Randall Amster

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# contemporary anarchiststudies

an introductory anthology of anarchy in the academy

# Contemporary Anarchist Studies

This volume of collected essays by some of the most prominent academics studying anarchism bridges the gap between anarchist activism on the streets and anarchist theory in the academy. Focusing on anarchist theory, pedagogy, methodologies, praxis, and the future, this edition will strike a chord for anyone interested in radical social change.

This interdisciplinary work highlights connections between anarchism and other perspectives such as feminism, queer theory, critical race theory, disability studies, post-modernism and post-structuralism, animal liberation, and environmental justice. Featuring original articles, this volume brings together a wide variety of anarchist voices whilst stressing anarchism's tradition of dissent. This book is a must buy for the critical teacher, student, and activist interested in the state of the art of anarchism studies.

**Randall Amster**, J.D., Ph.D., professor of Peace Studies at Prescott College, publishes widely in areas including anarchism, ecology, and social movements, and is the author of *Lost in Space: The Criminalization, Globalization* , and *Urban Ecology of Homelessness* (LFB Scholarly, 2008).

**Abraham DeLeon**, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the University of Rochester in the Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development. His areas of interest include critical theory, anarchism, social studies education, critical pedagogy, and cultural studies.

**Luis A. Fernandez**   is the author of   *Policing Dissent: Social Control and the Anti-Globalization Movement* (Rutgers University Press, 2008). His interests include protest policing, social movements, and the social control of late modernity. He is a professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Northern Arizona University.

**Anthony J. Nocella, II**, is a doctoral student at Syracuse University and a professor at Le Moyne College. He has published more than twenty academic articles and is now working on his eleventh book. He also teaches Life Skills at a New York youth detention facility.

**Deric Shannon** is a PhD. candidate at the University of Connecticut who currently studies Food Not Bombs activism, prefigurative politics, and contemporary anarchisms. He is a long time anarchist activist, owner of Wooden Man Records, and an author of numerous book chapters and articles, dealing especially with radical politics.

"*Contemporary Anarchist Studies* has been needed ever since the Battle in Seattle; it is odd that it took so long. This is an amazing collection and I am proud of being part of an amazing text."

- Dr. Richard Kahn, University of North Dakota, Education

"This book is a must read for anyone that wants to understand current activist movements."

- Dr. Steve Best, University of Texas, El Paso, Philosophy

"This is an outstanding collection of articles from some of the most prominent academics in the field and I am honoured to be part of this powerful and useful project. I recommend this book to everyone and anyone interested in social change. Finally a book that is diverse in topic and thought on anarchist studies."

- Dr. Lisa Kemmerer, Montana State University, Billings

"For anyone wishing to study anarchism, this ought to be required reading. For anyone wishing to practice anarchism, and engage with the theory, this is, indeed, recommended reading."

- Ramsey Kanaan, PM Press

"It's refreshing to see community level issues being dealt with on the academic level. This book offers a rare and important glimpse into grassroots ideas and actions that struggle to change our world from the perspectives of both activists and academics."

- Leslie James Pickering, Former Earth Liberation Press Officer

"A timely and stimulating book that forces us to reconsider both the status quo and fundamental questions pertinent to our cherished notions of democracy. This book will challenge you to think in new ways about age-old issues and is to be highly recommended to anyone who has even a passing interest in the future of humanity."

- Dr. Nicola Taylor, Central Queensland University, Australia

"In a culture bent on the manufacture of an expedient internalized domestication of both the human and non-human and the eradication of anything that might still hint of wildness, this unique and original book is essential reading for anyone interested in radical change."

- Dr. Carol Gigliotti, Emily Carr Institute, Canada

"When I taught Sociology I would ask an auditorium of 300-500 students how many studied or discussed anarchism as part of their education in high school or in college. Often no hands went up – sometimes one or two. Most students admitted they had not read anything by an anarchist or about anarchism. Now, as an academic dean, I am shocked and dismayed at how invisible anarchism is to university curricula. *Contemporary Anarchist Studies* is a book long over due. It debunks anarchism stereotypes perpetrated by popular media and political/corporate zealots. This book shows the theoretical logic and the empirical usefulness of an anarchist view of the world. If adopted for university classes, it will represent an important step toward expanding the theoretical parameters of what is now a very narrow view of history and socio-political thought."

- Dr. John Alessio, St. Cloud State University, Sociology

"*Contemporary Anarchist Studies* is an urgently needed text at this current historical juncture when powerful arguments for anarchism are needed that are capable of loosening the death grip of capitalist ideology. This book contains important essays by some of the world's leading anarchist scholars; it's a necessary instrument in today's anti-capitalist toolkit."

- Dr. Peter McLaren, Graduate School of Education and
Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles

"In a world where the leaders are, at best, delusional, we need to rethink what leadership is. When politicians are more interested in preserving profit, than people, and where a $1600.00 television is considered a 'steal of a deal', we need to realize that our government and political parties do not deserve to lead. They have left the real Americans well behind."
- Dr. Maury Harris, Chair, Environmental Studies,
University of St. Thomas, Houston, TX

"Too often we treat activists and academics as opposed groups. These authors not only show us how to bridge the divide but also insist that we must see activism and academia as collaborative forces in the fight against oppression. This is a timely and necessary book."
- Matthew J. Walton, composer of Sundance, an opera
about Native American political prisoner Leonard Peltier

"*Contemporary Anarchist Studies* comes at precisely the right moment in history. While governments and corporations continue to consolidate political and economic power, individuals are actively subverting totalitarianism in a variety of ways. From Anarchist theory and pedagogy in the academy, to the practices of anarchists in the streets, this book collects the insights of many of the most well known names in the field, and provides both a cogent analysis of our present as well as a hopeful direction for our future."
- Dr. Corey Lewis, Humboldt State University, English

"A first of its kind, this groundbreaking book explores the intimate details of anarchism from wide and academically sound perspectives. Edited and written by some of the foremost scholars in the field, this book breaks through the barriers of prejudice, assumptions, and misunderstandings. Anarchism is a complex and thorough philosophy that is impacting more and more communities worldwide. Understanding its principles and scope is essential for all activists, academics, and anyone interested in human organization. This book is required reading for anyone wanting to gain a better understanding of anarchism and its impacts on the world."
- Adam Wilson, CEO, www.Downbound.com

"Over the last decade or so, anarchism has been rapidly eclipsing Marxism as the most productive and perceptive framework through which activists might understand and, more importantly, change the world. Academic acceptance has taken much longer: not because there aren't plenty of anarchist intellectuals out there, but as the effect of an entrenched and increasingly outmoded culture of scholarly inquiry. *Contemporary Anarchist Studies* promises to change all that. This impressive and comprehensive collection includes some of today's most exciting anarchist thinkers working in a broad range of disciplines. Tackling questions of theory, praxis, pedagogy, methodology, and much more, this timely volume breathes new life into engaged social theory. Highly recommended!"
- Charles Weigl, AK Press

"At a time when corporate, government, and military power has grown more concentrated than ever, not only in the United States but globally, this volume will provide the reader with urgently-needed critical perspectives. It will be of enormous value to critical scholars, journalists, politicians, and activists in both the cultural and political arenas."
- Carl Boggs, Professor of Social Sciences, National University, Los Angeles

# Contemporary Anarchist Studies

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**Edited by Randall Amster,
Abraham DeLeon,
Luis A. Fernandez,
Anthony J. Nocella, II,
and Deric Shannon**

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# Acknowledgments

This project emerged from a plenary session organized at the 2005 American Educational Studies conference at the University of Virginia. William T. Armaline, William Armaline, Abraham DeLeon, Kurt Love, Cara Mulcahy, and Deric Shannon were all involved with the conception of the project, and at the outset we want to acknowledge this initial contribution. Originally, this volume was going to focus solely on anarchist pedagogy. As the volume expanded, William T. Armaline left the editorial collective due to time constraints. Shortly thereafter, we were joined by Anthony Nocella, then Luis Fernandez, and finally Randall Amster. Despite some having a longer history with the project than others, all of the editors spent an incredible amount of time and energy on this volume, and any talk of "first authorship" and the like became completely meaningless as we all dove in head first and worked tirelessly at putting this together and meeting deadlines.

First and foremost, we would like to collectively thank all of our contributors. We cannot stress this enough. It has been an interesting process for all of us, working with close friends, comrades, and colleagues – as well as some of the people who have inspired us and whose work we have been greatly influenced by. We would also like to thank Routledge for seeing promise in this book and following up with it. Thanks are further due to Ramsey Kanaan, Leslie James Pickering, Nicola Taylor, Carol Gigliotti, John Alessio, Peter McLaren, Maury Harris, Matthew J. Walton, Corey Lewis, Adam Wilson, and Charles Weigl, all of whom gave us kind words of support for the project. Thanks are also due to Rutgers University Press for use of published material from "Being There" by Luis Fernandez.

In addition, we would like to acknowledge all of our family members and friends who shared in both the burdens and joys of this project. Though we forebear to list them all here, we cannot imagine having found the emotional and intellectual energy necessary to complete this project without them. As we discovered working collectively as editors, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and we are immensely and eternally grateful for the many inspirations and input we received from our friends and loved ones.

As activists and academics, we have also been impacted by our experiences and interactions with various groups and organizations. The colleges and universities

that support our work have been important in this regard. Equally so have been the numerous grassroots entities that we collectively and individually support and draw inspiration from, including but not limited to: Food Not Bombs, NEFAC (Northeastern Federation of Anarchist-Communists), ARA (Anti-Racist Action), Bring the Ruckus, Phoenix Anarchist Coalition, Local to Global Justice, IndyMedia, Worker's Solidarity Alliance, ARRGH! (Area Radical Reading Group of Hartford), and ABC (Anarchist Black Cross). There are of course many other similar examples, and in naming these few we simply want to indicate how important are the communities in which we participate, and how essential are the ties that bind us together in the shared struggle of resistance and the quest to create a more just world.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge all of the anarchist authors and activists throughout history who worked to nurture and keep alive an idea that has touched our personal and professional lives. Without their sacrifices and struggles, this book would never have been possible, and perhaps even more to the point, none of us would have had the opportunity fully to find our voice as activists and academics. We hope that you as readers will be equally inspired by the con-temporary voices that fill this volume.

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# Introduction

*Randall Amster, Abraham DeLeon,*
*Luis A. Fernandez, Anthony J. Nocella, II,*
*and Deric Shannon*

Soon after the 1999 anti-globalization protest in Seattle, there was a significant
reemergence of scholarly and activist interest in anarchism and anarchist thought.
However, despite this interest, anarchism remains widely misunderstood. Littered
with misconceptions about violence and chaos, anarchism in actuality has little to
do with either. It is sometimes seen as representing, as Noam Chomsky once said,
the "libertarian wing of the socialist movement," ostensibly centered on consensus
models of decision-making and what is sometimes referred to as "direct democ-
racy." To have "no master" while respecting the virtues of diversity, anarchists
maintain that everyone should be treated with respect, allowed autonomy, and
accorded a voice in all decisions that affect them. These radical notions too often
have been chastised, ridiculed, and falsely represented. Nonetheless, anarchism
today is global, adopted by collectives, communities, and individuals around the
world.

This anthology seeks to document the growing interest in anarchism as it is
expressed through scholarly work. From the Ivy League to community colleges,
anarchist professors and scholars studying anarchism and anarchist movements are
increasingly present in the academy. They are using anarchism in their courses in
philosophy (for example, Steve Best, University of Texas, El Paso; Eric Buck,
Montana State University; Alejandro de Acosta, Southwestern University;
Todd May, Clemson University), education (for example, Joel Spring, Queens
College; Richard Kahn, University of North Dakota; Abraham DeLeon, University
of Rochester), peace and conflict studies (for example, Mark Lance and Colman
McCarthy, Georgetown University; Randall Amster, Prescott College), anthro-
pology (for example, David Graeber; Jeff Juris, Arizona State University), socio-
logy and criminal justice (for example, Jeff Ferrell, Texas Christian University;
Emily Gaarder, University of Minnesota-Duluth; Luis Fernandez, Northern
Arizona University; Deric Shannon, University of Connecticut; Anthony Nocella,
II, Le Moyne College), and political science (for example, Mark Ruppert, Syracuse
University; Joel Olson, Northern Arizona University). And yet there has been
no comprehensive anarchist reader for classes, community scholars, and activist
collectives that reflects this emerging and growing trend.

For this reason, this volume seeks to fill that void by compiling a much-needed
anthology on anarchist studies that highlights the growing scholarly and activist

interest in the subject. We seek here to highlight the diversity of contemporary thought around anarchism, indicating the relationship between anarchist theory, critical pedagogy, and political praxis. This volume features well-known and respected authors from many disciplines, as well as new voices in the field. By touching upon varied disciplines ranging from women's studies to economics, this work will be applicable to many classes and many different types of research projects. Of course, no single volume could be completely comprehensive in such a dynamic and wide-ranging area of inquiry, yet we have sought here at least to give a sense of both the broad applicability of anarchism to academic undertakings as well as to indicate areas where further development is warranted. Indeed, anarchism is by its very nature not readily susceptible to easy reduction, and thus we offer this volume in the spirit of promoting a dialogue even as we seek to cast it within the broad tradition of anarchist thought and practice.

## What is anarchism?

Considering the volumes of misinformation regarding anarchism, it seems a necessary task for any anarchist reader to first set out to define the subject. Anarchism is often linked with violence, terrorism, or chaos by its detractors and, in many cases, by self-styled "anarchists" themselves who are far removed from the diverse range of theories driving the practices of anarchists. The contemporary anarchist milieu, however, represents a varied range of tendencies, and thus any attempt at creating some monolithic "anarchism" is doomed to failure. There are as many varieties of anarchism as there are anarchists, much to the consternation of some anarchists and non-anarchists alike.

The purpose of this preface, then, is to give the reader an introduction to anarchism and to talk a bit about our own process for compiling this volume, since practice and process have always been critical concerns for anarchists. As this is a volume of contemporary anarchist work, this will allow the reader a chance to engage in the material contained in the book with a sense of the history that led to the development of these ideas. Likewise, this introduction should serve as a backdrop to some of the discussions contained in the book, providing the reader with an understanding of anarchism outside of the sensationalist discourses that often surround the subject. Still, this introduction is not intended to be an exhaustive discussion of all of the tendencies within anarchism, but rather is just one narrative in a larger project that is too vast and dynamic to fully cover in the length of a book preface. Interested parties should look well beyond the confines of this book into the anarchist milieu, especially outside of academic writing, for learning more about the rich and complex history of anarchism. In fact, we hope that this volume will inspire precisely that sort of interest in the field.

## Classical anarchism

Though some have pointed as far back to the teachings of the Taoist philosopher Lao-tzu as "the beginning" of anarchist thought, the first anti-authoritarian to

explicitly refer to himself as an anarchist was a French radical named Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865). Proudhon rose to prominence in large part due to his polemic "What is Property?" in which he contended that "Property is theft!" This pamphlet began a correspondence and uneasy friendship between Proudhon and Karl Marx, who was influenced by Proudhon's work but eventually condemned him for embodying "bourgeois socialism." Nevertheless, Proudhon's call for a stateless society became a hallmark of anarchist thought, and his opposition to private property placed classical anarchism firmly within the socialist movement, in opposition to capitalism and private ownership of the means of production.

Proudhon's work was in the starting point of a general critique of authoritarian relations in anarchism's "classical" phase centered around critiques of capitalism, the church, and the state. Later anarchist writers such as Mikhail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, and Errico Malatesta began to develop a theory of anti-statist socialism, and anarchists around the world began creating a theory and practice that was diverse yet centered around some basic points of agreement: (1) opposition to hierarchy, (2) decentralization, (3) a commitment to freedom and autonomy, and (4) an opposition to vanguardism as it was expressed in authoritarian socialist traditions. Some have argued that these general principles are nearly identical to left-wing (anti-Bolshevist) Marxism (see, for example, Chomsky 2005) and, indeed, there are many similarities between classical anarchism and the Marxism of the council communists, Italian autonomists, and various Marxist theorists such as Rosa Luxemburg, Paul Mattick, and Antonio Gramsci. Classical anarchism, then, is sometimes referred to as "libertarian socialism" to draw attention to the similarities in praxis between anti-authoritarian socialists, despite their personal political identification as either "anarchist" or "Marxist."

For many, this classical anarchism conjures images of groups such as the Industrial Workers of the World (i.e. the "Wobblies"), a largely anarcho-syndicalist labor union that reached its zenith in the early 1900s and that still organizes workers today. To others, famous events or notable historical figures such as Sacco and Vanzetti, the Haymarket Martyrs, or "Red Emma" Goldman and Alexander Berkman come to represent that spirit. Perhaps the most-cited and obvious example of classical anarchism in action, however, was during the Spanish Civil War. During this time period, "approximately a million people were members of the Anarchosyndicalist CNT ( *Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo* , or National Confederation of Labor) – an immense following if one bears in mind that the Spanish population numbered only twenty-four million" (Bookchin 1977: 1). As well, this quintessential moment of anarchism "mobilized over 20,000 women and developed an extensive network of activities designed to empower individual women while building a sense of community" (Ackelsberg 2005: 21). Anarchists of this time period also had a strong presence in the Russian Revolution, particularly the Makhnovists in the Ukraine. However, the Spanish Civil War had a revolutionary contingent that was primarily *anarchist* in character, and that context provides a glimpse of what classical anarchism in fact looked like in action. Even today when the question is raised about whether anarchism can

actually "work," the Spanish experience is still cited as a positive example – even though the revolution there was ultimately doomed by the combined treacheries of Stalinists, fascists, and capitalists alike as described in George Orwell's compelling account, *Homage to Catalonia* (1980).

## The 1960s and 1970s

After the Spanish Civil War, anarchism seemed (at least to some observers) to lie mostly dormant, though certainly not asleep, until the student/worker movements of the 1960s and 1970s. One particularly inspiring event for anarchists of that time period was the uprising in Paris in May of 1968. This partially Situationist-inspired rebellion saw students and workers united in strikes, marches, and clashes with police in the streets. The Sorbonne was occupied as students declared it the "People's University." Likewise, workers began demanding higher wages and occupying some of the factories. Ultimately, the events in France did not lead to as substantial a political change as the people demanded, however, this marked a cultural shift in France which is still often cited as a watershed moment. These events, and especially the ideas of the Situationist International, would have a big impact on anarchism during this time period.

Indeed, anarchist criticisms of hierarchy during this time period began fanning out in new directions as a result of theoretical engagements with radical anti-racism(s) and feminism(s), Situationism, developments in Marxism, and the like. Anarcha-feminism began to be distinctly developed by women such as Carol Ehrlich (1979; 1981) and Peggy Kornegger (1979). Anarchists began generating critiques of "work" in and of itself, challenging the assumed logic of classical working class politics (see, for example, Zerzan 1979). Anarchists were also heard articulating demands for the creation of alternative institutions, much as the old slogan had demanded that the new world be created "in the shell of the old" (see H. Ehrlich 1979). Also in this tumultuous period, a "back to the earth" communal movement had begun to take hold which was partly anarchist in its inspiration. Anarchism was becoming ever more diverse, if a general unity once might have existed.

## Contemporary anarchism

Yet again, during the 1980s and early 1990s interest in anarchism seemed to be waning. But anarchism began seeing a resurgence after the Battle of Seattle when a coalition of anarchists, workers' unions, feminists, anti-racists, environmentalists, animal rights activists, etc., successfully stopped the World Trade Organization's ministerial conference in late 1999. Indeed, since then anarchist infoshops have been popping up all over the globe. Likewise, anarchist-inspired projects such as Food Not Bombs, Critical Mass, and Reclaim the Streets are international in scope. Anarchists have a large presence in groups including Anti-Racist Action and Anti-Fascist Action. Class struggle anarchist groups can be found in various parts of the United States, western Europe, Africa, and Latin

America, and various anarchist networks, affinity groups, and collectives are deve-
loping all over the world.

Anarchism has also seen a growth in its theoretical development, and a con-
comitant diversification of its already multifarious tenets. Some anarchists have
continued to develop general critiques of leftism, formal organization, essential-
ism, identity politics, civilization, hierarchy, and capitalism, to take just a few
examples. New forms of anarchism are becoming more fully articulated, such as
insurrectionalism, primitivism, anarcha-feminism, Situationist anarchisms, especi-
fismo, and platformism. Anarchists have been particularly influenced in recent
years by post-structuralism, post-modernism, new developments in feminism,
radical anti-racist politics such as "Race Traitor," radical queer theories, environ-
mentalism(s), and animal liberationism, as well as anarchist practices emerging
from post-colonial states and indigenous populations who, at times, might not even
articulate their practices as "anarchist."

Likewise, a distinctly anarchist scholarship has began to develop. "Anarchism
in the academy" is certainly nothing new (witness the work of Noam Chomsky,
Murray Bookchin, and Harold Ehrlich, to name just a few). But there has
undoubtedly been a rise in anarchist scholarship in recent years. From Martha
Ackelsberg's (2005) re-release of her tome on anarchist women in the Spanish
Civil War, to Jeff Ferrell's (2001) work on the anarchist redefinition of public
space, to David Graeber's (2002) controversial pronouncement "Hello, we exist!"
and to Uri Gordon's (2008) very recent work articulating a contemporary
anarchism in light of new theoretical developments, anarchism has become a
respected field of study within academia (ironically enough, since anarchists
presumably seek to challenge these sorts of hierarchical institutions, an issue that
a number of the authors in this volume struggle with). With all of this in mind –
both the potent history as well as the cutting-edge incarnations – we came together
as an "editorial collective" to highlight work by anarchist academics and to catalog
these exciting developments in the field. We have, again, undoubtedly missed
much in the process, yet by all accounts this volume is a representative sample of
some of the remarkable and diverse work being done by anarchist scholars. And
as with all anarchists, we too were self-reflective and concerned about our process
along the way.

## Processes and results

Anarchism as a theoretical and political philosophy is concerned about means and
ends, with many advocates taking the view that process and result share a deep and
unavoidable nexus. Simply put, one line of anarchist thought and practice suggests
that the tactics one uses (both physical and intellectual) should strive to emulate
as much as possible the goals that one is seeking to bring about. If taken at face
value, this could preclude forms of social struggle that include an element of
hierarchy or coercion – generally taboo for anarchists – and might therefore lead
to the conclusion that anarchism is inherently non-violent. This would be too
simple a reading, however, since to stand by and watch violence be done to oneself

or others could contravene anarchism's "direct action," do-it-yourself stance. While a full exposition of the ethical implications of anarchism's relationship to the use of political violence would be well beyond the scope of this introduction, the essential point still holds: anarchism is deeply concerned with process as much as with result.

Having said that, it is important to note the limitations and benefits of the process we employed as an "editorial collective" in helping to create this wide-ranging volume. We generally operated by consensus in our decisions, although we never formally adopted that rubric since there was some debate within the group about its efficacy even as we largely embraced its spirit. We held regular conference calls and utilized email regularly to accomplish the many tasks presented by this effort, even as we sometimes lamented the role technology plays in our lives as well as the corporate interests that tend to promote it. We used honest feedback and constructive dialog to cope with disagreements and even a few conflicts that developed among us, working in each case not to "win" an argument but to find ways to move forward and preserve the positive values of this project. We learned how to trust each other despite the cultural frame we operated in as denizens of a capitalist society, and genuinely took this experience as an opportunity to build solidarity along the way. While the totality of all this was at times cumbersome, both the ensuing work and the skills we have gained benefited from the attention we paid to embracing a fl uid, horizontal process that mirrors anarchism itself.

Perhaps our greatest processual limitation was in the makeup of the collective. The five of us who formed the editorial working group reflect a range of back-grounds, geographies, economies, and cultural diversities in ways that we forebear to mention. But one glaring concern is that, despite our diverse perspectives, we are all male. There was no specific intention to proceed in this manner, and the experience did set in motion among us many soul-searching discussions about the nature of privilege and its inherent connection to gender (that is, patriarchy). We debated at length about whether to invite a woman to be part of the collective, but didn't want to degenerate into tokenism or patronization in the process. Likewise with the range of potential authors for this volume, many of the names forwarded to us as well as the people directly expressing interest in this project were men. Undoubtedly there are deep cultural and historical reasons for trends such as this, and we are very aware of the implications not only for this volume but for anar-chism itself. As with the rest of this effort, the learning process – which we have now shared with you, the reader – is central to the utility of the final result.

We hope that this work, both in process and outcome, inspires imaginations and generates debate. We also hope that it demonstrates the vast potential of anarchism as both a field of study and a radical practice. The chapters collected here have been loosely grouped into sections including theory, pedagogy, methodologies, praxis, and "the future," indicating the range of areas in which anarchism has taken hold. As befitting the paradigm, while the authors agree on many points, there are also broad chasms and spirited debates to be found as well. In this, may the essence of anarchism flourish.

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# Section One

# Theory

Anarchist theory has always been intimately tied with its practice. In anarchism's "classical" phase, theorists and revolutionaries such as Proudhon, Kropotkin, Goldman, Malatesta, and Bakunin formulated a *libertarian* socialism, distinguishing themselves from Marxists through opposition to centralization and authoritarian organizational structures. From this base, contemporary anarchist theory has grown into a multi-tendency milieu. Indeed, contemporary tendencies within the milieu at times even stand in direct opposition with one another.

Further, anarchism has grown theoretically as a result of its engagement with other perspectives. Queer theory, critical race theory, feminism, radical environmentalism, animal liberation, post-structuralism, and a host of other perspectives have left indelible marks on contemporary anarchist theories. Various journals and magazines such as *Anarchist Studies, The Fifth Estate, The Northeastern Anarchist*, and *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* (to name just a few) have further developed ideas from anarchism's shared past, as well as scathing critiques of some of the foundational theoretical works and shibboleths. Out of this diverse plurality we have seen some interesting developments: post-left anarchy, new approaches to platformism, post-structuralist anarchism, queer anarchism, anarchisms deeply influenced by *Race Traitor* politics, and anarchist approaches to animal liberation and the liberation of the earth.

It is within this shifting theoretical terrain that this section is placed – a theoretical soup, if you will, highlighting the work of diverse anarchist scholars, each taking on new problematics to develop anarchist theory. Todd May continues his exploration of the affinities between anarchism and the French intellectual tradition, spotlighting the work and libertarian tendencies of Rancière and Foucault. Likewise, Gabriel Kuhn outlines anarchism's connections with post-structuralism, arguing that the politically engaged and radical critiques of structuralist discourses contained in post-structuralist thought offer important pieces for contemporary anarchist praxis. Alejandro de Acosta takes on the argument that, perhaps, we should be building "anarchy" in the here and now; that is, we should build thought "that does not teach anarchy but enacts it." Joel Olson urges us to reconsider the politics of race from a contemporary anarchist perspective, citing encouraging developments from the journal *Race Traitor* and the organizations Love and Rage, Anarchist People of Color, and Bring the Ruckus. Emily Gaarder

argues for an anarcha-feminist response to violence against women, drawing from libertarian and feminist theories to outline possibilities of response outside of our state system of (in)justice. Finally, Eric Buck argues for an anarchist economic model based on support and "the flow of experiencing," while engaging other radical economic models such as participatory economics and economic democracy.

In tracing the analytical boundaries of race, class, and gender issues, and by exploring both historical and current schools of thought, these theoretical works create a framework for exploring the contours of anarchism in the contemporary world.

