reactionary, prejudicial condemnation of *difference* by, for instance, fuelling the sort of functional panic and anxiety promulgated by the mass media on behalf of authoritarian politics. Further, it cannot become involved with the nostalgic urge to restore obsolete forms of revolutionary politics from the superseded productivist era. However, it is equally important that it does not collude with liberal complacency; what it can do is attempt to expose and explain the conjunctural reality of violent criminal life as it emerges in neo-capitalism's globalizing market culture.

This is a question of integrity and responsibility. Criminology must not continue to fuel the duplicitous rhetorics and bolster the flimsy management claims of postmodern interest-groups who are vying for discursive power in the current interregal vacuum. Instead, it must trim away its metaphysical coppice and clear its vision to focus on those hidden *un-civilizing* forces—the banal, the violent, the corrupt, the malicious, the voracious—that drive market culture forward, in order that their social forms can be crystallized by rigorous empirical and theoretical work. This article represents a first attempt to delineate only one of these forces; the process by which capital established unique visceral cultures, functionally valorized them, bled them dry and then discarded them. These forces are driven by a rationalizing logic and they operate remorselessly and urgently in, above all, the practical world of *events*. Perhaps we should not need Goethe or Marx to remind us that it is not enough to free ourselves from myths by recognizing them as products of our own unconscious, but we must go on to use this freedom to break the chain of events that determines our present. Because criminology can contribute so strongly to the encouragement of a sense of *passion and urgency* in public debate and practice that is vital to the breaking of this chain, it cannot afford to concede to the narrow parameters of the liberal-humanist vision.

Notes

1. Along with poststructuralism, ethogenic culturalism is one of the most influential hyper-idealist schools in the left-liberal paradigm. According to Rom Harré (1979, 1983), one of its principal architects, social being masks the inner realm of 'personal being', the internalized product of the 'moral career' created by the winning and losing of honour and respect in the expressive social order. In this formulation, Harré crudely separates and insulates the expressive order from the imperatives of the 'practical order', the world of work and production. The problems of individualism and hyper-idealism in the ethogenic project are based around an obsolete, nostalgic view of human beings in face-to-face microcommunal symbolic activity, and it neglects the macro-connections that characterize wider structural power relations and the logico-practical imperatives that drive a system like market capitalism forward. It ascribes no real significance to the unconscious, and it even departs from G.H. Mead's (1967) original notion of practical activity in the object world as the basis of the moral and expressive orders.
2. The 'performative principle' is simply a term I use to describe the distinctly capitalist method of assessing human value based on the objective judgement of the performances that various individuals and cultural groups contribute to the central purpose of rationalized expansion of the commodity market. The principle itself operates logically and automatically. Morally driven human intervention always cuts against the grain, and therefore

always involves some *cost* to the project. Consequently, ethico-political intervention is more difficult when the logic is confronted by an urgent need to rationalize in the wake of technological development.

3. A most interesting discussion of the 'desacralization' of violence can be found in Hobbs (1995), where he drives home the centrality of mutating forms of violence in criminal enterprise. 'Pain will never go out of fashion', he claims, and we could be tempted to take this further by, for instance, examining the culture of rationalized utility where no positive form of loss is valued or permitted, and the 'loser' is degraded and vilified. It follows that the concept or practice of painful personal loss—*sacrifice*—is unthinkable. The only loss permissible is a *negative* one—the loss of the 'other'—and thus the only passionate act of pain that makes any sense is violent victimization. Here violence is absorbed into the one-dimensional logic of utility; it can no longer function as a sacred act since the fragile cultural counterforces that ritualized it have all but evaporated, and it has lost its function as what George Bataille (1986) once described as a '... privileged moment of communal unity'. Thus violence, as a culturally regulated practice, only exists in the nostalgic mythology of 'sacred places'. While recently serving time among contemporary violent criminals, traditional gangster Eric Mason found himself disgusted by the '... complete disregard shown by the majority of inmates for the misery that they had caused their victims ...'. (Hobbs, 1995: 10)
4. Anelpic micro-communities exist in what Rob Horne and I (1995) claim to be conditions of genuine, pragmatic disaster amounting to complete system-collapse at a micro-communal level, where there are small but growing bodies of people existing in industrially depressed areas (among but *not characteristic* of the economically poor) who have quite literally been overstepped and left behind by the new configuration of capitalist forces. Here, the dominant mode and form of life is one postulated upon a generalized excision from any positive or constructive engagement with the flows and forces of contemporary global capitalism. It is objectively criminal and increasingly characterized by non-rational, unpredictable forms of violence. This practical condition is categorized only by an interlocking set of negatives: it is without expectation, without opinion; without hope; and without fear. We have adopted a term used (once only) by Sophocles—the word 'Anelpis' (ἀνελπισ), which signifies precisely that condition. By extension, the as yet particularized locuses in which it is becoming a generalized state of being we have named 'anelpic micro-communities'.

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Chapter 3

Grasping at Straws

The idealisation of the material in liberal conceptions of youth crime

GRASPING AT STRAWS:*the Idealisation of the Material in Liberal Conceptions of Youth Crime.***STEVE HALL****Introduction**

There is much talk about the causes of youth crime and the ineffectiveness of conservative and left/liberal control strategies. I don't want to get involved here in those interminable pedantic arguments about the problems of youth crime statistics which produce meaningless averages that suggest the 'overall level' may or may not be going up or down or whatever (see Lea & Young, 1993). This is the material from which crude political footballs are manufactured. Let us instead embrace the findings of recent victim surveys, self-report studies and ethnographies (Walklate, 1989) that seem to suggest that, particularly in run-down former industrial areas and inner-cities, there is enough violence, serious crime, petty crime and marginally sub-legal anti-social activity to further erode a quality of life that for many people is already substantially eroded by a configuration of factors ranging from unemployment to the malaise of post-modern cultural uncertainty (Harvey, 1989).

Over the last 150 years, the constant see-sawing of reform and regression in the criminal justice system has left the public confused and disillusioned and directly threatens the credibility of mainstream political discourses. In crude terms, practically inclined people doubt whether any of these discourses know what they are talking about or what they are doing when it comes to youth crime. General credibility is threatened if too many people, already disposed to doubting the social managerial claims of mainstream politics because of the visible practical failure of post-war socio-economic engineering, begin to regard this failure as a possible indication that none of the political discourses operating in the west - conservative, liberal or social democratic - understand anything about the post-production capitalist world at all. The once proud conservative /liberal /social democratic nexus which defined the axes of 20th century political argument and convinced a large enough proportion of the public that it holds hope has seen its dialectic grind to a halt, nowhere more manifestly than in the current struggle over the theory and practice of youth crime administration. Ever since the attention of the State and the emerging social scientific establishment became focused upon youth crime in the mid 19th century, the constant oscillation between the justice/punishment/discipline perspective and the alternative perspective espousing welfare/treatment/rights began to give the impression, as the 20th century wore on, of a drunk walking up and down a dark narrow alley, bouncing uncontrollably from one wall to another. Recent developments in the form and intensity of youth crime and the persistent failure of policy and practice have occasioned the action of our sluggishly oscillating drunk to accelerate rapidly, moving through a Chaplinesque stage in the eighties justice/welfare juggling to the current imperceptible blur which uses as its alibi the vague notion of interactive eclecticism.

The possibility of growing bodies of nihilistic, uncontrollable and potentially violent young people strongly committed to unsociable practice is the shadowy figure

that appears on the horizon of the liberal landscape; a figure that must, at all costs, be explained, excused, dealt with or denied. The most disturbing possibility for both right and left variants of Western liberalism is a consistent failure to allay the fears of the practically incorporated majority. If more traditional attempts to explain and treat this high-profile phenomenon (incarceration, discipline, treatment, policing, justice and punishment) continue to produce high failure rates (Currie, 1985) and, worse still, if progressive alternatives (education, training, care, community development) continue to prove far less effective than envisaged (Martinson, 1974; Scull, 1977), then the cracks in the overall liberal project may become too wide to paper over.

What, I suspect, may be behind these fears and denials is the decline in power of the Nation-State and a systematic attempt to disguise the inability of current politics and social management to manage a disorganised global Capitalism. There is a growing feeling that, in some specific areas of the Western world, there is a perceptible growth of persistent, serious criminal and anti-social practice, whose pockets of incorrigibility are indicated by their unresponsiveness to either authoritarian or humanitarian measures. There is a great deal of truth behind the left/liberal battle-cry that most youth crime is petty (Morris & Giller, 1987), that most kids eventually grow out of it, (Rutherford, 1992) and that some professional or community forms of low-key intervention can help persuade some of them to grow out of it a little sooner by preventing unnecessary engagement with the criminal justice and care systems (Morris & Giller, 1987; Pitts, 1991a; Rutherford, 1992). I don't deny this and it would be foolish to do so. However, shadowing this orthodoxy is a growing awareness of the increasing involvement of a specific minority of young people in a developing global criminal economy and changes in the form and intensity of that involvement. This involvement is combining with, or in some instances replacing, traditional petty criminal activity. The implication of youth in the more violent aspects of drug distribution and car crime are probably the most high-profile examples, and in some areas of the old industrial world this 'career' form of involvement is becoming increasingly apparent (Taylor, 1990; Wilson, 1987). One suspects that the exasperating tendency of the 'authoritarian' liberal right to play up the level of involvement and the 'humanitarian' liberal left to play it down in support of their respective socio-political explanations and social management strategies has less to do with the reflection of reality and more to do with the maintenance of public credibility and the avoidance of private intellectual despair. The wraith that haunts any political grouping who bid for the helm of Leviathan and the governance of Capital is the possibility of unmanageability.

We begin with the assumption, then, that youth involvement in crime and violence is a genuine, substantive and disturbing problem and that strategies designed to engage with it have experienced much failure and frustration. What I want to explore is something which, it could be argued, has contributed strongly towards this failure and frustration, that is the Idealist philosophical underpinning of those prevailing radical theories and practices which deal with the concept of 'youth', its involvement in crime and its role as social agent. Conservatism's fundamental philosophical tenet of an evil or 'fallen' human nature in need of constant disciplinary attention has aroused suspicions of untenability simply because of the amount of evidence and analysis indicating the failure of practices and policies predicated upon it. A cursory glance at the consistent historical failure of the use of brutality and overt authoritarianism to

enforce civility needs no further exposition here (see Cohen, 1985; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939; Ignatieff, 1978). More disturbing and more interesting, however, is the constant failure of its putative opposition to theorise the problematic and the dawning realisation that a major player in the radical left/liberal emancipatory project - the independent and creatively rebellious human spirit extant in youth and intersubjectively manifest in sub-culture under the weakening grasp of a fast eroding traditional authority - has not quite lived up to expectations. This ailing belief, although not entirely reducible to it, is strongly rooted in the symbiotic relationship between left/liberal sociology and Idealist philosophy.

Youth, Crime and Idealism

The Idealist belief system, although rooted in Platonism and present in the development of Medieval Christian philosophy, emerged in a form more accessible to contemporary understanding in the tracks of the Cartesian revolution. Descartes' seminal contribution to the question of ontology was his emphasis on mind/object dualism, positing the body as a mere repository for the mind and matter as the object of the mind's experience, and this sort of thinking heavily influenced the development of a tradition of Western belief in the subject/mind as prior, autonomous, rational and self regulating. Although, as we shall see, much Western radical thought acknowledges the role of the 'social', the innate 'rational ego' pervades as the basic building-block of human action. The English traditions of socialism and liberal democracy retain deep faith in the singularity and autonomous existence of the rational ego as the source-point of meaning and action, and it is these traditions which have most strongly influenced the social movements concentrating on 'problem youth'.

Idealism, as a philosophy, is quite distinct from the everyday meaning of the word which denotes the 'holding of lofty ideals'. Its basic precept - that nothing exists in the universe apart from a spirit or 'mind' which possesses some internal, independent means of being conscious of its own mental creations - has not survived in its pure form, but its genealogical development has had a pervasive influence on Western thought and social practice. Locke's dictum that we 'can have knowledge no farther than we have ideas' was a reflectionist extension of Descartes' principles, and Rousseau's romanticism imputed a 'natural tendency' in each young individual towards the development of benign, revelatory ideas and feelings if reflective experience could circumnavigate the corruption and repression of civilised (particularly urban) life. The Kantian subject is one who possesses the innate ability to mentally impose form and structure on the world, and all human knowledge is grounded in the 'appearances' of an impenetrable reality which consists of unknowable 'things-in-themselves'. Although the later philosophical doctrines of phenomenology were less purely Idealist in that they did not deny the existence of objects, these objects remained the property of the 'inner experience' of the prior subject. The forms and meanings of the social world later became, in the social constructionist formulation of culture, 'intersubjective', a sort of negotiated sharing of subjective mental constructs based on diverse personal experiences. Twentieth century radical liberalism, in the tracks of Max Weber, the phenomenologists and the symbolic interactionists, holds as its most sacred belief the same ineradicable creative power of the independent rational subject and its ability to freely negotiate meaning in intersubjective groups.

In the Idealist intellectual myth, the simple denotative term 'criminality' triggers off a host of inter-related connotative meanings and attendant causal explanations based upon the independent subject. It has been passed off as either an idea temporarily lodged in the heads of prior rational beings who slip below the threshold of rationality under conditions of stress or abuse, or the perhaps more durable product of the corrosive experiences of individual lives in a disempowered and poverty-ridden structural location forced upon them through the injustices of present social arrangements. Although the role of the social and the material is acknowledged here, criminality is usually considered a 'behavioural' condition forced upon a pre-existing, autonomous and benign subject; inherently good people temporarily behaving badly. The social - with its history, its structure, its economic imperative, its cultural meaning-systems - does not really produce anything human but merely interacts with a subject that pre-exists it. Thus the individual can be 'saved' from a state of irrationality by releasing repressive external pressure, allowing recovery of the natural rational ego. Wherever lip-service is paid to sub-cultural variations in form and meaning the sub-cultural space has, with the exception of structuralist accounts, usually been posited as 'intersubjective', the negotiated product of the 'shared experience' of groups of independent rational egos occupying similar structural locations.

To Idealism, the subject is always prior, independent and, unless 'damaged' or 'repressed', inherently rational. Those individuals who fail to make their way in the social world or fail to acknowledge its basic contractual rules are assumed to be oppressed, impaired or lacking in individual skills, education or opportunity. The left/liberal humanist orthodoxy pervading those sectors of public administration which target the individual-in-need are based inalienably upon innate potential expressed in terms of an individual orientation towards some sort of benign way of life. The task social administration invented for itself, particularly those sectors concerned with youth, was to get those who erred from destiny 'back on the track' by tinkering with those social factors which somehow diverted them from a natural state of committed participation - abusive families, criminal peer groups, poor quality care-systems, a loaded education system, poor quality training, a shrinking job market, disappearing transitional rites, an unfair system of rights and justice etc. Too much exposure to these distressing forms would, according to Matza (1964, 1969), force young people into intersubjective groups which rely increasingly for their meaning upon a set of universal 'subterranean values', common to all but held in check by most. Removal of young people from the situation of abuse, inequality, injustice or criminalising reaction (or at least the development of awareness of it) would allow the naturally rational subject to reject these ideas and embrace sociability.

According to labourite or social democratic variants of left/liberalism these negative social factors are the direct product of an iniquitous system of social arrangements that continually fail the rational individual, and all this is exacerbated by the oppressive social policing of a vindictive middle class who mercilessly pick on anyone who heroically 'resists' the demands of the dominant culture. They not only pick on them but also call them names; Idealism's nominalist, symbolic ontology is invoked to construct new iniquities as, for instance, the interactionists utilise the Meadian notion of the 'dualistic subject' which, in conversation with itself, is forced to define itself

with the intrusive negative labels of the establishment. This oppressive displacement of the autonomous defining power of the 'I' produces powerless wretches who don't like themselves very much and act to their own type by doing things that not very nice people like them would tend to do. Thus sociological attention is drawn to the criminalisation process as an essentially symbolic activity carried out by the agencies of a repressive State in reaction to any activity that it construes as subversive (Pearson, 1983, 1985). In these formulations the causes of youth crime lie in the intrusion of the dominant group's idea of criminality into the subordinate group's conversation with itself, and the subsequent adoption of an imposed identity - the much-vaunted 'label'. Thus the young criminal was the product of someone else's idea, a temporary symbolic entity that could be allowed to define itself as something else if only the tap of negative symbols could be turned off.

The inclusion of the concepts of intersubjectivity and social inequality into the left-ist equation precipitated the social constructionist school, whose formulations, less individualistic and more conscious of the social, posit the power of interest groups or classes within the social hierarchy to define others in their own symbolic terms. Thus the duly labelled exist in the less tractable form of the intersubjective group rather than the putatively more accessible individual consciousness, and social engineering, in this formulation, needs to be politicised and focused upon unequal representation in the essentially political processes of symbolic interchange.

The further importation, largely through the work of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, of the 'superstructural' Marxist notions of ideology, hegemony and resistance operating in civil society produced more sophisticated theory and informed practice. Put crudely, the central formulation here is one of a systematically produced ideological mystification and hegemonic control of cultural form and institution that seeks to divide and therefore suppress a potentially unitary working class consciousness. Here is a group of subjects, the left hopes, that are not only inherently rational but capable of generating a unified conscious appraisal of their own condition of oppression and rising up against it. To support this desire, the Idealist notion of the 'relative autonomy of culture' (Hall & Jefferson, 1976) was invented. This conception permeated the more radical elements of the Western post-war labour and feminist movements, who subsequently traversed the fragmenting terrain of Late Capitalism with their sociological divining rods searching for signs of developing working-class consciousness and resistance in cultural form. Thus the criminal activities of the young are still posited as confused, imaginary cultural solutions to real problems (Hall & Jefferson, 1976), produced by an ideologically and hegemonically induced distortion of youth's emergent consciousness of its own situation and interests. Youth crime is not only the product of poverty and marginalisation but also at the same time a repressed, distorted form of proto-revolutionary political resistance to class oppression which is passed off as criminality by the Capitalist media.

In all these formulations, despite the inclusion of social class as the connection to political economy and the material world, it is still mainly in the rationalist interchange of symbols and ideas that social reality is constructed. Claims to materiality and unconscious symbolic structure in culture, language and discourse were invoked to address this problem, but eventually floundered in a pool of post-structuralist excess which ascribed all sorts of symbolic and political significance (see

Willis, 1990) to the everyday activities of young people, who, according to Allison James (1979), subvert the metaphors of Capital every time they go to the sweet shop and buy sweets shaped like traffic lights or submarines or whatever. The political significance of youth crime as a similar sub-cultural 'inversion-as-subversion' of the principal form of Capitalist exchange was the inevitable logical extension of this sort of discourse.

Despite valiant and sophisticated attempts by the New Criminologists (Taylor, Walton and Young, 1971, 1975), the Birmingham School (Hall et al, 1978), the Post-Structuralists (Worrall, 1990; Stenson, 1991), and the Left Realists (Lea and Young, 1984; Young and Matthews, 1992) to introduce material and structural elements into the discourse, the common notion which remains ascendant in the left/liberal theoretical conception and practical administration of youth crime is that both categories are essentially symbolic constructions, the product of discursive interaction which somehow floats in a realm of autonomy, or at least relative autonomy, above the material world. 'Youth' and 'crime' as categories are in fact chiefly representations or 'mediated abstractions' (Bessant, 1994), and their immaterial ontology can be altered by corresponding alterations in the symbolic world. Thus racism, and racist criminal attacks, can be addressed by manipulating representations of black people through education and media. This assumes that the cultural logics which underpin racism have a base in a historical and cultural tradition which itself was primarily the product of symbolic activity. For instance, in historical criminology much is made of the symbolic aspect of the conflict in the 19th century between young urban migrants and the emergent police forces who represented the 'respectable fears' of a middle-class obsessed with law and order (Pearson, 1983; Humphries, 1987). In those formulations, heavily influenced by Idealism, the persistent criminality of some young people is the product of representational activities - labelling, criminalisation etc. - and only indirectly connected to the material world. The brutality of enforced competition between groups in Capital's historical process is relegated to a secondary role; social dissonance and violent action become primarily *effects of symbolic ordering*. Thus, youth activity in the Elswick 'disturbances' in Newcastle in 1991 becomes for Jeffs and Smith (1992) yet another product of a bourgeois symbolic device, in this case a convenient metaphorical scapegoat for deeper structural problems. The possibility that this very real violent eruption of emotions indicates a durable, ontological form directly predicated upon those 'deeper structural problems' and *pre-existing bourgeois symbolic construction* is disallowed in the Pearsonite orthodoxy which Jeffs and Smith (and too many others) habitually follow. To the social constructionist, Capital's historical process has not produced its own uniquely structured ontological forms, only the representations of the oppressors constructed specifically to serve their own political interests. Youth merely occupy a place in the material order which reflects the place they have been allocated in the symbolic order.

Towards a Materialist Conception of Youth Crime

For there has been a movement ever since the beginning of the 19th century to eliminate substance from the view of the world.

George Lukacs. (1978,p.71)

If the Western establishment is ever to abandon its fundamental Idealist precepts and reflexively reconstruct its own intellectual foundations in order to engage with the

material forces, mutating structures and objective logic of Late capitalism, then it must start by at least acknowledging the materialist dimension of human life. Of course those more inclined towards materialist philosophy have been forced to acknowledge the abject failure of revolutionary movements concerned with rapid, swingeing socio-economic change and their degeneration into oppressive, corrupt totalitarian regimes. But, on the other hand, if problems like youth crime reach levels in democratic liberal States which provoke retributionist calls for similarly oppressive practices in the welfare and criminal justice systems (Wilson, 1991; Morrison, 1994), then liberal triumphalism would seem to lack real foundation. In America, the democratic 'left' now acknowledges the fact that crime levels are 'staggering' and violent crime is rising (Hagan, 1994) and that the level of youth involvement in serious violent crime is also high (Wilson, 1987; Shannon, 1991). If public tolerance dips below an as yet unknown threshold, authoritarian reactions could displace the fragile forms constructed by the liberalisation of criminal justice; two hundred years of reform is in danger of erosion or even effacement.

If we were to embark upon a rejection of Idealist conceptions of mind, attention would need to be focused upon the relationship between the material structure of Capitalist society and the ontological formation of social being through the adaptation or generation of those primarily unconscious and amoral cultural habits, practices and dispositions appropriate to the imperative of engagement with the social organisation of material life. Individual consciousness, cultural meaning and human action are dialectical products of evolutionary interaction with this imperative and do not in any way pre-exist it. The world of symbolic mediation so beloved of bourgeois emancipatory philosophers (understandably, for it is their own traditional skill and passion) must be relegated to the role of ministering for what is essentially a *material incorporation* into the social order driven by economic compulsion and material insecurity.

There is a distinct marginalisation in left/liberal debate of the processes, by which those acts 'correct' and appropriate to immediate survival and *pre-existing symbolic mediation*, become established as both emotional desires and conscious intentions, constituting a diversity of enclosed practical 'rationalities' which, in turn, define the broader ethico-rational system. And here lies one of the principal failures of Idealist thinking in criminology; apart, perhaps, from a small number of extreme cases, criminal, violent or unsociable dispositions may not be primarily the products of ethico-rational choice, symbolic construction, identity formation or whatever but of a direct and durable emotional attachment to ways of life that, during specific intense phases of the structuring of Capitalist social organisation, were the only available means of immediate survival. The processes of symbolic interchange, in this formulation, play only a lubricating and formalising role in the reproduction of social order, because these ways of life generate power internally and independently of bourgeois symbolic mediation, particularly through the efforts of core activists devoted to what is to them an historical institution established by its proven function as a rewarding articulation with the objective material world.

A materialist criminology needs to focus upon *primary motivations* as they emerge anterior to bourgeois symbolic manipulation in its principal forms of media mystification and State criminalisation. To explain the persistent involvement of young

males in crime and violence as a socio-cultural phenomenon without reverting to subjectivism, psychologism and rationalism, we must further explore the processes which generate these primary motivations. One of the most sophisticated attempts to theorise this aspect of the problematic is the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984). There is no space here for a synopsis of his work (see Harker et al, 1990; Dimaggio, 1979), but important to this argument is his conception of 'habitus', by which he means the instilling in people of a 'cultural unconscious' in the form of durable dispositions towards particular choices of action which generates habitual practice. For Bourdieu, habitus is produced in various social fields loosely corresponding to the hierarchal social organisation of society. We must remember that social organisation and cultural form must have a *material objective*. In Capitalist society the overarching abstract logic which predetermines all substantial human practice (that which most of are forced to spend a large part of our lives actually doing, not talking or dreaming about) and around which social organisation is centred is the production of surplus value as a combination of use value and exchange value; in other words profit. If this constitutes the fundamental, objective ontological grounding for social being '... for all those social relations that we refer to as values; and thus also for all those modes of behaviour of social relevance that we call value-judgements...' (Lukacs, 1978, p.76), then the hierarchal ordering of field and habitus must be contingent on this value-system. It could be that culture, meaning and action are not free-floating to any substantial extent in that they are not amenable to symbolic manipulation but inextricably tethered to the central objective of the production of material life and the crucial human activity of securing a place within the attendant reticulation of Capitalist cultural forms.

Formation of Social Being in the Modernisation Process.

Materialism does not deny human agency. In the theorisation of structure and agency, not enough attention is paid to the dynamic historical relationship between the two; that is the possibility that one can gain ascendancy over the other during specific historical phases in the social organisation of production. It could be suggested that in modern history there have been 'times of structural domination', (e.g. the rapid urbanisation process in the 19th century and the current restructuring of Capital), and 'times of agentic possibility' (e.g. the relative stasis and opportunity of post-war reconstruction). This is implicit in formulations such as Giddens 'structuration' argument (1994), but in a forthcoming article (Horne and Hall, 1995), Rob Horne and I attempt to make this more explicit and central by demonstrating how dispositions and practices - habitus - which allowed workers to accept and perhaps even glory in the intolerably brutal conditions which characterised semi-mechanised manufacture during Capitalist expansion throughout the 19th century were not 'socially constructed' (and certainly not chosen) but enforced and unconsciously adopted as durable 'ways of life'. This, combined with the complementary habitus emerging from the amoral competitive struggle forced upon them in the casual labour market (Stedman-Jones, 1971; Hobbs, 1994) necessitated the generation and adoption of the sort of brutal, ego-centric dispositions which, partly suppressed by a developing economy still offering pockets of status and reward for these 'skills' until very recently, now begin to re-surface as unconscious forms of resistance to the efforts of a re-structuring and re-ordering world to permanently discard them. What also emerges from the

ethnographic work (Horne & Hall, 1995) is the strong link between this ontological form and a tendency toward violent criminality in younger males, the depth of devotion to this durable habitus by more emotionally committed members, and the impenetrable strength of the defence strategies unconsciously invoked to fend off the incorporationist persuasions of youth and criminal justice professionals.

The Capitalisation and commodification of the world (Wallerstein, 1993; Braudel, 1985), manifest in the industrialisation and urbanisation processes, was an uneven and difficult development, spawning diverse ways of life. The production process remained only patchily mechanised throughout the 19th and 20th centuries up to the second world war, and practical adaptive activity was forced to ensue in occupations often characterised by notably harsh and brutal conditions. Predominant among the sort of 'skills' required were those predicated upon traits of fortitude, persistence and endurance collectively known as 'hardness' (Willis, 1977), a rigidity of thought and sedulous restriction of mental activity (Willis, 1977; Marcuse, 1964) which can best be described as 'stupidity', and the sort of unbridled egocentrism necessary to negotiate the intense competition of the casual labour market. The possibility exists that, in response to the immediacy of these conditions, durable cultural forms emerged, developed internally coherent logics founded upon physical 'hardness', mental sclerosis and egocentrism which opposed all political variants of civilised practice and produced fiercely devoted subjects. There is no doubt that it was in the immediate interests of these groups, who were forced to compete at the bottom end of the labour hierarchy, to actively collude in the establishment and maintenance of both the myth and the reality of their 'hardness'. A cluster of cultural meanings and practices was unconsciously constructed in order that a claim on this brutal articulation with available sectors of the industrial division of labour was staked. The naturalisation of this form of being and the dispositions necessary to compete in the intense struggle at the lower end of the labour market were to their immediate practical advantage; it was not the product of ideology or labelling but of the emergence of an enforced practical logic which quickly established itself as cultural practice.

The development of technology, bureaucracy and administration along with the growing importance of the 'style-wars' of commodity circulation allowed new possibilities of culturo-economic articulation, and the 'culture of hardness' slowly began to lose its utility almost as soon as it became firmly established as a form of life. Some rejected it and moved on, but others maintained or intensified their devotion. In this formulation, brutality in the practices of male child-rearing and peer-group organisation can not be posited as the product of individual or gender trait, 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1987), pathology or anything similar, but simply as part of the logic of practice of a very specific way of life within Capitalist social organisation. For sure, identity formation through symbolic mediation can help maintain the form, but this is not its primary generative source and certainly not the site of political dismantling. Power is generated and reproduced *internally* within the culture itself via the maintenance of the habitus; it was a particularly important element of practice for parents, particularly but not exclusively fathers (Hobbs, 1994), to force young men through those initial fears and doubts about their 'hardness' which could hamper money-earning capacity in the brutal worlds of semi-mechanised primary produc-

tion, casual labour and military expansion. Thus, inter-generational reproduction of the habitus of 'hardness', with its integral violent dispositions, was assured. Even though the expansion of circulation and administration in the twentieth century presented new opportunities, and the more 'respectable' organized working classes accepted them, the durable habitus of the lumpen groups continued to resist the persuasions of the educationalists (see Willis, 1977; Parker, 1974).

Mutation and Excision of Social Being in the Neo-Capitalist Phase.

History is an irreversible process. Recent technological developments based on robotics and the microchip combined with a transnationalisation of commodity production and the emergence of alternative cheap labour markets have caused a decline of traditional industry in the West and an irreversible shift away from primary production to service production and circulation/consumption. These developments, acting as they do in the service of the objective logic of Capital, constitute the major historical material forces of the moment within Western economies. They have generated socio-economic changes so rapid and sweeping as to be considered epochal, and there is a growing recognition amongst more candid social theorists that right now the stirring of these material forces constitutes a rare historical occurrence; one in which a force of such magnitude is generated that it tears away from the subjective/agentive powers of politics and cultural institutions, bursting out of the delicate framework of codes and relationships that have evolved over consecutive decades to harness the developing techno-economic and social forces of their age. Although the symptoms are confusingly familiar (uncertainty, depression, melancholy, unemployment, social disorder, crime), what we face now is much more than simply another cyclical economic slump; it is the beginning of a genuine break with a production-based past. This means the same for the social scientist as it does for the historian or cultural critic; that there is materialising a radically new context for the analysis of all forms of culture and social being in the West, whether emergent or evanescent, and all concomitant phenomena.

Implicated in this reformative process is the excision of habitus based on those forms of 'hardness' and 'sclerosis' no longer essential to capitalist expansion. An irresistible historical force meets a notably tough and durable cultural object and, finding it unusable and unincorporable, cuts off its resources, decapitalises it and leaves it behind. The exasperated head-scratching of peeved Leftists like Bea Campbell at 'marauding men' and the decline in the ability of working class women to carry out their traditional civilising role (Campbell, 1993) exemplifies the theoretical paucity of the traditional British left. Current intense and unpredictable forms of male brutality and nihilism well observed and documented by Campbell can perhaps be more adequately explained as an unconscious reaction of the habitus to the pressure of excisionary forces, not the product of gender trait, symbolically constructed masculinity or political marginalisation. It is also possible that many women trapped in this dying way of life unconsciously collude in this reaction, encouraging males to intensify their dispositions towards 'hardness' and mental sclerosis.

What this discourse suggests is the presence of a number of untheorised and unresearched possibilities. Despite the decline (perhaps moving rapidly towards a complete disvaluation) in the utility of arduous physical labour and its attendant habitus, traditional practices continue to be reproduced in a form of life that can not

consciously discern or accept its own excision. Because of the sedulous restriction of thought and practice which initially ensured its survival it is tragically denied the sort of reflexivity necessary to engage with the intense struggle for power and existence within the mutating social order. It will meet the forces of historical change the only way it knows how: head-on. It colludes in its own oppression with an unthinking masochism, distancing itself further and further from the style-conscious and physically rather timid, arty social being emerging from the present confusion and finding its place in the altered circuits of capital. It postures ever more wildly and desperately, pumping itself full of steroids, drugs and alcohol, fighting more viciously, swearing more profanely, trying to prove itself even harder than it was before. But the hard, unskilled graft is all but gone, as are the fundamental conditions of its initial establishment, leaving the hard lad howling in a desperate wilderness where one of the few places of acceptance and comfort to be found is within the criminal economy.

In times of recession, 'hard lads' are the perfect 'oily rags' for criminal organisations; the 'nutters' who will do almost anything, disregarding physical safety and glorying in their abilities to withstand physical pain and ignore danger. Organized car ringers seeking stolen cars need to look no further than the local young 'hard lads' to find someone willing to risk arrest, imprisonment, injury or death for a small remuneration, and there are many willing to undertake the dangerous task of 'policing' drug distribution operations in pubs and night-clubs or collecting 'debts' on behalf of professional criminals. Even within this particular 'alternative' criminalised social hierarchy the hard lads usually enjoy low status, doing the work that leaders in the world of organized crime have the sense to avoid. Over the last fifteen years the excision of hard lads (and those, even less respected, who aspire to be hard men and fail to make the grade; 'toerags', in north-eastern vernacular) from the mainstream commodity cycle has become almost complete, and those that can not give up the configuration of meanings and practices which constitute that particular way of life now drift around the periphery picking up what they can; much of it violent and criminal. Opportunity for positive engagement with the flows and forces of contemporary capitalism in the West has rapidly shrunk, and social being is now invested within circulation, consumption and bureaucratic administration as production recedes. The 'hard lads' have no acceptable cultural capital to invest in this project and the animated recapitalisation activities of the post-proletarian interest groups accelerate the excisionary process. The attempts of the liberal/left to promote a reflexive recivilization intended to 'emancipate' this masculine form and help it along the historical road produces resistance and intensification of form more often than compliance and change, decreasing chances of social acceptance and economic articulation and thus unwittingly adding fuel to the excisionary fire. The 'hard lads', within the terms laid down by the remorseless logic of capital, are in the process of being left behind by history.

Conclusions.

There is a growing feeling amongst all but the most committed functionaries (see Pitts, 1991b) that the agencies of liberal social administration are failing to cope theoretically or practically with the current mutation of intensive forms of youth crime and violence. I am suggesting here that central to this failure is the continued subscription to Idealist assumptions of an independent mind and an innate,

rational ego orientated towards some sort of 'good'. This implies denial of the diversity of social being and its formation within the social organisation of material life. The pervasive presence of these assumptions in those Western radical discourses concerned with youth crime replaces this diversity and uncertainty with a constant and tractable certainty, something which is always there to be worked upon no matter what the historical and social circumstances. Even those discourses which acknowledge the presence of material, structural and historical factors tend to retain the rational ego as a pre-existing singularity operating in tension with them, providing for Capital's social managers an object of manipulation, belief and ultimately hope. Nowhere is all this more manifest than in the standard 'diagnosis' of youth criminality used in social inquiry and pre-sentence reports over the last twenty years or so (see McGuire and Priestley, 1985): 'lack of self-esteem leading to a susceptibility to peer-group pressure' exquisitely captures the archetypal liberal assumption of the temporarily weakened ego of the pre-existing individual wilting under the pressure of the repressive social group.

A materialist conception of youth crime would replace the independent rational being with social being in the sense of an individual capable of subscription to any number of a diverse range of 'practical logics', but in no way existing independently of them and forced by historical process into a subject relationship with a specific combination of them. These logics are constructed through cultural articulation with the material structure, social organisation and historical processes of a specific epoch. It is possible that their existence is not primarily maintained and reproduced by the production and interchange of symbols and ideas but by the internal generation of a fierce devotion to the habitus and practical logic of specific forms of social being. The 'hard lad' form is possibly the result of an enforced articulation with material life, the practical establishment of which required a particularly stringent and unreflexive devotion. It is currently undergoing cultural disvaluation and brutal excision from the network of mutating forms which constitute a restructuring Capitalist social organisation. At the heart of this predominantly masculine form, the imperatives of cultural adaptation and recapitalisation are cursorily dismissed by the 'hard lads', the zealots of a cult characterised by the sort of deep unreflexivity that has been essential to survival in specific brutal locations of Capital's structure and process. As the inexorable pressure of a restructuring Capital grinds away at the socio-cultural order, reactionary intensification of a practically pointless way of life is generated, producing the persistent, active, committed and *emotionally driven* involvement of a growing minority of young people in crime and violence which stretches way beyond the ability of liberal administrative discourse to understand or manage it. Because the survival strategies of the 'hard lads' are entirely based on a cultural logic of practice (Bourdieu, 1977) which exists below the level of consciousness, language and rationality, they are not amenable to those pedagogical techniques of leftist education or youth service which rely on a conception of the learning process as the primarily cognitive manipulation of symbolic interchange between inherently rational subjects.' We have little idea of the morphology of those meanings and practices currently eliciting the devotion of subjects, and continued subscription to an Idealist tradition in criminology which either denies their existence or establishes them as representational categories will prolong that nescience.

Current thinking on youth crime still continues to marginalise those materialist conceptions which promise alternative explanations. The left/liberal strategy is prepared to risk nihilism, fragmentation, resentment, the growing emergence of energetically anelpic micro-communities² and the possible return of 'the terror of repressive intervention' (Morrison, 1994) to gain little but self-satisfaction in its own acts of tolerance. Underlying this is a metaphysic which seems to claim that the possibilities of intervention in material structure and historical process - possibly the only way to solve at least part of the crime problem - are essentially 'totalising', 'fascistic', or just too risky. Perhaps this is true; the terrors accompanying structural revolutions in France, Russia, Germany and China along with the failure of communism seem to confirm that and lend credence to the role of massive structural intervention as a kind of Medusa in Western liberal myth. Yet, on the other hand, the more violent, intense and intractable forms of youth crime which are the product of material historical process remain obdurately resistant to the symbolic flower-arranging of the 'radical' wing of Western social policy. The permutations of counselling, groupwork, alternative to custody programmes, health education, self-esteem building, empowerment exercises etc. which constitute the 'something works' doctrine (Pitts, 1991b) is powerless in the vast flow of an exfoliatory historical process which in specific locations is producing nihilistic, violent criminality amongst young people faster than most justice systems can process it, let alone ameliorate it. I offer no solutions myself, only a plea for serious debate about the materialist perspective, and I take no comfort in the probability that explanations of youth crime based upon traditional Idealist conceptions may be fundamentally wrong and actively counter-productive.

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Notes.

1. Contemporary youth work, youth justice and education have been informed primarily by the behaviourist and cognitive traditions in psychology. These traditions are slowly being displaced by the 'discursive revolution', which is attempting to dissolve the Cartesian distinction between mind and body and introduce the relationship between social/material context, the normative rules of signification in discourse, and emotional commitment to meaning and action as 'inculcated patterns of bodily reaction' into the understanding of self and personality. See Harre and Gillett (1994) for an intelligible digest.
2. 'Anelpic micro-communities' exist in what Rob Horne and I (1995) claim to be conditions of genuine, pragmatic disaster amounting to complete system-collapse at a micro-communal level, where there are small but growing bodies of people existing in industrially depressed areas (amongst but not characteristic of the economically poor) who have quite literally been overstepped and left behind by the new configuration of Capitalist forces. Here, the dominant mode and form of life is one postulated upon a generalised excision from any positive or constructive engagement with the flows and forces of contemporary global Capitalism. It is objectively criminal and increasingly characterised by non-rational, unpredictable forms of violence. This practical condition is categorised only by an interlocking set of negatives: it is without expectation, without opinion; without hope; and without fear. We have adopted a term used (once only) by Sophocles - the word 'Anelpis' (ἀνελπῖς), which signifies precisely that condition. By extension, the as yet particularised locuses in which it is becoming a generalised state of being we have named 'anelpic micro-communities'

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Chapter 4

Paths to Anelpis

1: Dimorphic violence and the pseudo-pacification process



Paths to Anelpis: 1: Dimorphic violence and the pseudo-pacification process

Steve Hall

The spectacle is that which escapes the activities of men, that which escapes reconsideration and correction by their work.

Guy Debord

What 'post-modernists' take to be the end of modernity and the crisis of Reason is in reality the crisis of the quasi-religious irrational contents upon which the selective and partial rationalisation we call industrialism is based.

Andre Gorz

I

In the original theory of the *anelpic* condition¹ Rob Horne and I spoke of the reduction of the proletarian hard-man to a position of radical insignificance. The visceral sectarian of a mode of being that was once highly serviceable in the heyday of industrial capitalism has become an unenrolable cultural outlaw in neo-capitalism's spectral world, erased from all futurist visions and excised from the stylised forms of life that are structuring the post-productivist commodity circuit. Although this analysis of socio-economic reality seems to have struck a chord with a number of students and teachers in the Liberal Academy, there is no sign of engagement from the current luminaries of social or cultural theory. Perhaps they have their minds on higher things, the latest 'inversion of meaning', 'crisis of representation' or some other ideational phenomenon that might add a novel tone to the liberal heterotopian vision.