# 1 Anarchism from Foucault to Rancière

*Todd May*

One does not normally think of anarchism and recent French philosophical thought as having a natural affinity. Of the major thinkers in recent French philosophy that have addressed political issues – Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière – none of them have openly embraced the anarchist tradition. Among them, only Rancière has occasionally utilized the term in anything like the sense most anarchists give it. There has been much dialogue between these thinkers and the Marxist tradition. Often, this dialogue involves various kinds of modification of Marxist thought. However, given the contortions made in order to bring Marx into alignment with current thinking, one might wonder whether it would be better simply to seek a new tradition in which to embed their thought.

Elsewhere, I have written about the anarchist perspective that frames the thought of Deleuze, Lyotard, and Foucault (see May 1994). Here I would like to draw on some of the same themes, but conceptualize them differently. The two thinkers I would like specifically to focus on are Foucault and Rancière. The argument will be that, particularly in combination, Foucault and Rancière offer a compelling anarchist vision that at once emerges from and continues the anarchist tradition. This emergence, of course, is not one they discuss. But those who have read or participated in the anarchist tradition will, I hope, find themselves at home in it – even if, perhaps, some of the furniture has been rearranged.

We should start simply. One way to mark the difference between Marxism and anarchism would be to contrast two terms: exploitation and domination. Exploitation is the Marxist term, and although it is an economic term, it has political implications. (At the time Marx wrote, of course, there was no division between economics and politics; there was only political economy.) Exploitation refers to capitalist extraction of surplus value from the worker. Essentially, since the value of a product lies in the labor that goes into it, and since the laborers do not receive the entirety of that value, there is value that is extracted along the way by the capitalist. That value is surplus value. Without an end to the capitalist system, there will be no end to the extraction of surplus value, i.e. to exploitation (Marx 1976: Parts 3–5).

Domination, the anarchist "equivalent" to exploitation, is not only a different term. It is a different *kind* of term. Although many people who are only passingly familiar with anarchism associate it solely with a critique of the state (or, following

Bakunin's *God and the State*, with a critique of religion and the state), this would be a misreading of a more supple term. There is no analogy of the form *the state: anarchism:economy:Marxism*. We might define domination instead as referring more broadly to oppressive power relations. Since some people think of power and oppression as coextensive, we might be tempted to simplify the definition of domination to a reference to power relations. However, this will not do. For reasons we will see when we turn to Foucault, the existence of power by itself is no guarantee of oppression.

If we take the first definition, we can see why it is a different kind of concept from that of exploitation. First, while exploitation is fundamentally an economic concept, domination is fundamentally a political one. It refers to relations of power. Second, and more important for our purposes, domination is a more elastic concept than exploitation. It can refer to relations in a variety of social arenas. There is economic domination, to be sure, but there is also racial domination, gender domination, sexual domination, educational domination, familial domination, etc. Domination, unlike exploitation, can occur in any realm of social experience. Exploitation, although its effects ramify out across the social spectrum, is specifically located in a particular social sphere: the sphere of work.

In this distinction between the two concepts, an entire political philosophy exists in germ. We cannot pursue this line of thought very far. Let me suggest, however, that if the fundamental problem of human relations is exploitation, then the proper way to address that is through an intervention that centers itself on the economic sphere. That requires experts in that sphere. After all, if all oppression is, ultimately, economic oppression, then it would stand to reason that resistance to that oppression be led by those who have economic expertise. This gives a special status to those whose knowledge lies in that sphere. Here one might glimpse the idea of an avant-garde party that has a leadership role in any political struggle, that is, a party of experts whose analysis and intervention leads the way for political resistance. Alternatively, where the fundamental problem of human relations is domination, then there cannot be an avant-garde party, because political struggle occurs across too many registers. There may be experts in this or that form of domination, but there are no experts in domination. Anarchist resistance to Marxist avant-gardism, then, can be located in the fundamental concepts that each uses to analyze social reality and struggle.

I would like to focus on a different, although not unrelated, aspect of domination. If domination is elastic, then its different appearances are irreducible to a specific form of domination. For instance, gender domination may be related to exploitation, but it is not reducible to exploitation. They may well intersect, and probably do. But each has its own character that requires its own analysis and intervention. Local and intersecting analyses of social and political phenomena replace a single, overarching analysis that encompasses all social space. We must understand the history and character of a particular form of domination, how it works, and how it relates to, reinforces, and is reinforced by, other forms.

Let us add another idea, one that complicates the idea of power inherent in the definition of domination. We often think of power in simple terms: a relation of

power is when A can make B do what A wants, even against B's will. (If we want to integrate the notion of ideology here, we can modify the last phrase to something like "against B's will or interests.") Thinking this way carries with it two assumptions about power: first, that it is always consciously applied; and second, that it always consists in someone (or some group) stopping someone else (or some other group) from doing what it would otherwise do in favor of doing something it would not otherwise do. It is in undermining these two assumptions that Foucault makes his contribution to anarchist thought.

Foucault's studies, particularly those on the prison (*Discipline and Punish*) and on sexuality (*The History of Sexuality, Vol. I*), show us that power can operate not only consciously but unconsciously and anonymously. They also show us that power is not only restrictive, but is also creative. It does not merely stop people from doing certain things. It also can work by crafting people into certain kinds of beings. In his book on punishment, Foucault (1977: 29) writes,

> It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished.

We cannot, of course, recount in detail the historical studies Foucault offers. However, we can gesture at one of them in order to give a sense of what he's on about. In his history of sexuality (1990), Foucault confronts the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s with the claim that it is not as emancipatory as once claimed. Sexuality has not been liberated because, for the past several hundred years, it is precisely sexuality that has come to define us. Sex has become the secret to our identity. He traces changes in the Catholic confessional (from confessing acts to confessing desires), alongside other changes (for example, the emphasis on population studies in eighteenth-century political economic practice) in order to show the increasing emphasis on sex over the past several hundred years. Rather than enduring a Victorian repression of sexuality that was only liberated in the latter part of the twentieth century, we have instead gradually become beings of sexuality. The sexual revolution, like psychoanalysis before it, is a symptom of our historical legacy, not a revolt against it.

This does not mean, of course, that people did not have sex before the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Rather, it means that a variety of practices converged during that time that make us think of ourselves and indeed create ourselves to be beings of sexuality. Our desires, in particular our sexual desires, have become the "Great Secret" of who we are. This is why, for instance, homosexuality has become an issue of moment, particularly to those who are religious. Rather than simply being a matter of who is doing what with whom, it is a matter of identities, of who one is.

In these historical studies, Foucault displays two ideas: that power can operate in more subtle ways than the model of A making B do what A wants; and that power can create things that were not there before. Combining these two ideas, we

arrive at two conclusions. First, if power is creative in the way Foucault describes, and if it arises in the welter of practices in which we participate, then there can be oppression without there being oppressors. Since power is not simply a matter of what A does to B, but can be a matter of who A is made to be by the practices in which she is engaged, then it is possible that A can be oppressed without there being a B that actually does the oppressing. Homosexuals, for instance, *as* homosexuals, are not the product of a conspiracy of people who hate those who sleep with members of the same sex. Rather, they are the product of a complex network of practices that has placed sex at the center of our sense of who we are. We might put the matter, a bit unorthodoxly, this way: homosexuals are oppressed because they have become homosexuals, which is an oppressive position to occupy in our society.

The second conclusion, in a sense a complement to the first, is that there can be relationships of power that are not oppressive. If Foucault's view is right, then there are relations of power inhabiting many, if not all, of our practices. Our practices, individually and in combination with others, are constantly creating us to be certain kinds of beings. And since power is pervasive, we cannot avoid asking which relations of power are oppressive and which are not. Looking at an arrangement of power, we must ask whether it is creating something that is bad for those who are subject to it. And in answering this question, we cannot simply say that since it is a power relationship it is bad. This makes political inquiry unavoidably moral, a point that Marxists have often missed (see May 1995). We will return to this point momentarily.

Foucault's reconceptualization of power adds a dimension to the conception of domination. As we have seen, domination is an elastic concept that can be found in a wide variety of spheres of social existence. We can now see more clearly why it is that domination is a more useful political concept than exploitation alone. Exploitation, in implying that there is an Archimedean point for political struggle, neglects the wealth of practices that form the ether of our lives. These practices create us to be who we are, and in doing so may create us in ways that are as oppressive as (and indeed may reinforce) exploitation. Although Foucault never considered himself an anarchist or aligned himself with the anarchist tradition, his historical analysis and his conceptual framework are of a piece with an orientation that sees politics as a matter of domination rather than simply exploitation. Furthermore, by widening the concept of power, Foucault extends reflection on the operation of domination. As we saw above, domination refers to oppressive power relations in many different social arenas. What Foucault's analyses offer us are historical accounts of how some of those power relations arise, and, in addition, a more nuanced conception of the operation of modern power in particular. The conception of power as creative, not merely restraining, is a modern operation of power in part because, as Foucault's histories show, this type of power requires more advanced technology and a larger population than had previously existed.

This extension can raise the question of how to conceive resistance. After all, if power relations are everywhere and are everywhere creating us, in the name of what is political resistance to occur? Foucault himself was always reticent on this

matter. He saw himself as offering intellectual tools for struggle, but was reluctant to engage in either normative or strategic discussion. This is in part due to his belief that the terms of struggle should be decided by those who resist rather than by intellectuals who have too often spoken in their name. However, there are ways to characterize the normativity of struggle without co-opting the integrity of resistance itself. One way to characterize it stems from a recent French thinker, Jacques Rancière, who is sympathetic to Foucault's histories and sensitive to his reluctance to speak in the name of others.

Rancière's intellectual itinerary began when he was a student of Louis Althusser and took its own direction in the wake of the French student and worker revolt of May 1968. At that time, while Althusser was criticizing the revolt, Rancière started to distance himself from a Marxism that too often posited a division of labor between the intellectuals who think and direct political resistance and the workers who merely carry it out. Rancière spent years researching the history of pre-Marxist nineteenth-century workers' movements, and, during the 1990s, developed a view of politics that reflected that research.

For Rancière, a politics that merits the name *democratic* is one that is radically egalitarian in a specific way. It is a politics that arises out of the *presupposition* of equality. In other words, a democratic politics must have as its basis the presupposition among those who struggle that they are equal to one another and to those who oppress them or consider them to be less than equal. A democratic politics is ultimately a resistance against the mechanisms of an order that distributes roles on the basis of hierarchical presuppositions. As he has argued (1999: 17),

> Politics only occurs when these mechanisms are stopped in their tracks by the effect of a presupposition that is totally foreign to them yet without which none of them could ultimately function: the presupposition of the equality of anyone and everyone.

Rancière (1999: 28) calls the order against which a democratic politics takes place, the police:

> Politics is generally seen as the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution. I propose to give this system of distribution and legitimization another name. I propose to call it the *police*.

The police, a term Rancière utilizes with reference to Foucault's studies of the policing of populations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, can in fact be read in this more broadly Foucauldian fashion. The police order is the set of roles and their normative framework that ensures specific forms of domination. It creates people to be certain ways, relates those creations to other ways of being, authorizes some people to judge others in specific ways, etc. With minimal over-simplification, we might say that the police order forms the framework for the circulation of power that Foucault describes.

Democratic politics arise when there are specific resistances to that police order. What characterizes those resistances is that they occur in the name of the equality of those who are resisting. We might point to the civil rights movement in the United States, May of 1968 in France, and more recently the Zapatista movement in Mexico as examples of a more or less democratic politics. What is key to understanding Rancière's view is to grasp the role that the concept of equality plays. First and foremost, it is not a demand, but rather a presupposition. There may well be demands associated with a democratic politics; indeed, there usually are. However, what characterizes a political movement as democratic is not the demands it makes but the presupposition out of which it arises.

Simply to demand equality is to place the bulk of political power in the hands of those who are the recipient of those demands. Correlatively, it is to place oneself in a position that is ultimately the passive one. To demand equality is to be a victim, even if an angry and organized one. Alternatively, to *presuppose* equality is to be active. It is to see oneself as primarily a peer of those who oppress another or who are beneficiaries of that oppression. And then, only secondarily, do demands arise. But they arise not out of a lack possessed by the oppressed that others are required to fulfill. Instead, they arise out of a recognition of one's own equality that one demands others stop inhibiting. It is strong rather than weak; active rather than passive.

In Rancière's view, what arises out of a democratic politics is a political subject. In fact, he calls the emergence of a democratic politics   *subjectification*. Where there were once scattered individuals dominated by the mechanisms of a police order, with the appearance of a democratic politics there is a collective subject of resistance: the proletariat, women, the Palestinian people, African Americans, etc. And just as Foucault shows how specific forms of domination arise within specific historical trajectories, Rancière conceives how resistance to those forms of domination can occur without resorting to any form of identity politics. If the characterizations of the police order are as Foucault has described them (for example, the homosexual), the refusal of that police order occurs in the name of a quality that rejects those characterizations (for example, equality). Foucault has often, mistakenly, been associated with identity politics. This is because of the specificity of his historical analyses. What Rancière shows is that one can take on board Foucault's analyses without having to embrace such an ultimately self-defeating political position.

In addition, Rancière's politics is consonant with the deep principles informing anarchism. If equality is the touchstone of a democratic politics, this means that there is no avant-garde, no necessary divisions between those who think and those who act. It also means, concomitant with this, that the process of politics is essential – not just its results. This is a point that has often been insisted upon by anarchists. How we struggle and resist reflects our vision of what a society should look like. We cannot resist now, and create equality later. Given the experience of twentieth-century revolutionary movements, this truth should be obvious by now. It is a truth that is recognized by anarchists, theoretically articulated by Rancière, and well prepared by the histories recounted by Foucault. If we are to carry the

lessons of the past with us, then, we must conceive and practice struggle not with democracy as an end in view, but democratically in its very unfolding. In this way, an anarchist interpretation of these recent thinkers can meet up with the anarchist writings of the past two centuries, and point the way more clearly toward a future more democratic than the times in which we now live.

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# 2 Anarchism, postmodernity, and poststructuralism

*Gabriel Kuhn*

Postmodernity and poststructuralism have been embraced in many intellectual circles since the late 1980s. Anarchist theory, though, has been a cautious suitor. In fact, a steadfast rebuttal of anything postmodern/poststructuralist has even united some of its most unrelenting foes (cf. Zerzan 1991; Albert n.d.). Since the beginning of the decade, however, there has been an increased interest in post-modernity's and poststructuralism's relevance for anarchist thought and praxis. It is the intent of this essay to investigate this interest, including its development and focus as well as its promises and flaws.

For the sake of clarity, I want to begin with a terminological distinction, since a curious confusion has plagued the discussions around postmodernity/ poststructuralism for nearly two decades. The terms "postmodernity" and "post-structuralism" have different origins and have carried different discursive conno-tations until they began to be used increasingly as synonyms. The meanings of terms do of course depend on their use and circulation within a community of speakers and any attempt at defining their "true" meaning only makes us look foolish. At the same time, it seems natural in intellectual debates to use the terminological tools at hand in ways that allow for somewhat differentiated rather than oversimplified discussion. For example, I am convinced that the sweeping generalizations that sometimes characterize anarchist opposition to anything postmodern/poststructuralist would vanish once a simple distinction was made: that between an indeed irritating and politically non- or counter-productive jargon in the name of "postmodern thought" on the one hand; and radically inspired poststructuralist (and sometimes postmodern) critiques of the Platonic tradition and its repressive implications on the other.

In the context of this essay, "postmodernity" will refer to *a socio-cultural condition*, namely the one outlined by Jean-François Lyotard in *La Condition Postmoderne*, in which Lyotard (1979) applied an attribute mainly branded in architecture and the arts to society as a whole. An anarchist engagement with postmodernity would hence consist of an anarchist analysis of this condition – potentially helping anarchists to understand the socio-cultural dynamics of postmodern times, anarchists' positions within these, and the implied challenges as well as possibilities for the struggle against the State. "Poststructuralism," on the other hand, will refer to *a body of theory* – developed by Lyotard, Michel

Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Jacques Derrida, and others – aimed at breaking the intellectual sway of structuralist thought in France following the events of May 1968. [1] An anarchist engagement with poststructuralism would hence consist of an anarchist evaluation of the usefulness of poststructuralist theory for anarchism's aims.

   The distinction between a socio-cultural condition and a body of theory becomes somewhat blurred by the term *postmodernism*, which is most commonly understood as a movement of thought embracing the postmodern condition and attempting to strengthen pluralist theory – thereby echoing a main feature of the poststructuralist endeavor. However, "postmodernism" remains a much wider term than "poststructuralism" and is used as a reference for everything from Jenny Holzer's conceptual art to Jonathan Kramer's music theory to Richard Rorty's liberal politics. In fact, it might today include every expression of thought that does not navigate around pillars of God, human nature, or historical determinism. In such light, "poststructuralism" is indeed, in the words of Lewis Call (2001: 14), best understood as "a variety of postmodern thinking."

## Anarchism and postmodernity

Postmodernity has left its mark on anarchism in various subtle ways. Concepts like those of a "small-a anarchism" – championed by David Graeber (2002), Starhawk (2004), and others – do, for example, distinctly resonate with times in which references to anything potentially "meta-narrative" seem to indicate an ungainly lack of intellectual refinement. Yet, surprisingly little has been published in terms of explicit anarchist reflections of and on postmodern culture. Lewis Call's *Postmodern Anarchism* (2001) is by far the most extensive effort in this respect. After sketching a "postmodern matrix" and suggesting anarchism to be "a political philosophy which seems perfectly well suited to the postmodern world," *Postmodern Anarchism* embarks on its journey to the "metastrand" of the indicated matrix, namely "the strand of science fiction literature known as cyberpunk" (2001: 11). In the course of this journey we encounter a generous evocation of Friedrich Nietzsche, a refreshing reading of Jean Baudrillard, and a widely acclaimed final chapter on the science fiction of William Gibson and Bruce Sterling whose writings exemplify for Call "a radical politics for the new millennium: a politics of postmodern anarchism" (2001: 24). Call's work might not allow for the most spectacular theoretical leaps, but it certainly stands as an important marker for the possibilities of anarchist moments entrenched in the postmodern condition.

   Unfortunately, few such additional markers can be found. Then again, the question arises whether we still need them when "postmodernity" itself becomes questionable as an apt description of our socio-cultural make-up. Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000) is just one recent model that could be interpreted as an indication of the necessity to re-employ the long shunned "meta-narratives" in order to properly understand the workings of current social, cultural, political, and economic dynamics. At the same time, the authors' concept of a "multitude" as

the most promising force of resistance – in its inherent plurality – might still be deemed a "postmodern" concept. If anything, this only goes to show that the complexity of the historical trajectory supersedes neat categories like "modernity" and "postmodernity," and that (with particular regard to the relationship between anarchism and postmodernity) a re-evaluation of the analytical usefulness of the postmodern notion itself seems paramount.

## Anarchism and poststructuralism

Todd May's book *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (1994), building on an earlier essay entitled "Is post-structuralist political theory anar- chist?" (1989), is usually referenced as the first broad attempt to fuse traditional anarchist thought with poststructuralist theory. Whether this claim holds true or not, the book must certainly count as a major contribution to the respective effort. At its core lies the conviction that "traditional anarchism," while an important ethical and political guide, has theoretically been embedded in the "naturalist" and "essentialist" philosophy of the nineteenth century and its many epistemological shortcomings. Poststructuralism then enters the scene with a "political theory" that "replaces traditional anarchism's *a priori*" (May 1994: 87) and that has the ability to infuse anarchism with new analytical and theoretical vigor.

In 2001, Australian Saul Newman published *From Bakunin to Lacan*, which recapped many of the contentions in May's work. Where the books differ is in the direction they take once they set out on what Newman elsewhere called the "salvage operation poststructuralism is to do on anarchism" (Newman 2003a). While May – via Lyotard, Foucault and Deleuze – ends up discussing analytic moral philosophy, Newman – by way of Stirner (who, according to Newman (2001:6) "provides an obvious but hitherto unexplored connection with post- structuralism"), Foucault, Deleuze/Guattari, and Derrida – finds his savior in Lacan who helps him "to theorize a non-essentialist outside to power" (2001: 160).

While the publication of May's book had gone more or less unnoticed, *From Bakunin to Lacan* was instantly acknowledged as an innovative contribution to anarchist discourse. The reasons for this discrepancy I see as threefold: (1) by 2001, poststructuralist theory had become such a strong and present player in many theoretical fields that anarchist intellectuals could hardly maintain their categorical rejection of it without appearing hopelessly anachronistic; (2) Newman's book was published within the post-Seattle "New Anarchism" euphoria which granted immediate and almost unconditional interest to anything hyped as "anarchist" and "new;" and (3) Newman had come up with a fancy and intriguing label for his position, namely that of "postanarchism" – a label he continues to promote and has most recently defined as indicating "a project of renewing the anarchist tradition through a critique of essentialist identities and the assertion instead of the contingency of politics" (Newman 2007: 4).

As with May's book, *From Bakunin to Lacan* is an important and inspiring exploration of the value of poststructuralist thought for anarchism. There remain certain theoretical problems, however. The most obvious lies in Newman's

inconsistent use of the term "power," which oscillates between its "traditional" and its "Foucauldian" sense. Both May's and Newman's work also suffer from an oversimplification of "traditional/classical" anarchist thought and the concept of "essentialism." As a consequence, much of their critique of "traditional/classical" anarchism seems to focus on an effigy rather than a vibrant and diverse historical movement. Certain political problems stem from this: by focusing on a somewhat superficial critique of "traditional/classical" anarchism, the anarchist movement's political legacy often appears discredited (see also Cohn 2002; Cohn and Wilbur 2003; Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Federation 2003.) As far as Newman's work is concerned, the most pressing question is of course why any of its contents would make anarchism "post" – and, if so, "post" what exactly?

For one, anarchism has always been in flux and characterized by permanent alteration. So when Newman adds another chapter to this history, what makes this chapter so special that it validates a change to anarchism's name (other than the fact that "post" is already circulating as a hip, albeit overexploited, prefix)? Second, why would we want to go "beyond," "past," or "post" anarchism? Because we do not like certain things that Bakunin wrote? This does not sound very convincing to me. There are anarchist authors out there who hardly write anything that I like, but anarchism is not about the texts of certain authors, is it? Rather, anarchism is about a non-compromising struggle against institutions of authority (most evidently concentrated in the State – and nowadays maybe corporations) and about the creation and maintenance of social relations that do not reproduce such institutions. Poststructuralist theory, in my opinion, helps us with both: it strengthens our anarchism, and it provides us with no reason at all to change its name.

There is another difficulty with the postanarchist label, namely the suggestion that the junctions of anarchism and poststructuralism/postmodernity as laid out by Newman (and maybe – *ante litteram* – by May) are new, when, in fact, they are not. It is true, as stated above, that anarchist theory, for the most part, approached postmodern and poststructuralist thought with a lot of caution. Yet, this does not mean that exceptions did not exist. May and Newman might have made their blends of anarchism and poststructuralism explicit, but quite a few others had already brought the anarchist tradition and poststructuralist thought together without label or fuss. These folks followed an understanding which, interestingly enough, Newman himself conveys when he states that "poststructuralism is *in nuce* anarchist" (Newman 2003b).[2]

In other words: A number of anarchists in different parts of the world have long incorporated poststructuralism into their discussions and activities. Let us here name some examples from the German-speaking realm where I know the history best. In Berlin a radical bookstore by the name of "Rhizom" was founded in the late 1970s by anarchists who deemed poststructuralist thinkers crucial in "formulating a critique of the State for the 20th and 21st century" (Bibliothek der Freien 2005). Swiss philosopher Urs Marti not only included a chapter entitled "Anarchist Sympathies" in his 1988 book *Michel Foucault*, but also drew numerous parallels between poststructuralist thought and Max Stirner, over a

decade before Newman's supposed resurrection of the infamous author of *The Ego and Its Own*.

Documented discussions of Foucault's theory of power within circles of the German autonomous movement stem from 1991 at the latest (cf. VAL 1992), and at around the same time in Austria, I was part of two anarchist student groups that held regular self-conducted workshops on the political usefulness of post-structuralist theory. I could continue the examples, but I hope this amply illustrates my point. Even Jürgen Mümken, Germany's most influential postanarchist writer and founder of postanarchismus.net, confirms that:

> the lack of a postanarchist debate . . . does not necessarily mean a lack of the discussions that happen elsewhere under the postanarchist banner. The different theoretical considerations (poststructuralist anarchism, postmodern anarchism, etc.) that are nowadays summarized as "postanarchism" are older than the term itself.
>
> (Mümken 2005: 11)[3]

Even within the history of the English-speaking world certain valuable "pre-postanarchist" contributions to the anarchism/poststructuralism debate are largely overlooked. A prime example is Andrew Koch's essay "Poststructuralism and the epistemological basis of anarchism," published to little acclaim in 1993 and today, despite the postanarchist hype, almost forgotten. Koch's text contains a crucial insight into poststructuralist theory that both May's and Newman's work is lacking. While May and Newman reiterate the accusations of both the Marxist left and the liberal center that poststructuralism allows for no theory of resistance or is, in Newman's words, bereft of "an explicit *politico-ethico* content" (Newman 2003a), Koch makes it clear that "those who base their attacks on poststructuralism in the claim that the denial of a singular subjectivity makes the formulation of an ethics of resistance impossible misunderstand the focus of the poststructuralist argument" (Koch 1993: 348). Koch's explanation of what he calls "a reversal of the burden of proof" is one of the most succinct and compelling formulations of a poststructuralist ethics: "It is not resistance to the state that needs to be justified but the positive actions of the state against individuals. Opposition to the state ls the only remaining normative space once the basis for state action has been denied" (ibid.: 343). The neglect of Koch's essay does no one a favor. Its study might go a long way for anyone interested in the anarchism of poststructuralist thought.[4]

The embrace of the postanarchist label itself does of course by no means prohibit great work. Richard Day's recent book *Gramsci Is Dead: anarchist currents in the newest social movements*, in which he sees himself "contributing to a small but growing body of work in postanarchism and autonomist marxism" (Day 2005: 10), has to count as remarkable proof of this, particularly in the way it presents and develops theory alongside concrete struggles. Indeed, Day's analysis of what he calls the "newest social movements" bears a noticeable resemblance to analyses that suggest a "poststructuralist" character of the related anti-neoliberalist/

anti-capitalist struggles (see, for example, Carter and Morland 2004, and Morland 2005). Nonetheless, it remains crucial to acknowledge the contributions made apart from all labels as well – not just as a matter of "fairness," but to enrich our theoretical investigations. Concretely, this means paying attention to the work pursued in France by Daniel Colson or the Tiqqun Collective, in Spain by Tomás Ibáñez, in Japan by the editors of the *VOL* journal – and I am sure in many other places of which I am unaware.

## Outlook

At the risk of stating the obvious one more time, what seems most important are ideas and concepts, not names and labels. The former will remain when the latter are long gone. We will see what legacy will remain of postmodernity; given the passe-partout levels that the term has reached, I am not holding my breath. The future relevance of poststructuralist theory for – or rather, within – the anarchist tradition will depend on the ways in which its ideas and concepts will inspire and strengthen our struggles. This, however, will much less depend on their "intrinsic" potentials than on our ability to relate them to our lives and their challenges. Here, then, are but a few aspects of poststructuralist thought (in no particular order) in whose concomitant potentials I strongly believe:[5]

1  A profound and fervent *critique of the Truth* which undermines all tendencies towards Platonic totalitarianism.
2  An uncompromising commitment to *plurality* and all that goes with it – rhizomes, cracks, shifts, fluidity, etc. – the anarchist value of which seems self-explanatory.
3  A far-reaching and all-encompassing *critique of representation* whose value to anarchists seems equally obvious.
4  A *critique of the subject* that liberates us from the need to conform to fixed identities and opens a never-ending playground to create and permanently re-create subjectivities in self-determined processes (the distinction between "subject" and "subjectivity" appears to be one of the most misunderstood aspects of poststructuralist thought).
5  Foucault's *theory of power* which helps us understand the complexity of social stratification, strife, and struggle much better than previous concepts of power and – properly understood – opens up new, well-grounded, and effective means of resistance, rather than hindering them.
6  Foucault's *specific intellectual*, who (contrary to the "universal intellectual") pursues theoretical work as a contribution to solving concrete and immediate problems rather than as a means to establish oppressive grand theory.
7  The *dismantling of the boundaries separating theory and praxis* which makes the former an inherent part of the political struggle rather than its guide.[6]
8  Deleuze and Guattari's *schizoanalysis*, which revolutionizes psycho-analysis and frees it – and hence desire – from all systematically imposed restrictions.

9  Derrida's concepts of *differánce* and *deconstruction*, which allow us to read the entire socio-political field differently and to develop imaginative ways of intervention (regardless of how often the concepts are exploited as justifications of gibberish).

10  The focus on *the minor* as a key revolutionary element, which is both a continuation of the important anarchist legacy to stand up for all those traditionally banned from the "revolutionary subjects" of the orthodox left, and a reminder that the social field always requires the prodding of its fringe and marginal elements to avoid trite and dangerous self-complacency.

11  Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of a *nomadic unity* of struggles (and, if one does not shy away from the martial overtones, a *nomadic war machine*), which sketch a diverse, fluid, and militant web of resistance that can only inspire anarchist politics (and should, in fact, have some of the poststructuralists' strongest critics – for example the folks from and around *Green Anarchy* – beaming with delight).

12  The focus on *direct, non-mediated struggles*, which allows the support of those at the heart of a struggle to replace all pretentious attempts to guide or direct (let alone lead) them.

13  An *affirmative/positive character* of thought and action that prioritizes creativity over entanglement in petty critique and in-fighting.

14  Finally, a thorough *radicalism* of thought that addresses the foundations of our problems – indeed, I believe few anarchists would argue with this being an indispensable requirement for radical social change.

This list is necessarily incomplete, simplified, and rough. Its only purpose is to inspire further reading, discussion and exploration – both to help us in our struggles and (which for me amounts to the same thing) to retain the radical (anarchist, if you will) legacy of the so-called poststructuralist thinkers.

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# 3 Two undecidable questions for thinking in which anything goes[1]

*Alejandro de Acosta*

This is an outline, a sketch. It is purposely abstract and philosophical. There are many other ways to make its case, some of which I am working on, some of which others are working on – or, for that matter, living out. In my case, abstraction has a purpose. This is a telegram to my many possible communities; thus its abrupt prose. I seek dialogue, discussion, incorporation, and mutation; thus my overly interrogative tone.

What is at stake in talking or writing about anarchism *as* theory, contemplation, or philosophy? When people refer to "anarchist theory," they usually mean something like a pedagogy: a theory not only informing and justifying but somehow *teaching* what anarchists and our allies do. They seem to mean something like a series of positions, or decisions, concerning fundamental questions. They usually do not mean a theory in which thought and action are themselves anarchic: an intensification not of anarchism but of anarchy. That is what I want to make manifest: an emergent philosophy that dissolves the certainty according to which there is or ought to be a center, principle, or beginning of, or for, thought and action. A thinking that does not teach anarchy but enacts it.

In the same way and for the same reasons that anarchist practices are both incredibly common *and* dramatically underdeveloped (most folks in fact *do* engage in mutual aid, direct action, etc., but are badly out of practice), anarchist philosophy already exists, but mostly in unrecognized or diffuse forms.[2] To make manifest or intensify this philosophy, or rather, cluster of philosophies, theories and contemplations, is both a provocation and an excessive gesture. It borders on tautology or absurdity, as all appeals to such common practices and ideas ultimately tend to do.

Tautology and absurdity: this implies the question, not just of pedagogy, but of ideology as well. Ideas, concepts, naming, and reference: whatever someone intends when she indicates, or tries to, patterns of thought and action with a noun ending in "-ism." With "anarchism," at least, this reference is of necessity para-doxical: it both creates and does not create. It names something that was already there, "in the air" and so strictly speaking creates nothing. At the same time, this kind of naming (in the pragmatics of a political game called "ideology" [3]) seems to add a model, or a scheme. Something on the order of a password, enough for strangers to recognize something of what they do in each other's doings, enough for people to gather and feel that they share something.

Indeed, would anyone want to claim that anarchist philosophy exemplifies what is best about philosophy? Would anyone claim that anarchist theory condenses philosophy's occasional but recurrent questioning and refusal of authority, calls for joy, and insistence on the freedom of thought and action? Certainly great anarchist writers have brought in as citation or inspiration whatever they needed or learned from mainstream, "unmarked," non-anarchist philosophers and called it theirs. Perhaps they shared the more or less explicit sense that these citations and inspirations would justify (ontologically, epistemologically) or provoke (ethically, aesthetically) their own anarchism – and so make others anarchists as well.

But herein lies the problem. Becoming anarchist has to be something on the order of a seduction, a passionate attraction, the feeling of anarchy's lure. Whatever becoming anarchist entails, it is ultimately neither the subject of a pedagogy nor the object of an ideology.[4] One can't say that anarchist philosophy is merely a decision concerning the concepts, theories, intuitions, books, and thinkers that are to be taught. Anarchy can't be taught!

Anarchist philosophy, a thinking in which anything goes, is just philosophy, apprehended from the perspective of anarchy. It is philosophy insofar as it arises from anarchy, concludes in it, enacts or is enacted by anarchy. To the extent that it is just philosophy, it is already there. To the extent that its relation to anarchy remains to be explicated, it has yet to be created.

This is the problem with decision: anarchist theory, on analogy with many other sorts of theories, has been approached largely from a perspective that presupposes scarcity: the belief that only one theory can adequately model anarchy. Thus we find various theories of "anarchism," more or less related to anarchist practices, contesting each other's claim to truth. In good or in bad faith someone decides what it is, could be, should be – and proceeds to debate or negotiate its particulars. Some of us assume, that is, that the negativity of debate (contradiction and its supposed resolution) and the positivity of consensus will allow "us" to arrive at a singular theory, teaching "us" to act as if it were final for all time (if "we" are focusing on human nature) or adequate for the present (if "we" are analyzing the current situation). I am not writing here of what people say their theories contain, but of how they act. I prefer to write and think from a perspective that presupposes abundance. There are many actual and possible philosophies that operate anar - chistically. They do not need intellectual hegemony to be effective. In this way we might become interested in the undecidable: not a new philosophy, exactly, but a new complex of relations among philosophies.

As I read Kropotkin (1955: *passim*), his most interesting claim is that mutual aid *just happens*, all the time, in the animal world and in human societies of all sorts. He implied that theorizing or contemplating mutual aid is a way of intensifying the common anarchist impulses that make mutual aid happen – better, that *are* mutual aid happening – in the first place. Mutual aid "just happens": this means that philosophy in the narrow or broad sense, as theory or contemplation, does not bring about those impulses. Philosophy might, however, intensify them, by making them more interesting, more compelling, more seductive, more of a lure for feeling or action. Kropotkin shows them as both elemental and remarkable,

particularly in societies that "structurally" (as they say) marginalize their idea – and especially their enactment.

Something along these lines might also be the best way to interpret Bookchin's onetime claim that "anarchism" is merely the most recent name taken on by a recurrent creative-destructive urge (what I call anarchist impulses, or just anarchy) that manifests here and there throughout history.   [5] He implied that the name "anarchism," invented in conjunction with other political ideologies of the nineteenth century, should have a different effect, spurring us on to remember or discover other political (even anti-political) histories and imaginaries.

Anarchy, then, cannot be said to happen because it is first planned or modeled and then taught. Anarchist impulses appear here, there, anywhere, anytime, almost any place at least in tendency. (I suppose that this is also part of Kropotkin's claims: mutual aid, and anarchy, by extension, is one of the poles of human sociality and that of at least some animals and perhaps of other things as well.) It is of little interest to divide, in thought or action, any social practice from anarchy, even the most repressive or authoritarian ones. The question is: what is there here in which anything goes? What is there in this practice, this activity, in which relations are anarchic? When exploring this question (often all we can do is open-endedly explore or navigate through a given territory) we may be traversing unknown realms of dream and imagination. We can only be so concerned, therefore, with what is still all too offi cially recognized as "anarchism." We are more interested in anarchy's other names.

Let me give a sense to "anarchy." One way to talk about anarchy could borrow from an old philosophical toolbox and call itself ontological. To do so will entail a strong dose of what the Situationists called "parodic seriousness" (Knabb 1989: 9). I am thinking of an ontologically grounded or founded anarchism, in which anarchy is the Ultimate, the ground or foundation, the most fundamental reality. Such an anarchist philosophy would propose that being itself "is" anarchy, all the way down. As anarchy, being is something *and* nothing, wound in a weave entirely too chaotic to be resolved in any dialectic. The interest of making the claim is to intensify ourselves. Parodically, seriously, we engage in ontology and perhaps eventually undo it as well.[6]

Ontological anarchism need not be abstract. I suggest that we can grasp our immediate, everyday experience of desire and affect as the feeling of anarchy. I call our everyday experience, conscious or not, of desire and affect, the libidinal economy. It sounds like a science, but it isn't and can't be one.   [7] It is a voice, a dramatic staging of desire and affect in the realm of concepts and theories.

Of course the phrase is Freudian, but its most remarkable ontological challenges are found in texts such as that of Deleuze and Guattari, and Lyotard.  [8] In various ways, these texts propose that desires and affects, as intensities of existence itself, compose a primary, libidinal economy. (Why desire  *and* affect? I suppose these are two ways of grasping what is "libidinal" and its assemblage of intensities: "desires" emphasize flow and circulation; "affects," the atomic, passing states.) Multiplicities of desire and affect circulate before anything else does – or rather, in order for anything else to circulate. What there is, then, are ultimately impulses

– impulses to exist. These impulses, in their tendency to invest each other, in their inexorable succession, in their insistence *as* investment, are chaotic-creative. Thus we have attained an ontological dimension: not just the impulse of anarchy, but also the anarchy of impulse. *That* is what is utterly common, what has recurred under countless names in history. In the libidinal-affective economy, anything goes. Desiring and affective investments can and do change. And the libidinal economists did not invent them! Like mutual aid, anarchist impulses – desires and affects – are exemplarily what is already there, "in the air." Social formations are regimes of desire and affective regimes all the way down.

Félix Guattari once wrote some fine pages, utterly practical pages, on *the question of evaluation* of desiring investments in political groups. The evaluation was ethical and qualitative. He outlined a difference between "group subjects" and "subjugated groups": in the former case, external forces form the group's subjectivity; in the latter, the group assumes the production of its own subjectivity. Subjugated groups imagine themselves as eternal and tend to be rigid and unchanging; group subjects tend to grasp their finitude and are open to mutation.[9] Subjugated groups deny desiring investments will change. Since they do, of course, change, such groups are perpetually in conflict with themselves and lack insight into their own functioning. (They often deny that desire plays any role in their composition at all!) Group subjects are open to mutation, seeking more artful arrangements of desire and affect. Importantly, the two dispositions are almost always present in the same groups. What is crucial in Guattari's outline for an evaluation is that the transition from subjugated to subject group begins when the former attempts to analyze its own micro-politics of desire. At this stage, the proposal was largely political: a dissection of group subjectivity into authoritarian and liberatory impulses.

When Guattari and Deleuze wrote *Anti-Oedipus*, they repeated and ontologized this outline along the lines of a Spinozist evaluation of affects: the construction of joy and the destruction of sadness *Anti-Oedipus* concluded by announcing a series of radical practices to be called, parodically, "schizoanalysis."[10] In both cases we find the idea of a possible and necessary evaluation, political and ethical: that one could somehow pay attention to, grasp, even, the shifts of desire that go in liberatory directions, the affective branchings that lead to joy, and abandon the branchings that lead to sadness as dead ends. In short: given our impulsive life, some investments are better than others. So we need an ethics or a politics of the libidinal economy. Deleuze and Guattari's gamble, then, was to propose that what is liberatory in the libidinal economy is liberatory in every other sense.

However, it is also possible that one cannot evaluate in this way. That was the position Lyotard took in *Libidinal Economy*, harshly underlining the "anything goes" of the primary process, the amoral anonymity of the unconscious. If the "white-hot libidinal band" is anarchy itself, the anarchy of desire and affect, perhaps one cannot make any evaluation. One may compose or practice a politics or ethics of or for the libidinal economy, lining it up in one way or another with the political economy that it precedes; but as for the impulses themselves, it is impossible to take a position.[11]

In this sense, if one indeed cannot take a position in terms of our impulses, if desire and affect are not the ultimate ground of politics and ethics but their perpetual undoing, we should be very suspicious of analytic claims amounting to "the libidinal band *is good*, . . . the circulation of affects *is joyful*" (Lyotard 1993: 11). For Lyotard, this would be "building a new morality;" instead, he writes that "we need an *ars vitae.*"[12] Such suspicion is in its own way healthy: it does not sink us into inaction but rather shows how dramatic the ungrounded ground of anarchy can be, how risky it indeed is to speak impulsively in the name of, or just from, one's desires.

Accepting that anarchist activity pivots, consciously or not, on something like this libidinal economy, we can pose a first undecidable question (the place of skepticism) for anarchist philosophy. From one perspective, that of Guattari and Deleuze, the group-subject, the active and joyful affects, free desire (even!) would be the very stuff, presupposition and aim, of anarchist activity. They are best because they are the most intense manifestation of anarchy, and what is called freedom or liberation pivots on their analytic invention and discovery (and re-invention and re-discovery). Lyotard's perspective on this libidinal economy denies the possibility of such a politics, even ethics, of impulses. For Lyotard, all of this sounds like another not-quite-forgotten authoritarian morality. He rejects any grounding in nature and perhaps even points beyond grounding altogether. Here anarchist activity pivots on the acknowledgment of chaos, on the thoroughly ambiguous character of the libidinal economy, without claiming to opt for one aspect or another of it. Lyotard's libidinal economy re-synthesizes what was to be analyzed, leaving no such "aspects."

I wrote that the force of the ontological claim is to intensify *our selves.*[13] I mean all of them, good and bad, "inner" and "outer," fake and real, masks and more masks. One aspect of the – I no longer want to write ontology, but I am not yet proposing alternatives, so I'll write – ontological effects of libidinal economy might be a theory and practice of multiple selves. They are invented and discovered: discovered as the masks of impulses; invented as their passing proper names, designations, "identities" even.[14]

We could find or develop many kinds of selves: first, of course, we wear the masks of individualized, apparently "total" selves. They appropriate to themselves all the affects and desires that they can; they are either possessed or unique egos in Stirner's (1995: 35–61, *passim*) sense. But we could also find or develop many "partial egos," sub-individual selves, discovering masks closer to particular bundles of affects and desires, selecting among them, or allowing them to select: roughly, this corresponds to various passing dispositions, to nicknames, pet names, code names, tags, or stage personas. And, according to a similar procedure, but operating now not so much on the affects themselves but on their masks, group selves, "unions of egoists," according to the vicissitudes of temporary gatherings of individuals (Stirner 1995: 160–161). That every self is multiple is already implicit in Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of groups; we merely need to think, feel, and practice "the" self as a peculiarly condensed group (of impulses or individuals). The condensation *is* its self-relation or just its "self."

We are then the property of these ontological effects as much as they are ours: our objects and subjects, our gestures and postures, our languages and sign-systems, our acoustic and visual images. So many impulsive investments wearing so many masks, ever more carnivalesque, of an anarchic history in which anything goes. I mean to say that according to the ontological effects of libidinal economy, its voice or voicing of anarchy, selves could be grasped as a kind of artifice – as fetishes. The term "fetish" has no intended pejorative connotation here: that selves are multiple and fetishes is an ontological claim about how they are produced. We make ourselves in the practices that make us, and *that process is anarchy*, the anarchy of impulse and the ways of living that express or designate it. That process is the most interesting, according to this perspective, because in it – in inventing and discovering the selves that embody them, that bear their masks – we anarchists embody most forcefully the becoming that "is" being, the creation-destruction that "is" nature as perpetual emergence of novelty. It is interesting, then, not because it is right or just; and not because it can be taught; but because in it anything goes.

As far as we may seem to be here from recognizable anarchist discourses of an ethical or political sort, multiple selves could be a significant supplement to the healthy anarchist preoccupation with the multiplicity of forms of domination. "The state" is not and has never been a monstrous unity. It is rather a proliferation of tactics of domination, an interminable and repeated emphasis, an endless channel-ing of impulses on the side of "you are the property of"; and an equally inter-minable de-emphasis, disinterest on the side of "you own." As Stirner would have it: *possession*.

Or call it "authority." And rather than wondering at what illegitimate or legitimate authority might be, wonder at how it is that people desire their own domination, enjoy it even (both perspectives on libidinal economy share this wonder, see Lyotard 1993: 111 and Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 29–30). From one side of the libidinal economy there might be a way of freeing desire from its grip, affective life from its structures. From the other there might not. Either way, we cannot do without this question.

Though these two "poles" (paranoiac and schizophrenic? analytic and syn-thetic? skeptical and credulous?) of the libidinal economy might seem to compose an unsurpassable continuum of ways of life, anarchy could go even farther "down" than being. Rather than an ontology, or even just "ontological effects," of "the" libidinal economy, anarchists could desert the terrain of ontology altogether, and with it the desire for a center, for a One: *a* philosophy, *a* criterion for practice.

Mutual aid, direct action, etc., may be happening all the time, but not in every place. Attention to differences in location – where, not when, anarchy manifests in all intensity – underlines the importance of space, geohistorical space, the archipelago of territories that make us as we make them. For every practice implies and involves a territory. Anarchy, creative-destructive complex of impulses that it "is," insists not only throughout history, but in multiple places that conceive, contemplate, or model themselves in various ways, as various kinds of selves. These places are different territories, giving rise to varied consequent constitutions of territoriality (considering territory as land *and* body, both as components of

self).[15] When it comes to these locations, these territories, we can grasp them as artifices, as fetishes: the land, too, makes us as we make it.

That, it seems to me, is the importance of the transitional idea of our selves as multiple and as masks. At first it seems like an outgrowth of libidinal economy: desire and affect are unrepresentable, too intense to perceive, so we name them by their masks. Suddenly the thinking mutates, and libidinal economy is not the sole story of anarchy. We would like to know where the masks come from. This is the second undecidable question (or place of perspectivism): not a "when," as in, "when can desire and affect be liberated and liberatory?" but "where?" It is the question of territoriality, of place and of culture.

Yet another kind of anarchist philosophy is possible: a thinking entangled in, and by, the voids, real and apparent, between philosophies and cosmologies, curious about, even obsessed with geohistorical openings where other names and intuitions of anarchy thrive or fail, larval and half-formed. Indeed, these voids are also *places* inside and between instituted territories. In the interstices that compose a global archipelago of minority and marginality, there is suffering, as everywhere; there might also be a greater chance for something new and unexpected to insist for us. An ontogenesis, maybe, that is interesting or vital precisely in its fragility. Anarchists might rediscover the marvels of abandoning the imaginary of force, intensity, strength, and orient their practices around the larval, the fragile, the failed, even. Gathering with border dwellers, refugees, and exiles, cohabitating with multiply-tongued and -cultured mestizos of every sort, anarchists could learn what they share with those without one primary territory, those whose philosophy is fabricated piecemeal. To be interested in such popular forms of thought and action might amount to the path towards "pluritopic thinking."[16]

Such curiosity and the relation it wants, it seems, undoes the closure demanded by a certain ontology, maybe by ontology absolutely. The closure that shuts out the libidinal economy by making it secondary or subordinate; the closure that makes the impulses the property of a person; the closure that obscures how a mask is already the trace of a territory.

When anarchists decide upon (or claim to) a philosophy or ideology, one destined for victory, do we not ultimately imply we are done with masks and fetishisms? To have distinguished the true and the false, the strong and the weak? To produce but not be produced? The alternative would be to act as some (sexual, especially) fetishists among us today do and assume fetishes and masks in their risky and desirable positivity. Affirm fetishes, that is, beginning with the selves that have them (and are not just had by them). Our fetishes may not seem like fetishes. We might call them obsessions, preoccupations, recurring themes, repetitions, or dreams. Or just impulses when our impulses are known. But they all have this curious structure: we fabricate them, as feelings or situations, so that they can fabricate us.

"Thinking in which anything goes" is the name I give to the anarchist philo -sophy that speaks with *this* voice. To philosophize in this way is to grasp multiple worlds or natures and the larval cosmologies and proto-philosophies that do not explain but rather expand, add to, them as fabrications. Masks for masks:  *that* is

fabrication, its skepticism, and its pluralism. "Thinking in which anything goes" is an experiment with consciously fabricating one or more cosmologies, one or more philosophies. What happens when a complex of impulses that wants to contemplate, to theorize, to philosophize, to invent a cosmos, knows itself as such, discovers its own contemplation? The mask comes to life (O pleasure!): we make worlds populated with objects, subjects, discover, that is, new objectivities and subjectivities, as we make puppets, music, body armor, gardens, love, in a spirit of decentralized plurality (of anarchy) corresponding to the greatest health of the anarchist impulse.

Perhaps, then, the anarchist intuition, or "thinking in which anything goes," suspends ontology altogether. It is interested in and knows it emanates from anarchy without claiming or needing to make anarchy a ground. Suppose that, out of curiosity or circumstance, we found ourselves in conversation with someone who speaks, not of "anarchy" and "impulse," but of other things: gods, for example, since so many of us still repeat the slogan which began "*ni dieux.*" When we hear of gods (fetish gods!) we need not accept their *existence* in our philosophies. We may not be able to contemplate them, or embody them in our practices. But we can be interested in their *insistence*, along with that of any "entities" in foreign worlds that do not (for all that) exist for us. The other worlds are located for us precisely insofar as we are interested in the insistence of their "entities" – let us call them "intities" or maybe *chimeras*? – in or between ours. These "intities" provoke the question: "Are you interested in making *this* world, too?" The question is a lure for feeling, a creation of impulse, that offers an alternative to the all-too-imperious idea of anarchism as another ideology-seeking intellectual or political hegemony on grounds of having gotten "it" right. It is a way to recognize other instances of anarchy, which surely call themselves by other names and wear different masks; selves that experience anarchy otherwise.

Is it enough for anarchy to have but One philosophy or theory, however com - pelling its claims? Echoing Stirner: you anarchists, you say you want no masters? Then do not make Being your master! Dissolve the One, that egg laid by the philosopher-cop in your head! Just One philosophy, merely One reality [17] – does that not inherently limit who we can enter into dialogue or alliance with? (Not to speak of "federation"!) The desire for the One is precisely the mark, the umbilicus, of the attempt to stage anarchy as "anarchism." However noble I consider the protagonists of that attempt, I want to marginalize it, to return it to its local history and its regional sensibilities. One day we might be fortunate enough to regard all that as a matter of taste! Instead, I propose a decentralized federation of philo - sophies as well as practices and ways of life, forged in different communities and affirming diverse geohistories. Why not make councils and assemblies what they already are and can be: councils of thought, assemblies of opacity and communi- cation? How not to feel, in solitary silences, the lonely breakthroughs of other worlds?

According to *this* voice of anarchy, there is no single criterion for knowledge or practice, no need for that sort of universality. (The great and paradoxical anarchy of Neo-Platonism: The One is beyond Being and enumeration.) This is what seems

most anarchic: there is simply no defensible criterion as to the highest form of contemplation or the best way of doing. What we want to know, rather, is how to build relations, or relations of non-relation, between forms and ways of life. Criteria appear only in the sense that they are emergent in singular territories and modes of territoriality. They are irreparably     *local*.   There can be – ethically, politically, *and* anti-politically – no preferred, central, geohistorical location from which – in which – to think or do. Instead, we could begin to embody a multiplicity of criteria, not arranged in an abstract hierarchy but rather distributed in geo-historical spacetime, corresponding to multiple contingent instantiations-insis-tences or expressions of anarchy. Thus, becoming-anarchist . . .

There is no way to decide between various ways of being individuals or groups, except in local terms of broad or narrow geohistorical locations – or even situations. At any rate, traditions and the criticism of traditions. To decide, we would have to affirm or accept a central place, erecting a kind of epistemological or ontological statism. My impulse is, rather, to tell some story other than that of enclosure-scarcity-alienation. I prefer to affirm something, perhaps all, of our present conditions, without recourse to stupid optimism, or faith.

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# 4 The problem with infoshops and insurrection

## US anarchism, movement building, and the racial order

*Joel Olson*

Anarchism has always had a hard time dealing with race. In its classical era, which dates roughly from the time of Proudhon in the 1840s to the time of Goldman in the 1930s, it sought to inspire the working class to rise up against the church, the state, and capitalism (see, for example, Goldman 1969). This focus on "god, government, and gold" was revolutionary, but it didn't quite know how to confront the racial order in the United States. Most U.S. anarchist organizations and activists opposed racism in principle, but they tended to assume that it was a by-product of capitalism. That is, racism was a tool the bosses used to divide the working class that would disappear once class society was abolished. Anarchists appealed for racial unity against the bosses but they never analyzed white supremacy as a relatively autonomous form of power in its own right (Roediger 1986, 1994). With a few exceptions, contemporary anarchism (which dates roughly from Bookchin to Zerzan), has not done much better. Its analysis of hierarchy and domination has expanded the classical era's critique of class to all forms of oppression, including race. Yet with few exceptions, the contemporary American anarchist milieu still has not analyzed race as a form of power in its own right, or as a potential source of solidarity. As a consequence, anarchism remains a largely white ideology in the US.

Despite this troublesome tradition, American anarchist thought and practice can provide a powerful analysis of race. Some recent anarchist or anarchist-friendly organizations, including the journal *Race Traitor* and the organizations Love and Rage, Anarchist People of Color, and Bring the Ruckus, have gone some way toward developing such an analysis. Building on this small but significant tradition, I argue that anarchist theory has the intellectual resources to develop a powerful theory of racial oppression and strategies to fi ght it, but first it must confront two obstacles placed in front of it by the contemporary American anarchist milieu.

First, it must overcome an analysis of white supremacy that understands racism as but one "hierarchy" among others and an accompanying critique of racial solidarity among the oppressed as itself racist. Racial oppression is not simply one of many forms of domination; it has played a central role in the development of capitalism in the United States. As a result, struggles against racial oppression have a strategic centrality to them that other struggles do not. Further, racial

solidarity or "nationalism" among the victims of racial oppression is not an obstacle to "true" class consciousness. Rather, it is a central source of a radical class consciousness in the US.

Second, it must reject the current US anarchist milieu's "infoshops or insurrection" approach to politics and instead focus on movement building. Organizing working-class movements, which was so central to the Wobblies and other anarchist or anarchistic organizations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has given way today to creating "autonomous zones" like infoshops, art spaces, affinity groups, and collectives on the one hand, and glorifying large-scale protests, riots, and sabotage on the other. But in building infoshops and idolizing insurrection, the American anarchist milieu has let the vital work of organizing fall through the middle. An effective anarchist approach to race, then, requires setting new priorities regarding political activity.