It's not surprising that the visionary activity which attends the neo-capitalist commodity market (and, since the apparent death of communism and socialism, this category denotes *all* such activity) appears to be mimicking the market's shape and movement. Our current forms of cultural analysis, released from the difficult task of constructing external critical perspectives, can now afford to adopt increasingly bizarre postures, to abandon their asperity and celebrate their absorption into the cultural dynamic at the centre of neo-capitalism. There, more fun and irony can be had in return for much less effort. Most of them have been swept up in the general process of neomania, where a fervent passion for the new is dissolving all solid forms

of the social, the moral and the praxical; but without a political purpose in mind, rather in preparation for the next beautiful journey, the next fascinating pleasure cruise around the spangling surfaces of a fragmenting world. These theories are often clever, elegant and beautiful, but as useful political tools they are quite simply beyond recuperation.

As new generations of neophiles tour listlessly around this world of glistening surfaces and disembodied freedoms, it's even less surprising that the serious reservations that could be held about neo-capitalism's direction are being brushed aside, and that the unpalatable social implications of the shift from productivism to consumerism are being ignored. Perhaps the most profound disjunctural element of this shift is the disappearance of the realm of necessity, where generations of case-hardened heavyweight beings once spent their lives engaged in laborious and violent struggles with nature and the hostile other; struggles that until very recently were the prevailing activities in all histories, no matter how deeply 'spiritual' or 'cultured' some groups and their *ministeria* are reputed to have been.

Because this loss allows our full attention to be drawn towards sensual pleasure and mediated meaning, it has eased not just the emergence but the triumphant social assertion of what we might term 'lightweight being', the malleable and suggestible cypher and manipulator of abstract systems. In its everyday form this social being tends to appear as the rather hectored servitor of the consumer sign-system, whilst at its more precocious and anomic extreme it seems attracted to a notion of freedom that can only be defined as the virtual exemption from all physically, practically and morally grounded limitations. The original article contrasted the condition of happy enrolment in which this being prospers with the *anelpic micro-climate*, an historical cul-de-sac that fosters 'objective disenchantment and brutalization' and 'non-rational, unpredictable forms of violence' amongst its 'heavyweight' inhabitants; a form of social being, I might remind the reader, based on the old agricultural-industrial virtues of 'physical hardness' and 'mental sclerosis'. In fact the *anelpis* thesis was built upon the empirical observation of this schism between lightweight and heavyweight being, one that in the five years since the article's publication has become notably deeper and wider.

Although many social analysts have attempted to explain the connection between this extreme form of 'social exclusion' and increasing levels of violence by mobilizing ideas built upon class, race and gender relations (the standard co-ordinates on the liberal sociologist's grid), they have been quite limited in their conceptions of social power and historical process, and even more so in their supply of ideas for political praxis. In the short time that has elapsed since it openly admitted its capitulation to the forces of the commodity market, the liberal establishment has invested its hope in the idea that the implementation of principles like 'equalization of opportunity' and 'tolerance of the other' might ameliorate this sort of 'social problem'. But it is showing few signs of doing so; to the horror of western liberal governments, the more the ideals of equal opportunity and tolerance are legally implemented and culturally prompted in a competitive environment the more the *anelpic* condition grows and intensifies. This, I hope to convince the reader, is neither surprising nor

rectifiable in the life we are required to live under the rubric of neo-capitalism's sign-economy.

Quite recently a deep fissure has opened in our social landscape, and it seems to correspond more closely to the insuperable ontological division that exists between the dimensions of the physical and the mental, the real and the phantasmagorical, than it does to the state-of-play of the traditional inter-group struggles that have characterized agricultural-industrial history. But before we embark on a preliminary exploration of this schism, perhaps a brief summary of some empirical evidence that indicates the violence immanent in the *anelpic* condition might help to prepare the ground. In the original thesis the claim was made that non-rational physical violence is not a general condition that permeates neo-capital's social and geographical landscape – or indeed one that characterizes whole impoverished zones – but rather a particular trend which tends to appear much more consistently and intensively in specific micro-communities that have been deserted by the forces of neo-capital. This postulation can be supported by a large body of painstaking social-scientific research that has recently been conducted across the industrialized West. I have summarized the results of this enterprise more fully in another article,² but here they can be boiled down further to outline the following basic insights, perhaps banal but nevertheless vital:

1. Even if we take all the phenomenological and political problems of data construction and interpretation into account, most positivist and ethnographic studies of fatal and serious forms of physical violence show an undeniable concentration in specific economically impoverished locales.
2. This violence is real, not a mass-media construction, and more likely to be under-recorded and understated than exaggerated. This makes political sense if we remember that understatement, in combination with its affective analogue complacency, is just as effective as the exaggeration-anxiety nexus as a metonymic device that aids the construction of establishment rhetoric.
3. Most of this violence is perpetrated by and against young men – and a smaller number of young women – from the same locale who often know each other. Although a substantial number of the regular perpetrators are associated with some sort of criminal enterprise, only a small proportion of the violence is used strategically to establish power in the criminal marketplace. Usually it is the result of a trivial altercation that, often encouraged by an audience of male and female peers, escalates and gets out of hand.
4. Serious and lethal violence in these micro-communities has risen steadily since the late 1950s, and spiked upwards alarmingly since the mid-1980s. This trajectory coincides with those of post-industrial unemployment, the dominance of the consumer sign-economy, the ghettoization of functionally unskilled post-proletarians and racial or immigrant minorities, and economic activity in the drug and nocturnal leisure markets.
5. A propensity or reputation for using physical violence, or even persistently displaying an unsophisticated type of aggression, attracts condemnation and

vilification from authority figures and from most of the more pacified yet more successful peers, thereby placing the perpetrators in a cultural ghetto and shunting them towards unemployment or the few 'dead-end-jobs' that are still available. It's quite erroneous to claim that the use of unstructured privatized violence or aggression is the continuation of some trans-historical strategy of 'male dominance' – as some feminist and pro-feminist theorists would have it – when the result is quite obviously a *notable lack of success* in mainstream culture, society and economy.

This evidence of the radical excision of heavyweight being can be found quite easily in the data banks of mainstream social-scientific research, and evidence of the social ascent of the elite forms of lightweight being is equally abundant. The dominance in the culturo-economic mainstream of what some sociologists are calling 'symbol analysts', and the concomitant demotion or expulsion of traditional manual workers, have been highlighted in a number of social analyses, notably Jeremy Rifkin's assiduously researched and comprehensive study '*The End of Work*'.³ Rifkin's crucial insight goes beyond the standard observation that manual workers are being eliminated at a rapid rate from the production process in the 'third industrial revolution':

The information and communication technologies and global market forces are fast polarising the world's population into two irreconcilable and potentially warring forces – a new cosmopolitan elite of 'symbolic analysts' who control the technologies and forces of production, and the growing number of permanently displaced workers who have little hope and even fewer prospects for meaningful employment in the new high-tech global economy.⁴

A growing service class of technicians and minor stylists are now operating and administrating the sign-economy on behalf of this elite. Most of the job retraining that has been going on for the last twenty years or so involves a shift from *manual-technical* to *significatory-technical* skills, which itself is the result of a deeper shift from a *heavy productive* to a *light circulatory* mode in neo-capital's economic base. It's not sufficient to say – as it was when commentating on less profound shifts in the productive mode – that there have been some corresponding shifts in the value-systems and cultural forms that inhabit the superstructure. Indeed, because all preceding productive modes – even those in the most salubrious geographical locations – were reliant in one way or another on the utility of mass forms of heavy manual labour, the historical material principle that culture is to a large extent shaped by social forms and forces that emanate directly from the underlying material economy could be applied to all disjunctures and modifications, including the emergence of capitalism itself.

However, neo-capitalism's growing independence from this form of labour – and from the various elements of physical violence that have always accompanied it – is an historical precedent. For the first time at least since the agricultural revolution 12,000 years ago, forms of life predicated on physicality and viscerality have lost most of their functional utility, cultural value and social bargaining power. This recession of the material imperative has created an underlying context in which

symbolic culture can dominate over everything material, where the distinction between the real and the ideational can be virtually dissolved. The abstract object-sign system of consumer culture can now approach a condition of totality and begin to act in the name of life itself (and in this context we cannot assume that the rule of an abstract system that appoints itself as a 'higher' or 'alternative' culture and purports to ply its symbolic trade in a more poetic way would be any less totalitarian). It seems that lightweight being is moving into a position of profound social opposition and hierarchic dominance to what remains of its heavyweight other, the durable and far less mentally suggestible proletarian 'hard-man'; a being whose traditional way of life was based on the everyday performance of the arduous and dangerous tasks necessary for the building and defending of the physical infrastructure on which the former's life of cultural significance ultimately depended.

It was made quite clear in the original thesis that the least adaptable of the 'hard' or 'visceral' forms that were cultivated amongst the proletarian mass in the industrial heyday are being effaced automatically from the social picture by the motive forces and structures of the neo-capitalist economy. However, from that basic position it could be construed that the thesis rested on a non-agentic and acultural conception of the historical material process. 'Lightweight' being, who we briefly outlined in the throes of readaption yet again to capitalist system modifications, was ascribed no active role in this historical-material process. Without wishing to renounce for one moment the claim that *anelpis* is indeed an *object* of that historical process, some attention must be given to the cultural agents who ministered it. State functionaries were portrayed as time-servers helplessly grasping at the straws of renewal and assimilation, the sophists of the social inclusion industry. That might well be an accurate description of liberalism's social administration, but this group of hapless, weary social maintenance engineers cannot be put forward with any conviction as neo-capitalism's power-brokers. The research quoted above⁵ seems to suggest that this role is being played by cabals of prosperous and powerful 'lightweights' who, attended by a deferent service class and a depoliticized consumer mass, are attaining positions of extreme advantage in neo-capitalism's not-so-brave new world. If this is the case, it was a little negligent not to make more of the appearance of astringent cultural forces such as 'abhorrence and embarrassment' that, as we briefly noted, characterize the way in which this ascending form of social being is interacting with its predecessors. These sentiments – expressed so stridently and frequently as judgements of the old industrial virtues of 'hardness and sclerotic mental inflexibility' – might well be rather obvious signs of the operation of the cultural-agentic force which is servicing neo-capital's excisionary process.

So there is more to this than the reductive banality that was put forward in the original thesis, the idea that the constitution and excision of 'hard' forms of heavyweight social being and the triumph of consumerism's lightweight denizens are the inevitable results of the *logic of the commodity*, in this case the nature of the classical manufacturing process and its subsequent displacement by the sign-economy. As far as it goes this is still true, but it's unlikely that the underlying dynamic social relation is peculiar to capital's historical process and cultural logic in the way that, for instance, the bourgeois-proletarian relationship was. It's quite likely that this social fissure might well have opened even if the Western mode of production had taken a different,

more socialistic and democratic course, although it might have been possible for an administration founded on such principles to deflect events onto a slightly gentler and less traumatic historical curve. But it's too late to even think about that now; at a deeper level the profound social schism at the heart of the *anelpic* condition is the result of a long-term ethico-cultural relationship between the orders of the practical and the symbolic. This relationship pre-exists the modern world and it has made possible the social evolution of *dimorphic violence*, a dynamic structuring force which was vital to the eventual establishment and progress of industrial capitalism.

II

The lightweight being now establishing itself in neo-capitalism's commodity circuits is not new; it has a long history. At least since the establishment of mass religions in the early agricultural states, the realm of the symbolic has shown itself to be unwilling to accommodate the realms of the practical, the affective and the communal as partners in the totality of life, much less to remain in the constrained but honourable position of an activity that is serviceable and accountable to practical, affective and communal ends. It was in these impoverished and fearful early settlements that the officers of symbolism's subliminalities established a true *doxic* power base. The early royalty-priesthood alliance located itself at the centre of the agricultural socio-economic reticulation, attracting the gift flow towards itself in return for the abstract conferral and confirmation of all value. Because the material impoverishment and cultural profanation that was experienced by the lower orders of the expanding agricultural populations was extreme compared to that of their hunter-gatherer predecessors,⁶ the transition to the agricultural mode of production cannot be assumed to have been driven primarily by the forces of technological, epistemological or social *progress*. The establishment of social power by politico-religious means appears to be a more likely candidate for the primary motive, and this move both required and made possible the enrolment of a reluctant undermass by threats of pain and misery that were made alongside airy promises of afterlives or future realities replete with luxury and glory. In other words our civilisation's basic prototype simply could not have established itself without a substantial rejection of practical, affective and communal value and a similarly substantial absorption of the population into an order of hyperbolic symbols. This is not the politics of legitimation and hegemonic consensus arranged amongst rational beings, but rather those of illusion and intimidation manufactured by agents of symbolism and violence.

It was during this politico-religious phase that the possibility of pure symbolic exchange – which in a materialist interpretation is a communicative process wherein signs are limited and remain faithful to the real referents of the practical, the affective and the communal – was transcended as the basis of social institutions and cultural practices. The usually violent assimilation and unification of mobile clans under the deified sign of a common identity provided the interest-group of symbol-specialists (the original class in-itself and for-itself) with the opportunities to secure unprecedented levels of social power and to establish a diuturnal rule that, if not invulnerable, was certainly sufficiently robust to transcend most of the challenges and contradictions which were thrown up by the unfolding of real events and ethico-



practical criticisms. Mass enrolment into centralized, hierarchized belief-systems – together with their policing and reproduction – became the principal purpose behind the production and circulation of symbols. The whole practical economy of bodies, affects, social relations, labour and material objects became absorbed in rolling processes of abstraction and equivalenced exchange, and a specialism in the symbolic arts came to represent the most valuable and adaptable skill, which is why it has since been jealously held amongst self-affirming, self-perpetuating symbolizing elites.

For the greater part of the agricultural era the delicate practice of reflexive reasoning was systematically inhibited by ruling priesthoods, and thus only two primary forces existed that could counterbalance or challenge the stranglehold of the religious order and its manufactured illusions, and they were grounded in the imperatives that ordered the realm of necessity; namely *collective labour* and *violence*. Politically organized forms of these two forces appear to be rare in pre-agricultural communities, although embryonic craft and warrior castes did exist.⁷ Before the early modern period in Europe, when socially descending knights and ascending peasants were brought together in the bourgeois labour and entrepreneurial markets, the symbolizing elite's favoured tactic was to keep these two forces as far apart as possible, even if this meant allowing the physical violence specialists of the warrior caste the chance to convene as an interest-group and reluctantly inviting them to share in some of the more vulgar aspects of political and economic power. Although the warrior caste often appeared to accumulate more material wealth and political power than the symbolizing elite, the former's position was always fragile and temporary, as living by the sword always is. Nevertheless, it was worth paying the price of this concession because what the symbolizing elite feared most throughout the agricultural-industrial project was the unification of these two forces under a practically referenced sign, a sort of Sorelian proto-proletariat that was politically and mythologically united and willing to use a measure of violence for the exclusive purpose of overthrowing the corrupt, diuturnal rule of the hyperbolic symbol.

The liberal-left's explanation of why this sort of revolutionary insurrection has been such a rare occurrence – and why the political will that it would require appears to have been stultified – is centred around notions such as the engineering of consensual belief, the ideological incorporation of the labouring masses into the prevailing symbolic order and the reproduction of that order by means of the hegemonic control of vital cultural institutions. If a genealogical line were to be traced through the work of the 20th century radical priests who have subscribed to these notions,⁸ it would become quite apparent that their criticisms of commodity fetishism (the kernel of capitalist symbolic enrolment) are framed in a general debasement of the object world, with particular attention being given to the human-object nexus. It takes only one small deductive step to understand that this is the same type of profanation that has been a motif of the historical symbolizing elite, except that in this case it was a call for the labouring classes to profane their own world in order to rise above it and partake in the riches of a purified symbolic life, a *poesis* or an elevated *aesthesia* manufactured and governed by the symbolic activity of the radical priesthood; we despise your world, so if you also learn to despise it you might be disposed to improve yourself and become one of us. This elitism amongst the pretentious pseudo-Marxist

and Hegelian left is of course a banality, but it is a banality that has been kept very quiet in most intellectual circles.

The tension between the hope that was rather reluctantly invested in the labouring classes and the disdain felt for their world of object production was present in the earlier writings of Marx himself.⁹ It was a legacy of the aristocratic-romantic and religious critiques of capitalist utility that permeated the radical intellectual oeuvre of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a position that in many ways was simply a lament for the loss of a prior mythical enchanted life in which the symbolizing elite thrived. This disdain, when and where it was felt, must have been particularly disconcerting for labourers and craft-workers, for whom the bodily gift of labour and the production and donation of objects – rather than the abstraction and communication of the ‘world’ in elegantly constructed texts and images – was the principal form of affective exchange and social value; the gift of the *deed* rather than the fine word. But the balance that Marx achieved in dealing with this tension was wrenched and skewed back in the direction of the ideal by twentieth century bourgeois radicals, those unruly apprentices whose primary ambition was not radical structural change but usually the personal one of attaining the prophetic stature of nineteenth-century giants like Marx or Nietzsche.

The practical object world has never been inherently profane; in fact it is the primal ontological state that pre-exists mental representation, and it would endure if humanity were ever to depart; which, if we continue to defile and exhaust nature’s objects in the name of the symbolic, we might in one way or another be forced to do. It is the ineffable site of qualitative formal differences that embodied beings can never transcend unless they surrender themselves completely to delusional fantasies. As such – unless it’s power and glory that you’re after – the practical object world is not too bad a place to spend some time in, producing, consuming and playing. It was not the objectification of the human being but the estrangement of a class of labourers from the objective products of their labour for the exclusive purpose of creating surplus exchange-value – in other words a form of objectification which was dehumanising because it was carried out *in the name of the abstract and the illusory* – that rankled Marx and also of course the labourers themselves, most of whom were more than happy to devote some of their time to the production of useful objects and services on behalf of themselves and their immediate community.

It seems that the practical side of Marx’s vision of the *total human being*¹² – someone who would engage in practical-manual work for a part of the day whilst playing and philosophizing in the evening – has been vilified and dismissed not only by the traditional-repressive symbolizing elite but also by most factions of its liberal-emancipatory successor. The general interest-group that these two factions represent quickly reverted to its true form as soon as it realized the extreme loss of patronage, privilege, security and power that would result from the fundamental restructuring of the division of labour and the regulatory attenuation of symbolism’s excesses which would have been possible on a new social landscape free of the commodity and all other quasi-religious forms. When the western proletariat was dissolved into the consumer sign-system and when the imperialist tyrannies that were constituted in the east under the abstract sign of ‘communism’ began to crumble, the liberal-left

intelligentsia – with the sort of political treachery that is the trade mark of the general priesthood – abandoned their fallen congregation, quickly split up and tendered bids to run the multiplex, post-industrial cultural *ministerium* on neo-capitalism's behalf. It was quite aware of the emergence of a labouring-consuming mass whose pseudo-emancipation and prosperity under capitalist rule had momentarily furnished its members with a measure of reformist confidence, and even more aware of the proliferation of opportunities to take up enduring offices of ethico-political leadership in the myriad moral enterprises that were springing up like mushrooms in the crumbling earth. All that was needed were a couple of short steps backwards and sideways, a public renunciation of revolutionary zeal followed by an affirmation of the multiplying lifestyle possibilities opened up by the global sign-economy.

By the late twentieth century radicalism had, with tedious predictability, degenerated into a corrupt institutionalized priesthood whose task, as always, was to maintain and preserve the transcendental symbolic in its elevated, enduring form of enigma and illusion, to ensure that it remains just out of reach of all practical criticisms and restraints. Jean Baudrillard, for instance, rather than bringing himself to confront squarely the dangerous fetish that the human being seems to have developed for the transcendental symbolic, tells us that hyper-collusion in the trivialized symbolic life of the neo-capitalist simulacrum is a method of overheating it and accelerating its destruction.¹⁰ But the simulacrum is the inevitable historical result of *that ancient fetish* and, because the symbolic is an unrestricted form with no inherent compulsion to emulate the physical world or conform to any systematic material process by 'ending', 'dying', 'implosion' or 'metastasizing', this sort of ecstatic hyper-collusion can only result in the unlimited expansion and recycling of illusions. And if the 'rule' of incremental reciprocity in symbolic exchange (you must give back more than you receive) were to be activated and enforced in a symbolic realm that is *inherently violent*, it would result only in an increase in social hostility, fuelling the neo-capitalist dynamic and bringing the troubles and prohibitions of reality down on our heads rather than furnishing us with an esoteric escape route. Like so many of the other modish priests from the French left bank – Deleuze and Foucault spring immediately to mind¹¹ – he seems to be immersed in the project of explaining the social operation of the symbol by means of revised organicist-functionalist and structuralist models, a fatally antinomic attempt to merge the ideational and the material. However, he is still the most entertaining of this priestly order, and furnishes those who feel like giving up the struggle that the will-to-truth and praxical politics demand with the most elaborate excuses they are ever likely to come across.

The fact that the symbolic order is in a state of disordered transition makes little difference to the tyrannical way in which it relates to the practical order, but it does proliferate the opportunities for ethico-cultural entrepreneurship and fuel the expansion of the offices and careers of the symbolizing elite. Symbolic violence can now be rained down on the practico-rational world and its values from more angles than ever before. In the continuum of Idealist rule, the principal role of the vascular warrior-producer has always been to go forth and nullify those aspects of reality that stand in the way of the glorification of the group's idea of itself; to oblige, supply and protect the symbolic order's powerful class of guardians, and in doing so affirm with his brutal violence and onerous labour the profanation of his own world. The

presence of contempt and disdain at the heart of western symbolic life – in the unashamed hubris of the orthodox ‘high culture’ and in the furtive bitterness of an exasperated radical priesthood which constantly despairs that nobody is sufficiently brave or intelligent to really dedicate themselves to its idealist ploys for social transformation – would seem to suggest that this hallowed realm is not worthy of the provision or protection of the warrior-producer because it might not be as precious and divine as its advocates make it out to be. And, of course, it isn’t; in its actual operation the symbolic world we know is constituted and energised by the atrocious, classifying violence of moral-aesthetic judgement and the constant threat of an unremitting sentence of cultural insignificance.

III

In its analyses of ideological enrolment, the western radical-idealist tradition has concentrated on the way in which the subject comes to accept ruling ideas, how it rationally legitimates them,¹³ how it is persuaded to give its consent,¹⁴ how it is seduced, beckoned and interpellated,¹⁵ or how it enters into contracts that promote trust and belief in the promises of corrupt rulers.¹⁶ This prevailing notion of the mystified and oppressed subject – someone who, in order to escape from some mentalistic prison-house, simply needs to shake her head, gather her strength and seek a new identity in some fashionable radical discourse – has tended to marginalize the idea that the *general* symbolic life of the agricultural-industrial continuum is in actuality a barbed structure of sublimated violence. In this Platonic-Hegelian tradition, the first step in the transformation of the world is invariably a re-ordering of the symbolic by a progressive *haut monde*, a political strategy that ignores the possibility that the symbolic itself, no matter which political project it represents, is a realm of immanent corruption that constantly requires the most vigilant scrutiny and stringent critical restraint. Many notable exceptions to this lineage of negligence can be found amongst those who stuck more closely to Marxist fundamentals, like perhaps Lukacs¹⁷ and Debord,¹⁸ who insisted on the reigning in and hitching of the symbolic to *proletarian praxis* (although this concept itself can be a little nebulous and open to priestly infiltration). However, because neo-capitalist culture seems to have fragmented this unifiable mass and thrown its politics into disarray, perhaps some of the core ideas of three thinkers who are often regarded as rather tangential to the orthodox leftist projects – Rene Girard,¹⁹ Norbert Elias²⁰ and Pierre Bourdieu²¹ – might help us to address this negligence.

Neo-capitalism’s symbolizing elite and its acolytes in the service class and consumer mass seem to be prime suspects for the cultural-agentive role in the constitution of the *anepic* condition. The traditional-repressive and liberal-emancipatory factions of this power elite function, in their own inimitable ways, as culpable executives of the suitably adjusted symbolic violence that is being used to apply the essential ethico-cultural lubrication to the rather problematic expulsion of forms of life that have been deemed surplus to capital’s logico-functional requirements. The current triumph of this symbolizing elite is not the result of some ‘new’ social relation, or of the logic of a capitalist process that operates in historical isolation. Rather, it is the result of an ancient division of labour and power that is based on the elementary fault-line



which divides the ideational and material dimensions of life. The radical tradition's moral judgement of the objective realm as profane and the symbolic realm as sacred reveals it to be just another reproductive force that is active in maintaining the hierarchic relationship between these two realms and enriching the myth of the sacred *telos* of the symbolic. In the original *anelpis* thesis the brief appearance of executive cultural forces ministering the process of social excision suggests that, if symbolism's *ministerium* was able to control and then overpower the physical violence of warrior service-castes and the potential political violence of the proletariat, then it must have at its disposal a more subtle and effective force that might itself be born of violence.

But what exactly are these 'executive cultural forces' and how might they help us to formulate a working conception of social power? On the one hand, numerous sociologists have suggested that, on their own, the *ideological forces* – belief, rational legitimation, persuasion, seduction, mystification and the rest – lack the motivating power required to sustain capital's enduring rule,²² while on the other hand history tells us that the constant application of physical force in the name of a ruling body always enervates it and accelerates its downfall. If ideology and physical violence are so obviously ineffective as independent forces, even though they often operate with some measure of political co-ordination, then it might be more useful to conceptualize the basic structure and motive force of social power as *dimorphic violence*, an interactive conjunction of physical and symbolic practices – with the symbolic at the helm – which has developed an enduring ability to manipulate, harness and to some extent *constitute* the intermediary worlds of the practical, the affective and the communal.

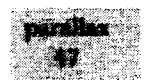
For our purpose of exploring dimorphic violence, the value of Girard's work lies in his reminder that the priestly elite's arrangement of violent, intimidating symbolism into rituals and institutions of cultural power has ancient roots in the direct intervention of institutionalized symbolic power into pre-existing forms of autonomous, unpredictable physical violence and social discord; a process that culminated in the subsequent fusion of that power with those forms. There is now some agreement between a number of anthropologists and archaeologists²³ that early agricultural settlements were not the natural result of technological and social progress but an opportunity provided by worsening material conditions for an alliance of manipulative magico-religious technicians and power-hungry demagogues to press into service under an abstract communal sign large numbers of independent familial clans and their practical functionaries; child-rearers, warriors, hunters, proto-farmers and proto-technicians. These contrived agglomerations of usually suspicious and hostile groups were characterized not by conviviality and bonhomie but by endless envy, jealousy, bickering and skirmishing, a situation that was exacerbated by the unreliability of early agricultural techniques, by social developments like the institutionalization of private property, and by the loss of the ability to simply move somewhere else to avoid material impoverishment and the escalation of conflict.

Because the general condition of discord could often deteriorate into interminable cycles of revenge, the threat of social dissolution was constant; that basic situation, historians remind us, persisted as the norm until the era of high industrialism.²⁴ According to Girard, who drew from, amongst others, the ethnographic and

historico-anthropological research of Radcliffe-Brown²⁵ and Hubert and Mauss,²⁶ the maintenance of basic law and order and the minimization of unpredictable bouts of assault and murder within the community were amongst the primary administrative tasks of the symbolizing elite. Although some attempts were made to foster sentiments such as pity and compassion amongst the population,²⁷ by far the most common pacification technique was to arrange sacrificial rituals whereby the urge to violence could be distracted and neutralized by redirecting it towards a surrogate victim, who usually represented a profaned and vilified class of victims such as the ancient Greek *pharmakos*. The political root of dimorphic violence might well be in the selection of sacrificial victims who, in volatile politico-economic conditions, were used to engineer a measure of pacification and stability amongst the group on behalf of the ruling elite.

It's also likely that this *secondary realm of pseudo-necessity* - the need to stabilize the general discord that burgeoned in these maladroit settlements which in reality were little more than configurations of prison-farms, military barracks and degenerate market bazaars - was the generative context in which *dimorphic violence* evolved as a technique of social ordering. The appetite for physical violence that suffused an uncomfortable and discordant mass was first sublimated and institutionalized by a symbolizing elite and then used in spectacular intimidating rituals that emphasized social differences and value-judgements. This process facilitated the enculturation of violence and its controlled, mediated release back into the community as a divisive symbolic toxin with which fearful populations constructed the proto-*anelpic* classes in our early history. As utility began to encroach on the sovereign territory of the sacred throughout the Roman and Christian eras, the victims could be effectively demoted from this unstable and ambivalent status - one which combined the vilified pariah with the heroic icon because the sacrificial victim was capable of both destroying *and* saving the community - and sacrificed in an ignominious utilitarian manner as the brutalized, desacralized drudges of the excessive militarism and hard labour that became necessary to sustain the original mistake of the *doxic* religious-agricultural settlement. Sacred death in the sacrificial ritual was replaced by a cruel living death in economic-military expansion. But this modified social relation still required a general mimetic art to aid its reproduction, and as it evolved it set in motion the lexical development and cultural co-ordination of the ambivalent, hyperbolic and judgmental symbolism that was used to glorify and encourage this class to perform its laborious and violent functions, yet at the same time to profane, humble and vilify it so that it would remain trapped within them. In socio-genetic terms, symbolic violence - the more socio-politically powerful and durable dimension of the dimorphic form - was born in the establishment and reproduction of an elementary and enduring class division between privileged symbolizing elites and brutalized conscripts who were consigned to various forms of arduous labour and militarism.

The ritual and conscriptive techniques of social stabilisation and pacification that prevailed in our Pagan and early Christian past relied to a large extent on the immersion of the body and its affects into the ecstatic dimension of the religious-symbolic order. Visceral abandonment in physical violence was not regulated very successfully, mainly because these open, expressive techniques relied on the deliberate evocation of violence in preparation for its subsequent external sublimation and



ordering in symbolic codes, what we might call a sort of highly risky and unstable *eliminating* process. Elias shows us how the contrasting methods of repression and internalised sublimation that were developed in early capitalism proved themselves to be more effective as instruments of long-term pacification and domestication in the internal territory; that is as long as they were able to operate in combination with the total monopolisation of the means and entitlements to physical violence by a rational-bureaucratic state and the rapid construction of long chains of socio-economic interdependencies in the expanding and diversifying labour market.

The external symbolism of the stabilisation process, for a long time the sole privilege of the ruling religious order, was somewhat devolved as early capitalism began to rely upon the development and dissemination of codes which directly addressed the affects and behaviour of individuals who wished to be considered as valued members of a supposedly democratizing and civilizing society, one that was replete with opportunities for prosperity and social advancement. Fear of the loss of social position, or at least the missing of an opportunity to attain one, became the basic stimulus for the pseudo-pacification and domestication of the self. The appeasement of this fear was possible only with the guidance of a new, schizoid *habitus* which disposed the individual to renounce guileless displays of viscerality and replace them with more subtle, sophisticated and strategic displays of a tense combination of civilised expression and aggressive social ambition. Thus the cultivation of a *habitus* that displayed physical pacification – yet retained at a deeper level an aggressive, hostile urge that could be sublimated and harnessed to the highly competitive capitalist economy and the structuring processes of the social order – furnished the individual with the most valuable form of social capital. Ancient feelings of social and cultural supremacy that followed the early symbolizing elites' conception of its members as precious delegates of the divine (they tended to be the only group exempt from all forms of sacrificial duty) were incrementally democratized and diffused throughout the social body during the capitalist project, generating a more powerful yet comparatively more stable social dynamic. Elsewhere in the social hierarchy, the functional yet dispensable members of the new capitalist *pharmakos* – those who were materially dispossessed and who also fell short in these compulsory symbolic displays – were required to apply themselves to the hard or violent labour that was demanded by the progressivist dynamic of industrial capitalism and the imperial state. They found themselves immersed in brutalizing material roles and conditions which – especially when they were combined with the immediate demands of sheer survival – generated no incentive whatsoever to abandon the visceral life and take up the rather affected behaviour that these 'civilizing' codes valorized. For them, the brutal rule of law that culminated in the Bloody Code would suffice; they were earmarked as living sacrifices to the god of progress.

In a recent article I have suggested that the capitalist epoch was serviced by a *pseudo-pacification process*.²⁸ The press-ganged agricultural community's original bedrock of discord, hostility and violence – a reservoir of primal motivations which, as we have seen, had been sublimated in a rather crude manner and harnessed to a sacred order of stringent ethico-social judgements and classifications – was not discouraged or eliminated but desacralized and recirculated around the social body during capitalism's early years. The symbolic violence that previously had been the exclusive

privilege of the ancient religious elite as a method of social classification gradually became available to the ascending secular functionaries and consumer masses of the emergent bourgeois order. This historical process is implied in Pierre Bourdieu's insistence that symbolic violence is the primary substance of capitalism's cultural and social orders, a long-term historical continuity from the *doxic* life of the traditional community that has been modified and harnessed to the capitalist project. But this project is of course built upon the cold utilitarian logic of the commodity, and the stabilization process, even though it was more effective in the reduction of murder and assault than the archaic sacrificial-conscriptive techniques that preceded it (historical research leaves us in no doubt about that),²⁹ was nevertheless limited to instrumental ends. Until roughly the late nineteenth century, Northern Europe's parsimonious bourgeois *ministerium* restricted the state enforcement and cultural promotion of intra-territorial pacification to those nodes and arteries that were vital to the circulation of the commodity. Locations considered to be of secondary importance, such as the domestic household or the proletarian ghetto, were relatively neglected, and a disposition to 'hardness' – along with the stringent codes that were developed in an attempt to restrict physical violence to a functional, manipulable form – was actively encouraged amongst clusters of micro-communities whose inhabitants dealt directly with heavy labour, military expansion and internal regulation.

Along with the pacification of money-making geographical spaces and routes, the other principal reason behind the simultaneous cultivation and sublimation of the aggressive urge was not the creation of gentle communities but the energizing of the competitive business cycle and the establishment of a hierarchical social order that could service it. Moving swiftly and purposefully across the new social landscape, the literate symbolizing elite established careers and dynasties by taking their chances in the marketplace as private ethico-cultural entrepreneurs, by accepting ecclesiastical offices in the hotchpotch of Protestant religious sects, or by swelling the ranks of the state's expanding bureaucratic and tutelary apparatus. The heavyweight denizens who populated the nether regions of excessive militarism, internal state regulation and hard labour – performing the arduous bodily tasks upon which the progress of capitalist nation-states depended – were rudely shunted and imprisoned there by a combination of forces: firstly, naked dispossession and intimidation by a business class and their puppet-state which between them monopolized the means of production and physical violence; secondly, the experientially generated insularity and rigidity of the 'heavyweight' form of social being that was postulated in the original *anelpis* thesis; and, thirdly, the ethico-social classifying operation of the symbolic violence that had ended up in the hands of bourgeois culture's ascending and expanding elite. A direct genealogical link between the symbolic technicians of the old religious order and those of the bourgeois cultural *ministerium* can be seen quite clearly during the dissolution of the monasteries in England, when large numbers of artists, actors, writers, lyricists, poets, orators, musicians, teachers and theologian-philosophers transferred themselves (the ability to symbolize in a sophisticated way is the ultimate transferable skill) into the less cosseted and privileged but potentially more rewarding labour-market and state administration.³⁰ Once they had made this less than traumatic transition, this group of elite technicians could continue to do their traditional jobs of fuelling the boiler and decorating the prison



walls with corrupt, hyperbolized symbols – this time on behalf of an emergent secular plutocracy – and developing on behalf of their new patrons a comprehensive, flexible and responsive power-base that could deflect, absorb and neutralize any form of critical organic intellectualism.

It was no surprise that these elite symbol technicians embarked on a journey of adaptation and service to the logical requirements of a commodity market which from the late eighteenth century onwards quite rapidly assimilated and enrolled all human agency and political power, even the bourgeois plutocracy that nursed it *in loco parentis* through its infancy. The early and high periods of capitalism required and cultivated the active agency of this ruthless plutocracy, of a neutralizing and sublimating symbolic elite, and of an impoverished and profaned mass of female domestic labourers and brutalized male specialists in hard labour and violence; I am aware that this is a functionalized *ideal-type* and that numerous crossovers and exceptions did exist, but it more than suffices as a basic description of the general shape of things. But the point is that the current radical transition from the productivist economy to neo-capital's sign-economy means that the logico-functional requirements for these traditional forms of social being have been superseded; with the exception of those which ratify the symbol specialists, who can now take up offices and opportunities in the gathering cultural totality. Neo-capitalism's consumer culture marks the most emphatic victory of the abstract world and its faithful *eternal priesthood*.

Symbolic violence, once the privilege of an ancient specialist elite which had erected a fragile one-way mirror along the fault-line that divided the practical and symbolic orders, is now being circulated around the social body for general consumption and use. Quite quickly neo-capital's world is becoming Hobbesian in a way that he could never have envisaged; a shapeless, terroristic war of proliferating, mutually hostile moral entrepreneurs and connoisseurs struggling viciously over diminishing and homogenising sources of social value. They have no common purpose other than to discard the forms of the old world as quickly as possible and surrender – with as much dignity as voracious *parvenus* can muster – to the requirements of neo-capital's marketplace. At one time the existence of symbol producers as an exclusive and spectacular religious-monarchical elite ensured that they remained visible to the public and that the number of pompous, moralizing narcissists and malingering gnostics who could exercise symbolic violence on the labouring masses was strictly limited. Now, in an economy where it's quite simply impossible to get a fair day's reward for a fair day's manual labour, everybody who wants to be somebody is playing the symbolic power-game, and the politico-cultural fragmentation of the social landscape means that now you never know where the next salvo of missiles is coming from.

The unpredictable crossfire of symbolic terrorism that permeates neo-capitalist culture is a direct result of the important cultural-agentive element of the historical-material genesis of the *anelpic* condition. This lattice of violent judgements deters the consumer-technician mass from expressing any feeling of sympathy or solidarity that they might harbour for the growing number of discarded wage-labourers who are being sentenced to the hell of *anelpis*. The appearance of the liberal-progressivist

symbolizing elite erupting through the traditional-repressive bedrock with their mawkish yet strident rhetorics of optimism does nothing to ameliorate but rather complicates and intensifies the excisionary process. No matter what your personal dispositions or preferences might be, it's now possible to be the recipient of a violent symbolic judgement from some ethico-cultural position on liberalism's traditional-progressivist spectrum. The assaults that are directed by modish progressivist-reformist factions against those who appear to represent the dying body of the old productivist world are no less vicious than those once wielded by the traditional symbolizing elite against the warrior-producer mass or its 'deviant' factions. The former is distinguishable from the latter only because it is deploying symbolic violence to *eliminate* the visceral body rather than cultivate and harness it. In this climate of subliminal hostility it's not surprising that the 'lightening of the self' – spectralization, ambivalence, malleability, non-commitment and disguise – in an effort to avoid these relentless and unpredictable assaults from the reforming priesthood is becoming a popular survival strategy.

But the absorption of the population into a near-totalized order of signs and the cultivation of social being as an other-directed lightweight mimeotype is producing in each individual a negative, one-way anaphylaxis. Each new generation is becoming more sensitive and less resistant to the violent, antigenic symbolic activity that drives the culture of neologism, and too many individuals seem to be suffering an incremental loss of the inner affective strength required to recriminate its accusations and resist its dictates, judgements, remonstrations and punishments. The absorption of the liminal human being into neo-capitalism's totalizing network of symbols – call it what you will, the economy of signs, the spectacle, the simulacrum, the doxa – has made it possible for symbolic violence to break loose from its dimorphic bond and become the principal generator of real social effects and historical events. The movement of bodies into geographical ghettos, together with the socio-cultural constitution and bodily inculcation of the structure of absolute negativity that constitutes the *anelpic* condition, is one of the real outcomes of this neo-capitalist mimesis of sacrificial massacre. What else can we expect of the abjected inhabitants of this sacrificial micro-climate other than some measure of undirected aggressivity, some kicking and screaming from strong, vigorous bodies as the social being that they have carried across generations is terminated?

Conclusion

The *anelpic* condition is certainly a product of the logic of capital's historical process, but the vital cultural-agenic part of that process is centred around the employment of symbolic violence to expel a cohort of erstwhile practical specialists – many of whom remain immersed in the brutalizing practices that once were an essential part of the roles to which they were conscripted during the agricultural-industrial epoch – from the compulsory celebration of a new totalizing symbolic life that none of them have any inclination to understand or participate in. In the five years since the original article was published the ranks of *anelpis* have swollen, and the petty violence and hostility within its boundaries has intensified. The inhabitants of an *anelpic* micro-climate constituted by radical insignificance, negativity and excision cannot even

fashion any sort of rational, focused — dare I say political — response. Mental sclerosis is not a permanent or inevitable feature of the 'heavyweight' habitus, but the socialist political movement — which once by means of a scrupulous praxical symbolism might have been able to foster in heavyweight being a conscious, reflexive and praxical appraisal of its own social position and trajectory from which a truly critical intellectual life might have grown — has itself been rendered *unfashionable*, an early death at the hands of neo-capitalism's cultural assassins. Unless some sort of intelligent, radicalized form of Philistinism or Socratic resistance can depose the tyranny of the violent symbol, and unless the fundamental structures of social value and labour that have prevailed across the agricultural-industrial epoch can be radically reworked in a way that is entirely different to neo-capitalism's maladroit modification, then the *anelpic* condition will be a permanent feature of this new millennium. Undirected hostility and physical violence will rise and the novel and renovated forms of actuarial authoritarianism that are being implemented across the industrialised West — pioneered by the North American penal gulag — will become the norm.