An anarchist theory of race starts with three principles. First, politics is fundamentally a struggle for hegemony, or as Antonio Gramsci puts it, the struggle to define the "common sense" of a society (Gramsci 1971). Second, white supremacy is the central means of maintaining capitalist hegemony in the United States. Third, building mass movements against white supremacy (which may promote a heightened racial or national consciousness among those oppressed by it) is the central means by which a new hegemony, an "anarchist common sense," can be created. Given these three principles, I argue that contemporary anarchist thought should look to the Black freedom struggles for historical lessons and inspiration, since these struggles have been central to fighting white supremacy and provide models for radical social movements. To understand American history in order to change it, American anarchists should look less toward Europe and more toward the histories of peoples of color in their own back yard.

## Hierarchy, hegemony, and white supremacy

The intellectual framework of most of contemporary American anarchism rests on a critique of hierarchy. Murray Bookchin, perhaps the most important theorist of the concept, defines hierarchy as "a complex system of command and obedience in which elites enjoy varying degrees of control over their subordinates" (Bookchin 1982: 4). Capitalism, organized religion, and the state are important forms of hierarchy, but the concept includes other relations of domination such as of:

> the young by the old, of women by men, of one ethnic group by another, of "masses" by bureaucrats . . ., of countryside by town, and in a more subtle psychological sense, of body by mind, of spirit by a shallow instrumental rationality, and of nature by society and technology. (4)

Hierarchy pervades our social relations and reaches into our psyche, thereby "percolating into virtually every realm of experience" (63). The critique of hierarchy, Bookchin argues, is more expansive and radical than the Marxist critique of

capitalism or the classical anarchist critique of the state because it "poses the need to alter every thread of the social fabric, including the way we experience reality, before we can truly live in harmony with each other and with the natural world" (Bookchin 1986: 22–23).

This analysis of hierarchy has broadened contemporary anarchism into a critique of all forms of oppression, including capitalism, the state, and organized religion but also patriarchy, heterosexism, anthropocentrism, racism, and more. This critique, anarchists argue, is superior to class reductionism, or the argument that class exploitation is the primary form of oppression that all other oppressions can be "reduced" to. (Other versions of this argument substitute class with gender or nationality.) The political task according to contemporary anarchism is to attack all forms of oppression, not just a "main" one, because without an attack on hierarchy itself, other forms of oppression will not necessarily wither away after capitalism (or patriarchy, or colonialism) is destroyed.[1]

This critique of hierarchy provides contemporary anarchism with a broad, radical critique of society that goes beyond orthodox Marxist and anarchist approaches. It also helps connect the various forms of oppression to each other, paralleling the academic analysis of "intersectionality" that emerged from feminists of color in the 1980s (for example Anzaldúa 1987; Crenshaw 1989). Further, its critique of class reductionism is powerful, for while patriarchy is surely connected to capitalism, for example, it can hardly be reduced to it. Despite these strengths, however, the anarchist critique of all forms of oppression fails to provide a theory of US history because it is unable to distinguish those forms of oppression that have been central to the structuring and ordering of US society. In other words, it lacks the ability to explain how various forms of hierarchy are themselves hierarchically organized. The critique of hierarchy is persuasive in insisting that no one form of oppression is morally "worse" than another. But this does not mean that all forms of oppression have played an equal role in shaping the American social structure. The American state, for example, was not built on animal cruelty or child abuse, however pervasive and heinous these forms of domination are. Rather, as I will argue below, it was built on white supremacy, which has shaped nearly every other form of oppression in the United States, including class, gender, religion, and the state (and animal cruelty and child abuse). Understanding white supremacy, therefore, should be central to any American anarchist theory, and developing political programs to fight it should be a central component of anarchist strategy, even though it is not morally "more evil" than other forms of oppression.

The critique of hierarchy, in other words, mistakenly blends a *moral* condemnation of all forms of oppression with a *political and strategic* analysis of how power functions in the US. It resists the notion that in certain historical contexts, certain forms of hierarchy play a more central role in shaping society than do others. It assumes that because all forms of oppression are evil and interconnected that fighting any form of oppression will have the same revolutionary impact. For this reason, it assumes that there is no more need to understand white supremacy than, say, vivisection, since both are equally evil and interconnected forms of domination.

One of the key tasks of anarchist theory, then, should be to develop a theory of history that can explain the United States and suggest strategies for building an anti-capitalist movement there. Such a history should begin with the rich tradition of Black radical thought, which has examined the contradictions of capitalism in the US in more depth and power than any other literature. One of the great theorists in this tradition is W.E.B. Du Bois.

In his classic *Black Reconstruction*, Du Bois argues that the primary reason for the failure of the development of a significant anti-capitalist movement in the United States is white supremacy. Rather than uniting with Black workers to overthrow the ruling class and build a new society, as classical anarchist and communist theory predicts, white workers throughout American history have chosen to side with capital. Through a tacit but nonetheless real agreement, the white working class ensures the continuous and relatively undisturbed accumulation of capital by policing the rest of the working class rather than uniting with it. In exchange, white workers receive racial privileges, largely paid for by capitalists and guaranteed by the democratic political system. Du Bois calls these privileges "the public and psychological wages" of whiteness.

> It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools. The police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts, dependent upon their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness. Their vote selected public officials, and while this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect upon their personal treatment and the deference shown them.
>
> (Du Bois 1992: 700–701)

At the time of the first publication of *Black Reconstruction* in 1935, these wages included the right to vote, access to desired jobs, an expectation of higher wages and better benefits, the capacity to sit on juries, the right to enjoy public accommodations, and the right to consider oneself the equal of any other. Today they include, in part, the right to assume one's success is due entirely to one's own effort, the right to decent treatment by the police, the right to the lowest mortgage rates, the right to feel relatively immune from criminal prosecution, the right to declare that institutionalized racial discrimination is over, and the right to be a full citizen in a liberal democratic state.

The racial order in the United States, then, is essentially a *cross-class alliance* between capital and one section of the working class (Olson 2004). The group that makes up this alliance is defined as "white." It acts like a club: its members enjoy certain privileges, so that the poorest, most wretched members share, in certain respects, a status higher than that of the most esteemed persons excluded from it (Ignatiev and Garvey 1996). Membership in the white "club" is dynamic and determined by existing membership. Richard Wright once said, "Negroes are

Negroes because they are treated like Negroes" (Wright 1957: 148). Similarly, whites are whites because they are treated like whites. The treatment one receives in a racial order defines one's race rather than the other way around: you are not privileged because you are white; you are white because you are privileged.

Slaves and their descendants have typically been the antithesis of this alliance, but various other groups have occupied the subordinate position in the racial binary, including Native Americans, Latinos/as, Chinese Americans, and others. Some, such as Irish and Jewish immigrants, started out in the subordinate category but over time successfully became white (Ignatiev 1995; Brodkin 1999). Others, such as Mexican American elites in California in the nineteenth century, started out as white but lost their superior status and were thrown into the not-white group (Almaguer 1994).

This system of racial oppression has been central to the maintenance of capitalist hegemony in the United States. If, as Marx and Engels argue in the *Communist Manifesto* (1948), capitalism tends to bring workers together by teaching them how to cooperate, and if this cooperation has revolutionary tendencies ("what the bourgeoisie produces, above all, are its own gravediggers"), then capitalists need to figure out ways to break up the very cooperation that their system of production creates.[2] Now, different societies have developed different ways of disrupting class solidarity, often by giving advantage to one set of workers over others. Perhaps in Turkey it's through the subordination of the Kurds, perhaps in Saudi Arabia it's through the subordination of women, perhaps in Bolivia it's through the subordination of the indigenous population, perhaps in Western Europe it's through social democracy. In the United States, it has been through the racial order. The wages of whiteness have undermined the solidarity that the working class otherwise develops daily in its activities. It has fundamentally shaped other hierarchies, such as gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and religion, refracting them through its prism. In so doing, it has contributed to making capitalism seem like "common sense," even to many (particularly white) workers who stumble under its burdens.

The racial order in the United States, then, is not merely one form of hierarchy among others. It is a form of hierarchy that shapes and organizes the others in order to ensure capitalist accumulation. Morally, it is not more evil than other forms of domination, but politically it has played a more central role in organizing American society. Strategically speaking, then, one would think that the racial order would be a central target of American anarchist analysis and strategy. Curiously, this has not been the case.

## Between infoshops and insurrection

It is surprising how little thought the American anarchist milieu has given to strategy, much less to a strategy for breaking up the racial order. Broadly speaking, the contemporary American anarchist milieu upholds two loose models that it presents as strategies and repeats over and over with little self-reflection or criticism. I call these models infoshops and insurrection.

An infoshop is a space where people can learn about radical ideas, where radicals can meet other radicals, and where political work (such as meetings, public forums, fundraisers, etc.) can get done. In the infoshop strategy, infoshops and other "autonomous zones" model the free society (Bey 1985). Building "free spaces" inspires others to spontaneously create their own, spreading "counter-institutions" throughout society to the point where they become so numerous that they overwhelm the powers that be. The very creation of anarchist free spaces has revolutionary implications, then, because it can lead to the "organic" (i.e. spontaneous, undirected, nonhierarchical) spreading of such spaces throughout society in a way that eventually challenges the state. An insurrection, meanwhile, is the armed uprising of the people. According to the insurrection strategy, anarchists acting in affinity groups or other small informal organizations engage in actions that encourage spontaneous uprisings in various sectors of society. As localized insurrections grow and spread, they combine into a full-scale revolution that overthrows the state and capital and makes possible the creation of a free society.[3]

Infoshops serve very important functions and any movement needs such spaces. Likewise, insurrection is a central event in any revolution, for it turns the patient organizing of the movement and the boiling anger of the people into an explosive confrontation with the state. The problem is when infoshops and insurrection are seen as revolutionary strategies in themselves rather than as part of a broader revolutionary movement. In the infoshop model, autonomous spaces become the movement for radical change rather than serving it. The insurrection model tries to replace movement building with spontaneous upheaval rather than seeing upheaval as an outcome of social movements. The infoshops and insurrection models, in other words, both misunderstand the process of social transformation. Radical change may be initiated by spontaneous revolts that are supported by subterranean free spaces, but these revolts are almost always the product of prior political movement building, and their gains must be consolidated by political organizations, not the spaces such organizations use.

Social movements, then, are central to radical change. The classical anarchists understood this well, for they were very concerned to build working-class movements, such as Bakunin's participation in the International Working Men's Association, Berkman and Goldman's support for striking workers, Lucy Parson's work in the International Working People's Association, and the Wobblies' call for "One Big Union." (To be sure, there were also practices of building free spaces and engaging in "propaganda by the deed" in classical anarchism, but these were not the sole or even dominant approaches.) Yet surprisingly much of the contemporary anarchist milieu has abandoned movement building. In fact, the infoshops and insurrection models both seem to be designed, at least in part, to avoid the slow, difficult, but absolutely necessary work of building mass move-ments. Indeed, anarchist publications like *Green Anarchy* are explicit about this, deriding movement building as inherently authoritarian (for example Morefus n.d.). The anarchist emphasis on hierarchy contributes to this impatience with movement building because the kind of political work it encourages are occasional

protests or "actions" against myriad forms of domination rather than sustained organizing based on a coherent strategy to win political space in a protracted struggle.

A revolution is not an infoshop, or an insurrection, or creating a temporary autonomous zone, or engaging in sabotage; it cannot be so easy, so evolutionary, so "organic," so absent of difficult political struggle. A revolution is an actual historical event whereby one class overthrows another and – in the anarchist ideal – thereby makes it possible to abolish all forms of oppression. Such revolutions are the product of mass movements: a large group of people organized in struggle against the state and/or other institutions of power to achieve their demands. When movements become powerful enough, when they sufficiently weaken elites, and when fortune is on their side, they lead to an insurrection, and then perhaps a revolution. Yet in much of the anarchist milieu today, building free spaces and/or creating disorder are regarded as the movement itself rather than components of one. Neither the infoshops nor insurrection models build movements that can express the organized power of the working class. Thus, the necessary, difficult, slow, and inspiring process of building movements falls through the cracks between sabotage and the autonomous zone.

Ironically, this leads many anarchists to take an elitist approach to political work. Divorced from a social movement, the strategy of building autonomous zones or engaging in direct action with small affinity groups assumes that radicals can start the revolution. But revolutionaries don't make revolutions. Millions of ordinary and oppressed people do. Anarchist theory and practice today provides little sense of how these people are going to be part of the process, other than to create their own "free spaces" or to spontaneously join the festivals of upheaval. This is an idealistic, ahistorical, and, ironically, an elitist approach to politics, one that is curiously separated from the struggles of the oppressed themselves.

C.L.R. James argues that the task of the revolutionary is to recognize, record, and engage: *recognize* in the struggles of the working class the effort to build a new society within the shell of the old;     *record* those struggles and show the working class this record so they can see for themselves what they are doing and how it fits into a bigger picture; *engage* in these struggles with the working class, participating rather than dominating, earning leadership rather than assuming it, and applying lessons learned from previous struggles (James *et al.* 1974).[4] This is a much more modest role for revolutionaries than germinating the revolution or sparking it, and one that is clearly consistent with anarchist politics. Yet the infoshops and insurrectionary models reject this approach for a top-down one in which anarchists "show the way" for the people to follow, never realizing that throughout history, revolutionaries (including anarchist ones) have always been trying to follow and catch up to the masses, not the other way around.

## Movement building and the racial order

Which brings us back to the racial order. The desertion of movement building by the bulk of the contemporary American anarchist milieu has led it to ignore the

most important and radical political tradition in the United States: the Black free-dom movements against slavery, segregation, and other forms of racial oppression. The intellectual tradition of American anarchism has always looked more toward Europe (and sometimes Mexico) than the United States. American anarchists know more about the Paris Commune, the Kronstadt rebellion, the Mexican Revolution, the Spanish Civil War, Paris 1968, the German Autonomen, and the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas than they do about the abolitionist movement, Reconstruction, the Sharecroppers Union, the civil rights movement, or the Black/Brown/Red power movements. It's not that American anarchists and history are ignored – Haymarket, Berkman, Parsons, de Cleyre, Goldman, Bookchin, and Zerzan all have their place in the anarchist pantheon – but these persons and events are curiously detached from an understanding of the social conditions that produced them, especially the racial order that has dominated US history. (One consequence of this European focus, I suspect, is that it has contributed to the predominantly white demographic of the contemporary anarchist milieu.)

The ignorance of Black freedom movements is so profound that even anarchistic tendencies within them get ignored. Nat Turner led a slave uprising in 1831 that killed over fifty whites and struck terror throughout the South; it should clearly count as one of the most important insurrections in American history. William Lloyd Garrison, a leader of the abolitionist movement and one of the first pacifists, is often described by historians as a "Christian Anarchist" (for example Perry 1973) yet is almost never included in anarchist-produced histories. The Black-led Reconstruction government in South Carolina from 1868–1874, which Du Bois dubbed the "South Carolina Commune," arguably did far more toward building socialism than the Paris Commune in 1871 ever did. Ella Baker's anti-authoritarian critique of Martin Luther King, Jr. encouraged young civil rights workers to create their own autonomous and directly democratic organization, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), arguably the most important direct action civil rights group. Further, racial consciousness produced in these has often been more broad, radical, and *international* than the conscious-ness produced in other struggles (see, for example, Kelley 2002; Singh 2004). Yet these persons and events curiously form no part of the anarchist milieu's historical tradition.[5]

In sum, the Black freedom struggles have been the most revolutionary tradition in American history, yet the anarchist milieu is all but unaware of it. I suggest that there is more to learn about anarchism in the US from Harriet Tubman, Abby Kelley, Ned Cobb (aka Nate Shaw), Malcolm X, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, James Forman, Angela Davis and Assata Shakur than from Proudhoun, Kropotkin, Bakunin, Berkman or Goldman. There is more to learn from abolitionism than Haymarket, more from Reconstruction than the Spanish Civil War, more from the current social conditions of Black America than the global South. To recognize this, however, requires that the American anarchist milieu modify its critique of hierarchy in order to understand how forms of unjust power are themselves organized. It requires it to abandon the infoshops and insurrections models for a commitment to building movements. It requires it to

look to Mississippi more than Paris or Russia. It requires, in other words, that the milieu view the US from a non-white perspective.

This is not to say that American anarchism has been completely silent on race. The anarchist critique of white supremacy has been underway since at least the 1990s, with the work of Black anarchists such as Kuwasi Balagoon and Lorenzo Komboa Ervin, the journal *Race Traitor* (which was sympathetic to the anarchist milieu and did much to develop it intellectually regarding race), and anarchist organizations such as Love and Rage, Black Autonomy, Anarchist People of Color, and the anarchist-influenced Bring the Ruckus. [6] Not coincidentally, these organizations also tend or tended to emphasize movement building rather than infoshops or insurrection. It is this tradition that influences my analysis here. But it is hardly a dominant perspective in the anarchist milieu today.

## After the Berlin wall

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, many anarchists were confident that anarchism would fill the void left by state communism and once again become the dominant ideological challenge to liberalism, like it was before the Russian Revolution. This confidence, even exuberance, was on display throughout the anarchist milieu in the United States in publications such as *Anarchy, Fifth Estate*, and *Profane Existence*; in the creation of new organizations such as the Network of Anarchist Collectives; and in the burst of anarchist infoshops opening up in Chicago, Minneapolis, San Francisco, DC, New York, and elsewhere. Yet anarchism never filled the void. It never captured the hearts and minds of masses of ordinary people.

A similar optimism followed the uprising in Seattle in 1999. Anarchists again confidently predicted the emergence of a new, powerful anarchist movement. Yet once again, it didn't happen. Today anarchism in the US is in about the same place it was in 1989: a static ideology and a loose milieu of largely white twenty-somethings, kept together by occasional gatherings, short-lived collectives, the underground music scene, and a handful of magazines and websites.

What went wrong in 1989 and 1999? Why hasn't anarchism filled the void left by the collapse of communism? Why hasn't anarchism grown as a movement and a philosophy? Most of the answer, no doubt, lies in the fact that anarchists grossly underestimated the power of capitalism and liberalism *All* socialist ideologies lost popularity with the fall of the Soviet Union, since there no longer seemed to be a viable, "actually existing" alternative to capitalism. Capitalism and liberalism appeared invincible and the world system seemed to be at "the end of history." September 11, 2001 brought a new antagonist to global capital – religious fundamentalisms – but it hardly represents a libertarian alternative. World events, in other words, smothered libertarian socialism between neoliberalism and fundamentalism.

But part of the problem, I have suggested, lies with anarchism itself. The failure to develop a theory of US history that recognizes the centrality of racial oppres-

sion, combined with a related failure to concentrate on building mass movements, has contributed to anarchism's continued marginalization.

But what if this was to change? What if American anarchists went from building infoshops and plotting insurrections to building movements, particularly movements against the racial order? (They could still build free spaces and encourage insurrection, of course, but these efforts would be part of a broader strategy rather than strategies in themselves.) What if anarchists, instead of concentrating on creating "autonomous zones" on the US–Mexico border, as some have tried to do as recently as 2007, worked to build movements in resistance to anti-immigrant laws? What if anarchists, instead of planning (largely ineffective) clandestine direct actions with their small affinity groups, worked to build movements against the police, who are at the forefront of maintaining the color line? What if anarchists, in addition to supporting jailed comrades, worked with family members of incarcerated people to build movements against prisons? What if anarchists stopped settling for autonomous zones and furtive direct actions and focused on undermining the cross-class alliance and on changing the "common sense" of this society?

The anarchist milieu might just build a movement.

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# 5 Addressing violence against women

## Alternatives to state-based law and punishment

*Emily Gaarder*

## Introduction

All too often, anarchists assume that simply "being" an anarchist marks a stance against all oppression. The result is a lack of attention to issues such as gender. Gender and patriarchy are undertheorized in most anarchist thought; thus it follows that anarchism has not adequately addressed the practical concerns of women. Anarchists who also identify as feminists have struggled with these theoretical and practical tensions. A most obvious "practical" need of women is freedom from physical and sexual abuse, and response to such harms when they do occur. In this chapter, I explore the following question: How can we prevent violence against women and respond to such harms without relying on law and governmental authority?

Anarchists have not been clear about such topics, except to surmise that violence will diminish when people are freed from the domination of the State. The shooting of Voltairine de Cleyre, the nineteenth-century anarchist feminist, is a prime illustration of this. In December of 1902, de Cleyre was on her way to give a tutoring lesson. As she stepped onto a streetcar, Herman Helcher, a former pupil, raised a pistol and shot her point blank in the chest. He fi red three more times, lodging subsequent bullets in her back. De Cleyre managed to run half a block before collapsing. The bullets were never removed from her body and she suffered the rest of her life from the effects of the wounds (Avrich 1978).

De Cleyre refused to identify Helcher as her assailant or to press charges against him. She instead dictated the following statement to the *Philadelphia North American* (1914: 174–175):

> The boy who, they say, shot me is crazy. Lack of proper food and healthy labor made him so. He ought to be put into an asylum. It would be an outrage against civilization if he were sent to jail for an act which was the product of a diseased brain.
>
> Shortly before I was shot the young man sent me a letter which was pitiful – nothing to eat, no place to sleep, no work. Before that I had not heard from him for two years. . . .
>
> I have no resentment towards the man. If society were so constituted as to allow every man, woman and child to lead a normal life there would be no

violence in this world. It fills me with horror to think of the brutal acts done in the name of government. Every act of violence finds its echo in another act of violence. The policeman's club breeds criminals.

Several months later, she delivered a lecture entitled "Crime and Punishment," criticizing the hypocrisy of the state and denouncing the prison system. She accused the government of being the "chiefest of murderers," arguing that the greatest crimes are committed by the state itself (1914: 184). As de Cleyre rightly proclaims, violence must be understood within the social context of inequality. What ends up missing from the analysis, however, is consideration of the gendered violence that emerges within a male-dominated society. De Cleyre's incredible consistency of principles is both remarkable and sad to me. Her anarchism did not have space for acknowledging the harm done to her. Her position that "forgiveness is better than wrath" is admirable, as is her analysis of the State's role in crimi - nality. But I can't help but wish that de Cleyre had enjoyed the support of a community or a theoretical framework that could have allowed her to address the problem of men's violence against women without invoking the rule of the State.

This chapter invites such a dialogue. I begin with a brief introduction to anarchist feminist thought regarding gender oppression. I then turn to feminists in the fields of law and criminology who have similarly questioned relying on the State to advance justice for women. This is followed by a discussion of restorative justice, a philosophy and movement which is gaining ground as an alternative to the state-controlled apparatus of crime response and punishment. Finally, I consider whether the community-based model of restorative justice can adequately address a specific form of gendered oppression: violence against women.

## Gender oppression

Anarcha-feminists see one of the primary loci of women's oppression (in fact, all oppressions) as the State. The State and patriarchy are seen as twin aberrations. To destroy the State is to destroy a major agent of patriarchy; to abolish patriarchy is to abolish the State as it currently exists. Anarcha-feminists argue that a fully actualized anarchist movement must transform all hierarchical relations – government and religious institutions, but also sexuality and the family (Ackelsberg 1991). Instead of treating class, race, or gender divisions as the basic form of domination upon which all others depend, they see hierarchy and formalized authority as the mechanism that both creates and supports all forms of oppression. Anarchist feminism offers "an analytical model that could accommodate multiple relationships of domination and subordination without necessarily insisting that one is more fundamental than the others" (Ackelsberg 1991:13).

A major impasse for anarchist feminists is whether and how the end of the State will equal the end of patriarchy. In a sense, anarchist feminism relies on the notion that when the State ceases to exist, all forms of oppression (for example, racism, sexism) will diminish as well. Is the cause of, and remedy to, gender oppression (and one of its most obvious manifestations – sexual and physical violence by men

against women) entirely bound up with the problem of the State? An alternative viewpoint suggests that "[m]en's forms of dominance over women have been accomplished socially as well as economically, prior to the operation of law, without express state acts, often in intimate contexts, as everyday life" (MacKinnon 1989: 161). This begs an important question: Would gender oppression (and violence) persist within a non-State society?

We know quite a bit about the societal conditions that help create and perpetuate gendered violence. Harms such as rape and domestic violence are "gendered" in that "they are indicative of sex/gender power relations" (Daly 2002: 67). Men who abuse women usually hold strong beliefs about male entitlement, privilege, and gendered expectations of acceptable behavior for women. These beliefs are created and maintained by social institutions that foster inequality. An abuser's violence is a choice designed to control and intimidate. When women don't have the same access or opportunities to make decisions (whether personally or politically), or to support themselves and their children, then it becomes difficult for women to access their personal power and autonomy. This is found not only in individual households but also in the economic, cultural, and political structures of many societies. In cases of intimate violence, women are punished when they resist the rigid gender story of men being in charge – when they disagree, when they don't keep the kids quiet, when they want access to the money. In partnerships and households where people share the decision-making, interpersonal violence is very rare. Societies where people share decision-making power and have equal access to basic needs such as housing and food would prove crucial in untangling the web of gender oppression.

The goals of anarchism – freedom and personal liberty – fit with this. Yet unlearning gender oppression involves more than this. While we can acknowledge that social inequities greatly contribute to violence, "this indictment does not go far enough in explaining a universal and ubiquitous phenomenon: men's physical and sexual abuse of women and children they know" (Daly 2002: 64). A great deal more needs to be said on the topic, and such a dialogue should involve the voices of women who have experienced gendered violence. In lieu of police or legal interventions, we need practical alternatives to interrupt the ever-present fear of violence in women's lives – be it stalking, rape, sexual harassment, or battering. How do we respond when a man threatens to kill his partner if she leaves him? When someone harasses a former girlfriend via text message 50 times a day? When a woman wakes up from a night of partying to discover that her "friend" has raped her?

I've heard many "unofficial" reports about the innovative ways that anarchists and feminists have responded to gendered violence. We need to hear more of these stories – about what worked, what didn't, and why – to build a working knowledge of mutual aid and direct action with regard to violence against women. Even if gender oppression will diminish alongside the dismantling of the State, a plan is needed for the interim, as well as bridges to walk across. The process of building alternatives and learning how to live them will be a long one. Thus, a viable anarchist response to violence against women is sorely needed.

## Feminists question the law and criminal justice system

History illustrates that the law, along with other institutions of the State, is aligned structurally with both capitalism and patriarchy and plays a key role in maintaining the ruling relations of society (Snider 1998). Engaging in debate *within* the law rather than questioning the *necessity* of it ultimately reinforces the power of the law to dictate and define women's lives (Smart 1989). Critiques of state punishment often argue that such responses to violence exemplify forms of power and control. Messerschmidt (1993), for instance, describes policing as a mechanism by which the status of masculine authority and dominance is secured. There is also a call to question the "authorization" of violence that is perpetuated when the State itself commissions violent responses to violence, such as mass incarceration and capital punishment. Reliance on the criminal justice system helps to legitimize the expansion of the prison-industrial complex. Accordingly, a growing number of feminist scholars and activists recognize the effects of harsher penalties on the more marginalized members of society, and caution against mobilizing class and racial biases in the name of feminist justice.

Some feminists continue to fight for tougher laws and enforcement against gendered violence. They do so not only because such action may offer relief to women experiencing violence, but also law is one means of communicating (at a societal level) that such acts are wrong (Daly 2002). Barbara Hudson (1998: 45) frames the dilemma this way: "How does one move away from punitive reactions which – even when enforced – further brutalize perpetrators, without, by leniency of reaction, giving the impression that sexualized . . . violence is acceptable behavior?" It is thus clear that some feminists remain uncertain about engaging with the law to effect social change. Yet the question remains: If not the law, then what remains to ensure women's freedom from men's violence? As DeKeserdy and Schwartz (1991: 163) explain: "The problems for these dissenters is that while they are sure that increased intervention is a problem, many cannot locate an alternative to policing which can provide at least some protection to women from the predatory hordes of men who populate society."

## Restorative justice: philosophy and practices

How is restorative justice[1] different from our current justice system? Restorative approaches to justice focus on repairing the harms caused by crime and creating an active role for the affected parties. Restorative justice interventions emphasize recognition of harm, healing processes, and reintegration. The interventions work toward social justice through healing encounters between victims and offenders, sponsored by community members. Sullivan and Tifft (2005) suggest the trans - formative potential of restorative justice, citing its emphasis on engaging in non-hierarchical social processes with regard to conflicts, disputes, and in "everyday life." While restorative justice has sometimes been linked to anarchist and other non-state models of justice (Sullivan and Tifft 2005), it is not explicitly aligned with anarchism, nor would many of its advocates identify it as such. Restorative justice often relies on some relationship with the State to obtain referrals from

probation agents, judges, and other court officials, or to have contact with incar-
cerated persons. However, many programs are community-based and driven by
unpaid volunteers.

Although restorative justice is often touted as a "new" approach to criminal
justice, it is actually an age-old approach that has been used in many parts of the
world. Its roots lie in early philosophies of the New Zealand Maori, North
American Indians, and Confucian, Buddhist and Christian religious traditions
(Braithwaite 1999: 5). Some common expressions of restorative justice today
are victim–offender dialogue, family group conferencing, and circles. Victim–
offender dialogue involves meetings, facilitated by a trained mediator, during
which victims and offenders are encouraged to identify the harm done, to make
things right, and to consider future actions (Van Ness and Strong 2006). Family
group conferences are commonly used in New Zealand and Australia as a response
to juvenile crime. Circles (variably called sentencing, peacemaking, or healing
circles) bring people together "to understand one another, strengthen bonds,
and solve community problems" (Pranis 2005: 3). They draw from the Native
American tradition of using a talking piece, an object which is passed from person
to person in a circle. This process relies on the collective wisdom of communities
to make decisions and resolve conflict. Circles are widely used by native
communities in North America and are growing in popularity in states such as
Minnesota.

### Widening the net of social responsibility: involving communities

Restorative justice accords a central role to communities in resolving crime prob-
lems. Communities provide support *and* enforcement; both are deemed necessary
to stop violence and to repair the harms caused by it. Friends, families, and
neighbors support victims by acknowledging the harm and by offering concrete
help in the future. The community also regulates the behavior of those who do
harm. The restorative approach is "unreservedly for net-widening, except it is nets
of community rather than state control that are widened" (Braithwaite and Daly
1994: 201). Social disapproval is a regulatory mechanism in the restorative justice
model. The offender is both held to stopping his/her misconduct, and is supported
to do so.

Processes in which members of one's own community participate are more
likely to address race, ethnicity, and culture without stereotyping. Restorative
justice also has the potential to increase victims' likelihood of reporting crime
since it offers an array of flexible interventions. These provide an alternative for
people (and communities) who distrust the criminal justice system. Rape-crisis
programs and domestic violence shelters demonstrate that communities play a
crucial role in responding to violence against women. Yet community efforts are
often fragmented or relegated to a single organization that is perpetually under -
funded and understaffed. We should not assume that communities have enough
resources (emotional, material, or otherwise) to either garner support for women
or adequately sanction men's violence. Stubbs (1997) argues that some women

turn to the courts precisely because their family and friends were not supportive, could not offer support that was effective, or because such assistance had resulted in violence directed at the women's supporters. Additionally, Stubbs points out that the work of the "community" might in reality fall mainly on women. "Community involvement must be more than a euphemism for the unpaid work of women" (Stubbs 2002: 14).

Additionally, what if the community norms being clarified reify existing power structures such as sexism and racism? Community and/or family members may have adopted the offender's rationalizations about their behavior. McGillivray and Comasky's (1999) interviews with battered Aboriginal women, for instance, shed doubt on whether women would feel safe or supported in community-driven processes. One woman remarked, "I guess it could be a good thing. But it could be a scary thing, too, depending on who's involved and whose family is there" (1999: 128). Another woman said, "It might work as long as there is good supervision where the person or victim didn't have to worry about being stalked or maybe even killed" (1999: 128). The activist organization Incite! Women of Color against Violence (2008) raises similar concerns about how to create true community accountability. As they observe, "anti-prison activists often uncritically support restorative justice programs as alternatives to incarceration without considering how to ensure these models provide safety for survivors."

### Using restorative justice to address domestic violence

In the following sections, I offer a brief vision of what a restorative intervention might look like, focusing on the specific example of domestic violence. While restorative justice holds potential to reduce and respond to gendered violence, it is largely untested terrain. Feminist scholars and victim advocates have raised important concerns about using restorative processes in domestic violence, and their questions deserve considerable attention[2] As Ruth Busch puts it, "It is a wise caution: one which we ignore in the area of domestic violence at the peril of others' lives" (2002: 224).

The example outlined below is based on both current information on existing programs, and my own experiences within a community-based restorative justice group that recently began using sentencing circles for cases of domestic violence. This community group met for approximately four years before testing a pilot case. I make this point to again highlight the preparation and care that should be used when intervening in cases of intimate violence. Interventions carry risks of retaliation against victims, and communities need to have the knowledge, resources, and follow-through if they wish to undertake such a process.

### Basics of the circle

The community has an opportunity to interrupt cycles of abuse by holding abusers accountable, supporting victims, and serving as allies to both the victim and abuser in their healing transition toward a healthy life in the community. Sentencing

circles can provide both the support and enforcement necessary to stop domestic violence and to repair the harms caused by it. The circle is comprised of diverse community members [3] who determine the dynamics and harm involved in the offense, appropriate sanctions, restoration to the victim(s), and reintegration of the offender to the community he has injured. All decisions are made by consensus, including any "sentence" that the offender is expected to follow. [4] Circles meet weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, usually for at least one year. Domestic violence tends to involve entrenched thought patterns and histories of abuse, so circles continue as long as the process is deemed helpful or necessary. Because the context of each offense is different, individual strategies are created according to the needs of the victim and abuser, giving the affected parties opportunities to find solutions appropriate for their family and culture.

*Safety*

Victim well-being and safety is primary. Victims choose   *whether* and *how* they wish to participate in the process. Many will choose not to attend circles involving their perpetrator, but may offer information through a third party, such as a victim advocate. Victims are offered their own healing circles, held separately from the offender's circle. Victims need to have their stories heard without blame or judgment, have a voice in holding the abuser accountable, and define what support they need to feel safe and heal. A victim advocate and survivors of domestic violence are always present in sentencing circles for abusers. At least one circle member keeps in regular contact with the victim, outside the presence of the offender, to assess safety and other concerns on an ongoing basis.

*Offender change*

The circle prioritizes the need for abusers to take responsibility and to be held accountable. Abuser accountability is defined as understanding the impact of his actions, agreeing to participate in a process to examine the values and patterns behind his abuse, and taking action to change his behavior. While the circle may condemn his actions, they also offer support to help him change. The offender is chosen through a screening process, to identify whether he is ready and willing to participate in such a process. This includes taking responsibility for the violence, and an expressed desire to change. Application circles also assess whether the circle has adequate resources to match the needs of the applicant. For instance, offenders with untreated mental illness or active drug/alcohol addictions are not good candidates for circles. Such individuals generally need interventions beyond what a community circle can provide. While circles can be extremely helpful in helping people maintain sobriety, offenders need to be clean (and make a commitment to stay that way) in order to do the work.

*Addressing root causes and power imbalances*

Community members are not necessarily well educated about domestic violence. They may blame victims, minimize harms, or feel confused about how to help. Domestic violence is a result of complex factors, which include the presence of oppression and sexism in society, socialization, inability to deal with emotions, and an individual's decision to use abusive actions to gain power and control over another person. Restorative practices need to acknowledge the power imbalances that exist between a victim and abuser, and train all sentencing circle participants to understand the specific dynamics of domestic violence. Circles need to be sensitive to – and capable of interrupting – excuses for violence and abusive dynamics that might get acted out (however subtly) in a circle.

*Emphasis on healing processes*

Victims/survivors are given concrete means of support and opportunities for healing. Healing involves the opportunity for story-telling in a forum that encourages the telling and validates the story. Judith Herman (1997) argues that this sort of public acknowledgment is often essential for the ultimate resolution of trauma. Public narratives by victims can also be viewed as inherently political. She writes, "Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of victims" (1997: 1). Abusers are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and are supported in changing their behaviors. The aim is the restoration of healthy human beings and relationships, and the empowerment of both victim and abuser to live free of violence.

## Conclusions

A well-known goal of anarchism is the dismantling of the State. "But it is not enough to destroy," wrote Kropotkin; "We must also know how to build . . ." (1993: 115). Any critique of the State begs the question of what should *replace* the State and how to create such a project. We must address the question of whether communities can prevent and respond to gendered harms without the State, and what it will take to do so. Critics of restorative justice wonder whether such practices work only in utopian settings – "unlivable" given the current state of affairs. The same question has been asked of anarchism. Ferrell responds, "Our inability to imagine alternatives, or to imagine that alternatives can work, may tell us more about the power of the present system than about the alternatives themselves" (1999: 106).

Anarchism theorizes that the State has a major interest in controlling all methods of conflict resolution and power distribution. The power of our current institutions has virtually robbed us of our ability to share communal knowledge, mutually aid others, and directly respond to ethical problems. Anarchism contends that one of the reasons community members are less likely to intervene in matters of crime is

they have lost a sense of responsibility for others and the "communal knowledge" needed to deal with conflict (Sullivan 1986–87).

How *do* people begin to behave in ways that develop their own sense of compassion, competency, and capacity? These questions are crucial to any kind of revolution, "since a sense of one's own capacities and powers is precisely what oppressors attempt to deny to the oppressed" (Ackelsberg 1991: 36). The anarchist feminist group Mujeres Libres, for example, tried to develop strategies for empowerment that would enable previously subordinated women to realize their own capacities. As Martha Ackelsberg explains (1997: 167):

> When people join together to exert control over their workplace, their com-munity, the conditions of their day-to-day lives, they experience the changes they make as their own. Instead of reinforcing the sense of powerlessness that often accompanies modest improvements granted from the top of a hier-archical structure, a strategy of direct action enables people to *create their own power*.[5]

Restorative justice fits with anarchist views that seek to replace the State through the creation of a multitude of voluntary associations. The anarchist philosophies of mutual aid and direct action (Kropotkin 1993) have materialized in many restorative justice ideals and processes, including face-to-face (or "direct") encounters between people, and the role of community in facilitating healing processes and problem-solving. German anarchist Gustav Landauer speaks to this point: "The state is not something which can be destroyed by a revolution, but is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behavior; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently" (quoted in Ward 1973: 19). This is the spirit of the restorative justice process. As restorative justice matures, both as a social movement and as a viable practice for harm prevention and repair, it may come to offer a compelling model that embraces both the call for women's safety *and* the call for the dissolution of state-sanctioned systems of law and punishment.

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# 6 The flow of experiencing in anarchic economies

*Eric Buck*

Economics often seems to be the purview of socialists, but anarchists need to consider economic theory partly because it deals with many of the supportive structures constituting the background for autonomous life. There is no life without supporting structures, but structures need to be designed to be fluid, receding, non-mediating, and *only* supportive. Even as some actions end and some collectives of people disintegrate, something might be grown from the beginning to remain behind and serve future generations of anarchists as a starting point and place for activity and life. The neo-liberal economic system in which life (anarchic or otherwise) takes place, has much to do with the setting of life. It is with and in this system that anarchists must vie for living room. Hence, the need for economic thought among anarchists.

Additionally, in giving attention to the background of life, something vague needs to be preserved. I contend that direct action needs a *place* that endures; it needs a built environment with anarchic qualities. [1] We cannot manage direct action without a material environment appropriate to it, which must nonetheless come about anarchically. This would be an environment that induces the habit of acting directly for ourselves, without thought of someone else doing it for us. But we cannot manage anything different "tectonically" [2] if we don't transform the basic exchange relations, structures of productive activity, and forms of consumption, ownership, and use, for tectonics are *products* of economic activity and are property, and part of the *setting* of economic activity. One difficulty of anarchic tectonics is that people develop a spiritual connection to their property, and are willing to make all sorts of concessions in their work life so long as they are masters in some degree over their residence. In the United States, accordingly, the house-owning class is vast, and the economic background of life related to it poses the greatest challenge to thinking about transforming tectonic practice. Anarchic thinking suggests a different economic basis for relating to the built environment.

I am not imagining a total, novel system, but letting a plurality of theories self-organize into an anarchist economic vision. This requires not only criticism of the dominant economic paradigm, but also the inventive imagination of the goal. Without the goals set up by human thinking and acting, we aim at nothing and hit nothing. Moreover, not all visions are equally anarchic; some are much closer to

the bull's eye. Thus, my second-order theory aims not for wholesale replacement of an economy, but gradual and piecemeal transformation.

I contend that there is no essentially anarchist economic theory or anarchist economy. Anarchic economic theory is only constituted as a *family of resemblances in theorizing* about economic matters; having these resemblances is what gets contending theories into the arena. No single position in the argument vanquishes all others. But an autogenerative principle comes from within to help identify the features of an anarchist economy: anarchy among theories is the standard of choosing theories to contribute to anarchist economic theory. [3] Consequently, we need every "alternative economy" theorist laboring on these issues, for *it is the plurality of anarchically interacting theories that will result in anarchist economic structures and practices*, primarily through inspiration of actions and life.[4] This is the reverse of the idea that one best vision should control the multitude of actions that an individual might undertake. Rather than relying on any one economic theory, anarchist thought sidles up alongside *every* alternative to the mediating nightmares we live under today. Any economic fiction, in order to be a tool for those who are working out individual and collective self-determination, needs to be *employed* anarchically, not implemented anarchistically. So, less an anarchist economy and more an anarchic economic thinking.

There are several models of economic relations that have something to add to anarchic economic thinking. I will briefly consider only three: a decentralist commonwealth, Economic Democracy, and Participatory Economics (Parecon). Each of these visions not only negates epochal economic relations in contemporary societies, but they also design economic arrangements that are explicitly committed to and structured by the values of autonomy, cooperation, inventiveness, self-control, joy, and balance, among others – none of which are values highly ranked by epochal economies (i.e., economies that express a given historical order or epoch) but all of which are necessary to a good life.

## A general theory of economy

Anarchic thinking needs a general theory of economics that, in its very structure, allows for unmediated exchange relations to be included among economic phenomena. I follow Manuel de Landa (1997) and the classical Daoists in thinking that *flow* is ontologically more basic than objects, which suggests a picture of economy as the co-management of flows and interpersonal exchange actions. Economy has always been in some sense the *management* of things, even from its coining in Greece long ago and through all the changes in sense. The problem is that from Greece we also inherited an untenable substance metaphysics, a world-picture of faculty-endowed souls, defining essences, and unchanging objects. Economic theory in the European cultural region developed as a substance economics: what are managed are things, represented by money. But more recent philosophy and much science has broken up the ice of substance metaphysics. We need a correlative, non-substance economics. That is *flow economics*.

There are two activities to which all economic entities are susceptible: exchange and flow. *Flow* is most basic, since the earth and all its products are dynamic events, and any description of it discloses a network of always-already connected events, coming from some states and heading toward others.

*Exchange* is how humans engage as participants in the flows. In exchanges, an element moves from one locus to another, usually passing another element flowing in the opposite direction.[5] Individual exchange action can itself be construed as a *flow* (internal to persons) of nutrition, waste, water, physical force, intentions, and emotion, but this flow is circulated in a certain way to manage external, non-personal flows between entities, such as materials, equipment, land, information, power of decision, wealth, values, ideas, and waste. Exchange occurs primarily in the form of *management of what flows*, which involves pausing and redirecting flows, discretely or *en masse*. In this dynamic view of economics, there are no static objects – there are only fluids, or events constituted of events, and it ever flows. *Products* are pauses in the flow, but never final stoppages. Furthermore, part of the management of these flows is *ownership*, which is the slow-down of flows for a person's use.

Take two fluids: a bicycle and a volume of coffee beans. In the case of the bicycle, ownership brings the movement of the bicycle through the system of exchange activities to a halt. It comes to relative rest for a period of time in the possession of one person. The coffee beans by contrast are destroyed in their being owned. There is no sense in having the beans simply to have them. They are to be consumed. The bicycle is not to be consumed; it is to be used. *Consumption* and *use* are two ways to slow down or *complicate* flows. Use is open-handed. The use of a bicycle does not prevent it from being used again, continuing to flow. Consumption is transformative. Coffee beans, for example, become forms of energy through conversion into a stimulant, and the grounds become compost.

As a theory of flows, economics describes the history and future of the interaction of powers that seek to direct and hold the flows. Economics is thus a view of some of the conditions of *individual experiencing* as part of social life. Anything that flows may be managed, and unfortunately the management of flows is not just carried out by people, but on people: for example, wage laborers, refugees, and professional athletes.[6] Experiencing – the person itself – is a fluid. Social life as the dynamic "hanging together" (Schatzki 2002: 18–25) of diverse things, people, purposes, institutions, knowledges, and practices necessarily involves *grouped experiencing*, and this is an intensely flowing matter, a raging whitewater streamlet. And while it would be sufficient for individuals and voluntary groupings (I speak of groupings because a group is always an event: both a gathering and a doing) to control their own flowing and the material flows to arrange their lives, many people make it their *business* to control the flow of experiencing of other people.

So in regard to the essence of economy, anarchist economics seeks to *liberate fluids from third-person management of flows*. It seeks to optimize the natural complications (use and consumption), holds, and re-directions, and to minimize actions that interfere with the self-determination of relevant flows.[7] Individual and collective experiencing is a matter of concern to anarchists – especially being self-

determining from birth to death. But management of others' experiencing is action that interferes with self-determination. Hence, what anarchist economists project as the target conditions in all management of flows and exchange actions are the self-management of individual and grouped experiencing, purified of any taint of mediation.

What does experiencing apply to, and how does management of it take place? Individual experiencing normally flows in swirls, but grouped experiencing flows transpersonally, so it both swirls and streams. It is a flow that is refreshed by the fact that groupings are temporary and the return of individuals to face-to-face gathering brings with it ever-new components. In the most natural grouped experiencings, the flow is co-managed by self and others. There is a whole world of flows in groupings: emotions, comfort, perceptions, doings, speaking, and overall becoming. This last is the open-ended possibility of existing; it is selfhood. As philosophers since Aristotle and the first Daoists have suggested, the point of this living is the optimization of experience. *Becoming* replaces *identity* as the "what" or "who" of experiencing by individuals and groupings. Experiencing should be freed in fulfilment of Nietzsche's idea of the will to power, which is the expressive potential of personal identity (being as becoming); groupings are capable of this as well. For Nietzsche, this required continually bringing a new person into being. This innovation gave rise in history to numerous philosophies of becoming, which is the tradition which birthed my own thinking on these matters. But becoming assumes self-managed experiencing, an assumption that is always betrayed by the interference actions of mediating others. Anarchist economic actions will always guarantee the self-determination of experiencing and take mediation to be a deal-breaker.

Epochal economies – in market and central-coordinator forms – rely for their support and operation upon the act of reifying either the market or state, and transferring to capitalists or bureaucrats the management of part or all of the important aspects of experiencing. Hence, by extension, epochal economies mediate human exchange action. From either point of view, flows are to be managed by as few people as possible. Coordinating bureaucrats mediate experiencing as *disinterested third parties of rule enforcement* , controlling exchanges anywhere within the system, which cancels fl  ows. Market capitalists are  *self-interested first-person parties of capital concentration* ,  whose defense of their positions in the competitive system produces multiple but comparatively few massive concentrations of goods, energy, and power. These concentrations imprison flows for generations at a time, among a  *class* of capitalists. In either case, the result is that mediated exchange action emasculates *individuals'* actions, and either neutralizes or appropriates the practice of community (the collective management of the flow of experiencing).

## A decentralist commonwealth

In trying to conceive an economic model that retains the best features of ideal socialism ("justice, equality, cooperation, democracy and freedom"), Gar

Alperovitz (1973: 50, 53) formulates a model in which " 'worker's control' [is] conceived in the broader context of, and subordinate to, the entire community," since the community is the more basic and more inclusive setting of life. Any "community as a whole locally own[s] substantial wealth-producing firms" (Alperovitz 1973: 15). Communities need to be economically embedded in the regional geography (Alperovitz 1973: 59). Beyond the community's region, there are matters of inter-regional interaction. This vision is meant to address and resolve the problem of conflicts of interest between business and extra-business human community (Alperovitz 1973: 60). To address these issues, Alperovitz insists on a society that comes together from below in its economic processes, forming from multitudes of voluntary, self-organizing exchange actions. [8] His vision is of an emerging "pluralist commonwealth" in which local and regional differences are maintained, and larger-scale identities are formed through complex interactions among smaller-scale ones. Economically, the system is based on comparatively small units, and only through a need to "work together" (Alperovitz 1973: 68) to address common problems are these units related to one another. Such problems include volatile "market behavior" and what to do with surplus capital. Here is where democratic planning comes in, but this takes place first and foremost on the local and regional levels (Alperovitz 1973: 72 and 1990: 18–19).

At the heart of every exchange action is participation. Citing the experiencing of still more recent worker direct-action, Alperovitz (1990: 14–15) observes that "[i]n some circumstances . . . worker-owned firms or worker co-ops may be a building block to the future . . . many yield experiences with participation in general, and with economic matters in particular, that may be important to the future development of still other forms." But this multiplicity of planning efforts needs a stable context to avoid "local expansionism and exploitation." This he finds, not in a typically gargantuan modern state, since this would eliminate real democratic involvement by most, and not in American states, most of which are too small to constitute a stable economic context, but in geographical units of 20–30 million, large enough to "tak[e] over directly (and decentraliz[e]) capital and productive functions now controlled by, say, the 500 largest economic corporations" (Alperovitz 1973: 75 and 1990: 20–21). So, a dozen "confederated regions . . . each region made up of confederated communities" (Alperovitz 1973: 75). Planning is carried out by professionals, but their decisions are informed by "expressed community needs and experiences . . . specific demands for goods and services" coming from local places, but "integrated . . . through regional and national politics" whose primary concern would be allocation of resources (Alperovitz 1973: 77, 80).

Planning also acts for the future through "community investment," in which "all major wealth (not necessarily small businesses and homes) would regularly be returned to the community that ultimately made the creation of the wealth possible" (Alperovitz 1990: 19). The development of that public trust requires in turn a transformation of community life, along cooperative lines, for it is in the local communities that the skills and dispositions necessary to cooperation on a larger scale are learned and built up. [9] This would require social cooperatives, as

George Melnyk (1985: 139–149; see also Alperovitz 1990: 15) observes. All in all this results in an economy that forms from the bottom-up, is dynamically plurality-becoming-unanimous, and manages flows from the periphery, for the center is really only the result of many interactions, a federative model.

## Economic democracy

David Schweickart's (1992 and 2002) model[10] is appropriately called "economic democracy" because it is basically an application of American political ideals to two sectors of economic life, building on successes in three other economies in the global setting: Yugoslavia from 1950 to 1979, Japan's post-war economy, and the Mondragon cooperative system in the Basque region of Spain. Schweickart suggests that a market economy can be improved on to the extent that democracy is applied in the lives of workers in their workplaces, and if investment of surplus is controlled through the representative democratic process and distributed through a process that is the reverse of Alperovitz's conception: top-down, unity-plurality, center-periphery, similar in many respects to our present tax-revenue system.

Schweickart demonstrates from studies of efficiency in worker-managed plants that worker-management is at least as productive and efficient as capitalist struc-tured plants. He does not mention humanitarian gains, but it is easily imagined that life in a worker-managed workplace is better overall for all involved, including bosses, who are to be elected by workers. Workers' dignity is enhanced through more use of their capabilities. Worker control is perfectly compatible with capi - talist structures: the studies of worker cooperatives that he cites were conducted primarily in firms operating in market economies.

The "day-to-day economy is a market economy [in which] prices [are] deter - mined by the forces of supply and demand" (Schweickart 1992: 19). Social investment, however, in which savings for future development is decoupled from allocation "of existing goods and resources" (Schweickart 1992: 22), is secured through taxation on capital assets and distributed by two means: first through a national legislature[11] and then through regional legislatures, to which the national one has distributed monies not required for projects that are national in scope. Regional distributions are proportional to the population. "The national legislature may also decide that certain types of projects should be encouraged" that are not national in scope (Schweickart 1992: 26). This allocation is repeated by the regions to their local levels, and fi nally to community banks, which are governed by representatives of "the community planning agency . . . the bank's workforce [it too is a workplace] and . . . the firms that do business with the bank" (Schweickart 1992: 26–27). Banks are not vehicles of investment, though they may protect individuals' savings (without interest). Instead, banks distribute funds to encour-age new development in the firms normally associated with it.

The idea is to ensure wide distribution of tax-sourced monies to entrepreneurial, cooperatively structured businesses. "Communities thus have an incentive to seek out new investment opportunities, so as to keep the allocated funds at home" (Schweickart 1992: 27). The goal is full employment through a dynamic

innovation system (Schweickart 2002: 135), though in Economic Democracy, this is only guaranteed by the government, the employer of last resort (Schweickart 2002: 136). By this social mechanism, he aims to bring rampant individual wealth accumulation under control and increase the well-being of the social body. To control the profit lust typical of capitalist businesses, Schweickart proposes decoupling labor and commodities, thereby building profit only on "the difference between total sales and total non-labor costs" (Schweickart 1992: 21–22). Schweickart also reconfigures capital ownership. Building on contemporary trends in employee-stock ownership plans, workers are elevated to full ownership, so that capital remains in the hands of the laborers, as does control over the company (Schweickart 2002: 168).

Schweickart's is a hopeful, comprehensive vision, with control of business in the workers' hands, and control of investment in social hands. But it is probably obvious to the anarchist reader that such a vision exercises control from the top down, as the original soviet system was to have done. Centralized systems assume the goodness of the individuals who fill governmental and planning roles. Schweickart's model of social order, borrowed wholesale from representative democracy, also will slow down the economic innovation process. The problem with Schweickart's model is his acceptance of representative democracy as the main social ordering mechanism. In representative democracy, individuals and groupings substantially give up self-determination for easier but thinner moment-to-moment existence, allowing elected representatives to control macroscopic and mesoscopic issues and processes. Representational democracy mediates what could, in the advanced digital age, be worked out directly and voluntarily,[2] rather than being indirectly decided through representatives and then coercively foisted upon the represented. His choice of the original state as the framework for trans - formed economic life results from a philosophical problem, namely reification: taking an aggregate and event as a substantial thing answering to a convenient label.