Notes

¹ R. Horne and S. Hall, 'Anelpis: A preliminary expedition into a world without hope or potential', in *parallax* 1 (1) 81-92.

² S. Hall, D. Hobbs, S. Winlow and S. Lister, 'Daubing the Drudges of Fury: The piety of the 'hegemonic masculinity' thesis', forthcoming in *Theoretical Criminology*.

³ J. Rifkin, *The End of Work: The decline of the global labour force and the dawn of the post-market era* (New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1995)

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xviii

⁵ *Ibid.*, see also R.B Reich, *The Work of Nations* (New York: 1992) and C. Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (New York: Norton, 1996)

⁶ M.N. Cohen and G.J. Armelagos, *Paleopathology at the Origins of Agriculture* (New York: Academic Press, 1984)

⁷ D.D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural concepts of masculinity*. (London: Yale University Press, 1990)

⁸ I am thinking in particular of the voluminous output of T. Adorno, M. Horkheimer, W. Benjamin, G. Bataille, B. Brecht, J.P. Sartre, C. Castoriadis, F. Jameson and J. Baudrillard.

⁹ This tension appears in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, an early work wherein physical labour in the natural world was declared the producer of both intelligence and barbarity, but in the much later *Capital I* it was seen to be an essential part of the dialectical process through which humans would evolve as whole, creative beings. But the suspicion that the abstract corrupts the inherent nobility of creative engagement with

the natural object-world appears throughout his work.

¹⁰ Baudrillard's clearest statement of this expectation can be found in *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), where he tells us that neo-capitalism's consumer system' can be pushed by means of deliberately excessive consumption into a 'hyperlogic' which will result in its 'brutal amortization'. The possibility that the real social-material infrastructure might disintegrate well before the symbolic system begins to 'die', and the serious social implications of this possibility, are ignored. Thus he can eulogise romantically about New York — see *The Transparency of Evil*, (London: Verso, 1993) — without even mentioning the racial tension, intimidation, violence and murder that blights the everyday life of the city's inhabitants.

¹¹ Deleuze and Foucault tell us, edifyingly, that in multicultural urban areas the regulatory pressure of capital's system will produce random subversive reactions of excess and dissent of the cultural-ideational kind that might lead us to 'liberation', assuming that this place exists and it is where everyone wants to go. What they don't tell us is that neo-capitalism is a sophisticated system that has grown up by using excess and dissent as its primary fuel; at this very moment some bright young entrepreneur might be hatching the idea of *Subversoters Ltd.* For a comprehensive if rather partisan discussion of this sort of thing see C. Stanley, *Urban Excess and the Law* (London: Cavendish, 1996).

- ¹² See 'The Dream of the Whole Man' and 'Creative Labour' in E. Fischer, *Marx in his Own Words* (London: Penguin, 1973)
- ¹³ See H. Gerth and C. Wright-Mills (eds and trans.) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946) and J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (London: Heinemann, 1984)
- ¹⁴ A. Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks* (London: New Left Books, 1971)
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Communications about the political constitution of radical philistinism, which might be able to be worked into a practical way of rejecting the tyranny of the symbol, would be welcome. e-mail: s.hall@tees.ac.uk

Chapter 5

Violence and the Nocturnal Economy

Violence and the Nocturnal Economy

An alternative 'nocturnal economy' is replacing industry in cities across Britain. Steve Hall looks at violence in the clubs, pubs and streets.

difficult to define masculinity. Far from thinking of a (male) subject conceived of as passive recipient of (masculine) gender roles or scripts, or as accomplishing a pre-given notion of a masculine gender, it has been suggested that 'tackling material inequalities in the relative position of men and women is more likely to bring about change (through making it possible for women to be independent of abusive partners, or removing men's power over women which makes their continued abuse possible) than attempts to reform men's selves, personalities or identities to make them less likely to choose to abuse women' (MacInnes 1998). This is not to reject psychosocial accounts out of hand; it is, however, to seek to focus on what men do in approaching the violences of men, rather than any seemingly free-floating, abstract problem of men's gender, whether conceived of as masculinity or masculinities. Contemporary understandings of men's violences reproduce some familiar ideologies of normality and criminality, sanity and madness, good and evil, psychopathology and sociopathology, each of which have constituted the norms by which we judge the conduct of ourselves and others. At the same time however, and in so many ways, understandings of the sociality of men's crimes as the actions of men continues to be routinely effaced within dominant political debates.

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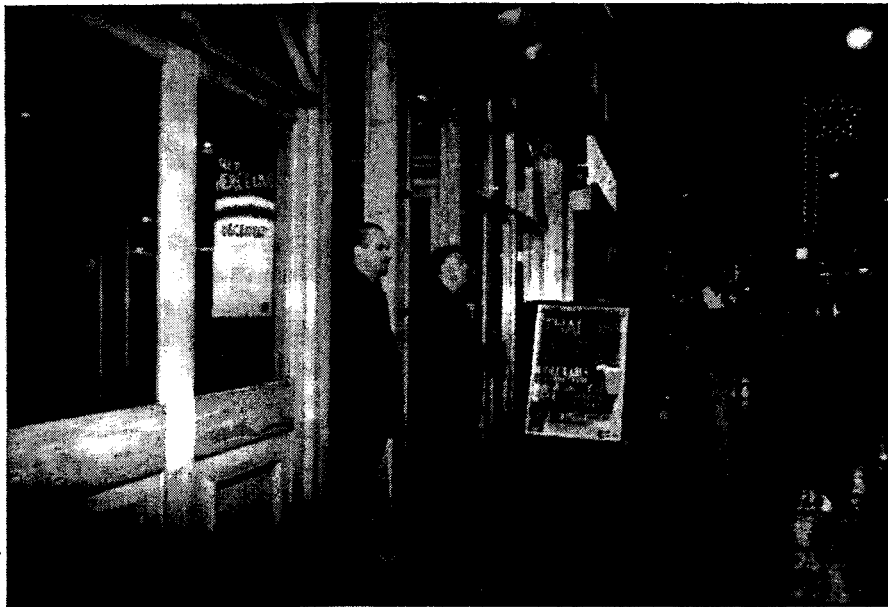
The recent shift from an industrial to a post-industrial mode of capital accumulation has generated a burgeoning nocturnal economy of pubs, clubs, cinemas and restaurants, pioneered in former industrial cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Newcastle upon Tyne and now being duplicated throughout Britain. The municipal-entrepreneurial partnerships that now manage urban areas regard the nocturnal economy as one of the most important areas of economic development. Not only does it energize commercial activity amongst local populations, but it also contributes to the 'imaging' of cities in the contest to attract inward corporate investment and an influx of populations with disposable incomes, such as students, young professionals and tourists.

As the hedonistic forms of consumerism known as the 'leisure industry' displace productive work, the traditional repressive control of public morality and behaviour is being recognized as an impediment to economic development. The nocturnal economy's paradoxical demand for orderly disorder has dumped a difficult conundrum on the desks of the bureaucrats who manage the traditional state-centred institutions of law and social control. How can places be made exciting and profitable, yet safe and pacified, when the market's demand for stimulation works in opposition to the condition of stable equilibrium required by civilized social life?

Just as escalating violence marks zones of rapid capital retraction and unemployment, it also characterises zones of intense capital investment. The pace of development in the nocturnal

economy is almost as remarkable as that of de-industrialisation. The rapid conversion of many of the larger Victorian administrative buildings into places of entertainment has changed the appearance, culture and economic function of Britain's old industrial cities. In 1998 there were 200 million nightclub admissions, and in that year these 'clubs' had a £2.5 billion turnover. The larger city-centre establishments currently boast individual annual turnovers of anything between £250,000 and £3 million, most of which can be attributed to the sale of alcohol. If the nightclub figure is combined with traditional bars and restaurants, the nocturnal economy's annual turnover in Britain can be estimated at about £22 billion. The contribution of the illegal bootleg booze and drugs economies is difficult to estimate, but there is some agreement that this general economy constitutes a significant proportion of GDP (see Hobbs et al, forthcoming, for a more detailed discussion).

The nocturnal economy is also a major source of employment, and the official figure of 500,000 workers could be significantly augmented if informal work was taken into account. Something like 100,000 of these workers are engaged in private security. At a time in Britain when official private security workers outnumber public police by 250,000 to 125,000 (Taylor, 1999), and most police officers patrol during the day, it is not unusual to find the 'nightstrip' in a medium-sized town catering for upwards of 15,000 revellers between the hours of 9pm and 3am. A dozen or so public officers in a tense and reluctant alliance with private door-minders are policing crowds larger and more intoxicated than those



attending most non-premiership football matches.

This rather disorganised and understaffed public-private partnership is achieving little success as a regulator of public conduct in the nocturnal economy. The reluctance of door-minders or young male customers to report violence - for a number of complex reasons centred around the avoidance of legal or informal repercussions (Lister et al, forthcoming) - means that violent incidents are likely to be massively under-represented in official statistics. However, statistics from the Police and Accident and Emergency Departments can be combined with self-report studies and ethnographies (Hall et al, forthcoming) to suggest that almost three-quarters of all violent incidents in urban areas occur during the weekend between the above-mentioned hours. The vast majority of this violence is perpetrated by and against young males who are excessively intoxicated by alcohol or drugs. The typical flashpoints are the queues that form around night-club doors, taxi ranks and fast-food outlets. Accident and Emergency departments in the major towns and cities are treating over 1,000 serious facial injuries per year. Since 1997, serious assaults have risen at a rate of 100 per cent per year (Hobbs et al, forthcoming). Young men are punching, kicking and stabbing each other with alarming regularity (James, 1995; Hall et al, forthcoming).

As always, violence is

becoming a routine part of life in a frontier economy predicated on hedonism, aggressive acquisition and frantic commodity exchange. This is the real face of the minimally regulated capitalist marketplace. The libertarian left's naive rhetoric of 'multi-cultural opportunities' offers ironic support for the Economic Development Corporations' image-building strategies. In Newcastle upon Tyne, whilst corporate outlets spring up like mushrooms, the sole self-owned 'indie' night-spot for young

The larger city-centre establishments currently boast individual annual turnovers of anything between £250,000 and £3 million, most of which can be attributed to the sale of alcohol.

people closed down recently because of lack of attendance. Escalating violence also suggests that the cultural climate and functional demands of the nocturnal economy are much more conducive to the reproduction of traditional forms of aggressive masculinity than they are to progressive, congenial forms.

The justifications that dedicated minimalists use for dismantling state authority and abandoning intervention in society and economy look very thin if 'deregulated' spaces are scrutinised honestly by rigorous empirical and

theoretical work. Young working class people might be floundering on the sink estates, but in the city centres at the weekend they are kept afloat by the cheap alcohol and hedonistic illusions of the corporate leisure industry. The inhabitants of both spaces are crying out for better public policing. This can never be a long-term solution to escalating violence in the post-industrial market economy. However, because the liberal right that runs New Labour has capitulated to market forces, and the paranoid liberal-left always chants the mantra of minimalism and personal freedom at a deafening volume whenever collective action looks like it might be needed, the socio-economic intervention that is required for a long-term reduction in violence has been postponed indefinitely. In the meantime, better policing might offer the public a temporary measure of safety and the sort of visible repression that they can at least hold accountable.

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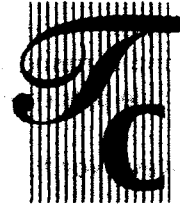
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Chapter 6

Daubing the Drudges Of Fury

**Men, violence and the piety of the 'hegemonic masculinity'
thesis**



Daubing the drudges of fury: *Men, violence and the piety of the 'hegemonic masculinity' thesis*

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Abstract

A substantial body of empirical work suggests that young, economically marginalized males are the most likely perpetrators and victims of serious physical violence. Interpreting these findings in a historicized way that has been neglected by the criminological discourses of the moment suggests that physical violence has become an increasingly unsuccessful strategy in the quest for social power in liberal-capitalist societies. Although it has been displaced by symbolic violence as the principal domineering force in capitalism's historical project, physical violence has not been genuinely discouraged but harnessed as a specialist practice in a pseudo-pacification process. From this perspective, violence has a complex relationship with liberal-capitalism. Can the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' help criminology to deal with this complexity and inform violence reduction strategies? This article argues that, in the context of pseudo-pacification, the notion that violent males 'rework the themes' of an institutionally powerful 'hegemonic masculinity' inverts and distorts the concept of hegemony, which for Gramsci was the self-affirming cultural production of the dominant political-economic class. Thus the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' tends to downplay political economy and class power, which suggests that it is too far removed from historical processes and material contexts to either justify the use of the term hegemony itself or explain the striking social patterns of male violence. This intellectual retreat is representative of a general political evacuation of capitalism's global socio-

economic processes, a move that is allowing sparsely regulated market forces to continue the economic insecurity, specialist roles and corresponding cultural forms that reproduce the traditional male propensity to physical violence.

Key Words

dimorphic violence • hegemony • masculinity • neocapitalism
• pseudo-pacification

Introduction: scrutinizing the terms of the 'hegemonic masculinity' discourse

The claim that men commit most acts of physical violence is possibly the nearest that criminology has come to producing an indisputable fact. There is now a measure of consensus in the discipline that men's violence has undergone a real increase in the past three decades (James, 1995; Levi, 1997), or alternatively that more penetrative analyses are revealing a traditionally high level (Newburn and Stanko, 1994). Working from this platform, criminology has made a major contribution to the placement of masculinity under the scrutiny of a number of critical standpoints, many of which have been influenced by varieties of feminism and profeminism. The intellectual tribunal emerging from this 'gender turn' has coincided with the gradual but seemingly irreversible erosion of the traditional male's predominance in politics, culture and the labour market. For many commentators violence is a traditional masculine method of maintaining dominance and responding to challenges, and thus it follows that an upward trend in male violence is one of the clearest indicators that the masculine gender order is under threat and showing a 'tendency to crisis' (Ingham, 1984; Connell, 1987, 1995; Kimmel, 1987, 1996; Brittan, 1989).

In this climate of transition and crisis, the sociologist Bob Connell's (1987, 1995) notion of 'hegemonic masculinity' has become highly influential in the study of the relationship between men, masculinity and violence. Connell, aided by a number of collaborators in the general profeminist project (see Kimmel, 1987, 1996; Morgan, 1992; Messerschmidt, 1993), has tried to support yet problematize the pivotal feminist claim that violence is an instrument of transhistorical male or 'heteropatriarchal' dominance and oppression in the gender order. His claim that '[a] structure of inequality on this scale . . . is hard to imagine without violence . . . [perpetrated by] . . . the dominant gender who hold and use the means of violence' (1995: 83) is balanced by an awareness that, on the one hand, many acts of violence could be expressions of the continuity of that oppressive power or, on the other, reactions to its perceived discontinuity.

Connell's introduction of the 'threatened male' into the discourse allows

the totalizing image of the transhistorically oppressive male to be juxtaposed against its vulnerable *alter ego*. He builds on this tension by claiming that a diversity of 'subordinated' masculinities shadows the traditional oppressive norm, offering men alternative gendered identities that can contest this norm in progressive ways. Following Gramsci (1971), he names the traditional, oppressive gender form 'hegemonic' because it utilizes cultural production to reproduce ideologically its institutionalized dominance over 'subordinated' men as well as women (1995: 78–9). This reinforces his earlier claim that both the gender *and* internal masculine orders are structured by '... a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity' (1987: 184).

Summarizing this complex position would risk oversimplification, but it does rest on the pivotal concept of 'hegemony'. The Italian neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci reformulated this old term to mean the use of popular cultural production—texts, images and ideas—to engineer among the subordinate proletarian mass a fragile consensus that the bourgeoisie's power, wealth and privilege was the product of 'natural' values, forces and circumstances. Thus hegemony helped to reproduce the class order by incorporating the bulk of the working class *mentally and emotionally* into the dominant belief-system, preventing a conscious appraisal of their material exploitation and politico-cultural subjugation that might have led to the politics of social transformation. Gramsci furnished the intellectual world with a vital insight; how class and corporate power is no longer reproduced principally by crude, coercive means, but by the naturalizing, legitimizing and mystifying ideological production of institutions such as the state, the family, religion, art and mass media. The influence of this ideology on everyday life can be seen in practices such as politics, wage negotiations, social policies, family relationships, schooling and child-rearing.

According to Connell (1995), traditional males mobilize similar ideological techniques to reproduce their real dominance over women in the gender order and, more notably, over 'subordinated masculinities' in the masculine order. 'Legal violence' and 'street violence' combine with 'economic discrimination' to constitute a set of '... quite material practices' (1995: 78) by means of which structures of dominance and subordination are enacted in real social and economic relations. Male-dominated cultural production 'exalts' these practices, giving men the impression that they have a legitimate right to call upon violence when it is deemed essential to the maintenance of the traditional order. In reality this often means in a brutal and arbitrary manner. This right has been distributed across the class order as one of a cluster of 'patriarchal privileges'. Hegemonic cultural production, in conjunction with the recurring enacted practices that it encourages (Butler, 1993), reproduces the belief that it is legitimate and natural for men to use violence as a means of oppressing women and less belligerent males. Thus male violence is the brutal core of a politico-cultural strategy that is

deployed to sustain an illegitimate position of dominance. Men who intimidate or physically attack women, gay men or less assertive heterosexual men '... usually feel they are entirely justified, that they are exercising a right... authorised by an ideology of supremacy' (Connell, 1995: 83). Whether or not they are involved directly as '... the frontline troops of patriarchy' (1995: 79), 'complicit' males in all class positions benefit from it because it distributes a 'patriarchal dividend' of privileged and legitimated entitlements throughout the traditional masculine order, one of which is the right to use violence. Thus what Messerschmidt (1993) labels 'destructive masculinity' can take its place as one of the hegemonic forms that dominate both the gender order and the social order.

Connell (1995) goes on to draw what could have been useful distinctions in the masculine order. He divides it roughly into three main groups, which bear some resemblance to those that make up the class structure. First, the specialist producers and circulators of culture; second, the complicit, aggressive (but not necessarily violent) mainstream redeemers of the 'patriarchal dividend'; and third, the frequently violent 'protest masculinities' that inhabit the socio-economic margins. The members of this third group are the most likely to mobilize their entitlements to violence as a crude reaction to economic redundancy and the perceived threat of supersession by what they believe should be 'subordinate' gender forms.

However, although these formal distinctions give the impression that class divisions are not being entirely overlooked, they simply describe the differing ways in which class-based groups of men tend to 'rework' the same universal privileges and strategies of domination. The basic totalizing premise is retained: real male powers and privileges are hegemonically reproduced and distributed in the form of a universal 'patriarchal dividend' that *permeates the class divisions of the masculine order*. The central claim seems to be that traditional masculine culture has some sort of unifying, distributive property that overrides class divisions in order to maintain its dominant social position for the benefit of all traditional males.

However, Connell does not delve too deeply into the question of the *real value* that the privileged right to use intimidation and violence might carry, and whether it is enough to warrant such prodigious cultural production and a cherished place in the traditional male's inventory of power strategies. The debate on whether or not social power is based on abstract rights and beliefs is too expansive to discuss here, but suffice it to say that Pierre Bourdieu's (1984, 1990) economic metaphor is possibly more convincing. For him, the main purpose of displaying, enacting and reproducing the customary beliefs, rights, practices and expressive capacities that make up symbolic and cultural capital is that not only can they aid the maintenance of a perceived dominant social position, but also that they can be transferred eventually into *economic* capital. Although this might elicit a cry of 'economic reductionism' from some temporarily in-vogue theorists of the 'cultural turn', this protest often throws a smokescreen over their own tendency to reduce analyses of social power to the much less convincing

premise of domination for its own sake. At least Bourdieu's perspective furnishes us with an objective material purpose for the struggle over cultural privileges. If this is the case, does the specific privilege of using intimidation and violence allow men to redeem this 'patriarchal dividend' politically and economically, or does it limit them to the fleeting liminal satisfaction of wielding pointless, destructive force over others? If indeed a unified 'patriarchy' does exist as a real social power, then its 'dividends' must be in some real sense exchangeable across class divisions. Put simply, it must be possible for lower-class men to *cash them in* for some of the real privileges and benefits enjoyed by those men who—alongside many women and 'subordinated masculinities'—inhabit the higher class or occupational echelons. If profitable exchange is infrequent rather than routine, then, in the case of violence, the personal is quite possibly *not* very political.

Connell (1995) glosses over this question of material reward in two main ways. First, he expresses the disparity of wealth between men and women in terms of a crude mean average income. This move ignores class divisions, not only allowing him to place a £3.60 per hour security guard or a £50 per night doorman in the same politico-economic category as a male billionaire, but also in a position of 'structural' dominance over a £300,000 per year female Q.C. or 'subordinated masculine' media executive. It also carries the tacit suggestion that, in the project of liberating homosexuality, a gay security guard might share mutual *political* interests with a gay media executive, an intellectual position in which the cultural politics of sex and gender override rather than 'intersect with' the economic politics of class, making his claim to give '... full weight to their class as well as their gender politics' (1995: 75) sound rather hollow. If this statistical average were to be broken down, it would become quite obvious that it is heavily skewed by the vast fortunes owned by a very small number of men.

It is also difficult to see how the 'patriarchal privileges' enjoyed by the lower classes can be expressed even in purely *cultural* terms. How, for instance, could the notion that '... [m]en gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command' (Connell, 1995: 82) be applied to the security guard, apart from the honour and prestige of wearing a peaked cap adorned with the firm's logo and the right to command his Alsatian dog? Connell, in an attempt to retain some notion of class, claims that the class and gender orders 'intersect' (1995: 75). However, he seems reluctant to explain exactly how, or provide any thick description of everyday life in the nodes of intersection, preferring instead to illustrate his argument with rather rare examples of working-class masculinities that might be experiencing some form of 'gender vertigo' (1995: 142). The inconspicuous majority—the comfortably heterosexual, quietly traditional and far less exotic young males who populate the streets, pubs and clubs of every western town and city—are conveniently ignored.

Second, he fails to apply even this crude economic analysis to the *internal masculine order* itself, the very focus of his study. This exercise would furnish us with a rough sketch of the general economic class positions

occupied by those masculinities that he posits as 'culturally subordinated' in the masculine order. However, as far as I know, no such research exists. Until it does we have very little idea of the offices of social power that these 'subordinated' forms might have held across the history of liberal-capitalism.

Although Connell's notion of 'protest' highlights the overall frustration in lower-class locations, it does not explain why these men would protest so forcefully over the loss of specific 'privileges' that, in what will be argued is a normative climate of pacification, have never been really valuable and are now virtually worthless. This problem is an indicator of fundamental contradictions in the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity', especially its connection to violence. In Gramsci's formulation of hegemony, cultural production was designed to engineer an *inclusive consensus*, and one important aspect of this was the creation of a secularized faith that would encourage the lower orders to emulate and aspire to the values and practices of their 'natural leaders'. If we remember that the bourgeoisie itself rose from the lower ranks of feudalism, then practising the entrepreneurial faith that grew around the developing economic logic of the market, as so many peasants and workers did (Hobbs, 1995), could always enhance prospects of status and wealth. Embracing bourgeois hegemony could produce *real results* for the active believer, and *real subordination* for the working-class passive believer or dissenter.

Does the *active believer*—and violent males are nothing if not active—in traditional masculine hegemony benefit in a similar way? Something approaching the *inverse* of this might be the case. Although the bourgeoisie aspired to create an inclusive yet hierarchal society in its own image, it seems to have made a significant exception in the case of those lower-class men who were required to construct and defend the physical infrastructure on which its power and prosperity ultimately depended. Crude, aggressive masculinity was constituted primarily by enforced and brutalizing practical experience (Horne and Hall, 1995) and culturally reproduced by *exclusive* subaltern anti-norms, which are difficult to label 'hegemonic' in a capitalist project where socially and politically powerful men increasingly abandoned physical violence for a form of sublimated, codified aggression. If this *pseudo-pacified* elite controlled the means of cultural production, it is difficult to depict the crude caricature of 'destructive masculinity' as part of the elite's attempt to engineer a legitimizing consensus by affirming itself as the pinnacle of a 'natural order'. Rather—and this is in keeping with the historical and anthropological tradition of many cultures (see Gilmore, 1990)—the purpose might have been to constitute and reproduce at a safe distance an archaic hyper-masculine 'other', whose insecure and peripheral social inclusion actually depended on his serviceability.

These problems need to be examined in more detail, because they suggest that Connell's overall theory suffers from some elementary misconceptions. First, the claim that '. . . members of the privileged group use violence to sustain their dominance' (1995: 83) is excessively simplistic in its direct

association of violence and social domination, and it neglects the complex dimorphic nature of violence as both a symbolic and a material practice (see Hall, 2000). Second, his one-dimensional conceptions of cultural hegemony, violence, state formation and the logic of capital accumulation do not bear the mark of deep exploration. The correspondences that he draws between them, summed up in the quotation below, seem to be informed by a notion of consumer-driven neocapitalism as the old Wright-Millsian *military-industrial complex* that characterized the productivist-imperialist form of classical capitalism. As such, they are quite stunningly simplistic and dated:

Nevertheless, hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power, collective if not individual. So the top levels of business, the military and government provide a fairly convincing *corporate* display of masculinity, still very little shaken by feminist women or dissenting men. It is the successful claim to authority, more than direct violence, that is the mark of hegemony (though violence often underpins or supports authority).

(Connell, 1995: 87, emphasis in original)

This rather vague statement tells us little about precisely how, when, by whom and for what purposes 'direct violence' is exercised, or exactly who is really benefiting from it. Complex and divergent institutionalized authorities, cultural ideals and class practices, between which he posits nothing more detailed than 'some correspondence', are being conflated in the questionable notion of a unified masculine authority. Perhaps this ambiguity can be addressed by emphasizing that capitalism has from its beginnings deemed the *physical pacification* of the internal territory to be essential to its economic expansion and social reproduction (a position reflected clearly and consistently in bourgeois high culture and law). Viewed from this perspective, the claim that enacted violence was ever a valuable 'power' and 'privilege' reflecting the sort of multi-dimensional and paradoxical authorities that capitalism required seriously neglects its complex institutional, moral and functional contexts.

To support a connection between violence as a valuable 'privilege' and a patriarchal order that is sufficiently unified and organized to be able to distribute this privilege as part of a general 'dividend', Connell's three patriarchal groups must be shown to have common interests. Then, to avoid reducing the issue entirely to culture and gender, the patriarchy's ability to distribute real social, political and economic benefits among its members without too much class and racial discrimination must be clearly demonstrated. Also, the real value of physical violence across capitalism's history, over and above its obvious ability to establish temporary inter-personal dominance over other individuals, must be appraised. Finally, if violence is to be connected firmly to institutional power, the claim that the 'hegemonic' cultural encouragement to practise it does actually represent the distribution of a dividend that has real value in the *current* socio-

economic context must be rigorously examined. If there are reasonable doubts about any of this then quite clearly criminology should defer the use of 'hegemonic masculinity' as an explanatory tool in its research into violence and masculinity.

Patterns of violence

Can we find empirical support for the claim that men who indulge in acts of crude aggression or violence really benefit from patriarchal power and privilege? Analyses that are based on the intersection of class and race teem with evidence to the contrary. Even if feminist criminology's important disclosure of hidden domestic violence in all class echelons is taken into account, a broad sweep of research findings suggests that the more serious forms of interpersonal violence—especially murder—are more conspicuous among the marginalized fragments of the (former) working class. Even if all the usual phenomenological and political problems of data construction and interpretation are acknowledged (see Maguire, 1997), we will see shortly that both statistical and ethnographic studies of serious and fatal violence show an undeniable concentration in specific social and geographical locations.

There are four main sources of contemporary positivist data: police records of arrests and convictions, government victimization surveys, self-report surveys and health service statistics.

Basing his conclusions on official statistics, while taking some account of their unreliability, the psychologist Oliver James (1995) claims that there was an 'unprecedented rise' in interpersonal violence among 14–16-year-olds between 1987 and 1993 in England and Wales. He focuses predominantly on the legal category 'violence against the person', which constitutes 75 per cent of all violent crimes that appear in the annual Home Office publication, *Criminal Statistics*. Although this category covers recorded incidents from homicide to domestic assaults, he notes that the bulk of the cases concern '... young men from poor backgrounds punching, kicking and stabbing each other' (1995: 1). The idea that similar levels and forms of violence occur in comfortable middle-class suburbs is a myth (Wilson, 1987; Lea, 1992; Currie, 1993). James' work indicates that some cohorts of working-class males from economically abandoned areas have become up to 30 times more violent in the period 1955 to 1995.

Attempts to deny or explain away working-class violence have been less than successful. The general feeling expressed by most non-idealist criminologists is that the incidence of serious violence is likely to be far higher than the average in specific economically impoverished areas (Wilson, 1987; Currie, 1993). Although it must be made quite clear that this is by no means a general practice permeating either *all* or *whole* poor areas (Horne and Hall, 1995), these findings cannot simply be dismissed. The likelihood is that the under-reporting of violence might well understate the reality of

the situation *in specific areas*, perhaps even more than unjustified police or media attention might exaggerate the general picture (Currie, 1993; Hall, 1995, 1997). This makes political sense if we remember that *understatement*, with its emotional effect *complacency*, is just as effective as *exaggeration*, with its emotional effect *anxiety*, as a metonymic device in the construction of establishment rhetoric. As usual, the reality seems to be more complex and spatially specific. Recent work on the 'fear of crime' indicates that a decrease in the fear of being on the street after dark in more salubrious locales contrasts with an increase in fear—and in the actual risk of victimization—in economically abandoned locales (see Lea and Young, 1993: 45–9). The 'average risk' calculation, which claims that in Britain a 'statistically average' person can expect to be the victim of violence once every 100 years, ignores the extreme variation of victimhood across social and geographical space and the reality of '... the daily spontaneous outbursts of violence in the margins ...' (Lea and Young, 1993: 39).

A recent medical study conducted in the Accident and Emergency departments of large urban hospitals in England (Hutchinson et al., 1998) offers striking support for this sort of interpretation. According to this work, some of the larger hospitals are treating up to 1000 serious facial injuries per year, usually inflicted during 'drink-related' fighting between young, working-class males. In 1998, the 16–25-year-old cohort constituted the bulk of admissions. A national total of something like 18,000 per year are suffering lifetime scarring of the face. What used to be a bit of stitching up after a fist-fight is now more serious because of the increased use of weapons such as reinforced boots, knuckle dusters, baseball bats, scaffold poles, knives and the occasional firearm.

The relatively comprehensive statistical overview of North American crime compiled by Dobrin et al. (1996) indicates that the USA suffers from the highest murder rate in the industrialized West; 37 per 100,000 for young men between the ages of 15 and 24 compared to less than 2 per 100,000 for the same group in England and Wales. This is five times the average of the other industrialized nations and twice that of Northern Ireland during the 'troubles'. Given that men do most of the killing, it is quite telling that 17,949 males were also the *victims* of homicide, compared to 5278 women. This male number constitutes 77 percent of the total, and the vast majority of incidents occur outside the domestic sphere among the most impoverished male members of the lower classes and ethnic groups. It is, in other words, being practised predominantly among the most powerless and socio-economically devalued male groups in American society, very often catalysed by alcohol or drugs and occurring among young men who know each other (Gibbs and Merighi, 1994). There is no need to downplay the gravity of domestic and sexual violence, homophobic bullying or workplace intimidation to appreciate that the redemption of this 'patriarchal privilege' (or the supposed protest lodged against its unavailability) is more often than not manifested in *materially and politically pointless* inter-male violence. The only discernible reward that the audience of fellow

marginals can bestow is *applause*, a brief moment of approval that, because it delivers only a fleeting shadow of the glory it promises, becomes a highly addictive but ultimately futile pursuit. Some 'privilege'.

A helpful cross-cultural comparison emerges from Zimring and Hawkins' (1997) statistical analysis of assault and death. Compared to other industrialized western nations, the North American rate of assault is not unusual, but the death rate is. It seems that young American males are no more prone to petty altercations than their counterparts in other parts of the world, but because of the prolific use of firearms and other weapons they are certainly more likely to carry an argument to its most lethal conclusion. Therefore a lower murder rate in Western Europe does not indicate a lower violence rate. Although cultural and legal factors such as gun ownership can cause variations in the rate of death and serious injury, the general rise in *assault rates* among young men of the former working class across the industrialized West confirms the probability that they might be in the grip of similar socio-historical forces (Wilson, 1987; Hall, 1995, 1997; Currie, 1997; Taylor, 1999).

A brief look at the circumstances in which murders are committed also casts an empirical shadow of doubt over the direct linking of violence to institutional power, the 'patriarchal dividend' or 'reworked cultural privileges'. Alongside murders in 'unknown circumstances' (5059 men and 1352 women), the highest victim categories for both sexes were 'escalation of trivial arguments' (4698 and 1590), 'non-specified violence' (2071 and 989), 'robbery' (1950 and 351), and 'drug-related violence' (1180 and 105). Taken together, these categories towered above the others, totalling 19,388, which constituted 83 percent of the total of 23,271 in 1993 (Dobrin et al., 1996). Regionally, the highest murder rates—calculated as homicides per 100,000 of the population—were to be found in the economically troubled 'downtown' areas of Washington (80+), New Orleans (80+) and Detroit (60+). Black males are by far the most likely victims of murder, over 100 per 100,000 in the early 1990s compared to 20 for black females, nine for white males and two for white females. Newburn and Stanko's (1994) reminder of the high incidence of sexual and physical assaults against young males supports the claim that they tend to be the main victims as well as the perpetrators of physical violence. Adler (1992) and King (1992) suggest that male victimization tends to be under-reported mainly because of the taboo against 'informing' in lower-class male cultures, while Lister et al. (2000) attribute under-reporting to the rational avoidance, by both victims and perpetrators, of unpredictable police actions and legal outcomes. This, in combination with the silencing effect of intimidation, suggests that the actual number of assaults and injuries might be considerably higher. However, the vast majority of murders *do* enter the statistical record, and the victimization figures for black males have spiked upwards since the early 1980s, while those for white males have declined. This rise coincides with a number of major changes in the socio-economic fabric, such as high post-industrial unemployment, the

intensified socio-economic exclusion and ghettoization of working-class racial minorities, and increased activity in the drug, nocturnal leisure and general criminal markets. Although intimidation and less physically injurious forms of violence are more evenly distributed across the social structure, most serious or lethal violence occurs in demographic clusters of poor, young, urban, minority males (Zimring and Hawkins, 1997).

Many ethnographic studies also tend to support the link between serious physical violence and socio-economic subordination. Gibbs and Merighi (1994) point to the multiple marginalization—in terms of race, age and class—of young lower-class blacks in American urban areas that have been deserted by the forces of capital. Some time ago Hannerz (1969) noted the drift into a ‘compulsory masculinity’ in impoverished and ‘hypersegregated’ neighbourhoods; a form characterized by sexual aggression, ostentation, high-risk behaviour and confrontational violence. In conditions of pragmatic social and economic stress, it displayed a tendency to become almost self-parodying, and many of the more committed individuals followed the stereotypical progression into gangs, crime, drugs and violence. Winlow (2001) notes that in some equivalent British locales the drug and theft industries are now providing more occupational positions for this ‘pseudo-masculinity’ than the mainstream economy. The probability that so many young, lower-class males continue to scratch a living in such impoverished conditions yet carry in their hearts and minds this parody of patriarchal authority suggests that violent hyper-masculinity is both an ideologically induced delusion (MacInnes, 1998) and a liminal fixation (Hall, 1995, 1997; Winlow, 2001) that emerged—or were cultivated—as complementary, sub-rational reproductive agents of an enforced practical relationship with specific material conditions (Hall, 1995, 1997; Horne and Hall, 1995). Or, to apply Bourdieu’s (1990) more succinct formulation, rather than the product of cultural narratives or synchronic psychodynamic relations, it is a set of beliefs and dispositions carried in the body, a *habitus* that is the product of generations of recurring practical experiences in unforgiving material conditions, a brutal art of living supported by internalized but *externally constructed* cultural narratives (see also Hall, 1997; Winlow, 2001). The more committed subjects of this deeply entrenched form now seem to be falling deeper into a social cul-de-sac where these delusions and fixations are best able to sustain themselves (Hall, 1995, 1997; Horne and Hall, 1995).

Earlier ethnographic studies from the USA and Britain in the 1970s and 1980s (Chambliss, 1973; Willis, 1977; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1985) also support the idea that violence is associated with cultural vilification and a lowly social position. One of the most valuable insights to emerge is Paul Willis’ notion that persistent displays of aggression attracted condemnation from authority figures and pacified yet more successful peers. This tended to shunt the perpetrators towards ‘dead-end jobs’, the most unrewarding positions in the occupational hierarchy. It raises the point that ‘symbolic violence’ (expressions of derogation that are part of

the cultural suffocation and subsequent reconstitution of provincial working-class cultures—see Bourdieu, 1984, 1990, 1991) emanating from the pacified mainstream order is a powerful force in the sociogenesis, reproduction and socio-economic structuring of 'visceral cultures' (Hall, 1997, 2000).

Another common ethnographic finding on the theme of cultural derogation is that violence often flares up among men when slights are made concerning the *performance* of traditional roles (Katz, 1988; Ptacek, 1988; Frieze and Browne, 1989). Polk (1994) confirms Wolfgang's (1958) finding that insults thrown at the traditional objects of male protection and provision—wives, girlfriends, family, close friends—are more likely to trigger violence than those directed at the person. Many cultural theorists have tended to underplay the importance of the way in which micro-interactions in the gender order—energized by powerful emotional dynamics such as expectation, judgement, honour and humiliation—are grounded and referenced in the logic of socio-economic performance (Gilmore, 1990). They operate with an impenetrable, preoccupying intensity in the worst material circumstances—where honour is constantly offended and humiliation is a structural condition of existence—which tends to restrict the practising or even imagining of alternatives (Horne and Hall, 1995).

Physical violence is also more likely to occur in front of a male audience. This indicates that many lower-class males are anxious to secure admiration in sub-cultures that are characterized by mimetic rivalry, where young men judge each other quite ruthlessly on their performances of normative sub-cultural expectations (Gilmore, 1990; Polk, 1994; Winlow, 2001). But if the perpetrators somehow feel or believe that violence is a privilege that can be contextually reworked for their own benefit, why are they predominantly *attacking each other*, and why are their everyday relationships characterized by so much anxiety, irritability and interpersonal hostility? Does membership of the supreme patriarchy—which supposedly authorizes access to the cultural resources and privileges that ensure continuing domination of the social world—engender feelings of triumph, solidarity and security, or express itself in the smug, elegant posture and celestial sneer of a timeless ruling elite? Miraculously, it appears not.

If this desolate mess is the only real result of the 'reworking of privileges', there might be a need for the patriarchy to introduce some sort of quality control on both its craftsmanship and its material. What is at its worst a forlorn cycle of socio-economic exclusion, foolish bickering, emotional combustion, violence, death and imprisonment does not seem to indicate the successful application of an institutionalized dominance strategy, the redemption of a 'patriarchal dividend', or the lodging of an effective 'protest'. Alternatively, it could be seen as the spontaneous fury that tends to follow a sense of betrayal as young men realize that, in this current socio-economic shift, most of their 'privileges' are—and in crucial ways always have been—bogus, obsolete and unredeemable for anything really

valuable. Reactions such as this are quite common when the subject first catches a glimpse of itself as the victim of a deception that it barely understands; a deception that for some reason continues to be culturally promoted even though its material and political purposes have evaporated. There is an increasing tendency for young working-class men to do very badly in the acquisition of qualifications, rewarding occupations and wealth when compared to other social groups, including young working-class women (Amin, 1994; Taylor, 1999). If the powerful producers of patriarchal culture have at heart common interests that transcend class, why, rather than reaching down and pulling their lower-class brothers out of trouble, do they persistently sell them a hollow, useless fake? Why do they ply a trade in parodies of an obsolete power that cannot furnish these supposed beneficiaries with any tangible rewards unless they have access to traditional class privileges or neocapitalism's new offices? And, more disturbingly, why do those who are sold short continue to buy?