This means that his model allows present political structures and processes to repeat themselves: election of representatives, legislation by bodies of representatives, policy-making and police powers exercised by departments of the executive branch. But this reduplicates all the present system's problems. For him, workplace democracy, coupled with representative democracy outside the workplace is sufficient transformation of our political system. We have in Schweickart a form of Economic *Representative* Democracy, which is not better at all, for Representative Democracy has a fatal delay built in. A decision is made and no action occurs, or only occurs after the deciding is forgotten. Between decision and action intervene a whole slew of mediations and interference structures. The purpose of the original action becomes purely textual. In the formal organizations and institutions of representative democracy, enormous quantities of energy (physical, intellectual, and emotional) are squandered on keeping people in someone else's lines. Elective, generic representation is not democracy; it is an abdication of democracy: "Go make decisions for me in all areas of life for X amount of time." This is democracy deferred. State reification economics cannot

be democratic, for the bodies that make decisions are not federative and issue oriented.

By contrast, anarchism advocates decisions followed immediately by actions: gathering materials, organizing into task groups, laying out relations, carrying out the work. This is why it embraces participation, voluntary association, first-order federation, and at best only *loose* second-order confederation. It dismantles state forms by replacing them with habit-formed and habit-forming face-to-face processes, leaving no vacuum for third-party management of experiencing. While generic representation is a failure, episodic, particular representations have been successful at all levels: "Go make a decision for me *concerning issue Y.*" To allow a representative for a single decision is temporally closer to the requisite action than that of the former. "We need a decision in order to take action on Y collectively, but we need no one to make decisions for us on L, M, or D, or there is a more appropriate body, perhaps even a face-to-face one that should make the decision." Episodic, federative representation avoids the reifying tendency of generic representation. This is what Parecon proposes.

## Participatory economics (Parecon)

Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel (1991: 11) have assembled a model of economic flow that they think will engender a more just, equitable, materially satisfied, variable, and self-determined society and experiencing. Treating of labor, allocation, and consumption, they propose a model that is fully participatory, thus the moniker, participatory economics (Parecon). In participatory economics, the planning activity usually relegated to central bureaucracies or to corporate managers and boards, and sometimes whole industries, is completely distributed to every person and grouping with a direct interest in the situation and its outcome.

In the workplace, they imagine an adaptive, federative structure in which teams of all varieties come into being and decisions are made by groups most relevant to them. Sometimes this involves small work teams, other times it is a workplace-wide process, and other times a process that needs only representatives from each work team to meet. This progressive, federative form for decision-making certainly has numerous precedents, and studies of the efficiency and success of worker-management models have demonstrated that they lose nothing desirable compared to more typical hierarchical models. What workers must dedicate to meeting time they gain in not having to deal with problems generated by hierarchical relations. They also are protected from the possibility that one person can make a killing by being either the owner or the all-powerful executive.

To achieve fairness broadly in the kind of work performed, a controversial goal for some theorists, Albert and Hahnel (1991: 19–21, 30) propose balancing "task bundles" within the workplace and regionally balancing the quality of work life by ensuring the easy combination of more desirable and less desirable jobs. If, for example, X has been employed by a worker-cooperative in a field that has primarily pleasant, safe tasks to do, X expects to spend some portion of his work-week or work-month in less desirable work in the same city or region, in order to

relieve the work displeasures of those whose primary assignment is in noxious settings. Within the workplace, X's cluster of tasks as an employee has roughly the same degree of utility and disutility as any other person's.

A final innovation of the workplace is that the production of the workplace is to be planned each year through an iterative process, beginning with previous production numbers, the desires of individual workers to work a certain number of hours in a year, and other pertinent information gathered from society (mostly from the consumption side of planning, as I will describe below). Through successive stages of feedback from consumers and down- and up-stream producers, eventually a workplace will home in on production numbers that will suit the upcoming year. Flexibility can be built into the production planning by allowing individuals to volunteer to work more hours to make more money (really, more consumption power for the next consumption year, as below). In this way, overages and shortages, the cancers of production, can be anticipated and made up, respectively. This eliminates surplus, which is a form of necessary waste in market economies. It also increases individual intelligence by engaging and developing reasoning powers, rather than relegating planning to an already-endowed intelligentsia.[13] Given increased diversity in thinking about products, participatory production planning would also provoke changes in the kinds of products made, and workers would shift their labor power – which is self-determined – to needed products. The federative council structure of workplaces is a critical condition for the success of this iterative planning, for worker's councils of various levels and concerns teach the skill and induce the habit of participation (Albert and Hahnel 1991: 18, 21, 30–31). This is necessary for the complex process and emotional/intellectual rigors of planning production. Workers will be well-versed in adjusting their actions to the actions of others, and reducing the dominance of self in their projects.

Work is not the only component of an economy. There is no economy without consumption. And yet most economic theories pay no mind to the problems of consumerism. Advertisers and marketers remain free to play on the emotions, create desires, manipulate spending, and influence the private material life of individuals (by determining what they may buy in order to meet their needs and wishes). Market economists seem to think that consumption is the highest kind of spiritual attainment for people living in a god-free age; even religious leaders and ecologists embrace consumerism. Consumption is almost never critiqued, and even in alternatives like food cooperatives, marketing, advertising, and promotions are given free rein. Hence, Albert and Hahnel's (1991: 46–64, 114–120) proposal about annual *planning* for consumption is an important consideration for anarchist economics. Just as production can be planned within production groupings and within industries, consumption can be planned within homes, neighborhoods, and consumption groupings. The iterative process, in which feedback is exchanged with producers, allows people to build up a consumption plan based on previous years' actual consumption and ongoing production planning; to volunteer for extra work to be able to consume more; and to work less to enjoy a simpler consumption year with more free time. It is a flexible process.

The effects of consumption planning force consideration of issues that cannot be raised and do not come up in capitalist consumption systems or in Economic Democracy: whether this product is really needed, whether this product has excessive waste streams, whether I am putting more of my personality into my purchases than is healthy, and whether I define freedom as unbridled consumption. Though Schweickart wishes to deny the capitalist rich their wealth, he ignores the more widespread harm of consumerism. Parecon, however, leaves people free to adjust their consumption to suit their inclinations in the context of real conditions of scarcity and ecological degradation. So a likely outcome from consumption planning is the anarchic (ethical, educational) transformation of the basic attitudes which organize daily material actions and exchange relations of individuals and groupings, and a concomitant simplification of lifestyles.

Together, production planning and consumption planning constitute the allocative process. Since planning occurs over a month or more of time, it is a live, immediate process. It happens while production and consumption are already going on, and thus is directly informed by actual life and flows of experiencing. The allocation of goods *and* labor power is not decided by others, either on the production side – in departments of product development, or on the consumption side – by one's imagination, greed, and fiscal power. Allocation is self-organizationally worked out (Albert and Hahnel 1991: 65–94, 121–129). It is not the mysterious, illegible process of epochal economies. Parecon decisions about production *and* consumption are real and direct decisions, made in the context of all the ongoing, self-determining actions of ordinary life. The very participatory nature of production and consumption is what makes allocation not rationally planned from above, but intelligently worked out by all and sundry.

These two spheres of planning, in which all are involved, induce correlative changes in human disposition and skills. This is what capitalists are loath to do, and what central coordinators coercively do (the dispositional changes in central-coordinator economies don't stick, precisely because they are *imposed*, not *learned*). Fully participatory economies non-coercively change dispositions by negating the mediating influence of marketers over personal desires and tastes. It has been said that there is no accounting for taste, and this may be true psychologically, but it is patently false socially. The entire capitalist logic is predicated on accounting for and manipulating taste! An anarchist economic scheme must counter-account for taste, free it from the coercive forces innate in capitalism. This is where participatory allocation comes in – it is a system-wide effort to liberate inclination, and take the wind out of the sails of consumerism. Hence, not only does Parecon promise more justice, balance and equity, it also elicits human development through a participatory, educative society.

Critiques of market and market-socialist theories show that a new mental habit has emerged in human consciousness over the last century. People have become more susceptible to the depredations of image-management, advertising, and marketing. Its corollary is the study of consumer behavior, which partners with marketing to mediate human experiencing. There is need, then, for critique and invention in regard to consumerism and materialism. Consumers are made, not

born. The materialistic middle class is a product of capitalism. Consequently, most members of any economy are people to whom anything can be marketed. Planning consumption would be one way to curb the tendency toward consumerism and materialism. Since both are historically produced dispositions, another disposition could be produced, namely, non-materialistic consumption, or flow complication.

The most anarchistic features of Parecon are the consumption planning and full-participation allocation, which consumption planning is part of. Parecon's *consumption-side economics* promises to bring about a social body composed of people to whom nothing can be marketed, not goods, nationalist sentiments and projects, nor representatives. Albert and Hahnel provide a foretaste of a non-materialistic consumption-side economy. And though it is a fiction in being a total system to be implemented, Parecon *is* organized around the single most important feature for anarchist social order, participation, which fulfills the anarchic disposition of unmediated exchange actions.

## A general theory of anarchic economies

Anarchic economic thinking suggests that an economy can be imagined and detailed that is *not* another form of mediated exchange action. Albert and Hahnel, and Alperovitz, develop social life from the bottom-up, retaining greater self-management for the level of persons, neighborhoods and workplaces, and less for commonwealths and nations. This preserves participation. Anarchic economy takes form as some degree of local sociality in production workplaces and con - sumption neighborhoods. It involves allocation among those and between multiple local socialities (within regions) and among many proximate regions. Therefore, what precipitates out from the anarchic interaction of the above theories is *participation*.

All forms necessary to self-determination are implicated in the concept of participation: self-determination, room to act, voluntariness, and cooperation, or co-management of experiencing by self and others. An anarchic economy is an action-informing *sense* of network relations rather than a codified, formally reticulated system. It is an indeterminate, open-ended promise in all actions, best fulfilled by theories in which the processes of social life educate *participants* toward an autonomous, cooperative ethic, while the emerging ethical habits lend credence and strength to processes. If a theory centralizes experiencing, even near-capitalist forms of life such as consumer cooperatives can be viable, transitional economic forms for anarchists. Cooperation allows for unmediated experiencing, including unmediated exchange action. Cooperatives have been referenced in most alternative economic visions of the last fifty years. The feature that inspires such trust in the cooperative model is economic participation. If we wish to make exchange relations more self-determining, we could do worse than to turn to consumer cooperatives. Furthermore, cooperative funding offers one way of spreading participation in our capitalist economy, for it is essentially loose, free-flowing capital. In effect this would distribute the organizational meme of co - operation more broadly throughout a community. Eventually, this will bring into

being the self-organizing network in which all economic action is participatory, again comprising the essence of anarchic economy.

Where mainstream economics is mediated exchange action, anarchic economy emerges from unmediated, or direct, exchange action. Action can be direct in three ways: in individual doings (reading a book), in one-on-one exchange (of materials, information, equipment, skills, emotion), and in collective exchanges (within a worker-cooperative, for example, or between a supplier and a manufacturing firm). The last two are the site of economic life per se. In them, the flows are inter- and trans-personal. In other words, the basis of anarchic economy is participation, which is a form of direct action explicitly in group settings, or grouped direct action. Such settings are constituted by and sustain individual direct action. Without openness to participation at all levels, economics falls short of anarchism. Self-determination in the management of flows is suppressed when one is structurally excluded from relevant decisions. Economic models may thus be judged according to the degree of participation that they build into the protocols. All persons with relevant and direct interest in a problem, process, or outcome of a process must be free to weigh in on deliberation, decision, control protocols, and action. Participation is the factor which determines the anarchy of economies.

The capitalist structuring of life excludes participation from so much of human existence. Some workplaces are worker-managed, some are even worker-owned, but the communities in which such workplaces are located have no say over the values, processes, and results of the workplace itself. The treatment for structural disutility is not personal ethical transformation, however desirable this is. The proper remedy is *procedurally and habitually protected participation*. In this light, it is clear that the economic models which encourage participation in all sectors of economic life are the more supportive of the social order of anarchy. Albert and Hahnel give the most complete picture of a full-participation economy, in which not only labor structures and allocation processes but consumption structures are participatory processes.

Practically this requires dark and light anarchists, critical destroyers and innovators, to decentralize, distribute, and localize control. The means for such must remain undecided politically, but include innovative actions, education in innovation, setting up cooperatives, and so on. The point is to maximize the spread and penetration of participation, the co-managed flow of experiencing, and to open up decisions to all *relevant* people and groups: workplaces, neighborhoods, kinship and friendship groupings, bio-regions, watersheds, down-winders, etc. Anarchic economic actions must in the end be self-determining, co-managed, and non-coercively self-replicating. To the extent that participation frees flows, this needs to be worked out in the field of architectural practices and how these shape flows of experiencing. I leave such divagations for future inquiries.

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# Section Two

# Methodologies

Generally, methodology refers to the critique of research methods. At a philosophical level, it addresses the principles beneath the formation of knowledge, concerning itself with how we know what we know and how truth is invoked. Not surprisingly then, the connection between anarchism and methodology has a long history dating back to the writings of Peter Kropotkin. In *Modern Science and Anarchism*, Kropotkin (1903) argues that anarchism is the seeking of freedom through social scientific methodologies. Steeped in the optimism of his era, Kropotkin saw the scientific method, grounded in empirical evidence, as a guiding light for anarchism, suggesting it as an alternative to the dialectical approach favored by Marxist thinkers. Since then, the academic discussion about anarchism and methodology has not only continued, but also diversified. Scholars from various fields (including criminology, anthropology, political science, and sociology) have explored the limits of academic knowledge production, as well as directly challenging the very premises of science itself.

This section presents the views of several scholars on the possibility (or impossibility) of an anarchist methodology. While they differ in focus, the five chapters that follow are connected through three general themes. First, all of the authors are concerned with power relations, although each at different levels. Whether concerning pedagogy, disabilities, or academia itself, each author shows the usefulness of an anarchist sensibility in analyzing systems of domination. For instance, several of the chapters deal with the researcher/researched dichotomy, suggesting that the research process itself is already imbedded within a dynamic that reproduces uneven power configurations. Second, the chapters also seek a liberatory approach to research. The concern here is not solely on understanding systems of oppression, but also in presenting alternatives to them. Finally, the chapters are practical and grounded in direct experience, giving the authors a first-person closeness often lacking in more traditional research approaches.

When considering an anarchist methodology, Jeff Ferrell calls for a Dadaist (anti-)program that neither takes itself too seriously nor claims itself fully realized. Rather, he suggests that an anarchic method might include the process of "losing yourself" and finding new meanings in the lives of the people you study. Taking a slightly different tack, Paul Routledge starts from an activist perspective and then develops an approach to being an academic. He suggests that an activist

methodology begins with immersion in the unpredictable world of everyday life and seeks collaboration and emancipation while directly confronting injustice. Luis Fernandez provides a practical example of an anarchist methodology, basing his conclusions on ethnographic work within the anti-corporate globalization movement. David Graeber admits to being an anarchist and describes both the methodological and substantive dilemmas that come out of this reality. Finally, Liat Ben-Moshe, Dave Hill, Anthony J. Nocella, II, and Bill Templer argue for an approach to knowledge and practice that is inclusive to those who are disabled, thus expanding notions of radical democratic values. In total, these writings add much to the discussion about the possibilities of creating and deploying anarchist methodologies.

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# 7   Against method, against authority . . . for anarchy

*Jeff Ferrell*

Over thirty years ago, in *Against Method*, philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend (1975: 17, 21) launched a deconstructive critique of scientific methodology, arguing for "theoretical anarchism" and offering an "outline of an anarchist methodology" in place of mythologized law-and-order rationality. In the book, Feyerabend documents the ways in which methodological innovations in science have historically come wrapped in performance, persuasion, and intrigue – tricks of the trade necessary for gaining a bit of visibility and support, and for freeing intellectual innovation from the stifling orthodoxies of the time. He also reveals the post-hoc reifications by which these tricks are forgotten – that is, the authoritarian reifications by which these undisciplined methodological advances are later defined as wholly scientific, necessary . . . even inevitable. In this way Feyerabend argues that the history of science resembles less a straight line toward greater and more objective knowledge than it does a Fellini-esque carnival careening around the intellectual countryside, putting on little plays and seductions, occasionally falling apart and regrouping. And so for Feyerabend (1975: 23), the lesson is: "The only principle that does not inhibit progress is: anything goes" – and the only strategy for anyone serious about progressive knowledge is a refusal to take seriously the cannons of received wisdom.

A decade later progressive criminologist Stan Cohen (1988) published a book with a similar title and similarly anarchic approach. In *Against Criminology*, Cohen documents intellectual uprisings against orthodox criminology (and more broadly orthodox social science) during the 1960s and 1970s – and argues for rising up against these uprisings to the extent that they have now settled in as a sort of alternative orthodoxy. Put differently, Cohen remains intellectually unwilling to tow the line, even one he once helped draw. Instead, he understands the essence of inquiry to be not received technique but ongoing critique. "Lack of commitment to any master plan" in this way becomes an intellectual strength – and "the unfinished" emerges as a practical strategy for negotiating the next moment of understanding (1988: 109, 232). Taken together, Feyerabend and Cohen suggest an anarchist understanding of method and knowledge – or maybe a Dadaist one. Looking back at the revolts against orthodox criminology in the 1960s, Cohen (1988: 11) sees them as perhaps closest to "the products of radical art movements such as Dada and surrealism, anti-art created by artists." Feyerabend (1975: 21)

clarifies, noting that he might just as well call his critique of scientific method Dadaism as anarchism, since:

> A Dadaist is utterly unimpressed by any serious enterprise and . . . smells a rat whenever people stop smiling and assume that attitude and those facial expressions which indicate that something important is about to be said. . . . A Dadaist is prepared to initiate joyful experiments even in those domains where change and experimentation seem to be out of the question. . . .

So, to summarize the anarchist agenda, or Dadaist (anti-)program, that Cohen and Feyerabend suggest for the disciplines within and between which we work: the more seriously a method takes itself – the more it claims to supersede other approaches through invocations of "truth" or "objectivity" – the more that method must be suspect of impeding understanding rather than advancing it. Methods most accepted within disciplines must therefore be those most aggressively cracked open, critiqued, and ridiculed (Ferrell 1996). Methodological closure and intellectual fastidiousness suggest stasis and stagnation; raggedy methods, methods not fully conceptualized or completed, suggest intellectual life and disciplinary vitality. The only way to move a discipline forward is through a healthy disrespect for the rules by which it defines itself – even for those rules by which it defines itself as moving forward. Today, it seems to me, we can productively aim this anarchist critique and agenda in two directions as we continue our attempts to humanize social research and create progressive social knowledge. One direction is more destructive, the other more creative – yet both share the intention of liberating our knowledge of the social world from those structures that contain it. After all, as Bakunin (1974: 58) argued, "the passion for destruction is a creative passion, too."

## The passion for destruction . . .

So, in fine anarchist fashion, first the destructive. Feyerabend's ploy is to *dismantle* the historical mythology of scientific method, and to do so in both senses of the word – deconstructing scientific method's seeming inevitability, and de-cloaking its façade of objectivism – with the hope that, in so doing, he can free inquiry from the suffocating authority of dominant method. Not a bad ploy, and one we might well undertake today. If we can dismantle the mythologies of dominant methods, destroy their intellectual arrogance and assumed acceptability, and confront the institutional practices that promote and protect them, we can perhaps hope to keep our  scholarship open to progressive possibility. Above all, if we adopt the playfully disrespectful stance of anarchism/Dadaism and refuse to take such methods seriously, we can penetrate the aura of importance, the armor of reifi  - cation, which protects them.

For his part, Cohen (1988: v) quotes Adorno's acerbic observation that "one must belong to a tradition to hate it properly," and so I'll leave you to dismantle your own disciplines and their methods; here I'll focus on the disciplinary

traditions to which I "belong": criminology and sociology. Over the past few decades, the historical roots of sociology and criminology in journalistic reporting and political theory, in the evocative essay and the field study, in life history and social history, have largely been erased in favor of survey research and statistical analysis. This importation of the serious and "objective" methodology of quantifiable survey research has been intended to position sociology and criminology as sciences, or at least as social sciences; in culture and in consequence, the effect has been similar to the introduction of scientific management methods into the office and factory a few decades before. For Frederick Taylor and other early "managerial consultants" who advocated workplace scientific management, the stop-motion camera and the key stroke counter were forms of surveillance designed to divorce mental craft from manual labor, reducing the worker to a quantifiable producer within the larger organization, and routinizing the work process in the interest of profit and control (Braverman 1974). For advocates of survey research and statistical analysis, the alleged objectivity of sample procedures and pre-set question banks is designed similarly: to divorce from the research process the human particulars of both researchers and those they studied, with the intent of positioning the researcher as an operative whose output can be measured within the larger professional organization of social science.

This methodological regime is undergirded by a variety of institutional structures. In my disciplines, the efficient, routinized production of research articles has largely displaced the scholarly book as the measure of professional achievement. After all, like the answer sets produced by survey research, journals can be quantitatively ranked, with each scholar's articles therein counted as an arithmetic of professional stature – and survey research can itself generate such journal articles far more quickly than other methods. In the United States, Great Britain, and elsewhere, these shifts toward assembly-line research methods and objectivist measures of disciplinary productivity have been replicated in the universities themselves, with their growing reliance on corporate management practices and a bureaucratic culture of actuarial control. For US criminologists especially, this quantified academic machinery has increasingly been coupled, through criminal justice departments and federal research grants, to a parallel state machinery of surveillance, imprisonment, and control – a state machinery that requires "objective," quantifiable survey data for its operation and justification.

British sociologists and criminologists in addition face the demands of the national Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), an evaluation of research productivity that puts a premium on regular and measurable production, with the effect of bullying scholars into research methodologies (and research projects) that can produce quick and efficient results. Back in the US, researchers confront yet another organizational incentive for confining their work to survey research or office-chair speculation: the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Allegedly constituted to protect the "human subjects" of academic research, IRBs conform to the requirements of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, are staffed by a mix of university bureaucrats and professors, and are charged with reviewing all academic research projects involving "the participation of humans."

In practice, these IRBs force researchers to forfeit scholarly independence in the interest of institutional oversight and risk management. IRB guidelines generally exempt from review survey methods, or research that utilizes "existing data" with the approval of agency directors, but reserve especially harsh consideration for those methods defined as legally risky. As a result, researchers mailing surveys, mining governmental data sets, or otherwise engaging in organizationally approved research face few obstacles; those wishing to conduct independent fieldwork or to investigate organizational malfeasance, on the other hand, face endless impediments. In consequence, there develop some dirty disciplinary secrets, secrets that have been confessed to me in confidence time and again by frustrated doctoral students and junior faculty: knowing of the IRBs, dissertation advisors dissuade their students from field research, handing them old survey data sets for analysis instead. Junior faculty wishing to do field research quickly learn that this method will earn them mostly bureaucratic constipation and career delay. "Oh, I'd love to do the sort of research you do," they tell me, "but I just *can't*." In the same way, then, that other of modernism's institutions – the public school and the reformatory, the fast-food outlet and the theme park – have been designed to expunge craft and creativity from the practice of everyday life, the modern machinery of criminology and sociology functions to exhaust the idiosyncratic insights of grounded inquiry. Just as the factory, the agency, and the marketplace have been rationalized in the interest of efficiency and control, the contemporary scholarly enterprise has been so shaped toward professional efficiency that it dehumanizes both its practitioners and those it is designed to investigate or enlighten.

As a result, the great majority of sociological and criminological scholarship today can only be described as clean, boring . . . and thoroughly unthreatening to the powers that be (Ferrell 2004). Like other forms of circumscribed cultural expression, this intellectual drudgery results directly from the conditions of its production, from the methodological routinizations enforced against human beings in order to drain data sets and numeric summaries from their lives. For students in classes and for readers of journals, then, a shared disillusion, a disappointment – that the promise of the subject matter could be so thoroughly betrayed by the methods of its presentation. The vivid experiential agony of crime victimization transmogrified into abstract empiricism, the uncertain sensuality of human interaction tabulated and footnoted – it would be a remarkable trick of methodological sanitation if only it weren't so damaging.

Under the methodological regime of contemporary criminology, for example, the gendered tragedy and dangerous dynamics that animate women's attempts to escape domestic abuse become "logistic odds ratios predicting help seeking and divorce or separation for female victims of spousal violence" (Dugan and Apel 2005: 715), and all of this is statistically derived from a victimization survey. The sneaky thrills and little moments of ritualized resistance that percolate through kids' delinquent careers are recoded as "GLS and Tobit Random-Intercept Models Estimating Interactions Between Antisocial Propensity and Time-Varying Predictors of Delinquency" (Ousey and Wilcox 2007: 332–333), with this

recoding generating a set of survey-derived statistics so sweeping that it spans two journal pages. Likewise, the National Youth Gang Survey, the "definitive" yearly study of gangs in the US, surveys only *law enforcement agencies*, declining to specify which information sources the agencies are to use or to provide a definition of "gang" – a methodology that can be summarized as follows: "That which is not to be studied directly can nonetheless be surveyed definitively, based on the records, or perhaps the personal perceptions, of those whose job it is to eradicate that which they cannot define."

As noted in Daniel Nagin's 2006 Sutherland Address to the American Society of Criminology, even the exploitative dynamics of sexual crime, the dark swirl of sexual transgression, indeed the very "interaction . . . between emotion and behavior," are reduced to a clinical experiment in which male undergraduates are randomly assigned to "nonarousal" or "arousal" conditions, with those assigned to the arousal condition then "instructed to masturbate but not to the point of ejaculation while responding to a series of sex-related questions." Nagin, a Professor of Public Policy and Statistics, speculates that the masturbators' responses may tell us something about their assessments of "factors of long-standing interest to criminologists," and wonders also about the validity of criminological survey data derived from respondents who, unlike these student masturbators, are assumed to answer surveys "in a 'cool,' non-aroused state" (Nagin, 2007: 265–266). I in turn wonder about two things. First, what might Edwin Sutherland (1939) say about the uniform failure of this methodology to address key criminological issues of social interaction, social learning, and shared motivation? Second, assuming the erect undergraduates responded in writing to the "sex-related questions" – well, did the researchers select for ambidexterity?

This isn't criminology; this is madness, madness filling issue after issue of journals that function primarily as warehouses of disciplinary delusion. And of course there is method to the madness. Researchers first deploy survey methods designed to deny any deep understanding of, not to mention immersion in, the lives of those who are their focus. Data from such surveys, little pencil marks on a response sheet or clicks on a computer screen, are then manipulated with over-blown statistical packages, producing two-page tables and outpourings of astoundingly obtuse intellectual gibberish. But like all good gibberish, of course, it's not really meant to make sense to those outside the delusion anyway; it's mostly for the entertainment of journal editors, tenure committees, and other keepers of the discipline. Twenty years ago, Stan Cohen (1988: 26) asked "who can still take seriously" this sort of work, and argued that it should be "relegated to the status of alchemy, astrology, and phrenology." I would only add, twenty years hence, that this perhaps insults the astrologers.

But maybe it's worse than generalized madness and delusion – maybe it's a particular form of *fundamentalist* delusion. The parallels between the fundamental, "scientific" methods of orthodox sociology and criminology and other of the world's fundamentalisms are, it must be said, striking: a resolute unwillingness to acknowledge internal absurdities. Certainty as to the innate correctness and superiority of the preferred approach. A culture of language and presentation

whose incomprehensibility to outsiders matters little, since these others are in fact unqualified to understand it in the first place, yielding an incomprehensibility that even becomes a point of internal pride. Denial of human agency, disavowal of ambiguity in meaning and interpretation. Most of all, claims to transcendental objectivity. And so, possessed by the spirit of social science, orthodox sociologists and criminologists speak in a fundamentalist glossolalia, a private prayer language of logistic odds ratios and intercept models, their tongues tied by their own ineptitude in appreciating other ways of seeing the world. The culture of this methodological fundamentalism only confirms it. This sort of work has certainly not become a "science" in any conventional sense of analytical rigor or explanatory scope; a recent review of quantitative analyses in criminology, for example, finds that such research regularly leaves "eighty or ninety percent of variance unexplained" (Weisburd and Piquero 2008). Confronting this failure, grasping for the illusion of scientific control, researchers have turned to hyper-specialization and linguistic obfuscation, apparently on the aesthetic assumption that their work has got to be good looking if it's so hard to see.