The evidence itself, with or without these alternative interpretations, casts some doubt on the idea that men with a propensity for crude aggression or physical violence are in receipt of cultural privileges that carry any material or structural exchange value in western societies. Some recent ethnographic studies conducted by Hobbs (1994, 1995), Horne and Hall (1995) and Winlow (2001) have begun to address this problem by contextualizing masculine practice in the nascent post-industrial, neocapitalist economy. In this rather novel context, physically violent men confront a '... post-traditional order that is by definition hostile to modes of authority based upon the eternal recurrence of male hegemony' (Hobbs, 1994: 120), an order that places high value on '... *precisely the opposite sorts of dispositions*' (Hall, 1997: 468, emphasis in original). This insight demands some consideration of exactly what this mutating order actually is and, if it has an element of continuity, how it has been implicated in capitalism's historical process.

Classical capitalism, neocapitalism and the pseudo-pacification process

A telling problem with the hegemonic masculinity discourse is that earlier radical liberal and feminist arguments, which staged a one-dimensional critique of both capitalism and patriarchy as unremittingly oppressive tyrannies driven by the 'masculine traits' of aggression, intimidation and physical violence (see Messerschmidt, 1993), have not really been shaken off. Connell (1987, 1995) does hint that these traits cannot be posited as the cause or reproductive agent of modern violence, because social institutions both encourage and discourage them in complex and ambivalent ways (see also MacInnes, 1998), but again he fails to tell us precisely how. Theorists as disparate as Gramsci (1971) and Elias (1994) have acknowledged that capitalism and some of its patriarchal agents retained the right

to use intimidation or violence in the international disputes that inevitably accompanied the pursuit of national power and wealth, and as a last resort in techniques of internal regulation such as policing and corporal punishment. However, they also recognized that the most strenuous politico-cultural effort was applied to the *elimination* of these practices in the internal state territory. The establishment of a more stable rule by enrolment into the social order—backed up by the rule of law—was both inferred by capitalism's market logic and preferred by its more committed and institutionally powerful agents. In short, a sort of expedient, selective *pacification process* in the internal territory vitally enhanced the market-capitalist project's capacity to maintain order and create wealth.

There is a good deal of empirical and historiographical evidence to support the claim that, compared to what preceded it, this pacification process was notably successful in reducing serious violence in the internal state territory. Historian Ted Gurr's (1981) classic empirical study of murder in England found that the overall rate decreased significantly from just under 20 per 100,000 at the beginning of the 13th century to less than 2 per 100,000 in 1950. Hanawalt (1976) demonstrates that the London rate was higher than average during the economic and political upheavals of the late 14th century, somewhere between 36 and 52. Although the point was made earlier in this article that the link between the murder rate and a general climate of violence is tenuous when cross-cultural comparisons are being made, these two phenomena correspond more precisely in the same cultural and geographical space. Gurr comments:

... [T]hese early estimates of homicide rates sketch a portrait of a society in which men were easily provoked to violent anger, and were unrestrained in the brutality with which they attacked their opponents. Interpersonal violence was a recurring fact of rural and urban life.

(1981: 307)

A number of historical studies show that most incidents of serious assault and murder followed arguments and flare-ups—especially between neighbouring families—in a general social climate where '... [h]atred, fear and violence were endemic in rural England before the Industrial Revolution' (MacDonald, 1981: 109). Girard's (1977) anthropological and literary studies support the salutary observation that much of the history of the pre-capitalist agricultural settlement was made against a permanent backdrop of petty hostility and mistrust. Bouts of violence erupted regularly, often ensnaring the protagonists in interminable cycles of revenge (Trompf, 1994; Hall, 2000). In contrast, the capitalist project has been characterized by a sustained downward trend in murder and serious interpersonal violence in the internal state territories of Europe from the mid-14th century to the mid-20th century. Remarkably, this occurred in spite of the intensification of conditions that, initial logic suggests, should have sent it spiralling upwards: increased socio-economic competition and class division; political, religious and economic upheaval; increased warfare; the

structural consolidation of patriarchy, nationalism and racism; brutal state-administered class repression; and the creation of large numbers of landless labourers, some of whom in the midst of recession expanded the ranks of violent criminal bands (Beier, 1983; Briggs et al., 1996; Hill, 1996).

Despite these apparently countervailing conditions, early and high capitalism's hegemonic cultural power seems to have achieved some success in establishing a 600-year internal pacification process in emergent European states. However, it is wholly inaccurate to claim that this was the product of the reformist lobbying of pacifists, liberal humanists, philanthropists, religious groups or feminists. These movements played a role in arranging and monitoring pacifying codes, or introducing piecemeal reforms, but the claim that they were prime movers is quite simply erroneous. Behind the pacification process was capitalism's central purpose: the expansion of the commercial market economy. This simply could not proceed under the rigid patriarchal tyrannies administered by partially Christianized warlords in the seigniorial-feudal eras. In Early Modern Europe these elite groups, whose family-centred political power was maintained by the deployment of privatized intimidation and physical violence, began a steep political descent. In fact, capital's logic demanded a wholesale revaluation and modification of both physical and symbolic violence. This signalled the demise of the independent or ordained warrior as an arbitrarily violent territorial tyrant (Bolton, 1980; Maddern, 1992; Elias, 1994). It also ended the monopoly that the religious and royal *ministeria* traditionally held on the deployment of symbolic violence. In an interesting historical reversal, the physical violence that had permeated civil society was monopolized by the emerging state, while the symbolic violence that had been monopolized by the elite was quasi-democratized in civil society in the sense that it was placed by the ascending bourgeoisie under the authority of market logic (Hall, 2000). Although external warfare in some respects proliferated, this emergent elite was determined to cultivate internal peace alongside an aggressive but sublimated socio-economic dynamic.

Classical historians from Herodotus to Gibbon (1972 [1788]) knew that it is impossible to expand trade and increase prosperity under conditions of general disorder, hostility and violence, and that the attempt to restore order by means of centralized tyrannies creates only the most fragile, ephemeral peace. Throughout its reign the original bourgeoisie's interest in establishing the crucial *internal* pacification process markedly outweighed its interest in maintaining the right to exercise arbitrary physical violence, and the corporate management class that succeeded it has, for precisely the same reasons, retained this preference. Violent masculine customs that had established themselves in the seigniorial hierarchies, but which were deemed to be dysfunctional in the nascent capitalist economy, were either repressed by altered cultural coding, commercialized and heavily regulated or outlawed (Holt, 1989). There is no space here for a detailed exposition of the pacification process, and at this juncture the reader could be pointed

towards Norbert Elias' work *The Civilizing Process* (1994 [1939]) and its burgeoning secondary literature (see Mennell, 1992; Fletcher, 1997). Very briefly—and with apologies for the crudity of this synopsis—of interest to this thesis is the way in which bourgeois society, establishing itself between the 16th and 19th centuries, based behavioural codes on the strict control of the visceral emotions. This process was supported by the state's monopolization of violence, the cultural prompting of individuals to psychosomatically internalize 'refined' behavioural codes as 'sensibilities', and the proliferation of 'figurations', long chains of social interdependencies in the expanding market and industrial economies in which individuals learnt to value each other. These expanding chains enabled and encouraged the traditionally despised lower orders to achieve more rewarding and valued social positions by displaying 'polite' postures and adopting non-violent forms of social and economic interaction.

However, in early capitalism's socio-economic environment, the process of distributing these behavioural codes was competitive, selective and uneven. A new class hierarchy grew around pacification because a convincing outward display of refined sensibilities became a vital requirement for entry to the expanding bourgeois social networks, which in turn lubricated personal access to the higher echelons of politics, trade and industry. The display of civility, manners, cultural knowledge and, most importantly, a reputation for being able to *sublimate aggressive liminal urges* became the main cultural criteria for social ascent (Bourdieu, 1984; Elias, 1994; Fletcher, 1997; Mellor and Shilling, 1997; Hall, 2000).

However, the capitalist socio-economic dynamic could not be fuelled by gentle sensibilities alone; if they had permeated every dimension of human interaction the dynamic might well have stalled. The velvet glove needed its iron fist, but the old, brittle fist of physical violence was to be replaced by a stronger and more flexible alloy. This was fashioned from what was known and available; in this case 'symbolic violence'. As explained earlier, this traditional form of symbolic derogation and cultural suffocation of the lower-class 'other' had for centuries been the exclusive privilege of religious, monarchical and aristocratic elites as a social ordering and control technique. Quasi-democratizing symbolic violence was a reasonably effective method of retaining aggressive interpersonal, familial and social competition in a modified form while simultaneously reducing trade-inhibiting forms of physical intimidation and violence. Thus the stimulation of those aggressive or fearful liminal urges and desires that could be translated into commodities and acceptable social ambitions, together with their diversion from physical expression by constant sublimation, gradually established itself as a core dynamic process (Hall, 2000). The personal adoption and expression of these elaborately coded sensibilities and practices signified the most valued mode of being in the classical capitalist project: 'Social advancement became less dependent upon one's ability to wield arms and more dependent upon one's ability to compete with words and

planned strategies with which to win the favour of social superiors' (Fletcher, 1997: 35).

As a dynamic social and economic drive, symbolic violence proved itself to be infinitely more effective than the abandonment of the body in the ecstatic religious fervour and physical violence that had characterized so much of the past. Any requirements or opportunities for naked intimidation and physical violence were palmed off onto a residue of dislocated males, and discarded ex-warriors found themselves competing with dispossessed peasants in a new, 'democratized' set of specialist violent careers in war, adventuring, internal regulation and banditry (Beier, 1983).

This realignment and revaluation of the physical and the symbolic can be seen as a reworking of the essential *dimorphic* nature of violence (Hall, 2000), in other words the capacity of violence to operate as both a physical and a symbolic form of social power. Despite the utilization of ancient religious sublimating and ordering techniques (see Girard, 1977; Mellor and Shilling, 1997) in capitalist cultural production, the underlying utilitarian logic of the market's requirements meant that maximum effort was applied not to the exciting transformation of some Hegelian 'spirit of the age', but to the practical reduction of physical violence in the mundane public places and activities that were vital to commodity exchange: streets, marketplaces, fairs, taverns, highways, sea-lanes, etc. It would have been simultaneously over-ambitious *and* counter-productive to be totally democratic by applying strenuous efforts to the 'liberation' of all displaced men from the grip of the traditional masculine norms and habits that could provide specialist services to the capitalist project. Although a vestige of the old warrior culture was retained and rebriefed to perform supervisory roles in military expansion, a proportion of the hegemonic output from the increasingly domesticated elite was focused on modifying *already existing* serviceable masculine and feminine forms among the lower classes; what Connell names 'hegemonic masculinity' might make more sense if it is seen as a dimension of this output. However, because the limited social mobility in the quasi-democratized order did offer some escape routes, the gendered cultural reproduction of the 'visceral habitus' (see Hall, 1997) could only be even reasonably effective and reliable among those who were already consigned to a brutalizing existence in impoverished locations and physically demanding occupations by means of political repression, economic dispossession and the vagaries of the labour market. This paradox between the simultaneous needs for pacification and the retention of serviceable practices of physical violence is at the heart of bourgeois cultural deception and class structuring. What does not seem to be emerging from this perspective is a picture of capitalism as yet another epochal manifestation of the ancient civic entitlement to exercise physical violence to further personal, familial or 'gender' interests, or indeed the endurance of privatized violence as an effective strategy in the reproduction of real social power in the internal territory. What we might be looking at here, rather than Elias' general civilizing process or Connell's oppressive tyranny, is

an extremely complex market-driven *pseudo-pacification process* that has been supported by paradoxical, inconsistent and duplicitous cultural activity.

Neocapitalism is the recent outcome of profound shifts in the basal productive mode and motive forces of its predecessor, classical capitalism. In the industrialized West, the acquisition and extraction of raw materials, their manufacture into commodities and the militarized defence and internal regulation of the political group's territory are now performed by sophisticated machines and robots rather than onerous muscular labour and physical violence. Information processing, commodity circulation and consumption and the attachment of artificial symbolic and aesthetic value to otherwise mundane commodity objects, have replaced productive, domestic and militaristic work as primary economic activities. A cursory glance at the post-industrial wage structure confirms the fact that even very basic technological, informatic, aesthetic and consumptive skills are much more valuable than traditional physical and practical skills (Amin, 1994; Horne and Hall, 1995; Rifkin, 1995; Taylor, 1999). This shift has set in motion *automatically* a systematic revaluation of the marketable dispositions, desires, beliefs, skills, qualities and appearances that constitute the *habitus* of diverse groups and individuals. In this culturally driven economy of symbols and aesthetic surfaces, the symbolic violence that the more powerful classes have honed to a fine edge can now dominate over all other forms of aggression as an instrument of social power and the focus of lower-class emulation. However, it would be grossly naïve to portray specialist cultural producers as permanent 'family members' of a specific ruling class or gender alongside which they rise and fall. Over the preceding 20 years the rather slippery behaviour of the press, broadcasting and general cultural industries suggests quite strongly that, within the parameters of market logic, they are adaptable, durable and independent power brokers with a keen eye for changes in the *zeitgeist*. Their allegiances to incumbent powers—ethico-religious, monarchical, patriarchal, governmental, corporate or otherwise—tend to slip and slide in a rather expedient manner (Hall, 2000). Symbol specialists operating in and around the commodity market now have the opportunity to reign over discredited, semi-redundant soldier-producers, domestic workers, politicians and old high-cultural *connoisseurs* (Gorz, 1989; Lasch, 1996; Hall, 2000); rather than continuing to serve ruling elites, they are rapidly *becoming* the ruling elite.

Some readers might suspect that the extent of symbolism's current dominance over material forces is being exaggerated. If so, perhaps the following quotation from Jeremy Rifkin's assiduously researched study on employment and social restructuring—which shows the rapid and permanent elimination of manual workers from the production process and the circulatory economy in the 'third industrial revolution'—might help to dispel some of the doubts:

The information and communications technologies and global market forces are fast polarising the world's population into two irreconcilable and potentially warring forces—a new cosmopolitan elite of 'symbolic analysts' who control the technologies and forces of production, and the growing number of permanently displaced workers who have little hope and even fewer prospects for meaningful employment in the new high-tech global economy. (1995: xviii)

Connell (1995) recognizes that familiar models of working-class masculinity that were cultivated around the stable forms of practical-manual employment are now being discarded in this socio-economic transition. However, he fails to update his conception of the dominant elite, ignoring prosperous new groups and therefore also failing to locate marginality in the *full context* of neocapitalism's radically altered social relations. The intermittent employment, unemployment and severe deprivation experienced by traditional males must be seen *in relation* to the accelerating accumulation of wealth, security and status enjoyed by the physically pacified symbol specialists and their attendant service class (Amin, 1994; Lasch, 1996; Taylor, 1999; Hall, 2000). In this context, what are 'protest masculinities' actually protesting about? His claim that '[p]rotest masculinity is a marginal masculinity, which picks up themes of hegemonic masculinity in society at large but reworks them in a context of poverty' (Connell, 1995: 114) ignores the probability that the specific 'themes' of violence and crude aggression enacted among lower-class masculinities have never reflected any of the *sublimated* strategies required to achieve real political and economic success in capital's social hierarchy (Horne and Hall, 1995; Hall, 1997, 2000), and now they are becoming obsolete even as menial auxiliary tasks. Rather than playing a variation on their self-composed 'hegemonic' theme, redundant masculinities are being erased from the score by the newly appointed composer.

Underneath the crassly metonymic accounts of 'living fast and dying young' presented by Connell (1995) and others, there is little evidence of a cultural or psychodynamic logic of protest in the violence practised by young working-class men. There is even less evidence that this violence is 'underpinning or supporting' an institutionalized authority, to which strategic pseudo-pacification is far more important than persistent violence. Rather, there is some ethnographic evidence (James, 1995; Hobbs et al., 2000)—supported strongly by police and health service statistics—which shows that the politically pointless detonations of violence that occur among the young men who wander the streets, pubs and clubs of the deindustrialized zones are often triggered by the frustrations experienced in struggles over inadequate material resources. The majority of serious violence occurs in crowds and queues around night club doors, bars, taxi ranks, fast-food outlets and sporting events, or in the acquisition or distribution of drugs and other illegal commodities. These incidents are often catalysed by excessive intakes of intoxicants (James, 1995; Hobbs et

al., 2000), and in some instances can be racially or ethnically motivated (Webster, 1996). Young men of more entrepreneurial leanings have become extremely adept in the pragmatic use of traditional forms of intimidation and violence to establish operations and generate cash in criminal or quasi-legal enterprise (Winlow, 2001). As the robust *habitus* enacts its limited dispositions and strategies in pressing socio-economic circumstances, psycho-cultural gender discourses do not provide the principal generative or reproductive forces, only vindicating narratives.

Conclusions

One constant requirement for the stability and prosperity of any past society based on trade and exchange was a complex structure of practical norms that could maintain interpersonal pacification in tension with aggressive social competition, while also being able to call on physical force and violence when required. From this perspective, 'destructive masculinity' is simply an archaic form that was modified to service capitalism's political economy. Higher-class groups seem to have invested in pacification because they eventually recognized that, in the longer term, this was a much more durable source of real political power because it was more effective in creating wealth, expanding markets, accruing legitimate political capital and maintaining stability. This group dominated cultural production to manufacture the archaic image of 'destructive masculinity' specifically for serviceable lower-class males, along with any others who were sufficiently gullible actively to adopt it as a narrative that justified the practices of their allocated roles, and, eventually, when culture was fully mediated and commercialized, spend their money buying it.

If genuine bourgeois hegemony was an affirming cultural image of its own existing social order (even though Gramsci agreed with Marx—who might not have been wrong about everything—that this social order itself was an inversion of real productive values and relations), the image of the violent macho male in eternal sovereignty over the pacified was certainly not. Rather, 'hegemonic masculinity' was an important element of the original ideological mystification of *real* productive relations, a ruse that helped to legitimize and reproduce *existing* inverted social relations. If lower-class males were to be simultaneously motivated and exploited, the machismo-myth had to be extravagantly inflated in the gender and cultural orders both to disguise and compensate for the fact that the ascending pseudo-pacified elite, and the economic logic they served, were in reality exploiting physically aggressive males as part of the class of materially productive males and females. This was a risky cultural ruse constructed simultaneously to mollify and motivate working-class males who had little alternative but to *do* the violent and dirty work allocated to them; to inspire them as active participants in their own subordinated functions and eventually to neutralize the dangerous political opposition that emerged in

later stages of the project in the form of labour movements. Modernist 'femininity' was, of course, a complementary ruse encouraging working-class women to perform very different but equally onerous and unrewarding functions. The mass cultural output that attempts to reproduce the classic models of aggressive masculinity or passive femininity is a deception initially contrived by a genuine hegemonic elite to harness the violence and hard labour of the politically and culturally powerless. Because its function is not to distribute the dominant class' own beneficial, pseudo-pacified way of life across the social landscape, but rather to engineer through a one-way mirror an alternative consensus among a subordinate class 'other' about its own much less rewarding way of life, this cultural output cannot be described as 'hegemonic'.

In this light it becomes clear that there is no overall 'crisis of masculinity' across neocapitalism's reconfiguring class order. In the reality of the pseudo-pacification project, the class factions of the masculine order have never been united under a patriarchal flag in the first place. What Connell claims to be a gender relation in which an institutional 'hegemonic' masculinity uses violence to oppress reconstructing 'subordinate' masculinities is, in terms of real politico-economic power and success, *the inverse of the real class relation* that continues to structure the masculine order. Now, in the neocapitalist order, the economic function in which traditional masculinities were grounded has largely evaporated, which means that these so-called 'subordinate' masculinities are not 'reconstructing' but rather recognizing that the time has come to reveal and fully assert themselves. His fundamental mistakes are first to ignore that the pacified have learnt how to exert a fragile rule over the violent, and second to posit physically pacified, non-macho masculinities as new, alternative or revolutionary: at the beginning of the bourgeois revolutions 600 years ago he would have been correct.

Thus there is no real 'crisis' among the mainstream cohort of pseudo-pacified, commodity-circulating and symbol-processing males, only a bit of pique, nervous apprehension and inconvenience as female and educated working-class incomers flood in to their privileged spaces in a period of rapid expansion and disruption. They will get over it. The *real social and economic crisis* is being experienced by traditional working-class men and women who inhabit the former heavy industrial heartlands that once relied on sex-specific variations of physical labour in the productivist, domestic and military spheres. These locations, cut off both geographically and culturally from the centres and arteries of mainstream commodity circulation and symbol processing, are now the heart of nowhere.

Connell acknowledges that the 'destructive' masculine form is a caricature that can be embraced quite gullibly by working-class men (see Taylor, 1999). However, he ignores the contextualizing fact that the pseudo-pacified mainstream has for 600 years exploited the brutalizing practices of hard labour, violence and the stultifying practices of domestic drudgery that working-class men and women performed in the name of

their respective caricatures. From this perspective, the notion that the right to exercise violence was at any time in this historical epoch a 'privilege' that promoted the interests of anyone but these pseudo-pacified rulers has to be suspect. Absent from Connell's account is the most obvious and extensively evidenced source of violence: that it was a brutal skill and a common livelihood practised by expendable lower-class males across the millennia of our hostile and physically demanding agricultural-industrial history; a form of enforced service to incumbent elites who manipulated the symbolic to reproduce their real wealth and political dominance (Hall, 2000). Connell's claim that the '... members of the privileged group use violence to sustain their dominance' (1995: 83) is correct as far as it goes, but it omits the crucial qualification that the dominant classes *avoid actually doing violence themselves*. Put simply, until very recently the lower classes have been ruled not only with the surplus products of their own labour but also with their own violence.

The altered, disorganized neocapitalist commodity market still has a use for intimidation, 'hardness' and physical violence, although the corresponding occupational fields, like others based on physical labour, have been severely 'downsized'. The remaining fields are in the general areas of criminality and the increasingly privatized methods of regulating it. Here the cultural ideal of hyper-masculinity continues to be generated and reproduced in economic reality, more intensely than ever because, compared to their predecessors, these new fields offer limited opportunities. The localized need to display 'hardness' as a marketable skill would at least partly explain the predominance of male-on-male violence and the preference for an audience through which the reputation of the 'hardest' can be transmitted. There are large numbers of former working-class individuals who, as Crowther (2000) suggests very persuasively, are very unlikely to find a place in the radically altered neocapitalist mode of production. Some have sunk into a general apathy that is punctuated by detonations of politically pointless interpersonal hostility (Horne and Hall, 1995), while others seek economic opportunities in those sectors of the economy where the boundary between criminal and legal commodity circulation is blurred (Hobbs, 1995; Ruggerio, 1996). Large numbers of young men are engaging with criminal and quasi-legal occupations such as property theft, selling stolen goods, drug distribution, protection racketeering, private security and varieties of temporary, unofficial physical labour. In some areas these fields of activity are providing more 'job' opportunities than the mainstream economy (Hudson, 1986; Winlow, 2001), and here hyper-masculinities number among the gendered forms that are deeply embedded in new capital-labour relations (Taylor and Tyler, 2000) and market imperatives (Hall, 1997; Winlow, 2001).

Once again, much of this is the dirty, violent, unrewarding work that members of the pseudo-pacified elite would rather not do, and which has traditionally been serviced by their very own subaltern social construction, *the drudges of fury*. To expect pious proposals of reconstructed masculine

positions or progressive parenting to be taken seriously enough to have a transforming effect in these brutal spaces would be to push the boundaries of credibility, while in the socio-economic mainstream they amount to little more than pointless sermonizing to those who are already being slowly but inexorably converted by historical forces. However, these reformist cultural schemes—touted by self-appointed priests of pacifism who bask in the security of the symbol-processing mainstream—transcend mere piety. They are also *active* in the process of socio-economic exclusion because the very act of identifying an inadequate 'other' in need of reform reverberates around the 'symbolically violent' and socially competitive value system at the heart of neocapitalism. No matter how sympathetically and delicately this is done, it translates itself *automatically* into a process of deselection in the new occupational and social networks. Thus too many traditional males are debarred from the real processes that are gradually promoting 'change', and the overall culturalist project colludes in the intensified reproduction of that which it wishes to reform.

In this bleak climate western governments are left with only two choices. The first, and possibly still preferable among the Left's less fashionable and vocal majority, would be more serious political intervention in the forces of the market and capitalism's culture machine. The return of full employment in the form of 'decent' tenured jobs and the retraction of consumer pressure—at an opportune time when brutalizing occupations are no longer required functions—could afford working-class men the time, security, practical incentives and cultural refuge needed to reflexively change their ways of being. It might be preferable, but under the present political regime it is also highly unlikely (Habermas, 1989; Hall, 1997; Taylor, 1997, 1999). This leaves us with only the restoration of the state's capacity to prevent and reduce male violence in the spaces where it occurs, which tend to be against other males in public and against women in private. This means simply more accountable and effective policing.

Left-liberal criminology, with its voyages into the oxymoronic world of 'cultural politics', is suffering the same fate as the general progressivist-reformist movement to which it belongs: paralysed in the negative double-bind that it brought upon itself when its initial rejection of old interventionist socio-economic strategies was followed by its subsequent distaste for the fragmented authoritarian measures that are being applied to clear up the social mess that appeared after political economy was meekly handed over to neoliberalism and market forces. In this hiatus it is forced to save face, so it feigns a preference for the only position that its political capitulation allows; one of repose to chatter about whether or not the intellectual flotsam and jetsam washed up by obsolete radical liberal currents can sustain its utopian yearnings. Quite simply, it no longer fulfils its function as a credible opposition. In a market-driven neocapitalist order that can transpose all sweet dreams into lifestyle commodities and competitive social hierarchies Connell's '... politics of pure possibility' (1995: 243) are a part of this clutching at straws. Meanwhile, pointless hostility

flourishes in the social margins that neocapitalism has left gasping for breath, and at its reconstructed economic heart privatized violence inexorably revises its tactics, alters its forms and expands its endeavours.

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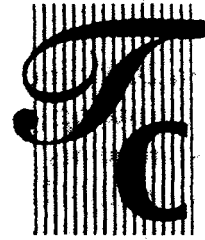
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Chapter 7

Rehabilitating Leviathan

**Reflections on the state, economic regulation and violence
reduction**

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Rehabilitating Leviathan: Reflections on the state, economic regulation and violence reduction

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Abstract

This article argues that some currently influential liberal-culturalist discourses tend to underplay the direct link between violent street crime, economic marginalization and the more ruthless adaptive aspects of advanced capitalist culture. In doing so they consistently reify the state, misconstrue its social role and represent its decline as a *fait accompli*. There is also a tendency to misrepresent the relative and moderate success in reducing street violence that it once achieved by using its political mandate to help maintain underlying economic stability above the required threshold. Underneath these discourses is a tacit political endorsement of the global neo-liberal project that is revealed by their collusion in the political neutralization of populations and the delegitimization of the potentially democratic state and its vital role in socio-economic stabilization and violence reduction.

Key Words

culture • economic management • market • state • violence
 reduction

Liberty is the perfection of civil society, but still authority must be acknowledged essential to its very existence.

(David Hume)

Precarious places: violence and rapid capital retraction

In 2001 and 2002, both Lee Jasper and Burhan Wazir, who number among a growing group of concerned black commentators, made strikingly critical statements in the British press about the current condition of black working-class culture. According to them, in some economically impoverished communities, which, although saturated by the values of consumerism, have been deserted by investors, this culture has become increasingly hostile and self-destructive. Despite protests from other members of the black community that these self-admonishing remarks fuel the labelling strategies of racist politics, Jasper proceeded to press the claim that some young black men are being caught up in:

... a multimillion pound economy of drugs and guns which subverts mainstream morality and social responsibility, appealing to those who have been excluded from society ... [where] ... black neighbourhoods have become free trade zones for every kind of drug and illegal contraband, including guns ... [w]e are paying for short-sighted political leadership [and] ... we must work with the police.

(Jasper, 2002)

For these commentators it appears that violent crime has become socially corrosive to a point where it is necessary to break free from the liberal-culturalist discourses that currently dominate the intellectual world and return to explanations grounded in political economy (see Wacquant, 2002). Although racism, with its own unique historical development (Gilroy, 1987; Bowling and Phillips, 2000), can never be omitted from an economically grounded theory of social divisions, social scientific research tends to confirm that similar levels of violent crime can be found among and between groups of white and Asian young people in similarly marginalized circumstances (Webster, 2001). It is entirely unnecessary to postulate the combination of economic marginalization and hyper-competitive values as a 'direct cause' or a 'single theory' of such diverse categories as interpersonal or intercultural violence to accept that hostilities old and new flourish in these conditions. If we look beyond misleading statistics that indicate rises in minor violence during times of economic boom, this more penetrative research suggests that extreme forms of exclusion from the circuits of the mainstream economy can set the conditions for increases in much more serious forms of violent crime during times of recession (Webster, 2001; Winlow, 2001).

Despite the lingering political fallout from the Lawrence affair, Jasper has made the provocative move of publicly advocating closer co-operation between black communities and the police in the fight against intolerable levels of drug-related violence in some economically deprived areas of London. It is, however, quite clear from his statement that he recognizes the temporary pragmatic nature of policing solutions to social and cultural 'problems' that are more deeply rooted in political economy. His term

'paying for short-sighted political leadership' indicates a further recognition that, in the absence of a genuine politics that can oppose or at least regulate neo-capitalism's economic processes, this form of exclusion and its accompanying tribulations could become a permanent feature of western life (Lash, 1994; Horne and Hall, 1995; Morrison, 1995).

Wazir (2001), observing that socio-economic decay in many 'downtown' North American areas is considerably more advanced, speaks in impassioned tones about a drawn-out 'black holocaust' in some former manufacturing and agricultural communities. Echoing the structural positions of writers such as Wilson (1987), Currie (1990, 1993), Zimring and Hawkins (1997) and Wacquant (2002), Wazir observes that rates of violent crime in these areas, aggravated by a resilient North American pro-gun and anti-state (yet pro-punishment) culture, have risen sharply since the mid-1980s to their highest post-war levels. As in Britain, the evidence suggests that this rise is not merely an effect of variations in reporting and recording (Reiner, 2000). The victimized and fearful inhabitants of both British and American zones of capital retraction seem to be asking for some sort of effective long-term intervention in the very real problem of violent crime. The upshot seems to be that, in the short term, these zones require more effective regulation and, in the long term, quite profound transformations of their economic and cultural foundations. Short-term regulation is becoming increasingly difficult because state-community control traditions are collapsing as disaffected post-industrial generations lose whatever respect for traditional public policing and informal controls they might once have had. The prospect of genuine long-term social renewal looks dim because the political relationship between this economically surplus population and a weak market-bound government that can offer little more than empty promises of helping individuals become 'fit to compete' and cosmetic regeneration schemes is, understandably, in the process of breaking down.

However, as Ian Taylor (1999) warned, 'fear of crime' is one of the worst possible motivations for a renewed state-community partnership. To be fruitful in the long term, such a partnership would have to be founded on a political discourse that can explain and address violent crime from deeper perspectives. The cry for help from the excluded zones is for the ears of neither a punitive state, which alienates and oppresses, nor a welfare state, which de-skills and disempowers. Rather, it seems to be aimed at some mythical political authority that can offer concrete help to revive prosperity, security and comprehensible moral codes alongside some sense of mutual interests and collective identity in environments where the traditional control mechanisms of both state and civil society have become significantly less effective in maintaining public order and managing underlying economic conditions.

Moving on to examine the broader criminological context in which these zones are located does little to raise the spirits. The fall in crime in 1990s Britain was '... largely a recording phenomenon' (Reiner, 2000: 82) and

nothing is stemming the rise of the 'grey figure' of unreported violence in specific western locales (Winlow, 2001) despite some overall statistical declines in what had become since the mid-1980s notably high historical levels of recorded violent crime (see Hagan, 2002; Levi with Maguire, 2002). However, these geographically and socially undifferentiated statistics of recorded violence are rather misleading when compared to more penetrative differentiated and ethnographic research. This suggests that levels of drug-related crime, intimidation and serious violence in specific locales in western nations since the 1980s have risen and remained unacceptably high at the same time as foundational economic changes in a move towards the 'pure' competitive market have taken place (Currie, 1993; Hall, 1997, 2002; Winlow, 2001; Wacquant, 2002). It might also be worth considering the possibility that the overall statistical decline in North America has less to do with advances in prosperity and sociability and more to do with the rise in the prison population from about 200,000 in 1970 to almost 1,200,000 in the late 1990s (Taylor, 1999).

Erring towards rather more circumspect readings of these ambiguous research findings, a number of the longer-serving criminologists have become increasingly less inclined to celebrate advanced capitalism's liberating potentials or 'resistances' and ever more vocal in their condemnation of its culture as a Darwinian process of ruthless competition, where exclusion and disaffection await the losers (James, 1995; Currie, 1997; Taylor, 1999; Reiner, 2000). In many of the West's former industrial areas, pockets of permanent recession contrast starkly with the extravagant prosperity of nearby centres of global commerce, administration and service industry (Lash and Urry, 1994; Winlow, 2001). In the shift from manufacturing to consumption and service industries, secure employment, especially for young working-class males, is now a relative rarity (Amin, 1994; Byrne, 1995). Much production has been moved abroad permanently, and this, alongside the increasing mobility of finance capital, the decline of state-centred labour politics and the absence of effective government at the international level, makes the return of tenured jobs and stable local economies unlikely (Byrne, 1995). This permanent departure from a physically, practically and collectively grounded agricultural-industrial past is engendering novel and intractable forms of social exclusion, political disenchantment and cultural fragmentation (Horne and Hall, 1995). The consistently low levels of educational and electoral engagement that accompany high crime rates in these excluded fragments of the former proletariat indicate growing disaffection with an increasingly distant neo-liberal political culture and a severely weakened labour movement that once represented them (Lasch, 1996).

This is reinforced by a hegemonic liberal 'cult of the self', which ensures that only lip service is paid to any traditional value apart from individualism, entrepreneurship and personal lifestyle opportunity, and that discourses of regulation or opposition are framed predominantly in terms of existential and ethico-rational choice (see Beck, 1992; Wouters, 1999).

Absorbed in a mass-mediated ornamental culture that has '... served to legitimate capitalism in the eyes of millions of ordinary people' (Bocock, 1993: 2), and the captivating daily routine of trying to acquire the fashionable objects that signify in this month's structure of symbolic value (see Lefebvre, 1991; Lash, 1994), most of these populations have been intellectually and politically neutralized (Baudrillard, 1983; Horne and Hall, 1995). Disconnected from its history, and from what Karl Marx (1972 [1888]) and Georges Sorel (1961 [1908]) once identified as the struggle for political and mythological unity, the atomized working class's sole exciting attraction is the leisure industry: holidays, sport, TV, film, popular music, computer games, intoxicating drugs and the regular soiree into the 'nocturnal economy' for a dose of manufactured Saturnalia. This largely enrolled and domesticated western culture can no longer be seen as a seedbed for the politics of opposition or reform (Baudrillard, 1983), or even for the sort of active participation that the new regulatory strategy of 'state-community partnership' requires. Rising violent crime seems to be coexisting with the silent majority's loss of faith—or even interest—in the ability of the state to govern the anarchic global market and its socio-cultural consequences. Perhaps the gravity of this situation should impel critical intellectuals to question the neo-liberal doctrine of *fait accompli* and reopen the investigation into precisely why democratic state government is in such difficulty.

Hamstrung Leviathan: the entrepreneurial state as a continuum

In today's globalizing economy, traditional nation-states have been caught in a downward spiral of political disempowerment (Loney et al., 1996; Bauman, 1998). Consistently under-funded and forced to borrow from city investment institutions, they must also convince corporate executives that their public policies are capable of supporting profitable business activities before their territories are earmarked for investment. We are approaching a stage where the survival of putative democratic government itself—and not simply incumbent political parties—is largely dependent on preparing the infrastructure, setting the cultural mood and providing administrative services for the business interests that run the global economy (Monbiot, 2000; Ellwood, 2001). The state appears to be politically hamstrung by the constant threat that, in the event of 'loss of confidence' by global financial institutions, loans will be refused or investments discontinued and placed overseas where labour and other unit production costs are cheaper and state regulatory policies more obliging.

Global capital's 'casino culture' encourages financial institutions to invest their clients' money solely where it is likely to produce high short-term returns (Bourdieu, 1998; Ellwood, 2001), and, at the moment, currency speculation tends to generate significantly higher profits than most forms of

commodity production, distribution or public service. Of the \$1.5 trillion traded every day on the global money markets, 95 per cent is simply bet on whether currency values and interest rates will rise or fall (Round, 2001). Investment is not arranged (and never has been in any absolute sense) by voluntary agreements between financial institutions, communities and politicians on the basis of social need, no matter how serious the consequences of capital retraction might be. By assuming the role of creditor and monopolizing the management of the large-scale movement of finance capital, global financial institutions now wield unassailable power over states.

The virtually unlimited flexibility and opportunity made possible by the emergent global market system has radically altered traditional investment culture. In 19th-century Britain, for instance, Victorian industrialists invested large proportions of their profits in the communal infrastructure. Railways, roads, factories, offices, schools, houses, bridges and parks were built and maintained to last as long as the technology of the time would allow. During the industrial phase of its expansion, capitalism needed secure, orderly communities for the circulation of commodities and the reproduction of workers for manufacturing, military service and unwaged domestic work (Willis, 1977; Hall, 1997). When domestic markets were of prime importance and stability outweighed 'flexible accumulation' as the guarantor of long-term capital returns, investments in infrastructure, strong state institutions and state-centred public services were relatively high, and order was maintained by repressive forms of social control and cultural restrictions.

In the neo-capitalist world the situation has changed radically. As traditional western manufacturing becomes less profitable, neo-capitalism is looking increasingly to the 'orbital' currency exchanges for higher short-term returns (Round, 2001). The relocation of manufacturing and the expansion of consumer demand are outcomes of the requirement of traditional industry to compete not only with itself but also with the highly profitable practice of currency speculation. This has increased the pressure on traditional trade and industry to adopt practices of 'flexible accumulation', and any nation-state that displays genuine democratic and regulatory potential can appear to be a threat and a burden to this process.

In this climate the corruption and decline of state governance and the emergence of some sort of 'market in social control' (see Taylor, 1999; Ruggiero, 2000) are inevitable. Because the market dominates so extensively, money has transcended its economic role as a medium of exchange to become a means of political and social control (Zysman, 1983; Ruggiero, 2000). Rolling back the state and its capacity to manage economic and social conditions is creating increased 'business opportunities' in everything from violence and criminality to crime prevention and imprisonment (South, 1988, 1994; Johnston, 1992; Taylor, 1999). Thus the privatized social control market can combine with the general global market to create its own autopoietic (self-reproducing) system of supply

and demand, which not only generates profit but also an important ideological revenue. If the market monopolizes the more visible and popular 'rowing' role, confining the state to a residue of impossible front-line tasks alongside the rather unsavoury back-stage 'steering' roles of monitoring, surveillance and intelligence gathering, the popular image of the active and capable front-line protector of life, limb and property will be transferred to the former. Thus the politico-cultural forces that promote the market can further de-legitimize the institutions of collective provision and public policy.

The current decline of the state and the rise in violent street crime are products of a long historical process. There is little doubt that the modern nation-state, despite its frequent role as an instrument of imperial war making and an oppressor of dissidence, was also the key administrator of a relatively successful process of internal pacification (Elias, 1994; Fletcher, 1997). As Norbert Elias reminds us, the significant reduction of violence in the states and cities of modernity '... becomes evident only when one realises how much more violent and how much higher in risk were physical attacks in earlier epochs of human development' (1988: 178). But why did the frequently warlike liberal-capitalist state put so much effort into reducing interpersonal violence in its internal territories? Although we want to offer something beyond standard Marxist instrumental or dialectical explanations, we are, nevertheless, convinced of the need to retain one core Marxist principle. During the bourgeois revolutions in Europe the expansion of the commodity market was the overwhelming primary interest of the business classes and the key motivation behind the development of both private and state-centred social control apparatuses (Hall, 2002). Affording other interests—such as those of religion, bureaucracy, patriarchy, medicine or the human sciences—the same explanatory weight as the business classes' politico-economic project, and thus associating power with the 'knowledges' and representational cultures of these elite discursive regimes, has been a profound intellectual and political mistake (Anderson, 1983; Eagleton, 1997; Taylor, 1999).

History reveals a number of reasons why democratic ethical government free from the logic of the commodity market and the political control of the business classes failed to establish itself. However, the core reason appears to be the regrettably vulgar fact that the modern capitalist state, unlike previous imperio-religious states and feudal principalities, has never possessed its own means of income. It is a cluster of abstract institutions, not a major landowner, manufacturer or merchant. It has indulged in the conquest and occupation of land only when allocated funding by the private interests that controlled its policy and military resources. Despite the power generated by its ability to legislate and control national resources (van Creveld, 1999), Leviathan's core relationship to the wealth-creating and property-owning aristocratic or business classes has always been one of *financial dependency*.

This relationship of ultimate dependency allowed the business classes to establish and maintain an enduring monopoly on political representation and fiscal policy. Although the embryonic administrative state existed as a consultant to sovereign monarchical power in Britain in the period following Edward II's Model Parliament in 1295, it experienced its first wave of rapid bourgeois development in the period from the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688 to the establishment of the Metropolitan Police in 1829. The ease of the removal of James II in 1688 to make way for property-based parliamentary rule demonstrated that the business classes had truly overpowered the aristocracy and commandeered the nascent state apparatus. The peasantry and embryonic proletariat simply did not figure in the political equation, and the main purpose of the political project was not curtailing aristocratic privileges but extending them to the 'gentrifying' business classes (Held, 1995; van Creveld, 1999).

According to the modern capitalist philosophy of statehood, forged in the early Italian states of the Renaissance, the state should be an instrument for private individuals to fulfil their own property-orientated ambitions (Held, 1995). Thus the immediate legal task of the early state was to pacify a volatile population in order to protect this private property so it could be accumulated, stored and circulated with increased safety, and its early success can largely be attributed to its passable ability to do so (Elias, 1994; van Creveld, 1999; Hall, 2002). However, underlying this was the longer-term strategy of promoting the accumulation of private property by legally endorsing the commodification of land, agricultural produce and mineral resources, and, ultimately, ensuring the installation of market exchange-value, rather than practical use-value, as the linchpin of the economy (Hechter and Brustein, 1980).

To lubricate this economic transition the bourgeois project required an emphatic shift in criminalization from offences against traditional symbols of authority to offences against property. After the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 the initial task of Europe's nascent states was to disarm and legally subjugate the aristocracy, thus eliminating their customary entitlement to exercise 'righteous violence', the most serious obstacle in the path of the bourgeoisie's system of acquiring, legally protecting and exchanging private property. If the state was to offer genuine protection it needed to overthrow the principal property owners and political rulers, namely the Roman Catholic Church in a fragile alliance with the hostile familial and clan powers that had emerged as the ruling 'aristocracy' after the demise of the Roman Empire (van Creveld, 1999). Feudalism was the result of warrior governors and chiefs struggling free from imperial power and reintroducing into their methods of government the practice of expanding and protecting hereditary assets by means of private violence and transmitting them to successive generations. Their relationship to the lower orders, among which the merchant class ranked the very lowest, was little more than a violent and exploitative protection racket. However, the early business classes' primary interest in the subjugation of these old barbarians was not

part of an ethical struggle on behalf of the downtrodden but a revolutionary *politico-economic* struggle to establish a bourgeois market-dependent state (Hall, 2002).

The second pacifying task was to prevent rebellious or criminal forms of violence welling up from the lower orders, who during the Peasant's Revolt had demonstrated a disturbing potential for political mobilization under the influence of demagogues such as Wat Tyler and John Ball. However, before the 19th century, lower-class insurrection above the level of traditional symbolic protest was rare (Thompson, 1963). As the aristocracy became more domesticated by absorption into courtly culture in early modern Europe (Elias, 1994) and the peasantry remained politically docile, the most persistent and immediate internal threat to the early mercantile bourgeoisie's power and property—in an age when property tended to exist in the tangible form of material goods—was theft or robbery committed largely by populations that had been dispossessed by early capitalism's commodification of land (Beier, 1983; Jutte, 1994; Sharpe, 1996). These criminal practices could quite often be executed more successfully with the aid of intimidation or violence, tactics that were encouraged by redundant soldiers who swelled the ranks of criminal bands in peacetime (Rawlings, 1999). Although most bourgeois states gradually outlawed side-arms among all classes, preventing the private use of technological advances in weaponry and legally safeguarding its monopolization of violence, during hard times violence remained a core technique for determined criminals. Despite the alleged deterrent effect of harsh punishment, throughout the capitalist project both violent crime and punitive state reactions developed into a pattern of increasing in times of economic recession and social disruption (Box, 1983; Taylor, 1999).

Despite being of central importance to the expansion of the market, the expensive business of maintaining law, order and security was always difficult to evaluate in terms of tangible returns on investments. In Britain, early private initiatives such as Houses of Correction, Town Watches and thief-catching agencies often ran at a loss (Rusche and Kirchheimer, 1969 [1939]; Melossi and Pavarini, 1981; Johnston, 1992), making them more difficult to justify. The declining aristocracy allowed social control to be transferred to the state because the responsibility of payment could also be shifted to the tax-paying business class and their professional service workers in a nation where wealth was spreading outwards. They accepted the costly burden of funding law and order through taxation in return for an even firmer grip on the state, more ideological justifications for their political power and a deepening of the condition of dependency in which the state and the rest of the population existed. Despite loud protests from the less politically insightful bourgeois factions who could not see 'direct profit' in social control, those who were more aware and fearful of crime, disorder and rebellion in the 'age of revolutions' considered its pacifying capacity to be a costly yet worthwhile investment that would produce long-term political, ideological and economic returns (Reiner, 1985).

At various points between the late 18th and early 20th centuries, European states attempted to strike a deal with their potentially unruly populations, promising to establish the conditions for widening prosperity and political representation in return for acceptance of the state's increasing disciplinary intervention in everyday life (Donzelot, 1980). It is possible to portray this intervention as either insidious, like Foucault (1977), or potentially progressive and beneficial, like Habermas (1992), but this argument tends to miss the point. The primary business of the state concerned the relationship between society and economic growth, which the French Physiocrats enshrined in the principle of 'laissez-faire'. All aspects of life, as Hegel later contended, should be subject to the state's sovereign power, because the state was a product of the evolutionary dialectic that drives history forward and, as such, the highest form of human authority. The rest of Europe reluctantly agreed, with one decisive caveat: the laissez-faire principle decreed that economic activity should be subject to the most minimal interventions and restrictions possible, which would allow the business classes maximal freedom to perform their primary task of creating the wealth that Keynes later claimed would 'trickle down' through the allegedly permeable layers of society to benefit the poor.

The age and endurance of this principle shows that the 'entrepreneurial state' is not new but the essentially unmodified prototype of modern western government. The restriction of politics and law in the economic sphere to the minimal restraint and maximal promotion of the commodity market became an integral part of the state's development. The economy was declared to be qualitatively and ineluctably 'different', sanctified as the exclusive preserve of the private individual seeking personal wealth, and as such it was, ideally, to be regulated differently, not by the state but by the moral and behavioural codes that, according to the parables told by classical liberals from Adam Smith (1986 [1776]) to Francis Fukuyama (1999), reproduce themselves organically and independently as 'social capital' in civil society. The durability of these core ideals—restored to their former glory in the current neo-liberal ideology of the 'property-owning democracy' in 1980s Britain and America—suggests that *in essence* the relationship between the state, the business classes and the population has remained relatively unchanged from the mercantile beginnings of western capitalism.

There is little doubt that the western business classes preferred state intervention *solely* where and when it was necessary to maintain the momentum of the capitalist economic project. But what strategies did these rulers employ? For too long, libertarian critics have portrayed the rule of the capitalist state as an only lightly and occasionally interrupted genealogy of oppression, punitiveness and insidious disciplinary manipulation of the rightfully 'free' individual (Cohen, 1985; Habermas, 1992). There is obvious truth in this critique when it is levelled at specific manifestations of the secular state, especially those monopolized by religious fanatics, totali-

tarian bureaucrats or racial supremacists. However, the important caveats are that pre-capitalist life was infinitely more violent on the interpersonal level, and that early mercantile capitalism's *primary* requirement was not to oppress but to disarm and pacify all social groups, especially the aristocracy and the marginalized banditry (Elias, 1994; Fletcher, 1997).

After a bout of quite gratuitous punitiveness in Tudor England, the bourgeois state's intention to eschew naked physical oppression as a first resort in controlling the population began to unfold. However, this was not the product of some blooming of the humanitarian spirit, but rather a requirement set by market-capitalism's central logic. The alchemy of market-capitalist societies required reactions between destabilizing dynamics in the economy and a complex mixture of stabilizing restrictions and stimulating incentives in the legal, social and cultural dimensions, but techniques of managing such a volatile and unpredictable process have never been more than partially successful. In an attempt to develop such techniques, the business classes monopolized violence not only as an instrument of imperial expansion or internal control, but also to evacuate as much of it as possible from civil society to ensure the protection of property and the free-flow of commodities. This 'pseudo-pacification' (see Hall, 2000, 2002) of the internal state territory was an indirect unit cost of the production and distribution of commodities when the domestic markets of state-governed territories were of primary importance. The disturbing thought here, of course, is that what appear to be the 'civilized' aspects of western culture might be primarily accidental by-products of this underlying historical process.

However, consumerism, imperialism and globalization were immanent in the capitalist process from the beginning, hampered only by inadequate manufacturing, transport and communication technology. As Braudel noted, 'there have been world economies, if not always, at least for a very long time' (1985b: 24; see also Wallerstein, 1993). If we look at the dynamism and profitability of early global trade, the burning ambitions of the Hanseatic League and the intensity of the 'trade wars' that appeared from the 17th century onwards, it is obvious that the early mercantile elites harboured global ambitions. We could suspect that, for the elite of a culture based on gambling, commodity exchange and global market expansion, the need to set up and maintain at great cost the imperial nation-state, internal production facilities, living spaces and social security arrangements for workers in the domestic, nation-bound phase of wealth creation was a temporary inconvenience. However, the vital economic importance of the producing and consuming populations that constituted the European domestic markets, the measured development of commodification and the logical need for reduced violence allowed most states to oversee a *relatively* civilized approach to economic growth and most social control techniques (Hall, 2002).

This is not quite the case if we look briefly at other modes of development. North America, for instance, experienced a significantly more rapid

and chaotic commodification process from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries. Here, there was no legacy of state administration stretching back to the 13th century, and, after independence, no ruling aristocracy and no customary peasants' rights to land and resources; only naked competition in a land populated by 'savages' and thus, to the Judeo-Christian entrepreneurial mentality, ripe for the taking. Thomas Paine presented us with an early example of the libertarian flight from reality when he declared North America to be the only exception to the state's tendency to 'crush and barbarize' its populations (see Keane, 1988). His miraculous failure to notice the increasingly violent population's ability to crush and barbarize itself on a daily basis has been replicated in the current neo-liberal ascription of the title 'champion of freedom' to a society whose violence and mass imprisonment rates are significantly higher than, for instance, those of 'state-bound' Europe or Canada.

The distinct and enduring shape of violence in North America is related directly to a unique process of commodification and the way it was interpreted by the embryonic nation's principal political actors, the Republican bourgeoisie. Following the ejection of the British and French monarchical state authorities in the 18th century, various private interests engaged in a chaotic and violent struggle to claim ownership of the continent's vast land and natural resources. In the absence of an effective system of law and order, the rush to claim as much as possible created a violent 'frontier economy' that approached ungovernability in the 19th century (Zinn, 1980; Trachtenberg, 1982). Levels of interpersonal violence and murder became so high, methods of summary justice and punishment so brutal and settler populations so fearful and volatile that desperate appeals for a revised form of 'statehood' began to overshadow the anti-state rhetoric that had become an ingrained aspect of political culture since the heady days of the 18th-century independence movement. In stark contrast, 'state-bound' Canada, while still embracing the market and commodifying many of its material resources—and despite the long-running conflict between two state authorities—created a much more stable civil society in the 19th and 20th centuries. The result is a significantly less murderous and imperialistic nation today.

If there is a rough principle here, it seems to be that in capitalist societies unmanageable, psychologically traumatic and socially corrosive levels of violence tend to occur on the one hand where democratic state control and economic management are unacceptably weak, or on the other where there is no genuine separation between state and private interests and an excessively powerful version of the former is merely an autocratic facilitator for the latter. Put simply, in capitalist history, violent crime and disorder display a tendency to increase where the requirement for major shifts in investment patterns in intense phases of socio-economic reorganization—which can be facilitated easily under either of the above political conditions—outweighs the human need for collective government, stability and civilized relations. In the postmodern age of Rorty's (1989) 'anti-

foundationalism' and Lyotard's (1984) 'incredulity to the metanarrative', it is with some sheepishness that we feel unable to conceal the distinctly modern scientific proposition that this eminently observable pattern seems to have repeated itself across time and space in the capitalist epoch.

The rise and stumble of the post-war democratic state

The current version of the dismal Machiavellian view could be that in no previous historical form, from the agricultural economy of Sumer to the command economy of the Soviet Union, has any known form of government succeeded in severing the link between governing institutions and private ambitions. However, the fundamental Marxian notion of the inextricable political connections between the business classes and the state might not precisely describe the immediate post-war era in Europe, from 1945 to 1979, when the leaderships of the labour movements put into political practice the fact that the industrial project had not yet technologically transcended the need for labour. In 1950s Britain, for instance, full employment and continuing interdependence between capital and labour met briefly with increasing prosperity, improving work conditions, stable communities and a dominant bourgeois class begrudgingly grateful for the huge working-class sacrifice in the Second World War. This formed the basis for the ascent—albeit brief and partial—of state-led social democratic politics. Even when the political representatives of labour were out of government, the collective identity and negotiating power of the labour movement itself still remained relatively strong, allowing a temporary balance of political forces.

Between 1950 and 1973, in the afterglow of Beveridge's 'cradle to grave' promise, state spending in Britain rose from 27.6 per cent to 45 per cent of GDP. Increased state provision of services in all dimensions of life indicated the practical fruition of the Beveridge ethos as some of the core political ambitions of the post-war labour movement were realized. Even in the USA, supposed home of rugged individualism and private enterprise, public spending rose to 35.8 per cent in the same period. More important than the level of spending, however, is the fact that a substantial proportion of the state's intervention was focused on maintaining economic stability and social security. It is more than a coincidence that, in the same period, rates of murder reached a 600-year low in Britain, less than one per 100,000, a decline from between 20 and 40 per 100,000 in the 14th century, and rates of the more serious forms of street violence were also at their lowest (Gurr, 1981). Even though hidden white-collar crime, institutional violence and domestic violence were inadequately researched—and small but disturbing rises in overall rates appeared from the mid-1960s—it still seems likely that violent street crime, imprisonment and execution in the West were significantly lower than either previous rates or today's rates after the

extremely steep rises in the 1980s (Hagan, 1994; Zimring and Hawkins, 1997).

The primary reason for this unusual convergence of prosperity and stability was not state management but post-war economic reconstruction, which stabilized social conditions and relations, curbing crime and interpersonal or sub-cultural hostilities well below what we might call a threshold of manageability in a restitutive social project. Initially, these conditions presented democratic socialism with an opportunity to establish itself as a long-term political player, but before labour's feet could be planted too firmly under the political table the profound economic effects of the oil price rises and increasing competition from transnational manufacturing industries in the early 1970s precipitated the 'long recession' in the West. The monetarist response in Britain and the USA was systematically to wipe out whole sectors of unprofitable or marginally profitable manufacturing industry, especially core heavy industries that sustained the workforces of Northern Europe and the North Eastern states of the USA. Unemployment tripled by the early 1980s, and this compounded with rising taxes and 'stagflation' (the unmanageable combination of rising inflation and unemployment) to precipitate a monetarist economic revolution and the emergence of neo-classical liberal politics and culture (Ormerod, 1994). Thatcher's 'British cure' involved the rapid transfer of 40 per cent of state-controlled industry into private hands, the closure of 'lame-duck' manufacturing plants and a massive and rapid loss of jobs. Expenditure ceilings were imposed all over the public sector, justified by an orchestrated and quite relentless ideological shift from the public to the private facilitated by the burgeoning mass media.

At the same time the culturo-economic revolution of the 1950s and 1960s promoted the expansion and infiltration of the powerful symbolism of the consumer marketplace into all aspects of life, the establishment of Guy Debord's (1995) mass-mediated 'spectacle'. This was a dialectical phenomenon that both reflected and impacted upon the epochal shift from an industrial productivist economy—where the value of skill, role and practical function had converged briefly with the logic of commodity production—to ornamental consumerism, where value swung towards the acquisition and conspicuous display of the symbols of social status (Faludi, 1999). In a social structure defined by a widening and hardening gap between the included and the excluded (Westergaard, 1995), this new culturally driven and socially restructuring economy produced a heightened sense of relative deprivation, anxiety, disaffection and social strain (Lea and Young, 1993) beyond the degree that Robert Merton (1938) had observed before consumerism's post-war quantum leap forward.

Violent crime and social disorder rose sharply as the children of ornamental consumerism, recession and social disruption moved into young adulthood in the mid-1980s (James, 1995; Taylor, 1999). In Britain and the USA especially, the expectancies of material wealth, social status and security that had become ingrained in post-war working-class culture were

frustrated for those unable to gain a fingerhold on the ornamental consumer economy. At the same time the international drug market began to expand its distribution activities to address the amplified demand created by a combination of disaffection and consumerism's hedonistic, pseudo-libertarian culture. The crime, riot and violence rates rose sharply to a high plateau in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and, despite recent declines in statistical 'national averages', they have remained unacceptably high in specific locales ever since (Reiner, 2000).

In an historical phase now known as 'postmodernity', or in Eagleton's (1997) possibly more sober and accurate term 'advanced capitalism', western populations, which throughout modernity had begun to identify themselves in terms of nations, regions, classes, communities and occupational groups, fragmented into competitive interest groups and privatized consuming selves. The potential for collective class-consciousness melted away as the practical economic point for working-class communities and identities disappeared in many locales, and consumer culture promoted the narcissistic, competitive lifestyle with all the vigour that its advanced mass-media technology allowed (Baudrillard, 1983; Bocoock, 1993; Winlow, 2001).

In this climate of disorder both the classical right and left-libertarian wings of liberalism seized the opportunity to depict the state and private individuals as opposed players. They concurred on the fundamental issue of the state's oppression of the individual, even though they tended to focus on different dimensions of individuality, namely the positive rights of the ambitious entrepreneur and the negative rights of the oppressed subject. The former tended to lobby for an increased punitive role for the minimal state, while the latter tended to indict the punitive state as a major cause or amplifier of crime and violence (Cohen, 1985). However, the abstract economically disembodied conception of 'rights' and 'choice' at the heart of these complementary dogmas glossed over the power of deregulated market logic to absorb western populations in a renewed process of social Darwinism (Dickens, 2000), where 'adapting to the environment' means reconstructing and marketing the self as a competitive functionary in the circulation of symbol-dependent commodities (Hall, 2000). Thus neo-liberalism ignored the disruptive, limiting and brutally competitive *market context* in which the struggle for these putative 'rights' and 'choices' has been forced to take place. In this free-for-all scramble, traditions of stable productive work, socio-economic interdependency, practical role, collective identity and the usually judicious (but too often unwisely excessive) repressive codes and inhibitions internalized by individual subjects during modernity's unique historical construction of the super-ego began to disintegrate. Hyper-competitive and individualized forms such as 'flexible accumulation', ornamental self-construction, lifestyle choice, hedonism and individual risk calculation (Beck, 1992; Lash, 1994; Faludi, 1999; Wouters, 1999) began to displace them at a quickening pace.

In this process of foundational change a complex system of interdependent civilizing conditions and strategies that had evolved in the industrial phase of market-capitalism began to show signs of rupture and, in the specific locations highlighted earlier, partial disintegration. In these locations informal community control and self-control mechanisms began to break down alongside the complementary strategies developed by the state. In other words, the vital elements of the underlying socio-economic and cultural infrastructure, which the state needed as cultivatable organic bedrock on which to perform its moderately successful violence-reducing government of the population, were subjected to a process of relentless erosion. This was no temporarily disruptive evolutionary advance towards a libertarian future, but a politically implemented *calculated sacrifice* of vital civilizing conditions made on behalf of global market expansion.

This problematic situation is not confined to the West. It is a global phenomenon occurring at its most acute wherever community and state have been disrupted with traumatizing rapidity and replaced by competitive individualism. For instance, the rapid establishment of merchant capitalism in the new Russian Federation has set the conditions for the emergence of the distinctly free-market problems of unemployment, insecure low-waged work, low educational returns, collapsing public services, emergent private oligarchies and huge rises in crime and violence (Gerber and Hout, 1998; Volkov, 1999; Rawlinson, 2002). Russia is an extreme illustration of the state losing its monopoly on violence because a new business oligarchy shot through with corrupt and criminal elements regards it as a threat to the expansion of profitable commercial activity.

The decline in state power and the emergence of pockets of social decay is directly related to the huge increase in power of the global cosmopolitan elite. It takes a disarmingly honest neo-liberal such as Ian Angell (2000), or a maverick such as Christopher Lasch (1996), to penetrate the smokescreen that the neo-liberal and affirmative postmodern schools have swathed around this new phenomenon. The cosmopolitan corporate business elite is concerned solely with its own futuristic economic and cultural projects and has no allegiance whatsoever to nation-states or the communities and individuals on which it once depended. It displays no concept of responsibility, sacrifice or common fate, and it tends to be the most reluctant contributor to public services as it seeks the 'pure and perfect' competitive market on a global scale (see Bourdieu, 1998; Taylor, 1999; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2000). Unfortunately, the cosmopolitan elite's lack of concern for the former working class is being vindicated by the tendency of some liberal intellectuals to question the existence of this enduring socio-economic category by positing it as a group in the midst of fragmentation and potentially 'free' reconstruction (see, for instance, Lyotard, 1984; Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1994).

As Eagleton (1990) warns, to 'wish class away' in this manner plays straight into the hands of the business elite, who have traditionally shown themselves to be most adept at absorbing and converting any struggle for

equality or power into fuel for their economic engine. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (2000), neo-liberal intellectuals of the right and the left are immersed in the process of constructing a new language, a 'new planetary *vulgate*'. This imperialist discourse has assembled a lexicon of hip new terms such as 'individualization', 'lifestyle', 'risk' and 'responsibilization' that threaten to displace vital categories such as class, exploitation and democratic government, categories that are now even more relevant in the global neo-capitalist world (see also Anderson, 1983; Eagleton, 1990, 1997; Westergaard, 1995). The constant elevation of cultural idealism, personal identity politics and administrative pragmatism over primary economic relations is accelerating the decline of the politics that underpin the potentially democratic state and its more enlightened methods of governing its territory. This leaves localized resource-poor classes of its population politically abandoned and defenceless (that is, defended solely by a politically loaded and cumbersome legal system and a dispiriting welfare state) against the disruption caused by globalization. In place of traditional politics and government, this new language is promoting unworkable and often quite outlandish 'alternative' or 'informal' law and order strategies (Matthews, 1988; Hall, 1997), for which the more thoughtful liberal intellectuals (see, for instance, Garland, 1996), quite rightly, do not hold out much hope in the current economic context. The 'cultural turn' and the new identity politics—joint constructions of Anglo-American libertarianism and Parisian postmodernism—together tend either to ignore, underestimate, obscure or apologize for the vulgar economic power of the business classes at a time when it is at its most potent (Anderson, 1983; Eagleton, 1990, 1997; Habermas, 1992; Hall, 1997; Taylor, 1999). Political and economic interests are the key reasons for the demise of the state, not the progressive liberation of the various cultural 'means of identity' via the relaxation of 'discipline', the essential interest being the long-term politico-economic benefit of the cosmopolitan business classes, furthered by the expansion of the global market game in which they are guaranteed winners.

Conclusions

There is little doubt that individual acts of violence have complex micro-cultural and psychological aetiologies. There is also little doubt that some post-structuralist and postmodernist theories can provide some insights into the construction and deconstruction of identities at the micro and macro levels. However, in the process of furthering our understanding in their preferred cultural-linguistic direction they have a tendency to ignore or conveniently reformulate more durable and intractable vehicles of meaning and practice, and Jefferson's (2002) reminder that the unconscious has been marginalized in this way could be extended to economic relations, the *habitus* and class or occupational cultures (Hall, 1997; Winlow, 2001)

or even, in an enlightened way, human biology (Dickens, 2000). Substantiation of the rather speculative claim that some forms of postmodern cultural politics can encourage the self to 'transform' and subsequently refrain from responding to life's complex pressures, arousals and altercations in violent ways by manipulating cultural representations or calling upon the power of will and desire remains to be seen. Sifting through history's representations of gendered cultural forms with the unquestioned assumption that representational culture, will and desire are considerably more constitutive than they are reflective and adaptive has so far furnished us with much interesting reading but few feasible political solutions to unremitting problems. Social patterns of serious violent crime expressed in the traditional categories of class and locale are undeniable (Zimring and Hawkins, 1997), and for at least three decades they have shown more indications of major expansion and consolidation than transformation. Identifiable historical shifts in these patterns seem to suggest that the attempt to reduce serious violent crime by improving underlying material circumstances and challenging the core values of capitalist culture is more likely to be fruitful in the short and long terms. Because the unpredictable economic forces of capital retraction and investment create the social conditions for increased rates of violent crime in specific locales that are best defined by their economic class position, the claim that the minimally regulated free market is inherently criminogenic (Currie, 1997; Hall, 1997; Taylor, 1999) can be made with much less speculation and a good deal of confidence.

The state and its mandate to govern is being rolled back not because of the patchy record of previous undemocratic forms, but because of what a network of potentially more democratic states might be capable of doing in the future. Extreme liberals choose capital's adaptive and uniquely anomic form of 'freedom' even when they are quite aware that many individuals use it to abuse, intimidate, swindle and exploit, and that the real cost is always paid by the exploited and, in the long term, the social in terms of loss of stability and civility. What might really be worrying the liberal elite is not the history of brutal oligarchs and irrational romantics using the state to oppress populations, but the potential of carrying forward and building upon its brief and moderately successful post-war role as an economic regulating authority. Thus it becomes vital for liberal discourse to conceal the probability that in their brief democratic phases, some modern states, combining economic management with legal power and social intervention, achieved the lowest internal violence rates in the history of complex, heavily populated societies (Elias, 1988). However, it must be acknowledged that they were allowed to play this part solely when the business classes saw pacification as a vital condition for the promotion of commodity exchange. When the economic importance of this condition declined, the promotion of public order and civilized culture where it no longer really mattered ceased to be a prudent investment.

This historical perspective, if taken in the long *durée* as Braudel (1985a) and Elias (1994) advised, suggests that one of the main targets of post-

modern liberal critique—expressed by Garland thus: ‘... one of the fundamental myths of modern societies ... [is] ... that the sovereign state is capable of providing security, law and order, and crime control within its territorial boundaries’ (1996: 448)—is itself a liberal myth, a product of short-term historical analysis which reifies the state by ignoring its controlling interest-group and their stringent economic logic, and assumes that the ‘cultural’ promotion of allegedly innate human sensibilities against violence is the supreme civilizing force (see, for instance, Arendt, 1976; Bauman, 1988) rather than an historical product of psychosocial processes in which the state’s monopolization of violence plays a crucial part (Elias, 1994, 1988; Fletcher, 1997). In direct contradiction of this myth, this analysis suggests that the modern state, in partnership with the required socio-economic interdependencies and super-ego building cultural codes, has been the sole institution capable of delivering law and order, managing violence and maintaining the underlying economic conditions necessary for a general civilizing process.

Western governments, spearheaded by the USA and Britain, have made a significant move away from their traditional economic management, welfare and rehabilitation programmes towards the actuarial targeting of ‘risky’ populations, private security, mass imprisonment and the retention of the death penalty (Morrison, 1995). If the populist far right achieves sufficient purchase on the remaining political apparatus—which is more likely as the left’s flight into administrative and cultural gesture politics allows them to move into the vacuum created in economic class politics (see Zizek, 2000)—some degree of immigrant repatriation looms on the horizon. In the long *durée* historical view, some progressive form of social democratic state authority—itsself monitored by democratically constituted legal institutions—at the regional, national and global levels seems to be the only serious contender with the capacity to halt these tendencies and return to an agenda of economic regulation, social justice, public security, the defusing of culturo-religious conflict and the reduction of violence—in other words the only feasible civilizing force.

At the centre of current state theory is a debate about future forms of institutional democratic authority, which range across a wide spectrum from world government (Elias, 1988; Held, 1995) to state-monitored devolutionary communal governance (Hirst and Thompson, 1996; Hirst, 2000). Such arguments are beyond the scope of this article (see Holden, 2000 for a digest). However, we suggest strongly that social science in general, and criminology in particular, need to pay more attention to this realm of ideas than to the grim neo-liberal pragmatism of privatized social control discourses or the stratospheric heights of postmodern libertarian fantasies. Neither of these, in the short term or the long term, is of any practical use whatsoever to the harassed and insecure inhabitants of sink estates. Security is irreducibly social, and only a public body can offer it (Loader and Walker, 2001), and this means putting cultural analysis back in its rightful place and returning to the old mundane intellectual questions

of collective morality, politics, economic management, taxation and law, bearing in mind that '... democracy can result from, and only from, a nucleus, or cluster, of democratic states and societies' (Held, 1995: 22). The inexorable rise in crime and violence that has accompanied the expansion of the global market is one of the starkest indicators that a network of enlightened social democratic nation-states funded by a global tax-raising authority and monitored by international law is a vital civilizing need.

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Chapter 8

Culture, Gender and Violence: A key problem

Culture, Gender and Male Violence: a key problem

Steve Hall and Simon Winlow argue that there is a need to relate violent crime and criminological theory to the economic principles that underpin culture and society.

In a post-industrial world where consistently high rates of crime, violence, corruption and terrorism haunt the imagination, perhaps the time has come to ask whether a culturalist-dominated gender studies continues to be useful to our political or pragmatic attempts to address these problems. To cut a long story short, older socialist models of crime reduction were based on the ambition of equalising social relations in the economy in the hope that a progressively more civilised culture would emerge from such a transformation. In the 1980s the failure of various socialist projects in the face of a tidal wave of neo-liberal political triumphs across the globe took the wind out of socialism's sails, and the broad churches of culturalism and feminism emerged as the radical alternatives in criminology.

Put simply, the improvement of material conditions by political means, along with a decrease of interpersonal hostility and crime rates, are now posited more as potential effects of cultural causes, and thus radical cultural transformation is the main path to follow. Culture is the means by which human beings make sense of the world, individually and collectively, by interpreting meaning and putting the meanings they temporarily settle on into practice in their everyday lives. Most radical culturalists argue that meanings are not eternally fixed and can thus be changed at will if freedom of thought and identity is encouraged.

Meaning and cultural 'identity'

Nowhere has this basic principle been transposed into criminology more powerfully than in its interface with gender studies. Feminists have been at pains to point out, quite rightly, that traditional criminology's negligence of the fact that men commit the majority of crime – especially violent crime – was jaw-droppingly absurd. Crime must therefore be associated with male nature or male culture. As the first waves of radical feminist essentialism receded, their claims that the male was naturally belligerent were disputed by highlighting the fact that even though 90 per cent of crime is committed by men, most men don't commit any serious crime at all. Liberal and post-structuralist feminists joined with pro-feminist men in the 1980s to suggest that masculinity was about meaning and cultural identity, not biological traits or mechanical responses to material conditions of existence or class traditions.

In fact, the idea that culture was largely determined by class position was all but abandoned, and the upshot of the current pro-feminist position is that a domineering and aggressive type of gendered masculine identity, which can be found in different variations throughout the class structure, currently exercises hegemonic control of the West's major cultural, political and economic institutions. Violence is often portrayed as a reaction

to any challenge to 'male honour', which is central to this traditional masculine form. Women and less belligerent males are often victimized because any attempt to assert themselves is seen as a threat to the inalienable right of men to maintain a dominant position in the social order.

Economic and class explanations

In this light, strategies aimed at reducing crime and violence must hinge on the transformation of this dominant, belligerent form of traditional masculinity, which is essentially a gendered cultural 'identity' constructed as a temporary suite of meanings. Thus its transformation is essentially pedagogical, about the learning of new meanings and the adoption of different, and possibly more fluid, identities: a sort of education for freedom. Family, peer-group, education, religion, work, politics and mass media are the main cultural institutions to target in the attempt to encourage young males to abandon this archaic form and embrace something more progressive and civilized. The meaning of masculinity, we are told, can be 'contested and re-negotiated' in localised sites both within these institutions and in the interstices that are emerging between them (Collier, 1998). This would be good for establishing social justice in the gender order, reducing the crime rate and securing a brighter future for all.

Although we would also prefer a brighter future, our criminological research casts doubt on culturalism in general and the strategies associated with it. Our main bugbear is its reluctance to engage with broader and more penetrative social theory and historical analysis, such as Hobsbawm's (1994) work on the way in which the industrial-capitalist continuum of incremental prosperity, reform and progress has been recently plunged into chaos. The decline of traditional work, community and collective moral codes internalised in the 'super-ego', which have been replaced by service work, consumerism, the glorification of the individual and an increasing reliance on the calculating ego to determine behaviour in a competitive consumer marketplace, are largely ignored. The real conditions of existence for many near or beyond the boundaries of social exclusion are beset by insecurity and fear engendered by this profound change of living, and it is very rarely asked whether these conditions are actually conducive to the cultural transformation of gendered identities, or, in fact, to any type of transformation at all (Hall, 2002). In this short article we can't provide fine detail or a watertight theory, but we can outline as a discussion point what is, amongst others, our major theoretical objection to liberal culturalism.

Although economic and structural class explanations are often dismissed as crude and outdated, our research evidence suggests a palpable social patterning of aggressive masculine forms and rates of intimidation and violent crime (Hall and



Winlow, 2003). In areas of extreme social exclusion where the agents of the criminal justice system do most of their coal-face work, we have found that a deep yet vague sense of insecurity discourages most males from taking up more progressive forms of masculine identity, largely because doing so would profoundly decrease their chances of self-protection, prosperity and status. Further, if we replace 'symbolic meaning' with the more rigorous notion of 'habitus' – Bourdieu's (1992) term for a more durable, embodied form of identity – then the likelihood of transformation looks even bleaker. Our research suggests that a very durable lump of masculinity, which was once actively cultivated as a serviceable form in the industrial capitalist heyday (Winlow, 2001; Hall, 2002), is turning to violent criminality in a desperate and chaotic attempt to obtain a fingerhold on the consumer marketplace. It has existed throughout the capitalist project, but it is now more active and visible, and the ambition to either re-socialise or liberate individuals who are caught up by it in market locations that are far too unstable, insecure and hostile to allow space for reflexive 'identity-work' is simply naïve.

Back to the future

The project of changing individuals by means of cultural intervention is in our view failing more profoundly than the traditional socialist project of changing basic economic relationships and life-purposes. This double failure is leaving the criminal justice system in an impossible situation, where the traditional remit to protect the public is clashing badly with the principle of maintaining and improving humane and progressive forms of dealing with offenders. If criminology is to produce theories and feasible strategies to reduce violent crime, then the liberal-culturalist variant of gender studies is probably the first perspective that needs to be reappraised for its usefulness to our analyses of violent crime in advanced

consumer capitalism.

Perhaps now more than ever we need to relate violent crime and criminological theory to the economic principles that underpin culture and society. Gender, like any other form of market-negotiated identity, needs to be related not just to the symbols and meanings of local or global cultural forms, but also to the insecurity, anxiety and hostility that increasingly characterise local labour markets and the global economy. The establishment of a permanently excluded underclass and the supposedly barbaric masculinities that reside here, along with significant rises in risk and fear and significant decreases in community and belonging, need to be addressed not only in a cultural context, but also an economic one. ■

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Chapter 9

Barbarians at the Gate

Crime and violence in the breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process

Chapter 23

Barbarians at the Gate: Crime and Violence in the Breakdown of the Pseudo-pacification Process

Steve Hall and Simon Winlow

The predatory actions of capitalism breed, by way of defensive reaction, a multitude of closed cultures, which the pluralist ideology of capitalism can then celebrate as a rich diversity of life-forms.

Terry Eagleton, The Idea of Culture (2000)

Introduction: criminology, economism and culturalism

Gregg Barak (2000) recently made the observation that neither the global system nor local culture can be allowed to eclipse each other if sophisticated criminological analyses are to be made. Although he could be insisting on compulsory balance in an extremely variable relation where balance is not always to be found, his comment certainly does describe the intellectual spectrum that has come to be defined at its extremes by economism/structuralism and culturalism. Economism, the notion that most of what we think, feel or do is determined in the last instance by the prevailing economic system, has along with biologism and conservatism been the principal target of critique in post-war liberal criminology. However, although much of that critique is deserved, we think it's also fair to say that the alternative possibility of criminology becoming too heavily influenced by culturalism has received far less critical attention. Culturalism is of course an extreme variant of cultural theory, a sort of inverted base/superstructure model that posits culture's diverse sets of meanings and values as the essentially pluralist bedrock of human existence, in which everything else – nature, economy, social relations, identity, politics and of course crime and violence – becomes a malleable, contested product of inter-subjective interpretations and discursive power-struggles rather than a feature of the mutating realities produced by historical processes (Hall 1997; Eagleton 2000).

An unbridled culturalist approach is always in danger of becoming one of global capitalism's principal apologists by helping to propagate the popular notion championed by neo-liberal thinkers such as Fukuyama (1999) that this particular economic system can allow more freedom of cultural form and personal identity than any other. The degree of faith placed in the consumer market system since World War Two has been immense, and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe seemed to testify to it. Not only did the market promise freedom in the traditional American conception of the word, but also prosperity, stability, progress and the avoidance of the ugly imperialist political forms that had blighted the modernist project. It was tacitly accepted that in an era of increased peace and prosperity the social stability of the 1950s would continue. Things could only get better.

However, when it came down to crime and violence, they didn't. Despite rising affluence and the expansion of abstract rights and freedoms, things started getting worse. By the mid-1990s many American criminologists admitted that crime and

violence rates in the USA were 'staggering' (Hagan 1994), Currie (1997) reminded us of the steeply escalating rates in the former command economies of Eastern Europe, Russia and China as they shifted rapidly to the market-capitalist economic model, and Reiner (2000) more recently pointed out that British crime and violence rates had throughout the 1980s and 1990s been undergoing *real* rises that were not simply the result of changes in recording practices. Although some parts of Britain and the USA enjoyed increasing prosperity and reductions in crime, the rates of murder and serious violence amongst young adults inhabiting areas of permanent localised recession remained unacceptably high (Zimring and Hawkins 1997; Taylor 1999). These rather gloomy criminological observations were made during a time of unprecedented free-market expansion that produced significant increases in the wealth of the world's billionaires alongside the persistence of near-absolute poverty for over a billion of its inhabitants (Ellwood 2001) and intensified feelings of relative deprivation amongst the increasingly insecure lower classes in the West (Lea 2002). The notion that things were getting better had to be qualified, as Hutton (1995) reminded us, by the fact that they were getting a lot better for the upper strata, fluctuating a bit for the middle strata and getting a lot worse for most of those who seemed to be permanently stuck in the lower strata.

The pervasive acceptance that the capitalist system might not be superseded or even brought under democratic political control in the foreseeable future has, with a few notable exceptions (see for instance Taylor 1999; Ruggerio 2000; Lea 2002; Wacquant 2002), created something of a hiatus in which thought has been largely distracted from critical investigations into ways in which human beings are interfacing in more *direct* ways with the demands of consumerism and global market capitalism. Without paying a huge amount of attention to the epochal reconfiguration of class relations going on in the background (Marshall 1997), the new liberal multi-culturalist model of governance, attempting to build on the successes of, amongst others, the post-colonial, black civil rights, feminist and gay movements, looked to the conferment of abstract legal rights on diverse cultural groups struggling in a fundamentally unchanged and minimally regulated economic system in order to create a 'level playing field' of equal opportunity. The key to justice and civility was the encouragement of tolerance and the celebration of difference as a means of cultivating convivial relations in the trying circumstances brought about by the inevitable disruption and reconfiguration of traditional industrial or agrarian ways of life (Hall 1997; Eagleton 2000).

This intellectual trend encouraged the return in the 1980s of administrative-reformist criminology, with its traditional focus on the criminal justice system augmented by the inclusion of cultural relations. However, the persistence of high crime and violence rates in specific locales and regions, together with the increase in prison populations across the industrialised West, tend to suggest that the multi-cultural liberal-reformist approach to the social management of capitalism is achieving even less success than the traditional state-welfare and socialist models (Taylor 1999; Wacquant 2002; Hall and Winlow 2003). In broad terms, we want to argue that the current difficulties experienced by the Western social administrative apparatus are tightly bound up with the virtual abandonment of any attempt to exert democratic political control on global market forces in favour a galaxy of brightly shining but rather distant and ineffective cultural gesture politics (Zizek 2000; Eagleton 2000). Our general contention is that cultural criminology, rather than becoming absorbed too deeply in this ideological principle that posits the

emancipation of culture and identity as the key to a civilised life, should continue to consolidate the tendency shown by many of its practitioners (see Presdee 2000; Winlow 2001; Wacquant 2002) to place culture and identity firmly in their politico-economic and historical contexts.