This sad pseudoscientifi c trajectory has fostered a set of symbolic codes, a disciplinary culture that embodies and perpetuates the problem: passive third-person writing, interruptive in-text referencing, big tables, long equations, and a general tyranny of the calculated number and the turgidly written word over the idea and the image. And of course these cultural codes are distinctly arid, ugly, and inhuman, devoid of any cultural markers that would distinguish a scholarly article from an actuarial report. In this sense, "objective" or "scientifi c" social science has long operated more as anxious metaphor than accomplished reality. These cultural codes function as symbolic performances of scientific objectivity, as façades fronting the public presentation of disciplines. The passive voice in writing accomplishes a neat stylistic sleight of hand whereby the author's influence seems to disappear from the author's own text. Twenty-line tables and convoluted equations provide an assuring sense of precision and order, even for those uninterested in actually reading them. Pervasive in-text referencing offers the illusion of comprehensive disciplinary knowledge, and the image of progression toward scientific truth as each scholar builds on the work of those before. Together, these coded communications assure scholars and their audiences that methodo - logical rigor continues to discipline the discipline; taken as a whole, they construct a persuasive aesthetic of authority (Ferrell 1996).

Of course, this is all collective performance, academic theater, another of Feyerabend's little carnivals where a discipline displays and deceives itself. Yet like other cultural constructions, these codes and performances create serious consequences, feeding back into the collective work that produces them. They set the tone for a particularly inappropriate approach to human life and human society. A  disciplinary fondness for a style that is off-putting and inelegant helps perpetuate the false hierarchy of content over form, and helps render even the most seductive of subject matters sterile. These off-putting cultural codes distance scholarship from engaged public discourse, leaving it an intellectual side water with little hope of effectively confronting contemporary injustices. Most of all, the

culture of orthodox criminology and sociology completes what their methods begin, namely the dehumanization of those individuals and groups we allegedly seek to understand, to wit:

> In the baseline model (model 1), no variables exert a significant effect on sexual coercion.
>
> (Piquero and Bouffard 2007: 15)

> Results from level 2 of the HGLM demonstrated that seven of the eight life circumstances included in the model exhibited a statistically significant impact on likelihood of victimization. . . .
>
> (Armstrong and Griffin 2007: 91)

> Recall that a key advantage of the Tobit Model is that it explicitly deals with the floor-value of the summative delinquency measure. . . .
>
> (Ousey and Wilcox 2007: 340)

Now what kind of way is that to talk about *people*? I doubt that those involved in sexual coercion appreciate being reduced to baseline models and (no) variable effects. It strikes me that disassembling victims into their component parts – sentiments, attitudes, life circumstances, all carved up like some intellectual butcher hard at a carcass – mostly makes them victims again. Whether delinquent youth or domestic violence victim, it can't feel good to have words put in your mouth, to have your actions and the accounts you give of them translated into the jargon of those who claim to know you better than you know yourself. Abstract and obtuse, this sort of language is also revealing, illuminating a set of linguistic practices that systematically suck the life from those they describe. It also reveals, upon close inspection, just how transparently non-existent are *the emperor's new clothes*, how naked is the fraud of objectivist social science – save for everyone agreeing to agree that the clothes certainly do exist, and are damn fine clothes at that. As Feyerabend and Cohen would also suggest, stripping away the mythology of social science, penetrating the cultural codes by which contemporary criminology and sociology present themselves as science, exposing the fraud of methodological fundamentalism – seeing, that is, through the emperor's new clothes – provides just the sort of healthy disciplinary disrespect needed for intellectual progress. Freed from the collective delusion of social science, we awaken to see that survey methods and statistical analyses forfeit whole areas of social and cultural life while inventing fictional social constructs from their own methodological arrogance. Ignoring situational and interactional dynamics, missing entirely the mediated construction of human meaning, these methods imagine instead a world where data sets correlate with – indeed, somehow capture – everyday life. But of course survey methods and their resultant data sets do no such thing; they simply create that which they claim to capture.

"Logistic odds ratios," "interactions between antisocial propensity and time-varying predictors of delinquency," "results from level 2 of the HGLM" – these

are the threads of the emperor's new clothes, and to believe that these loose threads can somehow be woven into an understanding of individual motivation or interpersonal meaning, and then generalized to "public attitudes toward crime" or "patterns of victimization," is to layer one imaginary garment over another. Hearing this sort of critique, concerned colleagues sometimes counter that I'm asking them to give up all the facts they know: rates of vandalism in Boston, amounts of British domestic abuse, levels of public support for legal abortion, etc. On the contrary: to the extent that such "facts" derive from simplistic survey data collated and crammed through statistical grinders, then spat out and slathered with a thin sheen of science, I'm asking them to give up what they don't know.

## . . . Is a creative passion, too

Still, it's a fair question: if we set out to ridicule the absurdity of orthodox methods, to dismantle and destroy their authority in the interest of opening possibilities for progressive knowledge, then what? One good anarchist answer is . . . not to offer an answer. In "Anarchism," Emma Goldman (1969: 63) said, "is not a theory of the future" – or as the Situationists liked to say, "We will only organize the detonation. The free explosion must escape us and any other control forever" (in Marcus 1989: 179–180). Blowing open the box of orthodox methodology begins a process of intellectual renewal that, by definition, lacks definition. Or maybe there is something of an answer – though I'll keep it brief to avoid closing back what was just blown open. That answer, it seems to me, is field research. Under the regime of the IRB and associated institutions of scholarly risk management, independent, ethnographic field research has been all but outlawed – which from an anarchist view, of course, suggests that it's all the more worth exploring. And indeed, at its best, independent field research does seem to embody the very sort of open, anarchic dynamics that orthodox social science denies.

Ethnographic field work – long-term, committed engagement with those we study – leaves researchers appropriately vulnerable to the emotions and experi - ences of others. It humbles researchers before those they study, subsuming intellectual arrogance to a search for *verstehen* – for appreciative and nuanced understanding (Weber 1978; Ferrell 1996). It also stands orthodox disciplinary methods on their heads. Rather than "objectivity" guaranteeing accurate research results, it is *emotional subjectivity* that makes for good research; without it, researchers may observe an event or elicit information, but will have little sense of its meaning or consequences. Fieldwork functions in this way as a sort of humanist subversion, a decision to affirm and explore the human agency of those we study. These subversions are temporal and existential as well. Good field research flows with the dynamics of situations, embracing the inefficiency of dawdle and delay, suffusing life with uncertainty and surprise (Kane 2004), and carrying researchers beyond their own existential complacency. Along the way, this do-it-yourself method generates disciplinarily dangerous knowledge, spawn-ing deep human engagement, oddball insight, and illicit meaning unimaginable –

and unmanageable – within the sternly scheduled certainty of orthodox methods, IRBs, and RAEs.

At its extreme, ethnographic field research can become an anarchic process through which researchers lose themselves – and by losing themselves, find new meanings and emotions. In my own ethnographic experiences, lost for years inside the worlds of graffiti writers, urban activists, and trash scroungers, fieldwork has indeed come close to Feyerabend's injunction that "anything goes," emerging as a more alternative way of outlaw living than formal method. In this way, it seems to me, deep ethnographic fieldwork constitutes more than anything a liberatory sensibility, a method against method, against authority . . . and for anarchy.

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# 8 Toward a relational ethics of struggle

## Embodiment, affinity, and affect

*Paul Routledge*

In this chapter I will run away (all too briefly) from the capitalist/war circus and (re)join the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA). In so doing, I will discuss the methodologies of activism, affinity, and emotion, and my personal reflections on what an activist geography might look like.

An activist approach to academia is concerned with action, reflection, and empowerment (of oneself and others) in order to challenge oppressive power relations. More particularly, from my perspective, it is about forging mutual solidarity with "resisting others" through critical collaboration, the creation of participatory spaces of action which are inclusive and anti-hierarchical, the nurturing of creative interactions independent of electoral politics, and conducting direct action (whereby we devise a plan to do something in collaboration with others, and then do it without recourse to external authorities). By "resisting others" I mean communities, groups, social movements, or non-governmental organizations that are challenging various practices of dominating power that attempt to control or coerce others, impose its will upon others, or manipulate the consent of others. This dominating power can be located within the realms of the state, the economy, and/or civil society, and is often articulated within social, economic, political, and cultural relations and institutions. Patriarchy, racism, and homophobia are all faces of dominating power which attempt to discipline, silence, prohibit, or repress difference or dissent. Dominating power engenders inequality, and asserts the interests of a particular class, caste, race, or political configuration at the expense of others, for example through particular development projects associated with neoliberal capitalism.

For an activist geography, then, "relevance" entails making certain political commitments to a moral and political philosophy of social justice, and research is directed both toward conforming to that commitment and toward helping to realize the values that lie at its root. To think about such objectives requires adopting a necessarily broad interpretation of activism. While my activism work usually involves direct action of some kind, and is done in collaboration with those involved in such action (see, for example, Routledge 1997, 2003a, 2003b), there are many other forms of productive, creative political action in which academics can participate. These frequently blur the boundaries between full-time activists and academic researchers who choose, for example, to work in and with particular

communities on particular issues. Through such forms of activist engagement, academics can help foster "prefigurative action" by embodying visions of transformation as if they are already achieved, thereby calling them into being (Graeber 2002). Through such a broad approach, and through a variety of possible engagements, academia thus can be made "relevant" to the everyday concerns of communities beyond the academy.

## Methodologies of activism, affinity, and emotion

Activist methodologies are conceptualized with an eye to both communication and emancipation, confronting (and seeking solutions to) issues of social, economic, and environmental injustice. They are conceptualized and carried out in collaboration with activist (and sometimes academic) others – the precise contours of such collaboration being worked through in cooperation with those others (Routledge 2002). In so doing, activist researchers invariably are confronted with issues of power, ethics, and personal political responsibility.

Critical engagement with issues of justice can invest such narratives with political and emotional power because the activist researcher is *writing from within* a particular issue or struggle. I have spent the past fifteen years working with, and conducting research about, social movements, both their particular struggles and their work within broader networks of association. Here I want to sketch out a methodological manifesto based upon recent activist research and praxis, through a discussion of some of my personal experiences in the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA).

### Activism: living theory beyond words

From July 6–8, 2005 the G8 (group of eight nations) met at Gleneagles, Scotland. The G8 – consisting of the US, Canada, Japan, Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and Russia – holds annual summits where top government officials discuss issues including macroeconomic management (i.e. running the neoliberal global economy), international trade, terrorism, energy, and arms control. With the emergence of the global justice (anti-capitalist) movement, such summits have been accompanied by protests – both at the places where the G8 meet, and elsewhere across the globe. These protests provide a critique of neoliberalism, debate alternatives, and challenge the "business-as-usual" performance of such summits by attempting to disrupt their operation.

In the months prior to the G8 summit, an idea spread that an army of clowns should be deployed during the protests. The Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA) thus was created to challenge the G8. CIRCA was *clandestine* because without real names, faces, or noses, the spectacle of celebrity was refused: activists took ridiculous military names such as Private Joke, Corporal Punishment, Major Disaster, and General Panic. CIRCA was *insurgent* because it had suddenly risen up from nowhere and was everywhere – having emerged from various cities in the UK, and from the US, Ireland, Belgium, and France. CIRCA

were *rebels*, because they celebrated life, happiness, and continuous rebellion more than "revolution," CIRCA were *clowns* because they believed that inside everyone is a lawless clown trying to escape, and because nothing undermines authority like holding it up to ridicule. CIRCA was an *army*, because it believed that we live on a planet in permanent war – a war of money against life, of profit against dignity, of progress against the future; and because a war that gorges itself on death and blood and excretes money and toxins, deserves an obscene body of deviant soldiers. We were "circa" because we were approximate and ambivalent, neither here nor there, but in the most powerful of all places, the place in-between order and chaos (see Routledge 2005; www.clownarmy.org).

Activism cannot simply be bounded off from other aspects of everyday life: our lives are entwined with the lives of others – through the legacies of colonialism, flows of capital and commodities, modern telecommunications, etc. – which demands that academics become politically sensitive to the needs and rights of distant strangers (Corbridge 1993, hooks 1994). Because the personal is political and relational, an activist academia implies a commitment to deconstruct at least some of the barriers that exist between academics and the lives of the people they profess to represent, so that scholarly work interprets and effects social change (Kobayashi 1994). Critical collaborative engagement with resisting others must recognize that, as academics, we are entangled within broader powers of association and intellectual production – with the institutions that employ us and/or fund our research, and their location within a global hierarchy that privileges the West's economic systems, institutions, and policy "experts" at the expense of those of the rest of the world. Such associations grant us certain securities and advantages (for example, economic, political, representational) that may not be enjoyed by those with whom we collaborate. Hence academics frequently enjoy a range of privileges that may include mobility, funding, class, ethnicity, gender, and nationality (see Nast 1994; Routledge 2002).

However, while we cannot fully escape our institutional or locational identities, we can as activist academics subvert them, making them work for us in political ways that attempt to effect social, environmental, and political change. This implies that the "field" of our fieldwork becomes "located and defined in terms of specific political objectives [which] ideally work toward critical and liberatory ends" (Nast 1994: 57). As Bourdieu (1998) argues, activist academics must seek common ground and common cause with resisting others in a non-hierarchical manner, to break the appearance of unanimity which is the greater part of the symbolic force of dominant discourses within society (1998: vii–viii). This will require an ethics of struggle to be developed within academia, one that is with resisting others as well as for them, that accepts moral and political responsibility as an act of self-constitution (Bauman 1992). It is, in short, about nurturing affinity with others.

## *Affinity*

Practically, affinity consists of a group of people sharing common ground and who can provide supportive, sympathetic spaces for its members to articulate, listen to

one another, and share concerns, emotions, or fears. The politics of affinity enables people to provide support and solidarity for one another. Ideally, such a politics of research should be built on consensus decision-making – which is non-hierarchical and participatory – embodying flexible, fluid modes of action. The common values and beliefs articulated within the politics of affinity constitute a "structure of feeling" resting upon collective experiences and interpretations, which are cooperative rather than competitive, and which are predicated upon taking political action. The idea of consensus here is based upon the notion of "mutual solidarity" – constructing the grievances and aspirations of geographically and culturally diverse people as interlinked. Mutual solidarity enables connections to be drawn that extend beyond the local and particular, by recognizing and respecting differences between people while at the same time recognizing similarities (Olesen 2005). It is about imagining global subjectivities through similarities of experience, recognizing the shared opportunities and techniques of struggle (Starr 2005).

During the G8 protests, there were fifteen distinct rebel clown affinity groups from different places. For example, there were groups called Glasgow Kiss, Group Sex, and Backward Intelligence, in which affinity was nurtured in a variety of ways. First, through a series of day-long clowning workshops, and subsequent affinity group meetings, clowning techniques were practiced and refined. These provided a common repertoire of clowning practices – including group play, movements, gestures, and language – that were shared by all CIRCA participants. Second, all CIRCA "clownbatants" shared a common "multiform." We wore personalized clown faces and rebel clown attire that was deconstructed, decorated, and subverted according to the individual creativity of each person and/or group. These created a sense of affinity within diversity. Third, the workshops and "multiforms" helped to develop group dynamics and close interpersonal relationships. Despite the seriousness of the protests against the G8, clown workshops and actions involved a great deal of play and laughter which helped to forge deep bonds between people and groups. Feeling part of a rebel army and sharing aspects of appearance and language – while at the same time acting autonomously in affinity groups and having our own specific clown characters – was empowering and fostered a deep sense of solidarity.

During the protests, we held clown councils where we would all sit in a circle and have meetings based upon consensus decision-making. Each affinity group would propose a spokesperson that would sit at the front of their group and discuss matters with the other affinity groups' spokespersons. Each issue raised by the "spokescouncil" would be discussed by each affinity group amongst themselves, and their respective decision was communicated back to the entire council via their spokesperson. These councils were held every day during the protests, at first in Edinburgh, and then at the rural convergence site near Stirling. Each group also kept in contact via mobile phone. In the clown councils we might agree to differ and to allow each group to pursue its own set of actions during the protests. Or we might all agree on a specific strategy during one of the protests.

Clown actions contained an element of dissimulation, or the unexpected – what Sun Tzu termed "being unknowable as the dark" (1998: 89) – by mixing together

the crucial attributes of fluidity, adaptation, and the interchange of surprise unorthodox movements and orthodox direct confrontation. Fluidity and adaptation are primary characteristics of affinity groups; the personnel and workings of such groups are fluid and decentralized. There are no real leaders (although there are temporary organizers of particular actions) which reflects the autonomist philosophy of such groups as well as posing deep problems for surveillance and control by the authorities. In this manner, we tried to remain open to the spontaneity of clowning and of the event, so as not to become too rigid in our action and play (Routledge 2005).

Of course, any form of collaboration with resisting others takes place within shifting, context-dependent relations of ethics and power that influence the construction of the field as well as the intersubjective relations between academics and activists. "Activist academics" must be attentive to the problematic power relations that exist between (research) collaborators and the need to theorize and negotiate both the differences in power between collaborators and the connections forged through such collaborations. In the collaborative politics of affnity, power accrues to different people at different times, depending on the context (see Routledge 2002). Attempts to equalize power relations should be made as much as possible.

However, activist academics are frequently in a position of power by virtue of their ability to name the categories, control information about the research agenda, define interventions, and come and go as research scientists (Staeheli and Lawson 1995). Hence, while in CIRCA I felt that decision-making powers were spread relatively evenly, the decisions concerning this representation of CIRCA have been entirely my own. This raises crucial questions concerning the extent to which, even in collaborative research, an activist academic and her collaborators become equal co-subjects in the research process. Just as "we need to listen, contextualize, and admit to the power we bring to bear as multi-positioned authors in the research process" (Nast 1994: 59), we also need to be attentive to the power that our collaborators bring to the research process.

Communication between people (and particularly between academics and activists), replete with intonations and gestures, is crucial to forming common ground and affinity. The ideas brainstormed, plans hatched, schemes discarded, itineraries planned, logistics worked through, and arguments settled all require, in part, interpersonal meetings and face-to-face encounters that enable the embodying of affinities. In particular, it is the conducting of action with others – in demonstrations, blockades, street theater, etc. – that forge bonds of association crucial to the creation of common ground. Such considerations are intimately entwined with what Laura Pulido (2003) calls the "interior life of politics": the entanglement of the emotions, psychological development, souls, passions, and minds of collaborators.

### Emotion

Emotions are personal feelings that occur in relational encounters with human and non-human others. Politically, emotions are intimately bound up with power

relations and also with relations of affinity, and are a means of initiating action. We become politically active because we feel something profoundly – such as injustice or ecological destruction. This emotion triggers changes in us that motivate us to engage in politics. It is our ability to transform our feelings about the world into actions that inspires us to participate in political action. Affinity with others under such conditions creates intensive encounters wherein practical politics is practiced. Collaborative association necessitates interaction with others, through the doing of particular actions and the experiencing of personal and collective emotions, through creativity and imagination, through embodied, relational practices that produce political effects (Anderson and Smith 2001; Bennett 2004; Thien 2005).

CIRCA was not an excuse for activists to dress up as clowns and bring color and laughter to protests. Rather, the purpose was to develop a form of political activism that brought together the practices of clowning and non-violent direct action. The purpose was to develop a methodology that helped to transform and sustain the inner emotional life of the activists involved as well as being an effective technique for taking direct action. This was because CIRCA believed that a destructive tendency within many activist movements has been the forgetting of the inner work of personal transformation and healing. Working with the body – through various clowning games and maneuvers – acknowledged and revealed the fears, anxieties, joys, and pleasures of being human. The emotional life of activists is also a site of struggle, and CIRCA was an attempt to change the way we feel as well as the way we struggle. Innovative forms of creative street action were understood as being crucial for building and inspiring movements. CIRCA's aim was to bring clowning back to the street, to reclaim its disobedience and give it back the social function it once had: its ability to disrupt, critique, and heal. The clown soldiers that made up CIRCA attempted to embody life's contradictions as both fearsome and innocent, entertainers and dissenters, healers and laughing stocks. Clowning, like carnival, attempted to suspend and mock everyday law and order (Routledge 2005).

This form of emotional politics played out in both the interior life of the clowns and in that of other activists. At times it also seemed to affect some of the authorities. For example, the CIRCA operation "HA.HA.HAA" (Helping Authorities House Arrest Half-witted Authoritarian Androids) was deployed to invert the logic and expectations of the July 6 demonstrations against the G8. Instead of trying to climb the fences and disrupt the meeting, CIRCA wanted to deploy rebel clowns to keep the world's most dangerous "errorists" (the G8 politicians) under house arrest in perpetuity, by building the fences higher around their meeting place at the Gleneagles hotel and never letting them out. While this entailed an element of street theater, CIRCA was also concerned to undermine and ridicule the intimidation and provocation of security forces at demonstrations – for example, by blowing kisses to riot cops behind their shields, or by hogging the lenses of police cameras and following the evidence-gathering teams around, mocking them and preventing them from conducting their surveillance. Various protestors at the G8 protests told us that such tactics had helped diffuse tense

situations between them and the security forces during the protests. Moreover, CIRCA clowning attempted to access the person behind the police uniform. During CIRCA operations, I witnessed police officers smiling and laughing in interaction with rebel clowns, and even mimicking the clown salute. This entailed the right thumb of the right hand being held to the nose, with the hand vertical, palm facing to the left, and the fingers wiggling. It was used when clowns met each other, and whenever clownbatants encountered authority figures such as the police (Routledge 2005).

Of course, the intensity of feeling generated in protest situations can generate powerful emotional ties between people, and can engage the body and senses in deep emotional connections that can generate personal and political affinities. During the G8 protests I performed a complex of identities: clown, witness, friend, activist, and academic, which took precedence at different times. Performed identities are dynamic, shifting, and unstable, in the sense that they are manipulated, promoted, resisted, negotiated, and accepted through our relations with our collaborators (Madge 1993). Recognition that self-identity (and the identity of others in relation to our identity) is unstable and ambiguous potentially destabilizes the problematic "powers" that are invested in the "all-knowing" academic. As a result, spaces may be opened for the consideration of the boundaries and interfaces of power relations and knowledge that exist among collaborators (Madge 1993). As activist academics we need to negotiate the entanglement of activism and academia, which requires practicing a particularist and relational ethics of struggle (see hooks 1994), pertinent to the place-specifi city of our research and to the politics of affinity and emotion discussed above.

### *Relational ethics*

Ethical considerations are clearly important in the practice, subject matter, and research priorities of academia, raising crucial questions concerning the roles played by social justice in research, and the extent to which ethical conduct is desirable, definable, and/or enforceable (Proctor 1998). Pulido (2003) argues that there are three benefits to cultivating a dialogue on ethics in political activism. First, we cultivate relations of honesty, truth, and interpersonal acknowledgment. Hence it is important for activist academics to be open about their dual posi-tionalities of "activist" and "academic" when working with others. Second, it allows us to build a genuine moral language. Pulido argues that "the left" has settled for making arguments based on policy, fi scal analyses, legal precedents, and history to almost the complete exclusion of ethics. Third, it contributes to us becoming more fully conscious human beings. Political consciousness is usually distinguished by its focus on structures, practices, and social relations of societal and global power – whereas self-consciousness refers to self-knowledge, including the understanding of one's past and present; one's motivations, desires, fears, and needs; and one's relationship to the larger world.

Relational ethical positionalities need to be for dignity, self-determination, and empowerment, while acknowledging that any collaborative "we" constitutes the

performance of multiple lived worlds and an entangled web of power relationships. Collaboration can enable what Gibson-Graham terms a "partial identification" (1994: 218) between ourselves and resisting others, and an articulation of a temporary common ground, wherein relations of difference and power (for example, concerning gender, age, ethnicity, class, sexuality, etc.) are negotiated across distances of culture, space, and positionality in the search for mutual understanding. As a result, in practical terms, an activist methodology would *at least* involve: (1) researchers sending their previous work to resisting others when asking for permission to conduct research and activism with them; (2) researchers collaborating with resisting others on the types of research to be conducted once in the field; (3) researchers engaging in some form of collaboration with resisting others while in the field in addition to their personal research; and (4) all research concerning the work of resisting others being shared with those others before it was submitted for publication (see Routledge 2003c). For example, work that I have written about CIRCA (for example, Routledge 2005; this chapter), has incorporated my activist collaboration with CIRCA, my sharing of the texts with other members of CIRCA, and the agreement of my CIRCA affinity group (Glasgow Kiss) to write about our collective activities.

Having said this, in workable affinities with others, we do not necessarily experience things differently as activist academics than we do as people/activists, and do not necessarily need to be wary of "over-involvement" with our research subjects (Fuller 1999). As a result, any notion of the "all knowing" and detached "activist academic" is destabilized. I was (and remain) part of CIRCA, while at other times being a critical geographer who writes chapters such as this (about CIRCA, and hence, partly myself) for academic publications. The boundaries between my roles as "activist" and "academic" are always in flux, always being negotiated. So too are the interpersonal dynamics and intersubjectivities within the affinity group process. This "third space" is thus a place of invention and transformational encounters, a dynamic in-between space that is imbued with traces, relays, ambivalences, ambiguities, and contradictions, with the feelings and practices of both identities (see Routledge 1996).

A relational ethics is about decolonizing oneself and getting used to not being the expert. It is about solidarity through the process of mutual discovery and knowing one another. A relational ethics is attentive to the social context of collaboration and our situatedness with respect to that context. It is enacted in a material, embodied way, for example through relations of friendship, solidarity, and empathy. Hence, through my work with CIRCA I have developed deep working affinities with others. One result of such affinity has been that one Rebel Clown friend has become a graduate student and colleague, herself becoming an activist academic in the process.

A relational ethics thus requires that we are sensitive to the contingency of things, and that our responsibility to others and to difference is connected to the responsibility to act (Slater 1997). Such a responsibility, within the context of political struggle, implies that activist-academics take sides, albeit in a critical way. We need to embrace a politics of recognition that identifies and defends only

those differences that can be coherently combined with social and environmental justice. This critical engagement can serve to be vigilant to those "minor" reversals within resistance practices, such as occur with the creation of internal hierarchies, the silencing of dissent, peer pressure, and even violence; or how various forces of hegemony are internalized, reproduced, echoed, and traced within such practices. Ideally, critical engagement would be able to confront, negotiate, and enter into dialogue with the manifestations of dominating power within resistance formations from sensitivity to the "feeling space" of one's collaborators (see Sharp *et al.* 2000).

## Start clowning around

Creating common ground with resisting others serves to highlight and "ground" differences (in language, ethnicity, power, access to resources, etc.) in particular ways in particular places. When placed in such active proximity, difference (in ways of being, talking, and acting) can be both recognized and negotiated. Activist-academic praxis acknowledges the importance of letting myriad flowers bloom in the academic imagination, while recognizing the importance of tempering the privilege of academics to pursue personal research agendas with an ethics of political responsibility to resisting others. Such responsibility extends beyond teaching within the academy (to relatively privileged students), in order for academic research to "make its deliberations more consequential for the poorer eighty per cent of the population of the world" (Appadurai 2000: 3).