Instrumentalism, economic exclusion and the 'new barbarism'

Here we present a synopsis of a body of work we have carried out on the future of social cohesion and the emergence of instrumentalism and barbarism in a period when historical capitalism's core cultural practice of competitive individualism has completed the colonisation of virtually every aspect of Western life. In this process have emerged codes of meaning and practice that combine the barbarism of the past and the predatory relations at the heart of today's market capitalism to produce cultural forms and identities that are closed, intolerant and violent, and, as such, constitute a threat to civilised life. Although we could have approached our investigation of advanced capitalism's 'new barbarians' (Angell 2000) by highlighting spectacular, exotic and successful manifestations, such as the Carlyle Group or the Russian Mafia, we selected something much more common and closer to home. Since 1995, our research has focused upon forms of criminality and violence emerging in micro-communities within locales that were first established and exploited only to be recently discarded by the economic processes and cultural currents of historical capitalism. A large number of working-class communities established during the industrial heyday of the capitalist project have now been left in a very precarious position as the functional economic point of their existence has evaporated in the globalisation process. Throughout the project our research data suggested a novel and quite disturbing type of despair emerging in specific locales within these areas, whose inhabitants have experienced the greatest difficulties in adapting in legitimate ways to the demands of the new consumer/service economy (Horne and Hall 1995; Hall 1997; Winlow 2001).

The term *anelpis* was used to describe this despair and its frequent visceral manifestations. This concept posited an historically unique section of humanity, which cannot be described as an 'underclass' in the structural sense because their wage needs have priced them out of the global labour market. They now inhabit locations of *permanent recession* (Taylor 1999; Lea 2002) in the old industrial West that are not only disconnected from capitalism's productive supply requirements but also have little chance of being reconnected in the future (Crowther 2000; Winlow 2001). However, despite this economic severance, our research data indicates that most of this group's members (especially the younger generations) have become ever more tightly connected to the demand side as a cultural group under the spell of consumerism, suffering the same status-anxiety and insecurity as others, only to a much more intense degree (Winlow and Hall forthcoming). Central to the original concept of *anelpis* was the presence of virtually total cynicism and nihilism: virtually no opinions, no realistic expectations, no hope and no fear of authority (Horne and Hall 1995), although we did find 'fear' in the form of susceptibility to the vague, nagging status-anxiety and insecurity mentioned above.

This condition described many men and a smaller number of women living in economically abandoned zones, and it is an outcome of the historical trajectory of the *visceral cultures* that were cultivated as functional units in the productive/military phase of capital (Hall 1997; Taylor 1999). Physical hardness, fortitude, persistence,

endurance, mental sclerosis and a general 'hardening' of the psychosomatic nature were at the core of this being. These skills and qualities were encouraged and cultivated by high-capitalism's hegemony as vital functions in that phase of economic development, and they were reproduced internally in working-class culture by generations of practical enaction as *habitus*, a suite of deeply internalised dispositions that together constituted something much more impenetrable and durable than mere 'identity' (Bourdieu 1990) and are still reproduced with great fervour across the generations in these micro-communities. Ironically, it seems that the masculine cultural form that enjoyed almost iconic status in that past world – physically durable, macho, resistant to education and all things designated feminine (Faludi 1999; Beynon 2002), outspoken and sometimes driven by a crude but very penetrative political consciousness (Hall 1997) – is, if it continues to be faithfully reproduced, the one now suffering the most complete excision from the legitimate commodity cycle and the mainstream cultural hierarchy (Horne and Hall 1995; Winlow 2001). As our research moved temporarily into the areas of violent crime, drug markets and the expanding occupation of 'minding' in the criminal economy and the semi-legitimate nocturnal economies that continue to expand across the world (Winlow 2001), we found that this form's generative roots are not exclusively or even primarily cultural, but economic and practical, shaped by local opportunities and restraints, driven by the primal insecurity that capitalism has learnt to harness and use as its most powerful motivation for human activities. Rather than prompting progressive cultural change and new 'identities', these local economic conditions tended to intensify the visceral *habitus* that now is of relatively little value to the mainstream economy (Hall 1997, 2002; Taylor 1999).

Further work explored the link between the anepic condition, crime and violence, highlighting the bleak reality of urban 'undersharks' and their victims. Deep in the heart of locales in permanent recession we found the last decaying vestiges of a mutuality that had, in the space of one or two generations, been virtually forgotten in language and practice. Here, our research continued to reveal 'hardened' micro-communities of predatory criminality and intimidated victims. We have been at pains to point out that predatory criminality is not simply 'caused' by relative deprivation or lack of education and jobs, and that it does not prevail amongst the majority of people inhabiting Britain's poor areas. However, persistently high rates of intra-class crime, violence, low educational achievement, family breakdown and recidivism appearing against a backdrop of hostility revealed to us what some who are hamstrung by liberal-capitalism's edict of compulsory optimism might prefer to remain hidden: micro-communities impervious to the effects of piecemeal legislation, social policy and inclusionary development programmes (Horne and Hall 1995). Extreme forms of economic exclusion are indeed emerging in and beyond the margins of advanced capitalism's old industrial societies (Byrne 1995), and a growing number of individuals who inhabit the communities that throughout the 20th century were serviced by unstable but usually available low-grade or casual occupations are now engaging routinely in crime and violence (Winlow 2001; Wacquant 2002).

Our research moved on to the analysis of what appeared to be a ubiquitous culture of hyper-individualism and instrumentalism emerging from the ruins of the social capital that had developed as a fragile bulwark against the barbarism of capitalism's military/industrial phase (Winlow and Hall forthcoming). Struck by the ubiquity of these enacted values and the virtual absence of substantive differences

across the shifting strata of the new 'working' class (Marshall 1997), we rejected the excesses of existentialism and purist forms of sub-cultural theory that stressed the relative autonomy and free negotiation of meaning and became much more attracted to earlier forms. Some of these schools of thought, stretching from classical Marxism and Freudianism through the Chicago School to Mertonian strain and anomie theories, furnished us with valuable ideas, but, with the exception of Freudianism, tended to gloss over the essential insecurity at the heart of the human psyche (Lasch 1979; Hall and Winlow 2005) and the restraints imposed upon culture by the logical demands and imperatives of the social and economic systems (Eagleton 2000). Even the Birmingham School's attempt to ground culture and biography in society's socio-economic structure (see Hall and Jefferson 1975) was underpinned by the romantic and naturalistic notion of cultural resistance to authority (Sumner 1994; Hall 1997).

We were also struck by our respondents' determination to acquire the status symbols of manufactured culture at virtually any cost, which attracted us to older forms of cultural theory that stressed the mass media's persuasive power rather than individual choice and 'resistance'. What Giddens (1994) claimed to be a balance between cultural/agentive enablement and structural restraint seemed to us to be in reality heavily skewed towards the latter, and it became apparent that a significant number of individuals who were deeply absorbed in consumerism's object-sign-value system (see Baudrillard 1983) and simultaneously devoted to visceral cultures in danger of extinction were trying to engage with the stringent demands of global capitalism in their own inimitable way (Hall 1997; Winlow 2001). We were observing a different and manifestly impolite way of practising the powerful and ubiquitous cultural current of instrumentalism that grew in the transition from the relative stability of productivism to the unprecedented insecurity of global neocapitalism.

Moving to a more mid-range analysis, the insecurity that – although sometimes hidden by overstated bravado and steely instrumentalism – haunted so many of our respondents seemed to be based *experientially* on the fragmentation of communal ways of life, shared meanings, values and practices, and, above all, traditional and readily available ways of earning a living (Winlow 2001). The new occupational opportunities presented to our younger respondents by the retail/service industry were usually regarded as drudgery in the same way that previous generations regarded the ones they replaced, but they lacked the compensations of status, communality, collective resistance and stability. The main division we found between our economically excluded and included young respondents was not in basic values or individual attitudes to work and consumption but in their degree of deference towards legal and informal authority and, in the classic Mertonian (1957) sense, their willingness to use illegal means to satisfy ubiquitous ambitions. We quite simply did not find sufficient substantive differences in fundamental cultural values to support the concept of an 'underclass' in the cultural sense (Crowther 2000; Lea 2002; MacDonald and Marsh 2004), but we certainly did find sufficient differences in attitudes to criminality to support our own claim that a growing number of micro-communities experiencing virtually complete excision from the legitimate circuits of commodity circulation are conforming to mainstream culturo-economic values in notably visceral and occasionally violent ways.

As the Left Realists have been at pains to point out, there is nothing romantic or politically rebellious about these micro-communities or their inhabitants (Lea and Young 1993). Standard indicators of social problems, associated cultural phenomena and a cluster of well-known and extensively researched socio-economic processes

were consistent with the cultural make-up of these micro-climates, what we might call a generalised anatomy of the anelpic zones (Horne and Hall 1995). Since the late 1970s, permanent localised recessions, widening income polarity, the current inflation of the housing market, the emerging fortress mentality of the new 'respectable classes', the intensification of educational selection and occupational accreditation, the tendency of better-educated working people to move out of troubled areas, the failures of social integrationism in the 70s and 80s, the expansion of drug markets and a host of accompanying factors contributed to the gradual ghettoisation of problem families and petty criminals in Britain and America (Wilson 1987; Taylor 1999; Wacquant 2002). A disproportionate number of downwardly mobile female-headed one-parent families and unstable, violent patriarchal families were strongly linked to the appearance of extreme examples of the now problematic 'visceral' masculine habitus at early ages (Beynon 2002). Mocking work and education, becoming involved with petty crime, adopting an attitude of extreme cynicism and instrumentalism towards most aspects of life and in a minority of extreme cases leading a virtually feral existence, this form became one of the accepted norms in these micro-communities. Further research revealed the erosion of traditional long-term friendships amongst young people *in general*, replaced by temporary instrumental alliances based on meanings and values manufactured by the fashion and leisure industries. Although practices, demeanours and attitudes to legal authority were entirely different, status-anxiety, competitive individualism and instrumentalism were common amongst both criminal and non-criminal young people (Winlow and Hall forthcoming).

Traditional values were not simply abandoned en masse, rather those useful to immediate survival were retained to be reworked in the new context and combined with the pseudo-libertarian values of post-war consumer culture in ways that most liberals either didn't expect, denied or didn't care about as the delicious prospects of personal freedom and satisfaction of desire captured their attention. For instance, the tradition of recognising mutual interests and organising collective responses to problems in the political or economic spheres virtually disappeared whilst the equally traditional tendency to establish closed micro-communities and become absorbed in the art of personal survival and prosperity on the basis of competition, suspicion, hostility and fear flourished (Taylor 1999). Instrumentalism quite simply began proving itself to be useful in everyday existence under the demands of the new global market economy and consumer culture. The anthropomorphic and often indiscriminate Kierkegaardian fear of the shadowy, threatening other replaced the traditional collective fears of hard times and oppressive rulers as the very concepts of politico-economic class and geographical community evaporated. This fear became a primary reason for entering into temporary, hostile and defensive alliances in a tense, paradoxical relationship with individualised instrumentalism (Davis 1990; Taylor 1999). As the global system goes through a phase of 'neo-feudalization' (Fletcher 1997), powerful feelings of fear, hostility and contempt in an uneasy alliance with envy and star-struck admiration permeate the relations that constitute the rapidly mutating and polarising structures of advanced capitalism, a matrix of emotions that once characterised the barbarian past (Veblen 1967; Diggins 1978; Mestrovic 1993). Ehrenreich (1997) warned of the return of the archaic connection between the joy of violence and the removal of threat, where relief is obtained by the destruction of the object that has been made to symbolise the cause of tension and also the primary obstacle to its resolution; a powerful and ubiquitous drive that has the potential to operate in all dimensions from the micro to the macro. Today, tension

is generated as the primeval insecurity lying at the base of each human psyche approaches a condition of over-stimulation in consumer culture (Lasch 1979), a tension that is ironically individualised, confused and deflected by the quite deliberate under-representation of the collective danger posed by the 'new barbarian' business classes' global escapades (Taylor 1999; Eagleton 2000; Hall and Winlow 2003). Despite the nagging anxiety, so many have so little idea of what – beyond unemployment, looking unfashionable, terrorist bombs, immigration and petty crime – they should be really anxious about.

However, in a sterling effort to avoid becoming too broad or even apocalyptic in the midst of what we regard as powerful psycho-cultural currents flowing through the Western way of life, for the moment we have restricted our research to the ways in which two groups of young people – low-grade service industry workers and persistent criminals – are enacting in very different ways the instrumental relations and vague but powerful feelings of status-anxiety and insecurity that are common to both. Very early in this long-term research project we felt that these young people were entering adulthood to experience economic conditions, social relations and personal micro-interactions that, despite the alleged expansion of personal freedoms, rights and opportunities, were significantly less secure, convivial and emotionally fulfilling than those experienced by previous generations (Winlow and Hall forthcoming). Although we do not expect the evidenced claim that instrumentalism is eroding traditional communality and often being worked out in criminal and violent ways in economically abandoned zones to be regarded as too controversial, the accompanying claim that this possibly indicates a move towards a significantly more divided, hostile and barbaric future that cannot be prevented by cultural gesture politics and piecemeal socio-economic engineering (Hall and Winlow 2003) requires more substantial argumentation.

The breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process

As an icon and role-model, the rugged, ruthless and instrumental individual, rather than the cultured *flaneur*, the educated functionary or the mutualist member of the politically constituted community, occupied the high-ground in the eyes of many of the young people we interviewed, but especially those persistently involved in criminality (Hall *et al* forthcoming). They displayed a growing admiration for and affinity to the general barbarism that the Enlightenment and capitalism's unique civilising project had palpably failed to leave behind, and which seems to be making a comeback in both the top and bottom strata of neocapitalist societies (Horne and Hall 1995; Mestrovic 1993). This puts into question the purposes behind this so-called civilising process, purposes other than the pursuit of the Platonic or Hegelian ideal of civilisation itself or the classical liberal ideals of civility, progress, freedom and democracy. Surely, if civilisation, in the sense of the incremental and cumulative movement towards more humane, convivial and intelligent ways of interacting accompanied by a preoccupation with higher forms of cultural expression, had itself been the primary purpose of the Western 'civilising process', after 600 years its foundations would be strong enough not to be shaken so profoundly by such apparently innocuous phenomena as the partial slackening of sexual repression, the invention of some better machines and the further expansion of a global trading system that, as Braudel (1985) notes, has existed for a very long time.

However, examining the way in which the market-capitalist system has stimulated and harnessed the human propensity for insecurity can help us to understand the system's tendency to social instability, even in the face of rising affluence and expanding freedoms. The central role of insecurity in human history is revealed very clearly in the writings of Thomas Hobbes (Tuck 1989), for whom the social contract was a way of formalising the makeshift order imposed on society by the state and church as the preferred alternative to the climate of fear and barbaric violence that characterised earlier forms of socio-economic organisation. It seems that nascent elements of governmental pragmatism and rational consequentialism were complementing the super-ego controls and state controls that Elias (1994) saw emerging in Early Modern Europe's 'civilising process' as ways of controlling human anxiety, volatility and violence. However, missing from both Hobbes' and Elias' formulations was the standard Marxist/Weberian account of how market-capitalism and its developing socio-legal system emphasised the acquisition and protection of private property, its promises of safety, freedom and prosperity offering a seductive alternative to bonded serfdom or the vilification suffered by the merchant classes at the hands of the feudal aristocracy and the medieval Catholic Church. In the midst of all these economic demands and pragmatic, relativistic preferences it is very difficult to present the Western civilising process as a 'blind' evolutionary form (Elias 1994), a cultural ideal or even a practical end in itself (Hall and Winlow 2003).

There is little doubt that the civilising process did have some success in reducing rates of murder and serious violence in the internal territories throughout the modern era, although organised state violence remained high, which again indicates that primary value was placed on economic growth and military power (Hall and Winlow 2003). Our view, which in some qualified ways supports the classical Marxist account, is that the prime purpose of the internal civilising process, operating with the safety-net of a potentially if not always manifestly punitive criminal justice system, was to create conditions conducive to the development of the market-capitalist economy and the success of its principal bourgeois actors. The whole project was dependent on the ability of as many actors as possible to indulge in brutally competitive, instrumental, acquisitive and exploitative practices in economic and social life without resorting too easily to those bouts of internecine privatised violence that threatened the property rights and social stability required for the expanding production and circulation of commodities. Thus the development of internalised emotional repugnance towards violence and bloodshed and the reduction of general interpersonal hostility were primarily historical by-products of the logical need to reduce privatised violence in everyday life (without reducing the state's monopolised military and internal policing powers) to secure property rights and create a brutally competitive yet more cohesive, deferent, pacified and productive population. This was not a process that balanced relations of abstract socio-cultural power to 'civilise' and 'stabilise' for their own sakes, but one that for primarily politico-economic ends attempted with some success to temporarily pacify the everyday lives of most sections of the population: a *pseudo-pacification process* (Hall 2000; Hall and Winlow 2003).

The first step was to disarm the violent and politically dominant aristocracy, then to tame the banditry that emerged as sweeping dispossession and disruption of customary rights and lifestyles in the early stages of the process produced the countervailing phenomena of marginalisation, insecurity, hostility and rebelliousness. Under these circumstances internal violence was slow to fall, and the class and gender distribution of pacification was uneven. However, by the 19th

century most women, who had been much more active in criminality and political protests up to the late 18th century, had been functionally pacified (Heidensohn 2002; Chesney-Lind and Pasko 2004). So to a lesser extent had most men who were directly involved in the circulation of commodities and professional occupations. The old aristocracy were still loosely connected to the organised violence of the military, but it was the displaced proletarian men working in the most brutal forms of heavy industry and militarism or sub-proletarians involved in the criminality that shadowed the capitalist project who were less pacified in terms of the internalisation of anti-violent sensibilities and deference to the state's monopolisation of violence (Winlow 2001; Hall 1997, 2002). This uneven distribution was chiefly a result of the fundamental paradox between the simultaneous need for pacification and deference on the one hand and serviceable forms of physical toughness and violence on the other, a paradox that is at the heart of industrial-capitalist forms of working-class masculinity that have always experienced various functional turnovers and identity crises as the 'pseudo' aspect of the pseudo-pacification process figured very highly in their lives (Hall 2002).

However, what concerns us here is the connection between instrumentalism, criminality and the *breakdown* of the pseudo-pacification process. The stimulation, subsequent sublimation and economic harnessing of insecurity were at the root of the social relations and cultural hegemony of early capitalist development (Hall and Winlow 2005). Although until very recently a high degree of *social stability* was vital, any political counter-movement that threatened to provide too much *economic security* for the mass of the population was fundamentally counter-productive to the capitalist project (Hall 1997). Striking a balance between social stability and economic insecurity was the main difficulty, but it is quite suggestive that the process achieved some relative success under the exploitative yet inclusive and relatively stable period of heavy industrial production, and even more under wartime conditions, where external threats produced the required fear and insecurity at the same time as the need for internal cohesion exceeded the level of social organisation and concerted effort required to be highly innovative and productive. Oddly, the monolithic economic engine of high capitalism, although far from perfect in its magnanimity, tolerance of difference and distribution of wealth and power, seemed to cope rather better – in the sense of being less polarised – with a fairly wide diversity of function and cultural form across the class and gender axes than today's self-proclaimed society of freedom and opportunity.

The major problem facing the pseudo-pacification process is that today's atomised, culturally-driven consumer society requires a high level of competition and instrumentalism in its *personal* relationships as well as its *business* relationships (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). This has led to the socially uneven breakdown of many of the more stable forms of culture and communality that, despite their repressive insularity and interpersonal tensions, for most individuals acted as refuges from the market's brutal competition and the major bulwarks to the destabilisation of industrial-capitalist societies beyond a critical point. There are now fewer refuges as even family relations, work relations and personal friendships become competitive and instrumental (Lasch 1979; Winlow and Hall forthcoming) and political collectives are gradually dissolved by the shifting demands of the economy and the systematic assaults of neo-liberal politicians, cultural leaders and media producers. At the same time as the dissolution of the communal refuges and hope-enhancing political collectives, the functional value of fortitude and physical

endurance virtually disappeared as militarism became technologised and production became out-sourced and fully automated. Caught in a severe historical irony, the survival capabilities of the visceral form are now working against themselves in a consumer/service economy where the primary economic function of competitive instrumentalism has been fully sublimated, accredited and pacified in a rule-bound game that pervades not just economy and society but also cultural and personal identities (Hall 2002; Winlow and Hall forthcoming). Our research indicated that most young people are adopting quite ruthless instrumental attitudes in general, but whereas those with reasonable family support and education are finding places in the mainstream economy where the practising of these attitudes can remain relatively sublimated and pacified, many of the least supported, educated and adaptable individuals inhabiting closed cultural forms beyond the margins are now becoming visibly more hostile and destructive in their practices and prone to violent criminality (Winlow 2001; Taylor 1999).

Although Veblen (1967) saw the survival of the barbarian mentality in the generous predators that were the nations of the monopoly capital era as an historical continuity, our feeling – backed up by the absence of the everyday generosity that characterised the noble dimension of the old barbarian and the palpable presence of cold, utilitarian calculation in the nations of the corporate overshark and the criminal undershark – is that this is the path to a hitherto unknown zone where the nascent ‘new barbarism’ of the present bears no real resemblance to that of the past other than its potential for privatised violence. The breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process is the product of the failure of neocapitalism to find status and functions for visceral cultures that performed vital services in the nation-bound productive economies of high capitalism at the same time as its neo-liberal political classes presided over the wholesale dissolution of the traditional occupations, ethico-cultural codes, communities and political collectives that might have acted as secure platforms for adaptive change (Hall and Winlow 2003). Many of those who are wholly unable to adapt to the ever more stringently enforced rules of sanitised and pacified participation in the global consumer economy will inevitably form or join one of capitalism’s quintessential ‘closed cultures’. Here, they can practice the ubiquitous values of instrumentalism and competition in their own inimitably impolite and often quite vicious ways.

Conclusion

The emergent field of cultural criminology holds much promise for the analysis of crime and social disorder in the coming years. However, in one very important way it has emerged at a rather hazardous time in the general current of Western intellectualism, born at a crossroads where one major road leads in the direction of socially and economically transcendent culturalism and the other in the direction of cultural analysis grounded firmly in the economic logic of advanced capitalism. So far it shows a healthy tendency to channel much of its energy along the latter route. This article, in placing rising rates of crime and violence in the context of increasing instrumentalism in consumer culture and the breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process, warns of the danger of losing sight of the underlying politico-economic and processual contexts and drifting into extreme culturalism, and tentatively postulates the beginnings of a means of conceiving the historical macro-process that connects capital’s economic logic with its criminal cultures.

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Chapter 10

Radgies, Gangstas and Mugs

Imaginary criminal identities in the twilight of the pseudo-pacification process

Radgies, Gangstas, and Mugs: Imaginary Criminal Identities in the Twilight of the Pseudo-Pacification Process

Steve Hall, Simon Winlow, and Craig Ancrum

A Note on Lower-Class Masculinities, Criminality, and the Media Industry

THOUGH THE IDEA OF A "CRISIS OF MASCULINITY" MIGHT BE A HASTY EXPLANATION of the problems experienced by males in today's radically altering world (Beynon, 2002), there is little doubt that the recent foundational change in the capitalist economy has negatively affected those unlucky enough to be born in locales of permanent recession (Taylor, 1999; Lea, 2002). The decline of traditional heavy industries and the communities that grew around them has destabilized what was once a fairly organized context for working-class male culture and biographies, rooted in collectivism and shaped by the rhythms and structures of the industrial economy. Transplantation of capital's socioeconomic heart from these stable industrial settlements to neurotic postindustrial cities and the global arteries of commerce has posed a number of important questions that criminology has yet to address satisfactorily. For instance, the decline of community and the emergence of individualized "lifestyle" consumerism pose serious questions about social order and the maintenance of civilized social interactions (Hall and Winlow, 2004). Answering them requires a critical analysis of the relationship between the neo-capitalist economy, extreme social exclusion, the problematic forms of masculinity (Beynon, 2002), and "street culture" (Jacobs et al., 2003), which are beginning to dominate micro-communities cut off from the legitimate economy and expelled from mainstream society (Young, 1999). Although the fine ethnographic details of these masculine identities have yet to be fully explored, we can begin to make a few tentative suggestions about the growing attraction of instrumentalism, violence, and criminality in socially excluded micro-communities in postindustrial Britain.

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The roles played by imagination and fantasy in the reproduction of identities in general have been the subject of many studies, from early treatises on the politics of the “creative imagination” by English Romantics such as Blake and Shelley to today’s focus on cultural hegemony and the means of its symbolic transgression (Eagleton, 1991). Since the emergence of the Romantics, resistance, subversion, and transgression have been at the heart of radical analyses of media and culture, a broad paradigm that assumes that the urge to transform personal identity for the purpose of liberating the individual from the oppressive norm is natural and timeless (Hall, 1997). However, now that the West’s brief flirtation with Marxism has died down, little is said about how the techniques of liberation have been absorbed and harnessed by the media and fashion industries, commodified to the extent that each step toward transgression and liberation is also a step toward further conformity (Baudrillard, 1993; Debord, 1998). Indeed, among the most interesting phenomena revealed by our ongoing research into the identities of young men whose day-to-day lives are grounded in highly restricted economic and cultural environments (Hall, 1997, 2002; Winlow, 2001) has been the confusion between transgression and conformity. The ability of the consumer market to fob off its stringent authority as free choice in the popular imagination is very well advanced, but the presence of this confusion does help to challenge the fashionable idea that consumer capitalism and neoliberal culture provide genuine opportunities for sociable forms of freedom and diversity.

Although the manipulation of desire has been at the heart of the capitalist project since the constant expansion of market demand became vital to economic growth in 18th-century Europe, the commercial mass media that perform this task with an unprecedented level of efficiency now dominate the world’s symbolic life. They glorify material wealth, promote competitive self-advancement, and portray a hedonistic consumer lifestyle that constantly expands to remain just out of reach of its audiences (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1995). These ideologies of the neoliberal market flow unhindered through today’s culture industries, subtly restraining and shaping the lives of those forced to participate in order to remain “social” (Presdee, 2000), and promoting not only practical aspects of consumption, but also values that help to reproduce masculine and feminine identities. Despite claims that the individual consumer exercises some control over media and cultural products, it now appears clear that, at best, the “choice” is between sets of manufactured and packaged lifestyles and are limited, rather than enabled, by the ubiquitous consumer market (Eagleton, 2000). This article, which draws on data from our ongoing ethnographic study into changing criminal identities and practices in a postindustrial northeastern town that we have given the pseudonym “Carville,” is a very brief preliminary exploration of the relationship between today’s “culture industry” (Adorno, 2002) and the imaginations, identities, and practices of our sample of young male criminals.

Carville in Decline

For places such as Carville, the late 1970s and early 1980s were times of epochal economic change as vital local industries were shattered by increased competition, cheap foreign labor costs, rising domestic inflation, and the arrival of a neoliberal government unwilling to support industries that were becoming unprofitable in the globalizing economy (Rae and Smith, 2001). The negative impact of these changes was not restricted to unemployment, relative poverty, and the failure of the service industry to adequately replace lost industrial jobs (Taylor, 1999; Byrne, 1989). It is now clear that the sudden loss of traditional forms of labor have led to significant social and cultural change, for our purposes the most notable of which is the downward mobility of sections of the former working classes and the development of cultures and identities often associated with "the underclass" (Wilson, 1987, 1997; Winlow, 2001).

The rapid withdrawal of industrial production from areas such as Carville clearly impinged upon local cultures and habitus (Winlow, 2001). Aside from the loss of the practical/economic point of the settlement's existence, forms of robust, physical, labor-orientated masculinities once systematically cultivated in capitalism's industrial-imperialist phase are now denied legitimate forms of expression, status, and reward. Our research reveals that the abandonment of the results of a 1980s generation, in which "working-class men bred underclass sons" (Lash, 1994), has been followed by a generation of socially excluded masculinities that is completely divorced from traditional incorporated forms of masculine identity and trapped within pernicious local cultures of high crime and little hope (Horne and Hall, 1995; Wilson, 1997).

The breakdown of the traditionally close association between work, local community, and identity makes the critical exploration of the increasingly consumerist basis for identity more important than ever (Beck, 1992). Evidence now indicates that younger people are adopting the signifying practices of consumerism and leisure to construct identity and interpersonal relationships (Presdee, 2000; Winlow and Hall, 2005). Rather than forging their identities in the workplace and its surrounding community, most now approach employment in a more instrumental and pragmatic fashion than ever, emptying it of symbolic meaning and "using" it to fund the aspects of their lives that they invest with greater meaning. As Beck (1992: 139) has noted, when industrial communities are denied traditional forms of labor as the basis of identity, "along with their occupations people lose an inner backbone of life that originated in the industrial epoch."

The gradual decline of community cohesion in areas such as Carville and the subsequent exfoliation and remaking of identities began to produce antisocial masculinities that, increasingly disassociated from the formal economy and mainstream culture (Taylor, 1999), were qualitatively different from the problematic, hegemonically reproduced masculinities of the modernist era (Hall, 2002). Though some of the more noble cultural qualities were swiftly abandoned when

the postindustrial economy arrived — especially camaraderie and collective political struggle — others were retained and reworked to cope with the new realities of life in Carville. The specific “visceral cultures” of physical hardness and stoicism formed by the logical needs of industrialism, when divorced from the traditional tasks, socialization, cultural codes, and social control that incorporated and focused their energies, became increasingly problematic for a locale already suffering from the general breakdown of community and collective politics (Hall, 1997; Winlow, 2001). Alongside this, neoliberalism’s mass-mediated culture industry presented a smorgasbord of ostensibly pluralistic identity choices to popular culture, promoting an ethic of compulsory individualization (see Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002), a “society of self” (Baudrillard, 1993), in which entrepreneurship, hedonism, and other cultural variants of market principles became the dominant messages communicated to young people.

The stereotypical indicators associated with “underclass” locales pervade Carville. The town’s housing complexes have deteriorated gradually into typical “sink estates” (Hutton, 1995), deserted by commerce, ignored by development agencies, avoided by the surrounding population, and typified by the tangle of pathologies often used in popular culture as stereotypical metaphors for the growing problem of social exclusion. Indeed, these social problems earn it a ranking in the top five percent of deprived areas in Britain in terms of education, health, and crime rates (N.T.C., 2003). Although it has long possessed the characteristics of the classic “deviant area,” and it was by no means problem-free during times of full employment, the neighborhood now teems with more extreme social problems, indicative of a micro-population that has lost both the hope and the real potential for change, an example of Horne and Hall’s (1995) “anelpic micro-communities.”¹

Automatically capitalizing on the destructive consequences of deindustrialization, the neoliberal economy has also colonized and begun to rebuild Carville’s culture in a number of unpredictable and problematic ways. As Wilson (1987) claimed, without work, men become poor marriage propositions and develop forms of masculine expression free from traditional techniques of informal social control. The traditional breadwinning male artisan is consigned to history (Taylor, 1999), and the increasing desire for ones “own space,” “own time,” and the right to develop ones own life perspective (Beck, 1992) can now be pursued outside of mainstream processes of individualization. A significant increase in competitive individualism, instrumentalism, and present-time orientation have accompanied the virtual abandonment of deferred gratification and the hedonistic attractions of “street culture” (see Shover and Honaker, 1991; Jacobs et al., 2003), increasing the flow of young people into expanding criminal markets. In the space of around 15 years, Carville has turned from a functional, productive manifestation of industrial capitalist social organization into a chaotic and increasingly criminal locale.

Within one or two generations, masculine identity has been transformed to a

startling degree and the traditional, hardworking, dependable, family-orientated and community-conscious workingman has become a complete anathema in the eyes of many young men. In the expanding criminal culture of chaotic and insecure locales such as Carville, self-interest and instrumentalism became clearly visible in most cultural practices, and mutuality, collective action and altruism were devalued as weak, obsolete, and strictly the province of "mugs." Concomitantly, glamorized forms of criminal or "barely legal" masculinity that have been featured in the postwar mass media resonate more powerfully in everyday life. Idealized portrayals of criminal masculinities are being consumed and used to construct semi-imaginary "factasy" lifestyles in which fact and fiction merge to enable even the most menial of Carville's drug peddlers or petty thieves to display some semblance of criminal status, if only to themselves. Combining observations with interview data from respondents whose masculine status is considered under threat and "in need of constant reaffirmation" (Winlow, 2001: 101), the following section seeks to explore briefly the relationship between mass-mediated images and criminal identities in this locale.

Radgies, Gangsters, and Mugs: Masculine Identities in Carville's Anelpic Micro-Community

Nipper's dress is a clear indication of the source of his cultural references. The expensive tracksuit, obligatory baseball cap, and gaudy gold jewelry constitute the established uniform for many of the area's male criminals. Nipper's outfit communicates distinct localized "gangster" undertones and represents a visceral "symbolism of the body" (Winlow, 2001). This is a means of embodying and encoding an instantly recognizable message to those able to decode it and grasp the implicit physical threat, the Wittgensteinian "action" that lies behind it. His outfit, his demeanor, his vocabulary, and his use of language connote one thing above all else: I am not someone to be taken lightly.

Despite the fact that life in Carville is very different from black American street life, Nipper is a renowned aficionado of gangster rap and finds a homology between the rap lyrics of his musical heroes and his own life experiences in Carville, which, because they signify a means of survival, status, and prosperity in another troubled locale, become legitimate in the construction of his own identity:

Loads of what they say is the same as here, not as bad maybe, but fuck-
ing not far off. I mean they go on about selling gear² (see the glossary
at the end), getting nicked, being in jail and that, loads of stuff that you
see happening all the time round here. Even people getting shot and that
happens now. It's like you're on the same wavelength.

Influences other than those of the music and fashion industries are also evident. Nipper idolizes his locale's older and more successful criminal entrepreneurs. He frequently dropped the names of several well-known "gangsters," and his aspiration

to follow in their footsteps seemed to influence both self-identity and his practical approach to obtaining what the local criminal culture has to offer:

It'll come. I know it will. I'm going have the B.M., the fuck off nice house away from this shit hole, villa in Tenerife, the full fucking monty, definitely. If they can do it, I fucking can. It's cush when you go on the drink with them kind of people. You don't queue to get in nightclubs, pay for drinks, or fuck all and there's always loads of Charlie flying about. Who fucking wouldn't want to be able to go on like that?

Prolonged observational work and detailed questioning suggested that Nipper was bound up with this particular self-image despite the glaring contradiction of his everyday life and real prospects. Crime is not something he simply does, but something he is dedicated to and revels in (Hall, 1997; Winlow, 2001). He amplifies the daring of his crimes and the eminence of his criminal connections, constantly imagining himself as a big wheel — and in turn a close associate of very big wheels — to belie his true low status in the world of serious professional crime. His inflated, hardened, and very brittle self-image provides a means of convincing himself that one day he can become a real, infamous winner in the most brutal and predatory sector of the free market.

Despite living and operating in Carville's criminal milieu, Little Legs has ascended to a slightly higher criminal plane. His involvement in crime has brought him a measure of relative financial success, at least within the context of Carville. Perhaps more important, it has provided the essential element of status. For Little Legs, there is an important reason for his success and the accompanying narcissistic affirmation of his own identity:

You've just got be fucking radge, that's all. Be prepared to go that one step further than any cunt else will. It's like, say you've got frisk with someone and you know for a fact that they're proper naughty cunts, that they'll stab you say, right? If you want to be the one who walks out of it all right, you've got to be that bit radger than them. You know what I'm talking about, one of them "naughty things."

The fact that Little Legs has been twice arrested in connection with shootings — including the killing of a notoriously violent local gangster that received national media coverage — emphasizes further his total commitment to his "radge-ness." Both Little Legs and Nipper, despite their widely differential status, are highly attracted to the idealized images of gangsterism that are manufactured, packaged, and marketed by the mass media. Ruthless, instrumental, entrepreneurial, and brutal images of the successful criminal are ingested readily into the local cultural lexicon. As Little Legs puts it:

Of course I like them kind of films. They're fucking class. *Goodfellas*,

one of the best films ever. I know all the fucking words and everything. It's class when they do that gadgy in the bar "Batts" or whoever, they proper do that poor fucker don't they? (Laughs)

His enthusiastic recollection of such a violent scenario, in which a man is literally beaten to death in graphic detail, echoes Presdee's (2000: 3) observations on the "fixation with ghoulish scenes" and Schechner's (in Presdee, 2000: 4) "violence of the imagination," the enjoyment of violence both real and fictional and the need to "feel in touch" with the violent element of human nature.

Despite the fact that Little Legs is a very small man and carries none of the violent symbolism of the muscular bodies that are redolent within the local criminal culture, he has succeeded in cultivating for himself a violent reputation, which has granted him access to Carville's upper criminal echelons. The fact that he carries no overt physical threat means little to others on the street, because "the hidden power of a violent reputation" (Winlow, 2001) goes before him in virtually every social interaction. The presumption of dark deeds and powerful connections fuels a mythology around Little Legs that affirms his identity and aids his criminal endeavors in Carville. He constantly emphasizes his willingness to resolve conflicts with extreme violence:

I'm just a little daft cunt if you like. But I'm a fucking dangerous little cunt, ask anyone that. Being a big, hard fucker stands for nowt nowadays, just ask "Melon Head" [nickname of the gangster Little Legs was arrested for killing, but not charged with]. The fittest, biggest, hardest cunt in the world can't stop a fucking bullet or a big fuck off chiv can he?

The little guy with big balls taking on the world has been a popular theme throughout modern history (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1995; Carrabine et al., 2002) and it is not outlandish to suppose that Little Legs uses these cultural references in the everyday enactment of his identity. He steadfastly denies any conscious mimicry of his screen idols, but, affirming Mulvey's (in Carrabine et al., 2002: 130) analysis of film narratives, hints at a narcissistic identification with the male gangster:

Obviously, you don't go and watch fucking *Scarface* or something and then go and act it out. That's fucking mental. What does happen, though, and I'm being proper honest here, you do walk out of a film like that a bit taller, you know what I mean? It's sort of like, you have it in your head for ages, like in the background sort of, what you would do in his shoes and that.

Nipper and Little Legs are two examples of over 40 young males observed and interviewed over a period of about one year. Lack of space prevents the presentation of further data, but we can summarize by saying that although a mi-

nority expressed other sources as the main influences for their own identities, the tendency to identify with violent mass-media characters as icons and to recognize a homology between the cultures these characters were supposed to represent and their own everyday existence was consistent across the group.

Marketing Masculine Images in the Breakdown of the Pseudo-Pacification Process

From the beginning, our research data pointed toward identities that, although based in the more durable and visceral traditions of working-class history, are now absorbed in the economic imperatives and mainstream cultural values of consumer capitalism. These identities pervaded locales that were in a condition of permanent recession, and any theory favoring autonomous subjectivity and a natural propensity to resistance and transgression over these powerful determinants would be unacceptably weak and romantic (Hall, 1997; Winlow, 2001). One of criminology's most pressing issues is the emergence of strands of criminal masculinity cut adrift from class and economy, increasingly constructed around cultural imagery and market demands and manifested within already fractious social environments such as Carville.

However, simply applying a Mertonian (1938) theoretical template and claiming that these images are imitated and enacted by every young man unable to achieve the success they aspire to by legitimate means would be naïve in the extreme. Even more naïve would be the idea that Carville's criminal residents are the otherwise hollow subjects of ideology, "hegemonic discourses," or any other ideational reproductive mechanism. Moreover, the postulation that homologous connections are being made between images, objects, and meanings specific to the subculture explains very little about the historical generation of these meanings and what might be influencing the ultimate connotative and moral decisions being made inside these young people. In any case, these micro-communities share too many values, meanings, and ambitions with the atomized mainstream to qualify as subcultures in the first place. These reproductive processes need something to reproduce, and our respondents seemed to be drawing upon deep emotional dispositions that pre-exist the processes in which they are allegedly generated. Thus, much more convincing for us is Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, the psychosomatic internalization of the economically enforced logics of practice that evolved in specific locales across the history of industrial capitalism (Hall, 1997; Taylor, 1999; Winlow, 2001). It is ironic that the most devoted and locally successful disciples of the traditional visceral habitus now teeter precariously at the edge of significant social existence, while the individuals who subscribed unenthusiastically or appeared to be "resisting" are now being recruited *en masse* to the mainstream. These domesticated "alternative" masculinities are not subordinate or rebellious, as Connell (1995) argues, but are in fact increasingly successful conformists in neo-capitalism's pseudo-pacified consumer-service economy (Hall, 2002).

Our research revealed no evidence of “resistance to normalization” in the substantive sense, only to the ways that the mainstream expects its norms and values to be *practiced*. Our respondents seemed to identify with, consume, and use media characters as temporary guides to survival and prosperity in — and often eventual escape from — the insecure and hostile climate of these impoverished locations; they are guides that affirm and justify the way they apply their traditional visceral dispositions to the game of atomized competitive individualism that has always been at the hub of market-capitalism. They seemed to be expending effort to regain and hopefully exceed in *this* world of consumerism the significance they once achieved in *that* world of industrial production and militarism, without capitulating to the complete domestication of being that neo-capitalism demands of its administrators, service workers, and consumers. Since this is life near the precipice of significance, where that ambition is failing palpably, the insecurity, instrumentalism, and hostility that had been somewhat placated in the relative stability of capital’s productivist phase are once again bubbling to the surface.

The continuity of a durable, visceral habitus across the generations and through the foundational changes of the transition from high capitalism to culturally driven neo-capitalism reminds us of the ahistoricism of much cultural theory (Hall, 1997; Taylor, 1999). We use the concept of the *pseudo-pacification process* as the explanatory backdrop to the historical trajectory of the potentially violent visceral habitus throughout capitalism. This process has been explained at length elsewhere (Hall, 2000; Hall and Winlow, 2004). Briefly, the theoretical core of the concept is that the well-evidenced reduction in interpersonal violence in Britain between the late-14th and mid-20th centuries (Gurr, 1981) was not a “civilizing process” encouraged for its own sake as many liberal progressivists argue, or operating as a blind process as Norbert Elias (1994) argued, or evolving to allow naked force to be replaced by the more inclusive and subtle operation of hegemony as the principal means of subjugation and exploitation as some critical theorists claimed (see Gramsci, 1971). This process had no teleological or moral end in itself, but rather developed as a relatively stable but very potent primary fuel for the market-capitalist project, a means of intensifying and harnessing competitive behavior while eliminating much of the privatized violence that had constantly threatened property rights in pre-modern societies.

From what we can make of it (Hall, 2000; Winlow and Hall, 2005), during that 600-year period the human propensity for physical violence and naked intimidation that flourishes in conditions of insecurity (Fletcher, 1997) was, in the classical Freudian sense, gradually repressed and sublimated into the sort of physically pacified competition that reduced the physical cruelty and violent criminality that had permeated the pre-modern world, yet transferred that violent energy to the task of intensifying interpersonal and micro-communal struggle in the social and economic realms. Thus, the psyche, social order, and bourgeois culture that grew from the repression and sublimation of privatized, interpersonal violence within

the boundaries of the state's territory were harnessed to drive forward the market economy. However, the repression and sublimation of violence were not distributed evenly across the capitalist class order because it would have been economically counterproductive to eliminate *entirely* a propensity that retained an important *function* in militarism, heavy industry, and internal social control. The visceral habitus was the result of this uneven distribution of the repression/sublimation process across the class and gender orders, and indeed the working-class masculine qualities of toughness, fortitude, endurance, and extremely restricted mental and emotional focus continued to function quite well as a normative ideal and a grounded habitus when it was securely harnessed to its appropriate economic tasks. It is not that no working-class males resisted and sought alternatives, but a majority, a critical mass, was recruited body and soul into this popular visceral form.

In the classical capitalist period, huge financial investments and cultural efforts were required to maintain the degree of moral repression and socioeconomic stability required as seedbed conditions for a functional pseudo-pacification process that was, in terms of economic utility, a vital unit cost of profitable production. In today's transitional phase, beyond needs and product innovation, in which hedonism, individualization, flux, and personal insecurity have become vital requirements rather than potential hazards for the continuing growth of consumer markets (Lea, 2002), the massive financial investment and cultural effort required to artificially maintain a high degree of repression, stability, and security across whole national territories are now both imprudent and actively counterproductive (Hall and Winlow, 2003). In Britain, the pseudo-pacification process has been automatically rationalized in the neo-capitalist economy and displaced by the burgeoning market in security and social control.

This highlights the dangerous condition of the pseudo-pacification process in this current phase of advanced capitalism. Seeing no attraction in the effete, over-accredited, and routine forms of exploitation offered by neo-capitalist consumer/service work, many males continue to seek new functions and rewards for the unchanged qualities of the visceral habitus in the unregulated alternative economies emerging in areas where economic capital and cultural effort, which once were invested in routinely in an expectation of returns, have been withdrawn. Here, neo-capitalism is simply marketing "gangster" icons that signify as a rough guide and affirmation of identity to this extremely insecure and receptive audience of "radgies," who are trying desperately to avoid becoming "mugs" by seeking temporary function, reward, and status — and often the finance required for eventual escape — in criminal economies. Consumer capitalism is making the extremely risky move of allowing its mass media to imply that the boundaries of its own rules of socially acceptable and legally circumscribed behavior can be stretched, thus continuing to comply with its own market logic by supplying a demand from a durable, insecure, and troublesome cultural form that was created, reproduced, and recently threatened with total extinction by its own historical processes.

NOTE

1. "Anelpic micro-communities" exist in what Rob Horne and Steve Hall (1995) claim to be conditions of genuine, pragmatic disaster amounting to complete system collapse at a micro-communal level, in which small but growing bodies of people exist in industrially depressed areas (among, but not characteristic of, the economically poor). They have literally been overstepped and left behind by the new configuration of capitalist forces. Here, the dominant mode and form of life is one postulated upon a generalized excision from any positive or constructive engagement with the flows and forces of contemporary global capitalism. It is objectively criminal and increasingly characterized by non-rational, unpredictable forms of violence. This practical condition is categorized only by an interlocking set of negatives: it is without expectation and without opinion, without hope and without fear. We have adopted a term used (once only) by Sophocles — the word "Anelpis" (anelpis), which signifies precisely that condition. By extension, the as yet particularized loci in which it is becoming a generalized state of being we have named "anelpic micro-communities."

2. The local English dialect spoken by our respondents is often regarded as one of the most difficult to understand. To assist the reader, a brief glossary of terms follows here:

<i>B.M.:</i>	an expensive BMW car
<i>Charlie:</i>	illegal cocaine
<i>chiv:</i>	knife
<i>class:</i>	excellent
<i>cunt:</i>	extremely sexist and derogatory metaphor for a low-grade person
<i>cush:</i>	good, attractive, desirable
<i>daft cunt:</i>	ludicrous low-grade person
<i>frisk:</i>	trouble or violence
<i>fuck off:</i>	in this context, spectacular and scary
<i>full fucking monty:</i>	everything; the whole works
<i>gadgy:</i>	man
<i>gear:</i>	illegal drugs
<i>mental:</i>	irrational
<i>"naughty things":</i>	guns
<i>nicked:</i>	arrested
<i>nawt</i>	naught, for nothing
<i>proper do that poor fucker:</i>	exercise extreme violence on an unfortunate person
<i>proper naughty:</i>	very violent and criminally inclined
<i>radge:</i>	crazy and capable of extreme behavior
<i>shit hole:</i>	undesirable place of residence
<i>to go on like that?</i>	to behave like that?

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Chapter 11

Anti-Nirvana

Crime, culture and instrumentalism in the age of insecurity



Anti-nirvana: Crime, culture and instrumentalism in the age of insecurity

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Abstract

The disintegration of traditional forms of community and social order is one of criminology's core issues for the twenty-first century. As these forms are replaced by individualism, fragmentation and differentiation in a fluid, unstable culture governed by advanced capitalism's economic command to consume and discard with increasing rapidity, everyday values and practices are undergoing radical reconfiguration. Here we offer field data from two distinct social groups that are caught up in this process of change: socially incorporated young people in low paid service work, and socially excluded criminal young men from the north east of England. If this set of data is analysed in critical rather than celebratory ways, it suggests that current economic and cultural forces, rather than liberating individuals from repressive structures and traditions, are promoting sufficient atomization, instrumentalism and insecurity in specific locales to threaten social cohesion and further increase the flow of young people into criminality.

Key words

consumerism; criminality; individualization; insecurity; instrumentalism

INTRODUCTION

The breakdown of traditional forms of working class community and identity poses a number of important questions about the future of social cohesion in the twenty-first century. As the traditional class order recedes and fragments, what remains of the once largely unified and politically powerful working class has been absorbed into the lower echelons of the middle class, funnelled into the new economies of the service and leisure sectors or discarded altogether (see Horne and Hall, 1995; Young, 1999). The erosion of modernity's traditional forms of industrial labour and the distinct value systems, identities and sense of belonging that developed around them provides a particularly useful

foundation upon which to build a critical understanding of the processes of social fragmentation and enforced adaptation to advanced capitalism's distinctly competitive individualization process.

Our recent research into the mutating values and practices of working class youth suggests that traditional forms of friendship and community are being radically transformed as prevailing cultural values and economic demands encourage young people to live their lives as competitive personal endeavours on advanced capitalism's difficult and irregular terrain (Winlow and Hall, forthcoming). As mutual interests and the previously parallel trajectories of working class biographies diverge, people once bonded together by the deep friendships and communal values that – despite the usual interpersonal frictions and altercations – grew around hardship and exploitation now forge their identities in the relations of consumer culture and the seductive images of global media. As Bauman (2003) notes: 'the invasion and colonization of *communitas*, the site of the moral economy, by consumer market forces constitutes the most awesome of dangers threatening the present form of human togetherness' (p. 74). It seems that the explosion of self-interest and instrumentality triggered in the shift to consumerism could now be threatening all the traditional forms of social order established during and before the industrial-modern era. Although we agree with those progressive thinkers who regard the current exfoliation of undeniably disagreeable modernist forms and relations as a positive development, our concern is that in this phase of broad transformation some fundamental aspects of sociability *essential* to the maintenance of civilized interpersonal conduct might be eroding as anxiety, fear and self-interest become the new emotional responses to life in advanced capitalism (Hall and Winlow, 2003). At its most basic, our argument is a standard cautionary tale about what might happen if we throw out the baby with the bathwater.

The British communities that once typified the world's oldest working class (Byrne, 1989) lie in tatters as the culturo-economic forces that once bound individuals together now drive them apart. The old working class is splintering as it is swept away by the powerful currents of economic 'rationalization', competitive individualism and consumerism, and formerly cohesive communities and neighbourhoods are being replaced by the faceless post-industrial city, the consumerist ghettos of new suburban housing developments, or the subterranean tangle of pathologies and tensions that characterize low income residential areas. Some individuals wrestle desperately with a new apparatus of social advancement that is based on minor accreditation, enterprise and personal image-management, clinging to the hope of creating a better world for themselves while constantly being mindful that the rug could be pulled from under them at any moment (Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2001). Simultaneously, the magnetic field created by the opposite pole drags those who fail to make the grade towards relative poverty, cultural insignificance and socio-economic exclusion.

There is no doubt that a connection exists between this major transition and rises in crime and violence in Britain and America (Hall, 1997; Taylor, 1999; Winlow, 2001). However, explaining this connection clearly and doing something about it are of course different matters. Following the emphasis made by so many theorists (see for instance Castells, 1996; Lea, 2002) on the gravity of today's socio-economic transition and its

subsequent criminological implications, we want to stress the need for the constant reflexive reconsideration of what have become inadequate theoretical frameworks in criminology. More specifically, in this article we see a pressing need to challenge progressive criminology's rather over-enthusiastic importation of the fashionable notions that meanings are fluid and diverse and individuals are potentially 'free' to construct their identities in a 'post-structural' or 'post-modern' world. We intend to do this by focusing on the structural contexts and shared values, motivations and meanings that appear to exert strong influences on the ways in which two groups of young people – one largely law-abiding and the other persistently criminal – perceive and enact their identities in Britain's rapidly changing economy.

TWO EXPRESSIONS OF INSTRUMENTALISM IN CONSUMER CULTURE

A co-ordinated body of research on violent crime and youth identities recently conducted by ourselves has revealed the emergence of a strong streak of instrumentalism in youth cultures, which, although commonly shared as a value, seems to be enacted under different rules that order distinct social and economic environments. Perhaps unsurprisingly in an Anglo-American world dominated by neo-liberal politics and culture for the past two decades, the commitment that young people once held to more traditional and communal ways of life has been supplanted to a large extent by instrumentalism and personal ambition, which, although they are constantly touted as the paths to freedom and prosperity, operate in a highly restrictive framework set by the logical demands of the consumer marketplace and have established themselves as norms in a climate of increased economic and cultural insecurity. The stringent need to find some sort of status-position in today's consumer culture has combined uneasily and paradoxically with the prevailing ideology of personal freedom and opportunity, subsequently fragmenting traditional friendships and communal interdependencies. Our data suggests that young people are beginning to relate to each other and all aspects of their personal, social and occupational lives in an increasingly instrumental, utilitarian manner (Winlow and Hall, forthcoming).

Our initial research revealed increasing instrumentalism – or at least instrumental practices that appear to be more pronounced because the traditional communal codes that governed and repressed them have largely evaporated – among the young people of the former working class who were surviving in or attempting to move through the insecure non-tenured sector of the economy (see Hutton, 1995; Taylor, 1999). We have found copious evidence that, despite superficial differences in form and expression, this basic value now influences virtually every aspect of young people's lives as social and economic actors (Winlow and Hall, forthcoming). So far we've focused on the manner in which friendships and personal relationships are now negotiated through the new market-generated social mechanisms that encourage young people to place instrumental self-interest at the core of their working lives in Britain's service sector and their social lives in its burgeoning club and pub scene. While there's insufficient space to exhibit all the

interview data from this group, a selection of quotes that ably display the type of sentiments expressed by the vast majority of our sample have been presented below.

It's now clear that the 'nocturnal economy', with its peculiar mix of hedonism and conspicuous consumption, is becoming a crucial cultural site for young people seeking companionship and forging their identities (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002; Winlow et al., 2003). For most of our respondents, the establishment and maintenance of close personal relationships were synonymous with 'going out', and many voiced the belief that without 'going out' there would be no 'friendship' at all.

Paul: I used to see my mates all the time when I was younger. I stopped going to the match, and we used to play five-a-side, but that stopped. Now, if I see them, it's always in a bar or something. We were saying, last week, if we'd still get on if we were all sober when we went out, you know, just joking and that . . . now we only ever see each other when we go out [on the town].

Neil: It's hard to keep in touch and keep friendships going if you're working and you've got a life of your own. My friends and me used to be really close when we were younger because you spent more time together. Now, everyone's got jobs . . . [and] stuff going on. I keep in touch with maybe a couple, like talk to them on a weekly basis, and I know I can call them if I fancy going out or something. The others, really, haven't got anything to do with me anymore. It's like they're strangers, even though we might go out for a pint and have a laugh together. It sounds harsh, because I still like them and I still enjoy seeing them and they're still my best mates . . . I think as I get older, I'm more and more happy just to spend time in my own company . . .

Lianne: [Apart from Paula, my best friend] the others, to be honest, I just see when we go out. They're nice and that, don't get me wrong, but, I don't know, I don't like to get drawn into all that kind of stuff, where, you know, you see each other all the time . . . We usually get on all right, but I know, if anything happened, or if I stopped going out, I just probably wouldn't see any of them . . . There's a time and place for friends, and I suppose we all like to meet up now and then, and we text each other and stuff, but really apart from Paula, I'm not that close to any of them.

Of course friendships have been changing across the individual's life-course for some generations, but what becomes important here is the culturo-economic context in which these fragile relations are enacted and maintained, where the long-term mutuality, reciprocity and loyalty that were core properties of traditional friendships are being rapidly eroded by the prevailing neo-liberal ethos of self-interest. Although some of our respondents talked about the depth of their affections for friends, in most cases they were mindful of the inherent instability of these attachments from the moment they were established. The 'close relationship' seems to have become a *rare bonus* rather than an everyday normative end in itself, a luxury that is always contingent on the utility that it provides for the achievement of personal occupational and lifestyle ambitions. Many current youth friendships do not seem to be generating the deep personal knowledge of each other's lives that was such a palpable feature of traditional working class communities (Willis,

1990). As traditional community and the ethos of mutuality declines, labour markets become increasingly diverse and friendships become centred around lifestyle ambitions, individuals are now often unaware of their friends' work, family, politics or inner emotions because they have no regular contact in these dimensions of life. An unwritten agreement appears to exist that the anticipated hedonism and abandon of a night out should not be spoiled by talk of them.

Joe: I think we make a conscious effort not to talk about certain stuff. If one of the lads comes out and starts talking about work, complaining about this or that, he's just going to get the piss taken out of him and everybody knows that. We get enough of that ourselves, during the day. We don't want to hear about depressing stuff cos it's going to spoil the night. You go out to have fun . . . We'll talk about girls, sex, drinking, football . . . We'll take the piss out of each other all the time: out of what someone said, out of clothes, anything, because that's the point of the night, to have a laugh, and that's why we all get on well because they're all up for a laugh.

While they could often recount in detail aspects of their friends' 'going out' selves, the everyday aspects of their lives appeared secondary:

Most of them I know everything about. I know who's going to get pissed first, I know who's going to be on the score all the time, I know which ones are going to sneak off to meet their girlfriends, I know who's going to get chucked out of nightclubs . . . The sense of humour you have to know because you need to know how far you can push certain people, like Eric, he'll stand for a bit of piss-taking but not too much or he'll go mad, whereas someone like Andy just takes the piss all the time . . . Eric, guaranteed, is going to have the worst clothes ever, Ian likes trainers, and he keeps getting dodgy hair cuts . . . and Tony, he's probably the best looking and most likely to score.

These sorts of assessments of friends, grounded in their detailed knowledge of the new cultural codes that have emerged in nocturnal leisure culture, contrast starkly with the often 'deeply descriptive' and insightful knowledge of the other that characterized traditional close friendships. Whatever familiarity with the personal histories and inner emotional lives of his friends Joe might have does not trip off the tongue as easily as his stories of their nights out together:

Eric works in a factory somewhere in Northville . . . I'm not sure what he does really, something to do with car parts . . . He still lives with his Mam . . . I'm not really sure what happened to his Dad. He grew up in Yorkshire somewhere so I'm not sure where he went to school . . . I think he likes his job, the money's not bad, but he doesn't talk about it much . . . Tony is a car salesman, he did OK at school I think, but we didn't go to the same school so I'm not 100 percent. He's got a girlfriend and he's just got a flat in town. He used to live with his Mam and Dad. His girlfriend is called Karen, and that's about it really. He's always got a sunbed tan and he drives a Golf.

Friendships appear to be used increasingly as a vital lubricant to the successful immersion of the self in the competitive and often narcissistic symbolic interplay of nocturnal leisure. As both traditional cultural norms and current fashion dictate that one cannot 'go out' alone, friendships must be maintained in order to allow and enhance the adventure in the nocturnal economy. Our data does not suggest that friendships always remain meaningless, but rather that these young people are tending to negotiate friendships initially and maintain them over time *primarily* on the basis of what they can get out of them, rather than regarding them as ends in themselves and an everyday normative aspect of their lives:

I think mostly I was driven by the music, that was what was important to me. We'd go all over the place [clubbing], and I can remember I'd always offer to drive, or book trains or whatever, because I really wanted to go and you're trying to get all your friends to go . . . We sort of stayed together because we all wanted to go clubbing together; there was no-one else I could've gone clubbing with. If they didn't go I couldn't go . . . Slowly but surely we started to drift apart . . .

We all enjoy a good night out, and we all have a laugh when we go out together. There's maybe ten of us who go out regularly, but really, there's only really Paul who I'd call a good mate, because the others, I mean they're still mates, still good lads. But, apart from going out I don't really see them. I don't even think most of them know what I do. See, it's not really talked about. You go out to have a laugh, and that's it.

If conspicuous consumption and hedonism are the ends, work is the means that brings the ends within reach. These young people tended to drain their working lives of any residual symbolic meaning. Their approach to work often appeared purely pragmatic and instrumental: they worked in order to get the money to consume. Once again, this attitude might well have characterized many work cultures during modernity, but the crucial difference here is the current way fellow-workers relate to each other while they're doing it. While at work, they tended to display only shallow aspects of self, rarely forming bonds with work mates and rarely acknowledging even the possibility of mutuality (Winlow and Hall, forthcoming). Labour mobility and the separation of work from community are important factors in the construction of a working environment populated by 'strangers', and in some cases this process was exacerbated by the nature of the work these young people did. For example, approximately half of our sample of young working people were employed in call centres, and consequently were distanced from workmates by workstation partitions, headsets and the constant flow of calls that demanded their attention. Donald's description of his work and his personal approach to it expresses a number of the key sentiments that pervaded our sample of young workers in this sector:

Donald: It's got to the stage where I just go into autopilot, just blank out and take calls without really thinking about it . . . I have to stay there at the minute cos I need the money . . . It's [work] just the way it goes and you've got to get on with it. I hate it, but what can you do? Everyone needs money, it's the only thing that matters, you need it to buy stuff, to do things, to go out, so you've got to put yourself through it [work] . . . There's nothing I like about it [work],

nothing at all. The money, the people, it's just not a nice place to be and not what I want to be doing. Without the money though, you've got no social life, nothing.

Joanne: Sometimes I think it's all right and sometimes I hate it. I don't want to stay there forever, but I need to have a job like that 'til I finish at Uni . . . Some of the people there are all right, but I haven't really got to know many people that well. You go off on breaks and you see different people so it's difficult to get to know many people. At the end of the night, everyone just gets out of there as soon as possible . . . I work nights and weekends mainly, but there's thousands of others who you never get to see cos they work different shifts. Most of the people in my team smoke, so they're outside having a fag, so it can be a bit boring. Plus, when it's busy, the calls are coming in all the time, it's just one after another, so you can't really talk to each other . . . Even at the end of a call, you've got to mess about with the accounts, then whoever you were talking to has got another call, so it's a bit weird really . . . They have staff nights out but I wouldn't go . . . I don't really want to, we just haven't got that much in common really. I'd rather go out with my own friends.

In much the same way as Donald, Debra appears to sifting and sorting aspects of work in order to fit in with the ethos of individualism and the pleasure principle. Work holds little or no pleasure, and her approach to it attempts to cut the traditional links – either resistant and negative or conformist and positive – between work and identity. Those who surround her on the office floor don't constitute a social group to which she feels any attachment, and the traditional forms of mutuality and resistance associated with low paid labour appear to have lost their resonance:

Debra: I'm polite to everyone, I smile at people, but underneath I'm just thinking about other things. What's on TV that I'm missing, anything apart from work. Some people are obviously more chatty than me and you can tell some of them are friends, but I think a lot of the people there just use work to get money, and couldn't care less about it. Now, people just talk to me if they need to or to pass the time on a break or whatever.

Peter: I just want to get out of there as soon as possible. It's just a way to earn some money until I find something better . . . The people there, they're mostly young, 19, 20, the manager's only 27. I think most of them, you know, they don't like it, but most of them, they'll probably end up staying there cos there's not much else they can do . . . Me, I'll end up doing something else cos I'm not like them really.

While a number of themes can be developed from this data (see Winlow and Hall, forthcoming), our concern here is the riptide of instrumentalism surging through the lives of many young people trapped in this exploitative employment sector and subjected to the overwhelming cultural power of the global consumer market and its attendant neo-liberal politics. Not only do they appear to be emptying employment of meaning and disassociating themselves from colleagues and traditional community, but also they prefer instead

to relate their own identities to the sign value of the general consumer and nocturnal leisure industries. In this powerful current many appear to be establishing and maintaining personal relationships not as ends in themselves or sanctuaries for human affections and the urge to resist, but as means of successfully negotiating the insecure and difficult new terrain of neo-liberal consumer culture.

Now we want to shift the focus to another group of young people who inhabit conspicuously less stable and supportive home environments, and whose attempts to survive and prosper on this same terrain are characterized by persistent involvement in criminality. Here, it will become apparent, our inability to use recording equipment with this group of respondents required a different research method based on the unstructured interview.

Radiator Ronnie has been involved in acts of petty crime since his first 'dipping' (pick-pocketing) attempt at the age of 12. By the age of 14 he was a regular shoplifter and drug user. Now in his early 20s, he has graduated into small-time drug distribution and various types of theft, specializing in the removal of appliances and equipment from building sites and vacated council houses, especially central heating systems, from which his nickname derives. His attitude to acquaintances displays the same instrumentality as the previous respondents, but it tends to be expressed in a more hostile manner when he describes most of them as 'mugs' or 'muppets' who had better not 'fuck him around' in the 'business' arrangements they make with each other as temporary accomplices, receivers of stolen goods or customers in the drug-distribution network. They are chosen primarily for their functional use to Ronnie's personal efforts to gratify his immediate desires and continue to 'please himself' in his choice of lifestyle; their relationships are little more than a shifting matrix of brief financial transactions and exploitative deals. He displays no sense of mutual interests or common fate: everyone in the world is simply 'out for themselves'. His attitude to current occupational opportunities is again similar, only more extreme, and the death of his beloved grandfather caused by industrial disease provides a powerful justification for his total rejection of 'shitty work', with its low pay and overbearing authority, as a valid means of survival or prosperity. Only 'mugs' work.

Trippy is a 24-year-old heroin addict who has recently moved back in with his parents after being fitted with an electronic tag, a disposal that requires a place of residence with a permanent telephone connection. He feigned depression and psychosis to qualify for disability allowance rather than social security, because the former does not carry 'job-seeking' requirements. His attitude to work is again hostile: 'I won't be working me arse off for four quid an hour like some of them daft cunts'. His friendship network, based mainly around drug-taking, has fragmented over the past ten years of his life as many of his former acquaintances have drifted away. He remembers that relations with his acquaintances were consistently hostile, and bouts of drug-taking and drinking would often end up in arguments, fights and permanent rifts. He was taught by his father to use violence as a first resort in dispute resolution, to mistrust all others and to put his own interests first. Relations with his family are strained, and he has never felt any reliable support from his jobless and occasionally violent father or his permanently ill mother. He seems to have adapted in a fatalistic way to the uncertainty and insecurity that prevails in today's world: 'I mean, fuck knows what I'll be doing in ten years' time, I could be fucking dead, in the jail, I could win the lottery, fuck knows. I'll still be taking drugs, I know that much'.

John's interview was permeated by constant reference to the inadequacies of what he perceives as his lazy, incompetent and negligent father. He also displayed what could be construed as a misogynistic contempt for women who practise what he sees as the sort of loose sexual morality that he suspected was a characteristic of his mother. He left his girlfriend – who, at 27, was 11 years older than him – quite early in the relationship, because he 'didn't like the responsibilities' that accompanied living with a 'useless slag' and looking after children who had been fathered by a number of other young men. To him, the influx of 'scrounging foreigners' to impoverished locales in Britain was the principal threat to his personal prospects, although he demonstrated no interest in politics apart from a vague affinity to the BNP. When asked, he appeared to be unaware of the history, the structure or the policies of this particular party. All politicians, and all other individuals for that matter, are 'cunts out for themselves', and throughout the interview he emphasized his own instrumental individualism and attributed it to everyone else as a matter of course. Everyone is 'on the make'; how individuals go about satisfying their desires is a personal matter, and, as if to emphasize his commitment to the tactics he preferred, the word 'thug' was tattooed in elaborate script across his stomach.

While these young men tended to exhibit dispositions and forms of criminality traditionally associated with the 'lower class' (see Miller, 1958), in reality they exist largely outside the restrictive codes of traditional lower class culture (Horne and Hall, 1995; Jefferson, 2002) and, for the most part at least, outside of all but the most formal and punitive techniques of social control. The development of criminal cultures in micro-communities that have been excised from advanced capitalism's commodity circuits (Horne and Hall, 1995) and excluded from society (Young, 1999) has 'liberated' many young men and – and, increasingly, young women (Chesney-Lind and Pasko, 2004) – from their local variants of modernity's repressive techniques of maintaining civility and sociability. However, although these allegedly 'transgressive' practices do tend to appeal to some romantic sociological commentators (for critiques see Sumner, 1994; Hall and Winlow, 2003; Jenks, 2003), our evidence suggests that in reality they are usually accompanied by a palpable sense of menace and absorbed in the values of conspicuous consumption and its attendant mass-media imagery. The cultural capital that many of these young men carry is now associated with naked self-interest, which is glorified in criminal cultures that have been allowed to flourish in locales where the legitimate economy is in permanent recession and modernist methods of social control – formal or informal – no longer operate effectively. Techniques of enacting consumerist values and demands slide further away from social acceptability with each passing year, manifesting themselves quite often in brutal methods of pursuing personal interests that are now appreciated by those who inhabit the vague boundaries of 'street culture' (Shover and Honaker, 1991; Jacobs, Topalli and Wright, 2003). The inability to plan for the future that is now a feature of everyday life (Bauman, 2003) takes on added significance in criminal cultures, and cultural capital pivots on the performative ability to negotiate the burgeoning criminal marketplace with a combination of wits and violence across an atomised cultural terrain that not too long ago was saturated with communality and mutuality.

Apart from a few fleeting allusions from those engaged in higher education, neither group displayed a significant degree of the long-term rational calculation and

consequential awareness that Wouters (1999) insists is essential to the maintenance of stability and civility in a world where the traditional 'conscience' or 'super-ego' – a product of now largely obsolete inhibiting and repressing cultural rules – is no longer the principal reproductive mechanism of the civilizing process. Many appeared to be immersed in the codes and practices of individualism and entrepreneurship and tightly focused on their personal ambitions, but few were adept at planning ahead for themselves beyond the short-term or considering the long-term social consequences of the new culture that they were busy enacting in their everyday lives. A sense of collective politics was *entirely* absent. Aside from the problems associated with attempting to predict the life-course in essentially unpredictable times (Bauman, 2001; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002), the need to slake the thirst of market-generated desire has profoundly transformed approaches to social and cultural engagement.

Many individuals in both groups seemed determined to achieve a common form of status in consumer capitalism's cultural hierarchy, but the means of achieving this end were notably different, which gave the impression that in the classical Mertonian sense lifestyle status-groups were emerging around different means of achieving common cultural goals set by consumer capitalism (Merton, 1938). However, the current scenario has moved beyond the quaint 'house on the hill' ambitions of New-Deal American dreamers. Most expressed a preference for a 'real fuck-off job' as the answer to their common ambitions of wealth, total personal freedom and a high status-ranking in the hierarchy forming around those ideals, but resigned themselves to the probability that this will never be attained. The majority of the criminal group were as highly attuned to consumer symbolism as the more law-abiding sample of young people, but their attitudes to work were tellingly different. The employed group approached their work in a surly, resigned and purely instrumental fashion: a necessary hardship to fund their immersion in hedonistic leisure and consumption. The criminal group were also instrumental in their attitude, but willing to tolerate the inconvenience of work *only* if rewards were high enough to fund *instant* access to the commodity market's high ground. As a small-scale drug dealer and occasional thief told us:

Paul: Work is a nightmare . . . To be honest, I can't see why people bother, all the headaches and worrying about bills . . . I've been offered jobs a couple of times but you think, if I'm going to be getting paid nowt anyway what's the point? . . . I think something like, maybe 50 grand, and then it's worth it. You get yourself a Mercedes, all the best clobber, then you can put up with it.

The criminal group displayed characteristics already well researched by criminologists: a radically dismissive attitude to work and education, the experience of childhood in chaotic, uncomfortable and unsupportive families, the cultural normality of violence and criminality in their locales and the relative absence of work and opportunities in local economies that languish in permanent recession. However, our research suggests very strongly that added to this is an upturn in the degree of uninhibited instrumentalism that many young people are willing to use to achieve their paradoxical ambitions to both fit in and stand out in consumer culture (Winlow and Hall, forthcoming). The inhibiting norms that permeated working-class cultures in Britain's classical capitalist phase are now being rapidly displaced

by the sort of rugged hyper-individualism that is more readily associated with North American culture, and instrumentalism is being enacted in a more radical, non-consequential and ruthless manner by individuals who feel trapped – and in many cases are trapped (Westergaard, 1995; Wilson, 1996) – in situations of extreme economic disadvantage, cultural impoverishment and psychosocial insecurity that set them apart from other social groups.

INSECURITY'S MAGNIFIER

One of progressive criminology's biggest mistakes over the past 40 years was to marginalize discussions of the conditions that underly crime and assume that criminality is simply a socially constructed category constituted by the powerful elite's ability to criminalize the cultural preferences of the 'marginalized other'. This contributed heavily towards criminology's 'aetiological crisis' (Sumner, 1994; Young, 1999) and lost a lot of ground to the right, who moved in gleefully with their own populist aetiological preferences such as wickedness, laziness, lack of deterrence and so on (Hall, 1997). There is, of course, no *essential* link between instability, insecurity and instrumentalism on the one hand and crime and violence on the other. So, if the current of competitive individualism and instrumentality sweeping through advanced capitalist life does indeed – as Bauman (2003) speculates and our own data and analysis tend to support – constitute 'an awesome threat' to the social and moral order, how can criminologists begin to make sense of this in a more specific, historicized way that might help to explain the rises in the rates of crime and violence that the West has experienced during its recent economic transition?

What struck us during our research was the appearance of variegated yet commonly instrumental attitudes among young people who are floating in and around the margins of a society in the throes of profound economic and social reconfiguration. The ubiquity and depth of instrumentalism casts doubt on the popular liberal precept of infinitely 'malleable' and 'diverse' subjects capable of constant rational-cognitive and consequentialist appraisal of phenomena and relative autonomy of action in all dimensions of life. Yet, at the same time, our data constantly revealed a very vague, adumbrated awareness of the cultural currents in which they were caught up, and an equally vague unease about the current state of their personal social relationships which, because it was not informed by any prevailing discourse to which they were exposed, casts doubt on the post-structuralist 'subject of discourse' notion. Dissatisfaction with currently fashionable criminological and sociological paradigms (see Sumner, 1994; Eagleton, 1996; Hall, 2000) drew us towards classical concepts, among many others the possibility that perhaps Thomas Hobbes and Sigmund Freud were correct in suggesting that all human beings, no matter how much libertarian yearning and bravado they display, carry deep within their psychosomatic being a universal need for at least some *security* in their lives (see MacInnes, 1998).

All biographies and inner psycho-emotional lives are inevitably replete with unavoidable anxieties and vulnerabilities (MacInnes, 1998; Jefferson, 2002), which, denied cultural or political expression, become repressed in the unconscious, creating psychic tensions

that demand release in any available form. The trick of civilization is to use culture to shape and inculcate the sort of refined desires that can achieve satisfaction in sublimated, socially acceptable outlets for the release of the inevitable tensions that any form of social and economic existence will cause (Freud, 1930/1979; Elias, 1994). However, the personal ambition that has been systematically fostered by consumer capitalism – to expand, diversify and intensify the less refined yet in purely financial terms less easily satisfied desires that it requires as its primary fuel – creates an additional, external stimulator of insecurity for all who are caught up in it (Hall, 1997). The neo-liberal counter-claim that many human beings seem to thrive and become innovative in conditions of insecurity tends to ignore the fact that this sort of insecurity is not the traditional form experienced by people confronting the difficulties of novel social or material environments, but born of consumerism, and its tensions can only be resolved by further absorption in consumer symbolism rather than the creation of genuinely innovative and transformational solutions. Further, many of the 'cultural innovations' suggested by research groups – such as the Chicago School in their studies of the chaotic 'zones of transition' that appeared during urban immigration in early twentieth century North America – were not genuine innovations at all, but variations of traditional ways of conforming strictly and efficiently to the business ethic and the logic of the commodity market. These strategies tended to be instrumental and self-centred much more often than communal or political (Downes and Rock, 2003) and – as they were played out in notably disorganized and trying circumstances where the opportunities to release psychic tension in legally acceptable forms were limited – often violent and criminal. What communality there was tended to appear in the form of hostile and defensive 'ethnic closure' (Downes and Rock, 2003; see also Taylor, 1999). Put simply, in order to fuel its basic dynamic, capitalism's historical project has evolved the means of stimulating and harnessing the immutable human tendency to insecurity, risking outbursts of acquisitive crime and violence as by-products that, although unsavoury and annoying, are preferred to political unrest and to be contained by what its functionaries still rather hopefully regard as incrementally advancing techniques of social control (Hall, 1997).

Genuine, authentic resistance to the core economic demand to engage in one way or another with commodity circulation is at the moment virtually non-existent (Baudrillard, 1986; Debord, 1995; Hall, 1997). Apart from peripheral sub-cultures of withdrawal and pseudo-radicalism populated chiefly by downwardly mobile members of the middle classes (Lasch, 1996), a grounded, viable and resolute political opposition no longer exists. It is disappearing even as a utopian ideal as its language and images evaporate in the heat of mass-mediated neo-liberal culture (Habermas, 1989; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2000). This is a system that has long since colonized its politico-cultural outlands, and, if indeed the threat of expulsion from both the meaning system and practical interdependencies of a given social order are among the most potent generators of insecurity in the human psyche (Fletcher, 1997; Downes and Rock, 2003), the threatening presence of the sheer drop into insignificance that now marks the boundary of advanced capitalism's commodity circuit becomes the inevitable outcome of the intensifying consumer pressure emanating from the core, magnifying the general insecurity that pervades the whole landscape. The death of community also marks the absence of collective means of coping with the constant threat of impoverishment, exploitation, cultural negation or expulsion, and

the prospect of being shoved rudely towards this terrifying precipice is now born by the individual.

The potential threat of losing meaning and value in the form of identity 'can be one of the most painful experiences in an individual's life' (Fletcher, 1997: 63). The sense of possible expulsion from a disintegrating socio-economic order – no matter how repressive and unjust that order might have been – and having no place reserved in its nascent replacement can engender complex combinations of despair, irrational hostility and quite frantic pseudo-conformist activity (Horne and Hall, 1995). However, the current 'lifestyle industry' relies precisely on the constant destruction and re-making of identity, which lends weight to the notion that the fostering and harnessing of insecurity is indeed a crucial psycho-social element of capitalism's economic dynamic (Hall, 1997). In his discussion of psychogenesis and sociogenesis, Norbert Elias (1994) drew upon the Freudian principle of psychic insecurity being invoked in unstable social circumstances, where high levels of apprehension among a population about the loss of national identity and standing within the geopolitical community can have a profound effect on the cultural and behavioural codes that maintain tolerable levels of sociability and civility among the population. Although Elias acknowledged the link between the economy and psycho-social security, he tended to focus more on the fine details of social power struggles (Fletcher, 1997). However, if the economy were to be given more weight as a basal context in the Marxian sense, this analysis could be equally relevant to the break-up of working-class communities, whose members, since their bitter experience of the disruption, dispossession and disempowerment in the transition from feudalism to industrial capitalism, had become dependent on the nation's economic fate for their identity and for their material and psycho-cultural security. Even if periods of rapid economic change provide some individuals with opportunities for the free and creative transformation of identity and role, our research revealed extremely limited opportunities for prosperity and genuine freedom and a high degree of dependency and conformity that has simply been transferred from the roles, identities, norms, values and symbolism of industrial modernity across to the nascent equivalents of advanced consumer capitalism.

In the process of analysing our data we failed to see how convincing explanations of this ubiquitous instrumentalism could be constructed without exploring direct links between culture, identity and economy. Advanced capitalism has brought with it the second crisis of modernity (Wagner, in Lea, 2002: 106). The problems of equality and inclusion into a relatively coherent and stable social world – albeit one that was characterized by structured patterns of inequality and punctuated by episodic crises – that produced the Keynesian welfare state have been replaced by the disruption of coherence and stability as social and individual identity is compelled to forge itself in a world of permanent crisis and fragmentation. The fact that capital is no longer dependent on labour or social stability and now, in its advanced consumer form, benefits from the weakening of both has left the West in a condition of general socio-economic instability that is blemished by a large number of permanent localized recessions (Taylor, 1999; Lea, 2002). Widening income polarization and a growing shadow economy on and beyond the margins seem to engender very little concern among a global entrepreneurial class that no longer regards social integration as an ethical concern (Lasch, 1996) or a prudent investment (Hall and Winlow, 2003).

The breakdown of traditional family structure, prohibitive housing costs and the unattractiveness of economically struggling and culturally vilified males (Wilson, 1996; Faludi, 1999; Winlow, 2001) has further hampered the reconstitution of communities in economically marginalized areas. As our research demonstrated consistently, young men now show significantly less respect for older males who can no longer pass on useful skills, styles and values. In the unstable mainstream economy, the middle classes and tenured working class feel constantly squeezed by the threat of downsizing and redundancy, which of course indicates that insecurity, although differing in form and intensity, is a general condition of existence. These mainstream groups have responded by participating actively in what Gray (1998) describes as a process of de-bourgeoisification, fragmenting away from their once relatively stable interest group into much more competitive, hostile and fearful sub-groups based upon occupation, region, gender, age, ethnicity, style and so on, all of which are permeated by intense interpersonal competition.

These fragmented national populations now display very little sense of common fate and mutual interests in their everyday lives except the substitute pseudo-solidarity of fear and nationalism (Lasch, 1979; 1996; Taylor, 1999). Not only does capital no longer require mass labour, but also neo-liberal culture openly and loudly rejoices in this fundamental historical shift in relationships, lauding it in that rather comically utopian Ayn Rand style as the great liberation of the individual entrepreneur from the constraints of needing workers to make things. In the dizzying circuits of cyber-business, the entrepreneur's 'idea' can simply appear in front of consumers as if by magic. The traditional difficulty that lower-class groups experienced in defending their rights and struggling for politico-economic power has now been to a large extent displaced by the extreme difficulty of finding and fulfilling roles and responsibilities that are defined by the market-performance principle; the trick is now to acquire a function with some responsibilities before one can defend it or persuade neo-liberalism's political priesthood that one has any rights at all (Hall, 1997). The insecurity born of relative deprivation and political exclusion is now compounded by the far more overwhelming insecurity engendered by the relative inability to *participate in and matter to* advanced capitalism's performance-driven consumer/service economy: the prospect of total insignificance and redundancy now looms over and bears down on the individual. The poor no longer matter (Lasch, 1996; Davis, 1998; Lea, 2002) to the logic of the economy or the global overclass, and the insecure and competitive middle income groups, immersed in maintaining their own ability to participate and prosper, also care little: the poor – as our data shows, also joined by those in low-grade work near the precipice of relative poverty and insignificance – in a vague but very potent way, sense it (Horne and Hall, 1995). Gated communities and increased surveillance signify the paranoia induced by the palpable inability of formal or informal institutions to manage and regulate the current phase of economy and society (Davis, 1998), and the 'working class' is no longer something in which to seek collective strength but something from which to escape. The residue of non-escapees is the new 'dangerous class', to be dealt with no longer by welfare, discipline and normalization but calculated actuarially as a social risk to be minimized (Morrison, 1995; Wilson, 1996). Fragmentation, insecurity, hostility and crime have now become part of the way the new economic system works rather than signifiers of its breakdown (Lea, 2002).

If Elias's (1994) claim that codes of civilized conduct tend to start crumbling in those dimensions where fears and insecurities are at their most intense, then a direct connection between advanced consumer capitalism and rising levels of incivility, hostility, crime and violence can without any doubt be postulated. Put simply, the primary generative source of fear and insecurity is not mass-mediated ideology and discourse but the experience of everyday life in the very real grounded and relational realities created by advanced capitalism's political economy. According to Fletcher (1997), disintegrating groups, or at least those with a sense of their own impending disintegration, tend to display the following indicators:

. . . a rise in the levels of fear, insecurity, danger and incalculability; the re-emergence of violence in the public sphere; growing inequality or heightening of tensions in the balance of power between constituent groups; a decrease in the distance between the standards of adults and children; a freer expression of aggressiveness and an increase in cruelty; an increase in impulsiveness; an increase in involved forms of thinking with their concomitantly high fantasy content and a decrease in detached forms of thought with an accompanying decrease in the 'reality-congruence' of concepts. (p. 84)

Criminological research has demonstrated consistently that these indicators have increased their presence quite notably in most areas of permanent recession in the West (Wilson, 1996; Taylor, 1999). Our own research highlighted an important difference in the degree of insecurity that pervades the two groups of respondents. Both groups displayed similar attitudes associated with a general move towards atomization and instrumentalism, a move that could possibly be explained as the product of neo-liberalism's powerful culture of instrumental individualism – a sort of revived and purified classical utilitarianism – operating as the principle guide for young people who are confronting the stringent demands of consumerism. However, the criminal group tended to lack the minimal conformity to the work ethic, modest personal ambitions, techniques of personal presentation, family support and minor accreditation that protected the casual service workers from the extreme insecurity that pervaded the former's everyday existence. This is a sort of radiation-shelter scenario. The current atmosphere, which is thick with the fall-out from the process of stimulating and harnessing the human propensity for insecurity as the primary fuel for the capitalist project in a process that resembles nuclear fusion, is indeed the generality, and it is invariably extreme in its nature. In this macro-climate we all live with the nagging possibility of falling off the edge into oblivion. Protection and survival depends upon the strength of the radiation shelters that individuals and small family, friendship or entrepreneurial groups – but *primarily individuals* – can maintain around themselves.

What is rather lacking in criminology at the moment, as Jefferson (2002) and others astutely recognized, is a convincing explanation of the precise psycho-cultural processes that connect this socio-economically generated insecurity through categories such as class, gender, race, sub-culture and identity to the rises in crime and violence experienced in specific areas of the West since the 1980s. Freud argued that aggression, violence, narcissism and masochism are not simply temporary psycho-pathologies, but in fact durable cultural phenomena, products of complex psychodynamic and socio-cultural processes

centred around the Nirvana principle, the primary urge to resolve the tension generated by the stimulation of insecurity (Freud, 1920/1984; 1930/1979; see also Elias, 1994; Fletcher, 1997). As we've argued elsewhere, the capitalist project recently reached a stage where the two main cultural manifestations of its historical pseudo-pacification process – the partial repression of individual desire and the maintenance of stable communal identity – became obstacles to its developmental logic (Hall, 2000; Hall and Winlow, 2003). In the world of mechanized over-production and compulsory consumption, instincts in general have become targets of stimulation and manipulation rather than repression. The old Marxist notion that the development of the instruments of production creates new needs that are socially acquired needs to be revised in the more complex prismatic light of consumerism, which now operates in the realm of manufactured discontents too far beyond the realm of necessity for the term 'need' to be appropriate. Thus consumerism has moved beyond the satisfaction of natural psychic tensions to the satisfaction of expanded tensions that it has itself stimulated as personal ambitions and commodified desires. It is quite possible that the competition and insecurity at the heart of advanced capitalism, disseminated by the language, images and practical demands of consumerism, is at its root nothing more than the return of an archaic technique of directly stimulating the potent unconscious drive to resolve insecurity (Hall, 2000).

We could tentatively name this process 'anti-nirvana'. Modernity did at least provide the hope and the means of satisfying basic social and material needs, even though satisfaction was unevenly distributed across the various axes of its social structure. Consumerism's fantasies encourage the revolutionary idea that the limits to pleasure and freedom that the reality principal must impose on us at some time – if we are to understand, confront and deal with the real limitations that need to be worked upon in intelligent and communal ways – do not exist. These solutions are displaced by the individual's desire to satisfy a constantly expanding procession of personal fantasies by acquiring and displaying the symbolism from which they have been constructed. The need for pleasure, friendship and security ceases strengthening the bonds between individuals and starts strengthening the bonds between the individual and the commodity market, which is becoming the only means of resolving the tension that it has itself stimulated in each individual (Hall, 1997; Hall and Winlow, 2004). Our research evidence suggests strongly that one of the main factors in the recent rise of crime and violence is the individual's need for a technique of satisfying these ambitions and desires and thus releasing over-stimulated psychic tension in those locales where the opportunity, support and skills necessary to do this in traditional legal ways are not easily available, where cynicism abounds, where the confidence to create cultural alternatives has never existed, where the tradition of criminality is strong, and where the sense of mutual solidarity and politics has been shattered. The constant individualized attempts to resolve the tension simply fuel the process that produces it, creating a downward-spiralling vortex of further insecurity that is compounded yet again as some of the hostile, criminal and violent attempts at resolution further erode the already badly shredded communal fabric that was once at least a partial refuge from personal insecurity. Of course, the absence of the material comforts and economic opportunities that can temporarily compensate for the loss of community is significantly more advanced in the most impoverished and economically redundant former

working-class areas, creating a condition of double insecurity from which escape can only be a personal matter. There is, we could speculate, no way to prevent these vortices from occurring other than a substantial reduction in the general climate of consumer-driven insecurity and the return of some sense of mutuality and collective politics.

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Chapter 12

Night-Time Leisure and Violence in the Breakdown of the Pseudo-pacification Process

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Night-time leisure and violence in the breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process

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Abstract A stubbornly high level of interpersonal violence in town and city centres across Britain every weekend is gradually being recognized as a key aspect of the general problem of crime. In this article we want to explore some of the important criminological outcomes of night-time leisure in a culture dominated by hedonism and the logical needs of the free-market consumer economy. Our ongoing research into the night-time economy in its broader social and economic contexts suggests that alcohol-related violence is emblematic of British society at this point in its history; a point we have conceptualized as the 'breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process'. Since the 1980s, the altering cultural norms accompanying Britain's enthusiastic adoption of the free-market consumer economy seem to have opened the door for specific types of interpersonal violence, the containment of which is proving very difficult for traditional-informal techniques of control and state-centred agencies alike.

Keywords alcohol, neo-liberalism, night-time economy, pseudo-pacification process, violence

In both academia and mainstream culture, the epochal social and economic transformations of the past three decades have often been judged as potentially progressive and liberating. Traditional forms of class and gender identity, we are told (see Stanley, 1996), are now mutating and evolving in a world apparently dripping with possibilities for self-definition and devoid of many of the practical and moral restrictions that were such important features of the classical industrial-capitalist era. We are now apparently free to create and recreate our own identities by playfully utilizing consumer imagery and accessing the multitude of leisure options that proliferate in an 'ornamental culture' increasingly geared towards

self-indulgence and the acquisition and display of 'lifestyle symbolism' (Faludi, 1999; Miles, 1998, 2000). Perhaps now more than ever, a majority of the British population subscribes to the belief that we are economic and personal entrepreneurs in a free society, and whatever failures or successes we achieve in life are invariably the results of our innate ability to fashion our own destiny. The general message emanating from neo-liberalism, the political mouthpiece of the free-market Right, is that never before have everyday folk experienced a way of life so rich in opportunities for personal freedom and gratification (Fukuyama, 1999).

Despite this promise, which is embedded as the ideological pivot in each seductive advertisement and media production (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1995), in the criminological sense things have not really 'got better' at all. Each increase in the dynamism of the free-market economy seems to have been accompanied by a visible tear in the thin protective veneer of sociability and civilized behaviour that evolved – quite probably with the assistance of conscious human agents – to stabilize British society and protect it from the vagaries and potential hostilities inherent in all market-driven societies. The US is of course the quintessential free-market society, and since the unusually collectivist New Deal era was replaced by the ferocious neo-liberal rationalization of the Reagan era, violent crime rose to 'staggering' levels in the early 1990s (Hagan, 1994). Levels have recently reduced, but only with the aid of a mass incarceration programme that has now dumped over 2.2 million individuals – almost 1 percent of the population – in jail and placed over one quarter of the young lower-class male population under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice and correctional systems (US Department of Justice Statistics, 2005). In specific areas of Britain, violent crime has increased throughout the 1980s and 1990s and remains at unacceptably high levels despite Britain's own (albeit less spectacular) increases in imprisonment. This increase is not simply an exaggeration constructed by the conservative press to justify authoritarian governance, and nor is it the result of changes in policing and recording practices (Reiner, 2000). A coherent answer to these problems has of course already been prefabricated by neo-liberal thinkers: less taxation, less state management of the economy, less welfare, more freedom, more enterprise, more consumption and ever more punitive responses to social problems and the awkward individuals whose presence casts an embarrassing shadow over our current leaders' vision of a bright future. All of this is to be facilitated by neo-liberalism's magic bullet, the panacea, the medicinal compound most efficacious in every case: privatization and marketization of most aspects of everyday life.

In criminology, these dominant culturalist and neo-liberal agendas have shifted attention from structural and economic issues, such as class inequality, employment, welfare and the economic management – which still constitute a core aspect of social policy in most European states (Hutton, 2002) – towards outlaw subcultures that produce individuals now classified as 'flawed consumers' (Chaney, 1994), who are driven by the 'natural' urge to increase personal consumption yet choose to break the rules. According to Right-leaning liberals, these individuals can be deterred only by increasing the certainty – and, if need be, the severity – of proportional punishments (Wilson, 1975). Left-leaning cultural analysts use the

same principles of personal choice and cultural autonomy, but prefer to romanticize and sanitize as much criminal behaviour as possible by portraying it as misdirected 'resistance' against the iniquities of a capitalist system, which can ultimately be reformed and humanized by democratic means (Ferrell, 2001). In many cases, these cultural analyses regard advanced capitalism's move to global, free-market consumerism in an economically homogenizing 'West' as a *fait accompli* (Hall and Winlow, 2003), despite the French population's recent rejection of a European constitution on the grounds that it was a free-marketer's charter threatening their regulated social market model. With a few notable exceptions (see for instance Taylor, 1999; Ruggerio, 2000; Lea, 2002; Wacquant, 2002), criminological thought has been distracted from critical investigations into the ways human beings are interfacing directly with the pressing demands of a consumer-service economy that has displaced manufacturing as the core economic activity in Britain and the US, and how this is profoundly affecting their ways of feeling and interpreting the world around them. As social science attempts to dance nimbly around the thorny issue of consumer capitalism's ability to determine values, meanings and practices in an era allegedly characterized by unlimited opportunities for self-definition, and sticks its fingers in its ears as the renewed calls for critical social analysis build, it runs the risk of increasing irrelevancy induced by a failure of nerve in the task of addressing crucial macro-level social and economic issues.

The most striking macro-phenomenon still perplexing criminologists is the very slow rise of British crime and violence rates throughout the 1960s *despite* increasing affluence and personal freedom; the very fruits of liberal-capitalist cultural emancipation and economic progress were displaying a tendency to decay. These rises were strongly correlated to the gradual importation of the American model of free-market consumer capitalism and its attendant competitive-individualist culture. Robert Merton's (1938, 1957) well-known postulation that the increasing and intensifying expectations generated by consumer culture would clash with structural limitations on economic mobility, thereby causing social strain, the evasion of moral restraints and increased crime, seemed to be prophetic. The neo-liberal technique of avoiding this celebrated notion has always been to deny the existence of structural limitations by positing the social as an aggregate of individuals organized exclusively by the stringent principle of meritocracy; there is no such thing as society, in the infamous words of Mrs Thatcher at the height of her 1980s pomp. Individuals, it would seem, are responsible for their own limitations, and, with a little help from 'equal opportunities' policies and an expanded education system, for finding their own way around them. The post-war economic management and welfare ethos fell back to be displaced by incentives designed to make the individual more competitive in an economy that demanded a whole new range of skills and qualities. Most young individuals responded by rejecting whatever collectivist traditions remained, adopting values and attitudes based upon instrumentalism and competitive individualism, joining a race in which the winners were rewarded with the opportunity to work hard, earn money and spend most of it playing hard and creating impressive identities with the lifestyle regalia that proliferated in the consumer marketplace (Hall et al., 2005; Winlow and Hall, 2005).

Neo-liberalism's standard side-step of emphasizing the 'adaptable and creative individual' in the midst of serious problems caused by disruption to the social and economic fabric was to be employed with increasing frequency as British society, following the American path in response to the globalization of the capitalist economy, underwent epochal change in the 1980s. This change was a conjuncture of historical processes; an immensely powerful fusion of globalization, free-market ideology, right-wing political triumph and a cultural development in which collectively-rooted libertarian urges that can be traced back centuries to the Early Modern period (Thompson, 1963) were hi-jacked by a hedonistic form of atomized competitive individualism and consumerism. This major cultural shift took place in the midst of profound social and economic disruption, resulting in the outbreak of permanent localized recessions, the decline of tenured work and the erosion of stable forms of family and community. In the mid-1980s, violent crime rates began to rise alarmingly. Traditional welfare institutions began to struggle in their role as stabilizing mechanisms, and in many of the poorer regions of Britain the sector of the welfare state concerned with crime – policing, probation and specialist social services departments – found themselves working in locales where the traditional bedrock of British society was disintegrating. In the 1990s, the role of the Probation Service and Social Services shifted abruptly, from the original ambition of encouraging probity amongst individuals and their families and prioritizing the welfare of younger offenders – an ambition that had by the 1970s mutated into a quasi-political aim of supporting communities in their appeals for social justice – towards that of a strictly de-politicized coal-face worker in the new strategy of 'risk-management'.

Various aspects of our not-so-brave new world of consumer capitalism, we are told, are producing risks (Beck, 1992); some novel, and some intensified versions of the traditional hazards of everyday life. Sexual liberation can create the risk of unwanted pregnancies and disease; social mobility can create the risk of rootlessness and dissatisfaction; more cars can create more congestion, pollution and accidents, and so on. According to this doctrine, the state must assess these risks and put appropriate and cost-effective resources into their management, just like an insurance company assesses the likelihood of motor accidents or house burglaries, setting its premiums accordingly. In essence, this is the revival and application of 18th century Benthamite utilitarianism to the radically altering society, culture and economy of advanced capitalism. The free-market, neo-liberal way of the 'Washington consensus' is a *fait accompli* (although, as we've said, many in Europe seem to disagree), and the British state is now obliged to manage efficiently the risks that the shift from a traditional manufacturing economy to a dynamic consumer-service economy throws up. Crime, in all its variations, is now no longer a social pathology, or a product of social injustice or impoverished cultural values, but a routine risk, one of the unavoidable prices of freedom to be managed by a variety of new partnerships between traditional state agencies and the private sector.

In Britain, violent crimes both traditional and novel have increased in tight correlation with the shift to a free-market consumer economy (Taylor, 1999; Lea, 2002; Hallsworth, 2005). Traditional street crimes committed by the

disadvantaged have increased markedly, and white-collar crimes committed by the far less disadvantaged seem to be continuing along their usual mysterious and oddly-neglected path, but nothing displays more spectacularly the 'risks' inherent in the types of social relations and cultures accompanying full-blown consumerism than Britain's 'night-time economy' (Winlow and Hall, 2005). The configurations of pubs, night-clubs, cinemas and restaurants pioneered in the 1980s, in former industrial cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Newcastle, are now being duplicated in most urban settlements. With a current turnover approaching £30 billion, this market sector is now, not surprisingly, regarded as an important area of economic growth. Not only do these night-strips turn over huge amounts of money, but they also help image-conscious cities to attract young populations with disposable incomes, thus boosting the daytime economy. With the addition of 24-hour shops and cafes, some British cities are edging closer to a culture of round-the-clock consumption. However, as the hedonistic elements of the 'leisure industry' expand to replace productive work in manufacturing, a tacit recognition is emerging in the industry; certain aspects of the traditional repressive control of public morality and behaviour are impediments to the development of this economic sector (Winlow and Hall, 2005). For instance, just as the traditional cultural taboo on female smoking restricted the profits of the American tobacco industry in the 1920s, the tendency of most women to drink less than males was restricting the profits of the British alcohol industry in the 1970s; although, of course, many male drinkers did their very best to compensate for this lack and solve the problem. The American tobacco industry employed the services of Edward Bernays, one of the pioneers of the advertising industry (interestingly, Sigmund Freud's nephew and partly cognisant of his uncle's psychological theories). He took advantage of timely advances in the mass manufacture of lithographic prints and the subsequent emergence of the 'glossies' to encourage female smoking, simply by placing on the front covers photographs of attractive and culturally influential 'society women' with lighted cigarettes. This exemplifies consumerism's ability to blur the boundaries between personal liberation and manipulation, and this echoes the way that the cultural trait of increased alcohol consumption amongst young women today corresponds precisely with the night-time economy's logical need – driven more and more by shareholder demands as large public companies move in – to sell its principal commodity. 'Drinks promotions', 'happy hours' and 'all you can drink deals' are the results of this commercial pressure. Just as smoking carries health risks, so does the sort of heavy alcohol consumption being encouraged here; but the latter, because of its tendency to be associated with interpersonal hostility and violence, also carries additional risks.

The night-time economy has been conceptualized as a 'liminal zone' (Turner, 1969), whose main attraction is the relaxation of the repressive rules of comportment that regulate human behaviour and interaction during the day and the early evening. Alcohol is a psychological lubricant, altering individuals' perceptions to the extent that clubs, which are little more than glorified and often rather tacky dance-halls, can appear to be temples of fashion, sexual promise and visceral excitement (Winlow and Hall, 2005). This makes alcohol and specific illegal drugs the lucrative commodities they are in these liminal zones. However, night-clubs

and pubs are also traditional commercial institutions, reliant on the maintenance of public order, property rights, licensed trading rights and reputation, so their rather unstable position is determined by the paradoxical need for orderly disorder, the economic requirement to sell an image that promises the experience of a controlled loss of control. Maintaining order by containing alcohol-fuelled expressions of liminality within the boundaries of safety, and thus maintaining a reputation that will attract customers and avoid investigation by the licensing authorities, requires a combination of internal self-control exercised by customers and external control exercised by regulatory agents.

However, the night-time economy tends to be woefully under-policed, with in some cases as little as a dozen police officers regulating up to 20,000 alcohol-fuelled revellers. As we have said, our research, drawing upon penetrative ethnographic studies and hospital records rather than unreliable official statistics and victim surveys, suggests that it is characterized by a huge 'dark figure' of unrecorded violence. Even though official police statistics severely underestimate the reality of violence, they suggest a rise of 100 assaults per year since 1997, and, year after year, local crime audits suggest that the night-time economies constitute 'hot-spots' where over 75 percent of these rising levels of street violence occur. Most assaults occur in and around typical flash-points, such as night-club doors, fast-food outlets and taxi-ranks, but our ethnographic work also suggests that a large number of unrecorded assaults occur in back-streets and other nooks and crannies. Thus, the 'dark figure' of unrecorded violence in the night-time economy is significantly higher than that of the daytime environment. In the task of reducing violence to minimal levels, the traditional 'bouncers', agents of the privatized forms of regulation operating on behalf of commercial licensed premises, seem to be rather ineffective in the palpable absence of traditional state policing (Hobbs et al., 2002).

However, the absence of a direct bio-psychological cause between alcohol and violence indicates the likelihood of other underlying reasons why the rates of hostility and violence have ascended rapidly in Britain since the mid-1980s (Winlow and Hall, 2005). If the alcohol is acting as a catalyst, there must be some latent force for it to catalyze. This necessitates a much more complex theorization of rising violence, one that corresponds more closely to the move towards free-market consumer societies outlined at the beginning of the article, and which poses a number of extremely difficult problems for the state agencies entrusted with the task of managing this 'risk'. Britain's rising violence rates are not confined to the night-time economy. Both official statistics and estimates of the 'dark figure' suggest that violent assaults – associated with instrumental property crime, burgeoning criminal markets in commodities such as drugs, and less rational forms of hostility such as petty arguments that become violent, retaliatory assaults and gang fights – rose from the mid-1980s and remain at unacceptably high levels (Hallsworth, 2005). Most of this violence occurs in economically run-down inner city areas, former industrial towns and cities and satellite estates. Increases in assaults at work and 'road-rage' in congested traffic have also been noted throughout the 1990s. What these environments have in common is reliance on individual self-control where external agents of formal and informal control have a minimal presence.

After a great deal of deliberation in what has become an ongoing empirical and theoretical project, we are moving towards the hypothesis that the nature of violence today points towards the emergence of individuals who are governed less effectively by the inhibiting mechanisms of cultural codes and 'super-ego', or conscience (see also Wouters, 1999). They are more likely to erupt into physical violence under the influence of alcohol and drugs in liminal zones that encourage the loosening of restraints as a commercial necessity, or in stressful situations such as increasingly pressured work environments and congested roads. Our explanation for this difficult phenomenon goes far beyond that of an increased risk, to be managed more effectively with innovative techniques of regulation in partnerships between state agencies and 'responsibilitized' private businesses (Hall and Winlow, 2003), to a fundamental shift in the processes and conditions in which human subjectivities are formed: *the breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process* (Hall, 2000; Hall et al., 2005; Hall and Winlow, 2005). We do not suggest that emancipation is criminogenic, but rather that what masquerades as freedom in free-market consumer economies might well be. Like it or not, this is the condition of life at the beginning of the 21st century, in which all agencies and institutions concerned with the maintenance of reasonably convivial human interactions must operate.

This concept is the theoretical backbone of our work, and it is based in long-term historical processes. It suggests quite strongly that we must transcend the redundant 'moral panic' argument and take rising violence seriously, without supporting the sort of conservative authoritarianism that will promote increased incarceration and thus exacerbate the problem. What we are suggesting is that the mechanisms of self-control and the relatively civilized human sensibilities that have been constructed over the past 600 years in Europe are showing early signs of corrosion in Britain, to a greater extent than in other core European countries. In England and Wales, rates of murder and serious violence showed a remarkable drop from the late 14th century to the mid-20th century. The murder rate, one of the few reasonably reliable statistics we have, dropped from between 20 and 40 per 100,000 in the late 14th century to 0.4 per 100,000 in 1950 (Gurr, 1981). This was not simply the result of 'post-war fatigue', but the culmination of a long and complex historical process. Lack of space prevents a detailed delineation of all aspects, but the three crucial ones appear to be those outlined by Norbert Elias (1994) in his celebrated work *The Civilizing Process*: the monopolization of the right to exercise violence by a legitimate state, the establishment and maintenance of 'figurations', or long chains of social interdependencies in which individuals learn to respect and value one another (see also Sennett, 2003), and the cultural reproduction of behavioural codes as 'manners', which are gradually internalized in the super-ego or conscience as 'sensibilities'. Civilized sensibilities inhibit cruelty and violence by associating emotional feelings of distaste with these activities. Some social scientists rather incautiously accused Elias of racism and Eurocentrism (see Mennell, 1992, for a discussion), but the purveyors of such knee-jerk reactions would have done well to consult the work of anthropologists such as Gilmore (1990), who analysed many other cultures around the world, both traditional and modern, whose rejections of routine violence were

based upon similar principles, especially the crucially important maintenance of interdependencies.

We were more than happy to accept Elias' claim that the civilizing process is never complete, but because the human propensity for aggression cannot be permanently eradicated it is always in need of maintenance. However, we were dissatisfied with his explanation of the phenomenon as a blind, unconscious process initiated for rather nebulous reasons (see Hall, 2002; Hall and Winlow, 2004). Our criticism was based on the observation that the civilizing process in Europe coincided with the development of the capitalist market economy, which, after an initial flurry of activity from the 10th century onwards, picked up pace again after it was interrupted by the initial, devastating emergence of the Plague in the 14th and 15th centuries. It also coincided with the social redistribution of symbolic and physical violence across the same 600 year period, where the physical violence exercised as a customary right by the ruling aristocracy was repressed by law, and sublimated symbolic violence, also exercised exclusively in a caste-system by the 'distinguished' ruling elite against the derided peasantry, was gradually democratized and harnessed to the market-place in the dynamic force of 'fashion', which of course now pervades our celebrity and lifestyle-obsessed consumer culture (Bourdieu, 1984; Hall et al., 2005).

In this period, the increasingly production-centred British market economy, based on the securing of property rights and the reduction of violence in the internal territory so that property could be produced and traded in the form of commodities, needed the pacification of the population in its internal territory as a fundamental precondition of its genesis and growth. This was axiomatic for all developing imperial-capitalist states, in which, paradoxically, acceptable levels of internal pacification could create the wealth to fuel the industries that supported ever more destructive inter-state wars. Because civilization was not initiated for its own sake, and the infrastructure required to maintain its progressive momentum – law, policing, education, welfare, secure settlements, insurance schemes and so on – as an economic function was expensive and time-consuming to maintain, civilizing codes were not distributed evenly. Specific forms of heavily-codified masculine aggression, functional to the defence of the state in a world driven by imperial competition, and to heavy labour and the policing of internal public order, were assiduously cultivated amongst the male population (Hall, 1997; Winlow, 2001). There were also lumpen, often criminal, sub-cultures and families, excluded from interdependencies and reluctant to adopt behavioural codes, and elements amongst the bourgeois and upper-classes hanging on to the traditions of violence, rugged individualism and adventuring. However, throughout the fully industrialized, productive phase of capitalism, a substantial amount of working-class aggression was channelled into the sublimated political struggle over the surplus produced by the economic system, which also contributed to the long-term reduction in interpersonal violence. In general, the pacification process was reasonably effective in securing property rights, commercial arteries and pacified productive settlements, thus allowing the commodity market to develop as the mainstay of the economy (Hall, 2000; Hall and Winlow, 2003; Hall and Winlow, 2005).

Despite the inequalities and political hostilities of the class and gender orders, and occasional upturns in crime and violence that temporarily defied the trend, towards the late-19th century industrial capitalism's repressive behavioural codes, socio-economic interdependencies and state regulatory mechanisms had in Britain developed into a sophisticated and relatively stable configuration. European nations followed a similar pattern, distinguished of course by cultural and historical differences that altered individual time-scales. These conditions remained virtually undisturbed until the 1980s, when a counteractive process began to infiltrate British culture. Early signs of what has often been described as 'Americanization' – perhaps unfairly, because of course America is not homogeneous in its politics or culture – could be detected in the 1950s, as British people worn down by war and post-war austerity were immensely attracted to images of a brash, prosperous and seductive American consumer culture, imported in the forms of Hollywood movies and rock'n'roll. It was not until the 1980s, however, that the core economic practices underpinning this intensive form of consumer culture were imported into Britain: the free-market, neo-liberal, 'Washington consensus' model of capitalist development. Core European countries, it should be noted, resisted this development, and powerful political movements across Europe continue to reject the neo-liberal model in favour of their more stable 'social market' models (Hutton, 2002).

Again, put rather crudely for the sake of brevity, the economic basis for traditional social interdependencies fragmented in the 1980s, and since then Britain has rapidly become a more atomized, competitive and aggressive place. As the old class and gender divisions fragmented and some race relations improved to some extent, technically speaking, business and work opportunities for previously oppressed groups increased. However, this was offset by many negative factors such as the continuation of high unemployment levels in specific localities, the proliferation of unattractive service jobs (Hutton, 2002), the 'dumbing-down' of culture (Furedi, 2004) and increases in general anxiety, competitiveness, instrumentalism and hostility in interpersonal relationships (Hall and Winlow, 2005). In other words, progress in structural relations was offset by deterioration in the quality of work, culture and interpersonal relations. The British state's inability to manage this epochal economic change effectively soured its relationship with the population, and some individuals living in zones of permanent economic recession and social exclusion, feeling that they lacked the skills and cultural capital necessary to compete and 'better' themselves, drifted into alternative criminal markets (Taylor, 1999; Lea, 2002; Hallsworth, 2005). To some extent the state was in the midst of a classic 'legitimation crisis', but the political opposition that could have taken advantage was in disarray, its utopian energies exhausted (Habermas, 1989). The onus was now on the individual, and as criminal markets grew in run-down areas, the monopoly on violence established by the state, with a good deal of success by the beginning of the 20th century, began to corrode in crime 'hot-spots'. The use of knives and firearms increased slightly throughout the 1990s (Hallsworth, 2005); enough to represent a disturbing upward trend, but certainly still far short of American levels. The plain historical fact is that, in terms of disorganized interpersonal violence, America has over the

past 200 years been consistently more violent than Europe, a combination of the second amendment's affirmation of an armed citizenry, a cultural revulsion amongst an influential majority of the population to state-centred authority, and intensely atomized and abrasively competitive social and economic lives. In the task of maintaining stability and crucial interdependencies, behavioural codes and sensibilities, America has been overly reliant on religious repression in a tense and volatile combination with the ability of rapid and uninterrupted economic growth to satisfy ever-expanding material desires. In the pure free-market model, growth and stability have become ideologically unified, and if the constant expansion of opportunities for individual success in the acquisition of wealth and status decelerates or reverses, the more devout believers in the 'American Dream' tend to become rather restless, agitated and hostile when success evades their efforts (see Merton, 1938, 1957; Currie, 1997).

Since the 1980s, Britain has moved away from Europe and closer to the American neo-liberal economic and cultural models. Moreover, the shift away from manufacturing towards ornamental consumerism has poured more fuel on the fire by introducing an even more intensified dynamic of interpersonal competition into the neo-liberal economy and what remains of its 'society'. Most young people now engage in intense competition over the acquisition of consumer symbolism. Not only has this increased irrational forms of property crime – or perhaps more precisely mundane property crime with irrational objectives – but it has also placed the consumption of symbols at the centre of personal identity (Miles, 1998, 2000). For young people whose lives seem to be characterized by personal ambition, anxiety and mounting debt, consumption in the shopping mall and the night-time economy has replaced work, class politics and community as the principle locus of identity-construction. That uniquely asocial form of identity construction, our research shows, is brutally competitive, carrying the threat of humiliation and insignificance for those labelled 'unfashionable' or 'uncool' (Winlow and Hall, 2005; Hallsworth, 2005). In brief, under intense pressure to consume copious amounts of alcohol, the anxious products of a hyper-competitive, atomized society – wherein the socio-economic interdependencies in which individuals learn to value and respect one another have disintegrated and the behavioural codes that maintain the super-ego have been beaten back by the hedonistic demands of consumerism – young individuals enter a space minimally regulated by a shaky partnership between commercial interests, and overstretched police services representing the authority of a state that very few people have much faith in. To be candid, we await with great interest the arguments of those who would not expect to see high levels of interpersonal violence in this space.

The night-time economy is but one manifestation of a general cultural current, in which each core requirement for the maintenance of the pseudo-pacification process is collapsing into a state of disrepair; and, we repeat, this is not a process that is driven by its own moral or teleological ends. Thus it is not likely to be allocated the expensive and time-consuming effort required for its maintenance by a globally-focused neo-liberal business elite (Lea, 2002; Hall and Winlow, 2003), which, as Christopher Lasch (1996) argued persuasively, shares no real sense of

obligation or common fate with the working populations in the West. From what we can make of it so far, the augmented level of violence in an expanding British night-time economy, one that contrasts starkly with its much more convivial European equivalent, is a direct result of the wholesale importation into British society of a neo-liberal, free-market consumer economy and its attendant unstable, hostile, and competitive-individualist culture. Increases in instrumental criminal violence have also been heavily influenced by the same process (Currie, 1997; Taylor, 1999; Lea, 2002; Hallsworth, 2005).

Core European countries are not experiencing such spectacular increases in public intoxication, interpersonal violence and general hostility. General crime rates are also lower, and rates of murder and violence have been relatively low and stable since 1945. The exceptions to this general rule are Russia and the newly marketizing former Soviet satellite states, where of course the correlation between the abrupt and ill-considered importation of the free-market consumer economy – a ‘shock therapy’ that has been neatly described as ‘more shock than therapy’ (Gerber and Hout, 1998; Volkov, 1999) – and rapidly rising rates of crime and violence is even clearer. We are not attempting to revive the old vulgar Marxist dictum that ‘capitalism is criminogenic’. It quite probably is, but so of course were other socio-economic systems that preceded it. We are most certainly suggesting, however, that the evidence points very strongly towards the assertion that the American neo-liberal, free-market consumer form of capitalism is markedly more criminogenic – and, crucially, more prone to violence in both criminal and non-criminal dimensions of everyday life – than the European production-based social market model (see also Hutton, 2002; Gray, 1998; Lea, 2002).

If we use this general framework to address rising levels of violent crime, it becomes painfully apparent that all is not well in Anglo-American liberal-capitalist democracies, or indeed the fledgling democracies in Eastern Europe currently being persuaded to imitate them. While America’s version of liberal democracy displays staggering levels of violence, a large and growing prison population and a comparatively punitive criminal justice system, it rests content that it is still the ‘land of the free’, the champion of global justice and democracy, and the most civilized and progressive society on earth. However, the European social democratic model of capitalism displays less pronounced forms of social division, less violent crime and much smaller prison populations. To be sure, there are significant social problems in Europe, and the ‘social market’ version of capitalism is certainly not free of crime and violence. However, the key point is that the problems produced by this more regulated, stable and socially-conscious production-based capitalist variant appear less relentless, less aggressive, and much more manageable by traditional institutions and methods of formal and informal control.

The early signs of the breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process pose a number of problems for state agencies such as the Probation Service. From the late-19th century these agencies evolved out of their early charitable status and became part of the general state-managed welfare movement that dominated the Gladstonian era from 1895 to the 1980s. Although the Probation Service did not really escape its original remit that restricted its activities to individual cases and their immediate families, it became embedded in the framework of a welfare

movement that throughout the 20th century was focused on the improvement of the economic conditions of the working classes by means of social insurance, which, after World War Two, was bolstered by the direct redistribution of income. In that period from 1945 to 1985, rates of violent crime in Britain reached historical lows as post-war reconstruction absorbed the population into productive economic activity, cultural life still hung on to values steeped in communality, solidarity, austerity and the judicious repression of urges considered to be anti-social, and social life remained relatively stable. Although some aspects of cultural repression and sublimation were quite rightly criticized as excessive and unnecessary (Marcuse, 1969), especially those bearing down on alternative forms of sexuality and artistic expression, the underlying bedrock was solid enough to support a reasonably effective state-led programme combining welfare, justice and the degree of control necessary to protect most British communities from intolerable levels of crime and violence. Put simply, for a brief period British life was stable enough to be 'managed' in a reasonably effective manner without unacceptably punitive levels of state intervention; things were far from perfect, but there existed a platform for future improvements. Further moves closer to the American neo-liberal way of life might change this scenario radically and irrevocably.

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Chapter 13

Conclusion

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Assessing the degree of violence present in human societies across history is fraught with difficulties. A significant number of anthropologists agree that violence probably figured much less in the lives of undisturbed gatherer-hunters, a claim that is supported by studies of such groups still living traditional lives today. This of course could be a romance, and Colin Turnbull's (1972) famous study of the Ik, a group that metamorphosed from a rapturous Rousseauian relationship with nature to a grim and violent Hobbesian 'warre of all against all' when they were forced off their traditional hunting grounds, indicates the fragility of pacified sensibilities and social relations. It is quite likely, however, as references throughout this study have shown, that, relative to today, violence did figure highly in both the politics and everyday social relations of pre-modern Europe. I contend that the journey out of everyday interpersonal violence, which occurred alongside its retention in geopolitical relations, cannot be attributed to some suppositious 'natural aversion' to the brutal aspects of life and the actions of progressive cultural movements that cultivated it. Thinkers such as Bauman (1989) and others too numerous to mention, who claim that a natural aversion to violence can indeed be assumed as a metaphysical foundation for theories of cultural and social life, are misleading the intellectual enterprise to an extent that could be quite calamitous.

However, it is equally misleading to assume that violence is a product of some innate human wickedness, with all the well-known authoritarian consequences that this can precipitate and justify. For the moment, my research suggests that the sensibilities that in conducive circumstances can inhibit the use of violence are variable and dependent

upon a complex concatenation of economic, social, cultural and psychological factors. Thus, although individual incidents and micro-patterns of violence require combinations of micro-sociological, cultural and psychological analyses, macro-patterns of violence across time and space seem to correlate with shifts in the material conditions of existence, as Turnbull demonstrated (see also Gilmore, 1990, for a broader global study), and shifts in political economy. For me, the fact that Europe's 'civilizational curve', a phenomenon constituted by a decrease in interpersonal violence alongside an expansion of organised inter-state violence, corresponds precisely with the development of the market-capitalist economy suggests a direct relationship between the two. I do not suggest that this relationship is unmediated by language, discourse and the cultural negotiation of meanings, values and practices, but my research does indicate that the logical imperatives of the market-capitalist economy, mediated by its attendant political culture, is the ultimately constraining bedrock of life upon which this cultural activity takes place.

Building upon this complex metaphysical debate and supporting my argument with copious ethnographic data, my principal claim is that the so-called 'civilizing process' can be reformulated as a 'pseudo-pacification process', which, in terms of its primary aetiology, was a functional phenomenon, an accidental by-product of the logical requirements of the capitalist economy. However, my research also shows that the development of the process was uneven and its cultural effects were rather more superficial than is often assumed. Repressive socialisation became vital as an insulator for the underlying hyper-competitive barbarism that energised the economic system, but this socialisation does not civilize deep values and sensibilities, it simply creates an emotional attachment to the fragile rules and affectations from which the insulation

is constructed. This fragility, manifested in hypocrisy, absurdly affected manners and unstable behavioural codes, is the primary reason why bourgeois manners have been a rich vein for skilled satirists such as Proust. The uneven distribution of sensibilities deposited visceral cultures at specific points in industrial capitalism's social structure, but in Britain the crime and violence problem actually diminished between the decades of the 1850s and the 1970s as social control became more sophisticated and a good deal of working-class viscerality was absorbed by the labour movement and harnessed to a long-running project seeking social justice in an uneasy relationship with revenge.

In capitalism's high industrial phase the crimes and corrupt practices of the powerful were committed in furtive and unspectacular ways and their violence was largely orientated to militarism and repressive social control. However, most interpersonal violence and petty criminality were working-class phenomena, and they correlated with poor socialisation, family breakdown, school drop-out and the destabilisation of youth transitions into work and adulthood, not simply because these institutions are the exclusive keys to civilized life, but because they must perform that role exclusively in the absence of civilized relations in capitalism's barbarously competitive socio-economic realm. The rise and mutation of interpersonal violence in the Anglo-American world coincided precisely with the return of neo-liberal politics and the systematic destruction of industrial communities and the concomitant decline of their collective political and cultural institutions. My explanation for this phenomenon is that these geographically localised cultures signify the beginning of the breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process, a complex, profound and epochal cultural mutation precipitated by fundamental shifts in the logical requirements of the

capitalist economy as it moved from a relatively stable nation-centred productivist phase to an unstable global consumer/service phase.

Throughout this work I have attempted to explain the complex details of this process in relation to violence, which I will not repeat here. Many inferences can be drawn from this concept, but for the moment doing that is the prerogative of the reader. If I can make one concluding remark, it concerns the subject of freedom. This is not intended to be an apocalyptic thesis dripping with dark portent; in the past, life has continued in the face of uncomfortably high levels of interpersonal violence, although the quality of that life often sinks towards dismally low levels. I do claim, however, that in the breakdown of the pseudo-pacification process there is a tendency for capitalism's elective affinity between freedom and barbarity to be intensified. This can precipitate a reaction to high levels of corruption, crime and violence as it leaks from the top and the bottom to saturate the social plasma, and the call for increased repression from those with interests to protect or, paradoxically, from those with ideals and sensibilities intact, can invoke extreme authoritarian politics. Freedom can only be combined with civilization if the core values and desires that drive forward the socio-economic project are themselves orientated towards civilization. Anglo-American 'civilization', in the degraded form of the rules, affectations and partially formed sensibilities that constitute the pseudo-pacification process, is merely a fragile insulator of the volatile barbarism that underlies it, and, as such, it can by no means guarantee a progressively less violent future.

References:

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