Activist geography is concerned with grounding our theories and imaginations in the messy unpredictability of everyday life, and embodying radicalism that situates the academic imagination within the key political debates and actions of our time. We can, for example, politicize the personal by actively resisting (rather than bemoaning or complying with) the neoliberal restructuring of academia (see Castree 1999, 2002); living alternative geographical possibilities in addition to theorizing about them; and radicalizing geography to actively engage with the "wretched of the earth" (Cumbers and Routledge 2004). In particular, an activist geography can contribute to the creation of new political spaces and potentially new forms of collaborative power.

One doesn't have to become a rebel clown in order to realize this. Myriad forms of engagement are possible. For example, as activist academics we can reclaim streets, blockade military bases, and barricade corporate offices; we can occupy land, warehouses, and unoccupied houses; we can use our skills in popular health and education outreach; we can participate in social centers, infoshops, guerrilla gardens, and independent media initiatives; we can culture jam and decommodify corporate/private space; we can contribute to direct democracy and autonomist experiments in everyday living through practicing consensus-based politics; we can engage in the long-term work of contributing to, and constructing, socially just and environmentally sustainable communities. Ultimately, an activist academia prioritizes grounded, embodied political action, the role of theory being to contribute to, be informed by, and be grounded in such action, in order to create and

nurture mutual solidarity and collective action – yielding in the end a liberatory politics of affinity.

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# 9 Being there

## Thoughts on anarchism and participatory observation[1]

*Luis A. Fernandez*

I was about to join a thick crowd of demonstrators when a friend pulled me aside to ask for help. She wanted me to interview Spanish speakers for an independent documentary she was filming. We were in Cancun, Mexico, during a four-day protest at the 2003 World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meetings. All around us were *campesinos*, farmers, and indigenous people who had traveled to Cancun from different parts of the world, including South Korea, Brazil, Bolivia, France, Italy, and Mexico. Also present were anarchists from Latin America, North America, and Europe. They were all there to draw attention to WTO food and agricultural policies that would likely produce drastic and grave human consequences. For this reason, thousands were now marching in the streets of Cancun. The diversity of the crowd was stunning, audible in the multiplicity of languages spoken.

My friend and I spent most of that hot summer day approaching Spanish speakers and asking simple questions, hoping to elicit responses for the documentary and to get a deeper appreciation for the lives of the people attending the protest. After interviewing a dozen people, we ended up near a large fence erected at the northern entrances to the hotel area. Mexican police built the fence to keep protesters far away from the WTO meetings. It stood twelve feet tall and expanded to the full length of the entrance. Behind it were hundreds of police officers dressed in olive green uniforms and wearing riot gear. Behind them was a large vehicle mounted with a water cannon. We kept interviewing people, but kept a close eye on what felt like a tense situation.

Soon a small group of young activists began throwing rocks over the fence, which landed on the helmeted police. We continued with our interviews, feeling a bit nervous and sensing a clear shift in the mood of the demonstration. Rocks continued to fly overhead. Then something unexpected happened: police officers picked up the rocks and threw them back into the crowd. The rocks landed on the unprotected heads of protesters. It was difficult to maintain composure while trying to interview people, since we could see medical crews disappearing into the thick crowd only to reappear moments later escorting individuals covered in blood seeping from head wounds.

It was during an interview with a middle-aged *campesino* from Chiapas, Mexico, that I realized just how serious the situation was. Keeping with the simple

questions, I asked why he was protesting the WTO. He and his family were dying, he told me. He barely had enough to eat and, without farm subsidies from the Mexican government, he would soon starve. I asked him what he feared the most in life. Sadly, he said that leaving his land and moving to the city or having to migrate north was the worse thing that could happen. Meanwhile, just behind us, medics continued to find and move bloodied people past us. In the middle of the interview the man stopped talking and just gazed at the injured people. Looking at one young woman holding her head covered with a blood-soaked handkerchief, the *campesino* said simply, as if stating the obvious, "Somebody is going to die today. And it's going to be a good, honorable death." The truth of the statement almost knocked me over. He was right. Somebody *was* going to die that day. More frightening, I realized it could easily be me. Equally stunning was that he was ready to sacrifice his life, since living in a desperate situation left few alternatives.

Prior to this, I had understood, in my head, the reality of human desperation resulting from globalization. I read the major theorists, the critiques of global capitalism, and understood the importance of direct action and autonomy. Yet, I understood these things as facts, as intellectual arguments, in the way that academics understand ideas much of the time. Now I was confronted with this reality face-to-face and it penetrated me in ways I had not expected. As the *campesino* foretold, somebody did die that day – a Korean farmer named Lee Kyung performed an act of self-immolation to protest the thousands of suicides per year in Korea and India resulting from globalization. It was a shocking death. His death forced me to feel, in my heart this time, the seriousness of the global struggle. This, I believe, is the key to participatory research and the reason why the method is so useful for anarchist scholars.

We, as scholars, anarchists, and thinkers need to seek out and cherish these kinds of experiences. They teach us many things, including our own subjectivity and mortality, and the limits of our understanding. And these experiences only come from *being there*, by placing ourselves within and among the lives of those who suffer, by running risks and, if only momentarily, by placing our privilege into sharp focus. This chapter presents some thoughts on a research method based on direct experience, grounded in activism, and informed by an anarchist sensibility. At the same time, the chapter describes one possible approach for studying the anti-corporate globalization movement; a movement that is based on principles of autonomy, dispersed throughout the world, and organized non-hierarchically. Scholars (both in this volume and elsewhere) have recognized the resurgence of anarchism in this movement, particularly as is constituted in Europe and the United States (Graeber 2002; Chesters 2003; Hardt and Negri 2004; Juris 2008), making it even more pertinent to explore anarchistic methodologies that build solidarity with people in the movement.

## Critical approaches for being there

The incident described above is one of many encounters I had during my years inside the anti-corporate globalization movement. From 2002 through 2005, I

participated in several large demonstrations in North America, where I collected data that eventually coalesced into a book entitled *Policing Dissent* (2008). When I first began following the movement, I started as a participant, namely as an activist curious to see what globalization was about and trying to understand why people from all over the globe were singling out global institutions as the culprits of problems ranging from poverty to environmental pollution.

From the start, I rejected traditional notions of science and objectivity. Like most of us in the social sciences, I was trained to look for probability, to make predictions, try to falsify hypotheses, and to be objective. Instead of using a pseudo-scientific methodology, I followed the lead of such criminologists as Bruce DiCristina, Jeff Ferrell, and Hal Pepinsky, who argue for a different type of methodological sensitivity. We, in this generation of scholars, can now draw from a broad base of anarchistic methods (or, perhaps more accurately, from a broad base of anarchist critiques of various methods). For instance, each scholar mentioned above has presented convincing arguments on the poverty of the scientific method, opting instead for an approach that favors creativity, openness to possibilities, and compassion for those under study (see Ferrell and Hamm 1998; DiCristina 1995; Pepinsky 1978). We no longer have to rely on narrowly defined and uncritical approaches to research that can, if left unquestioned, reproduce colonizing effects or help reproduce state practices. In direct opposition to objectivity and neutrality, these other anarchistic alternative methodologies call for self-awareness and interpretive knowledge. Rather than producing information useful for social control, legal regulation, or criminal punishment, these scholars call for "humble conversations with those outside the domains of criminology and criminal justice" (Ferrell 1995: 88), or in my case, solidarity with the "wretched of the earth," like the Mexican *campesino* who faced displacement. Rather than detachment and objectivity, we therefore should seek connectivity and compassion, values that dovetail well with anarchist sensibilities such as cooperation and mutual aid.

It was within this contextual framework that I launched into several years of participatory observation in the anti-corporate globalization movement. While collecting data, I not only rejected objectivity, but also deliberately blurred the lines of participant, activist, and scholar, hoping that the experience of being there would elicit an understanding of how social control operates. I sought to get as close as possible to protesters, to imbed myself so deeply into the movement that I would lose myself in it.

## Where is the anti-corporate globalization movement?

Being there, of course, requires knowing where *there* is. At first, the task of studying control within the anti-globalization movement felt not only daunting, but also destined to fragmentation, incompleteness, and partiality. After all, the movement is known as "the movement of movements" (Brecher *et al.* 2000; Starhawk 2002; Notes from Nowhere 2003; Mertes 2004), an assemblage of activities originating from diverse ideological and geographic points. Looked at

closely, the movement merges global issues that cross social, environmental, and spiritual struggles. When looked at from afar, the movement may seem chaotic, fragmented, and disjointed. But a closer analysis uncovers a more coherent movement, one that is disjointed only in as much as it is democratic and anarchistic.

Given this fact, my research faced an important question: where is the anti-globalization movement located? When imagining the movement, images of the great Leviathan come to mind, a giant body made up of thousands of struggles to form what may become a new social force, a new civil society or world body, but one with no head, no center, few leaders, and organized around networks. One problem of studying this amorphous Leviathan is, of course, finding it, since the movement appears to be everywhere and nowhere at the same time. If one looks directly for it, one finds the movement spread across the world in various locations. Scholars see it in the water wars of Cochabamba, Bolivia (Shiva 2002), in the Zapatista struggle (Hayden 2002), in indigenous resistance to genetically modified agriculture (Kimbrell 2002), in the peasant occupation of lands in Brazil (Wright and Wolford 2003), and even in the resistance to gentrification of downtown urban locales such as Tempe, Arizona (Amster 2004). The movement is also located in the labor disputes over free trade agreements (Brecher *et al.* 2000), in the fight against sweatshop labor (Fung *et al.* 2001), and in the symbolic manipulation of corporate symbols (Klein 2000).

Regarding the origins of the movement, some see a new anti-capitalist movement springing from the so-called "Battle in Seattle" of late 1999 (Yuen *et al.* 2001), others see its roots in the queer struggles of the 1980s or in reclaiming the streets (Shepard and Hayduk 2002), or in the International Monetary Fund riots in Asia, Latin America, and Africa some thirty years ago (Woodroffe and Ellis-Jones 2000), while others see the birth of the movement 500 years in the past when the indigenous people of the Americas fought Columbus (Notes from Nowhere 2003). Any of these locations and struggles could easily serve as the primary focus for a lengthy study of social control and globalization. It is clear, then, that the anti-corporate globalization movement is situated in different times and geographical locations. However, it is of course impossible to study all of these spaces. To keep my research manageable, I focused on protests outside major global institutions (such as the WTO, IMF, WEF, and the G8), as they occurred in North America.

These locations were ideal for studying the social control of protests, in part because the responses to these protests were strong. Since the breaking of windows at the Battle of Seattle and the killing of a young anarchist in the G8 protest of 2001 in Genoa, Italy, the movement received an increasing amount of negative public attention from the media, who often depicted the activists in the movement (especially those who identified as anarchist) as dangerous, violent, and threatening to the "public order." Although not directly related, the terrorist attacks in the US on 9–11–01 augmented the perceived threat of "violence" and "public disorder" of the anti-globalization movement. Since the attacks, anti-globalization protesters across the globe are more likely to receive the brunt of a highly orchestrated police response.

Yet, the frequency of these protests presented a problem. At the time, these large protests occurred two to three times per year in North America. The unstable frequency made it difficult to "be there" since the "there" appeared only periodically, converging on a location and then going underground until the next event, only to reemerge in different geographic locations. Each time the movement appeared, a new set of circumstances appeared with it, along with a different set of organizing web pages, and a slightly different ensemble of groups and organizers on the ground. Many scholars from various fields have documented the network-based tendencies of the movement (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001; White and Sproule 2002; Hardt and Negri 2004; Juris 2008), showing how, like a rhizome, the movement is intricately woven together from human connections facilitated in part through electronic communication.

## Building an organic, flexible, and reflexive mode of inquiry

Given that the field of study was so amorphous, fading in and out of geographical locations and existing in various virtual environments, a fl uid research approach was essential in entering, understanding, and experiencing this complicated environment. For this reason, I adopted a multi-ethnographic approach, which includes participatory observation, reinforced with analysis of web pages, newspaper articles, and even interviews with police offcers. It was my goal to get as clear a picture of how protest was controlled. However, I wanted this picture to develop from the ground up, organically, and to refl ect the emotional realities of those who were targeted by the police.

As stated above, I adopted a mixture of two approaches when doing research, one methodological and the other ethical. The methodological side blends a grounded theoretical approach as described by Glaser and Strauss (1968) and the multi-sited ethnographic technique developed by George Marcus (1995). The ethical approach derives from the sociological tradition of *verstehen* as explained by Jeff Ferrell and Mark Hamm (1998), a concept that helps connect anarchist values to methodological concerns. I discuss this link further at the end of this section

Both grounded theory and multi-sited ethnography are deeply imbedded within a tradition requiring the researcher to develop intimate knowledge of the environment under study. Grounded theory is most accurately described as a research method in which theory develops from data, rather than springing from *a priori* knowledge. It uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived "grounded" theory (Glaser and Strauss 1968). The primary objective here is to expand upon the knowledge of a phenomenon by identifying the key elements of that phenomenon, and then categorizing the relationships of those elements. In other words, to go from the specific to the general without losing sight of what makes the specific circumstance unique. The grounded theoretical approach also presents a serious critique of positivist science. It argues against the dominant tendency in sociology to overstate the positivist idea of verifcation as the primary motivation for empirical research. Verifcation, they contend, often supersedes the

need for real, grounded theory based on observation. According to Glaser and Strauss (1968), sociology focuses too much on the deductive method, which takes a hypothesis or theory and tests it directly through empirical data. Positivistic methods take theory as given, never asking where it comes from, never grounding it within a context, ideology, or interests.

Following the grounded approach, I entered the field with little theoretical background regarding social control. Rather than starting with a positivistic approach (which would include formulating a hypothesis and testing it), I allowed the issues to emerge organically, derived directly from my personal experience within the movement. The goal was to immerse myself in the protest, become a protester, and develop a theoretical understanding of the situation based on that immersion. While I recognized the impossibility of entering the field *tabula rasa*, I did attempt to put aside academic ideas and theories regarding the movement, hoping that this would produce a deep experience of the situation, resulting in valuable new insights.

Although useful during the beginning stages of the research, I also found significant limitations with the grounded theoretical approach. While the approach is friendly to an organic, experience-based method of research, it is still based on quasi-scientific procedures, seeking to develop scientific theory through deductive rather than inductive means, and the goal is still to uncover social laws rather than imbedded meanings. Grounded theory also lacks the theoretical coherence to deal with a shifting, ever-changing field environment such as that found in the anti-globalization movement. The approach still holds to notions of a static, geographically solid field environment that the researcher enters and observes. The reality of the current postmodern condition, however, is more complicated, with a field of study that bubbles up and fades away every few months, a field that includes multiple physical and non-physical sites. For this reason, the work of George Marcus is instructive.

Marcus develops the notion of multi-sited ethnography, a concept that recognizes the flexibility needed in contemporary ethnography to understand an increasingly complicated and interrelated world (Marcus 1995). Marcus argues that the most common way to do ethnography, until recently, was to focus on a single site and later develop the systemic context around it. However, another way of doing ethnographic work (often labeled postmodern) "moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffused time-space" (Marcus 1995: 96). This mode of ethnography differs in that it recognizes the increasingly complicated relationship between time and space as experienced by contemporary subjectivities, leaving behind the notion that ethnography is only produced in a single site of intensive investigation. This form of ethnography is mobile and flexible, providing the researcher with the theoretical ability to explore "unexpected trajectories in tracing a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity that destabilizes the distinctions" (Marcus 1995: 96). Marcus's concepts embrace the fluidity of the movement as it emerges, forms, and transforms in various geographical locations. The task of researcher,

then, is to enter these multiple-sites, to participate in them, and to make connections.

Equally important for ethical research is the notion of reflexivity. Reflexivity, at its most basic level, is the ability of a person to stand back and assess aspects of her own behavior, society, power, and culture in relation to such factors as motivation and meaning (Steier 1991). In relation to ethnography, reflexivity represents a deep questioning of objectivity, of clean and unproblematic separation between the researcher and those researched. It involves understanding that in saying something about the people you study, you are also saying equally as much about yourself, since all of your passions, thoughts, and feelings inform your curiosity and the selection of what you study. Reflexivity signals the understanding that an observer is just as much part of the social setting, context, and culture that she is trying to understand. Rather than falling back on the notion that "objective distance" is needed for producing "truth," a reflexive approach embraces interaction and focuses on uncovering situated knowledge by encouraging participation and involvement, in the space and time of those whom one studies (Burawoy 1998).

Finally, my approach confronted an ethical dilemma, one that is likely common for anarchist scholars: how to research people who are running serious risks, without being exploitive of their circumstances and without doing what some call "drive-by research" or "airplane ethnography," where a researcher enters a setting, conducts studies, and then only concerns themselves with publishing manuscripts for other academics to read. To resolve this, I embraced the concept of *verstehen*, an idea first introduced by Max Weber and embraced by various anarchist scholars (see Ferrell and Sanders 1995; Ferrell and Hamm 1998). *Verstehen* is an approach to knowledge that calls for empathy, compassion, and understanding. In line with an anarchistic approach, it involves a deep commitment to and involvement with those under study, as well as an attempt to connect with the intentions, passions, and lives of those in the margins. For me, adopting this method involved opening myself to the emotions, fears, and frustrations experienced by those in the movement; running alongside them in the streets as they sought shelter from law enforcement; sleeping in the crowed halls of the convergence space or in public parks; and directly experiencing the effects of social control on the body and mind as police fired rubber bullets, bean bags, and stun-grenades.

## Entering the field

Entering the field in the manner suggested above has the potential for great rewards, and perhaps some pitfalls. If we can, for a moment, give ourselves over and stand with those we study, if we can embrace experiential closeness and reject objective distance, then we might begin to know more about their lives, their fears, and the rationale(s) for their actions.

For instance, when I first arrived in New York City for the World Economic Forum protest in 2002, I was struck by the overwhelming police presence. Police officers were stationed in front of corporate locations known to be "targets" of the

anti-globalization movement. Officers dressed in "robocop" uniforms protected hundreds of Starbucks stores, McDonald's restaurants, and City Bank offices. They were also present inside and outside subway stations and in public parks. The police appeared ready for a massive violent invasion, or perhaps were preparing for another terrorist attack. These actions were not surprising since prior to the protest the NYPD Chief of Police stated openly in the *New York Times* that there would be a "zero tolerance" attitude toward violent protesters. If necessary, he continued, anarchist protesters would be arrested for simple infractions such as jay walking, adding that the city could not tolerate another black eye resulting from violent demonstrations. This rhetoric produced fear in the streets, with protesters worried about what the NYPD might do to them. I felt this fear in the organizing meetings, noticing that paranoia was rampant, with people being kicked out or refused entry into activists' meetings. Adding to the fear, police vehicles patrolled the central gathering area for activists, leaving us with the feeling that a raid was imminent. It is this type of closeness that can provide a researcher with insights on how control operates, how it affects the psyche, and how easily it is to internalize.

During that trip, I also observed police surveillance while attending organizing meetings of mostly anarchist activists. Often referred to as "spokescouncils," these meetings were common at anti-globalization protests and were used to organize non-hierarchically. Each night, a group of one hundred people, each representing affinity groups of between five and fifteen individuals, gathered to discuss and collectively decide on the events for the following day. The activities varied from snake marches to animal liberation demonstrations. Most of the activities occurred without legal permits, which necessitated a high level of security in the planning process. Even though each event was planned with no more than one day's notice, police consistently were present in full riot gear at the precise location the next day. It was obvious that either undercover police officers or informants were present at the spokescouncil meetings. For a researcher, the reward for doing this type of work is the richness of the data. These experiences allowed me, as a scholar, to get deeper insight on control.

However, entering the field as a full participant also posed challenges. I experienced the first of these while still a graduate student. When some of the faculty in my department got word of my "activist research," I was openly dis-couraged from continuing. Activist research, I was told, has significant consequences in academia. For starters, most activists were generally unable to complete their dissertations, mainly because the activist work "distracted" students from more rigorous academic writing. Those who finished might ruin their chances of getting a "good" academic job or be reduced to working at a community college or at a less prestigious university. So far, I am glad that I ignored this advice.

Overall, participating in and observing this movement was exhilarating, leaving me with a deep sense of solidarity and hope for the future. Here finally was a group of people not intimidated by the rhetoric and force of the state, willing to confront authority and hierarchy and to run great risks in order to voice their concerns with confidence and defiance. Thus, my research unfolds from the admiration and respect of those involved in the movement and from the anxieties and fears

induced by police while in the streets. In this sense, the anti-globalization move-
ment stands in solidarity with anarchist movements both historical and contem-
porary. As such, anarchist scholars must seek methods that are reflexive and
conscious of the potentially exploitive nature of research itself.

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# 10 Anarchism, academia, and the avant-garde

*David Graeber*

Initially, I was to write a critical auto-ethnography of my life in the academy. But I quickly realized that writing critically about the academy is almost impossible. During the 1980s, we all became used to the idea of reflexive anthropology, the effort to probe behind the apparent authority of ethnographic texts to reveal the complex relations of power and domination that went into making them. The result was an outpouring of ethnographic meditations on the politics of fieldwork. But even as a graduate student, it always seemed to me there was something oddly missing here. Ethnographic texts, after all, are not actually written in the field. They are written at universities. Reflexive anthropology, however, almost never had anything to say about the power relations under which these texts were actually composed.

In retrospect, the reason seems simple enough: when one is in the field, all the power is on one side – or at least, could easily be imagined as being so. To meditate on one's own power is not going to offend anyone (in fact, it's something of a classic upper-middle-class preoccupation), and even if it does, there's likely nothing those who are offended can do about it. The moment one returns from the field and begins writing, however, the power relations are reversed. While one is writing his or her dissertation, one is, typically, a penniless graduate student, whose entire career could very possibly be destroyed by one impolitic interaction with a committee member. While one is transforming the dissertation into a book, one is typically an adjunct or untenured Assistant Professor, desperately trying not to step on any powerful toes and land a real permanent job. Any anthropologist in such a situation will, in fact, mostly likely spend many hours developing complex, nuanced, and extremely detailed ethnographic analyses of the power relations this entails, but that critique can never, by defi nition, be published, because anyone who did so would be committing academic suicide.

One can only imagine the fate of, say, a female graduate student who wrote an essay documenting the sexual politics of her department, let alone the sexual overtures of her committee members, or, say, one of working-class background who published a description of the practices of Marxist professors who regularly cite Pierre Bourdieu's (1993) analyses of the reproduction of class privilege in academic settings, and then in their actual lives act as if Bourdieu had been writing a how-to book instead of a critique. By the time one is a senior faculty member,

and thus secure in their position, one might be able to get away with publishing such an analysis. But by then – unless one is reminiscing – one's very situation of power guarantees the object can no longer be perceived.

On the one hand, my thoughts lead me to the conclusion that it would be safer to admit to being an anarchist than to write an honest auto-ethnography of the academy. On the other hand, I am an anarchist. And it strikes me that the dilemmas that come out of this reality provide an interesting commentary on the academy and its *modus operandi*, which I present in this chapter.

## Consensus and direct democracy

I conducted my doctoral research in a rural community in Madagascar, during a period in the late 1980s and early 1990s in which most of the countryside there had been largely abandoned by the state. Rural communities, and even to some degree towns, were to a large extent self-governing; no one was really paying taxes, and if a crime was committed the police would not come. Public decisions, when they had to be made, tended to be made by a kind of informal consensus process. I wrote a little bit about the latter in my dissertation but, like most anthropologists, I couldn't think of all that much interesting to say about it. In fact I only really came to understand what was interesting about consensus retrospectively, when, ten years later, I became an activist in New York. By that time, almost all North American anarchist groups operated by some form of consensus process, and the process worked so well – it really seems about the only form of decision-making fully consistent with non-top-down styles of organization – that it had been widely adopted by anyone interested in direct democracy.

There is enormous variation among different styles and forms of consensus but one thing almost all the North American variants have in common is that they are organized in conscious opposition to the style of organization and, especially, of debate typical of the classical sectarian Marxist groups. The latter are invariably organized around some Master Theoretician, who offers a comprehensive analysis of the world situation and, usually, of human history as a whole, but very little theoretical reflection on more immediate questions of organization and practice. Anarchist-inspired groups tend to operate on the assumption that no one could, or probably should, ever convert another person completely to one's own point of view, that decision-making structures are ways of managing diversity, and therefore, that one should concentrate instead on maintaining egalitarian processes and considering immediate questions of action in the present.

One of the fundamental principles of political debate, for instance, is that one is obliged to give other participants the benefit of the doubt for honesty and good intentions, whatever else one might think of their arguments. In part, this too emerges from the style of debate that consensus decision-making encourages: where voting encourages one to reduce their opponents' positions to a hostile caricature, or whatever it takes to defeat them, a consensus process is built on a principle of compromise and creativity where one is constantly changing proposals around until one can come up with something everyone can at least live with;

therefore, the incentive is always to put the best possible construction on others' arguments.

All this was very much like what I'd witnessed in Madagascar; the main difference was that since American activists were learning this from scratch, it all had to be spelled out explicitly. So the activist experience did throw new light on my original ethnography. But it struck me just how much ordinary intellectual practice – the kind of thing I was trained to do at the University of Chicago, for example – really does resemble just the sort of sectarian mode of debate anarchists were so trying to avoid. One of the things which had most disturbed me about my training there was precisely the way we were encouraged to read other theorists' arguments: basically, in the least charitable way possible. I had sometimes wondered how this could be reconciled with an idea that intellectual practice was, on some ultimate level, a common enterprise in pursuit of truth. In fact, academic discourse often seems an almost exact reproduction of the style of intellectual debate typical of the most ridiculous vanguardist sects.

## Anarchism and the academy

All this helped explain something else: why there are so few anarchists in the academy. As a political philosophy, anarchism is going through a veritable renaissance. Anarchist principles – autonomy, voluntary association, self-organization, direct democracy, mutual aid – have become the basis for organizing new social movements from Karnataka to Buenos Aires, even if their exponents are as likely to actually call themselves Autonomists, Associationalists, Horizontalists, or Zapatistas. Yet most academics seem to have only a vague idea that this is happening, and tend to dismiss anarchism as a stupid joke (for example, "Anarchist organization! But isn't that a contradiction in terms?"). There are thousands of academic Marxists, but no more than a handful of well-known academic anar - chists.

I don't think this is because academics are slow on the ball. It seems to me that Marxism has always had an affinity with the academy that anarchism never could. Marxism is, after all, probably the only social movement to be invented by a man who had submitted a doctoral dissertation; and there's always been something about its spirit that fits the academy. Anarchism on the other hand was never really invented by anyone. True, historians usually treat it as if it were, constructing the history of anarchism as if it's basically a creature identical in its nature to Marxism: it was created by specifi c nineteenth-century thinkers (Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, etc.), it inspired working-class organizations, became enmeshed in political struggles, and so on. But in fact the analogy is strained. The nineteenth-century thinkers generally credited with inventing anarchism didn't consider themselves to have invented anything particularly new. They saw anarchism more as a kind of moral faith, a rejection of all forms of structural violence, inequality, or domination (anarchism literally means "without rulers"), and a belief that humans would be perfectly capable of getting on without them. In this sense, there have always been anarchists, and presumably, always will be.

One need only compare the historical schools of Marxism and anarchism, then, to see that we are dealing with a fundamentally different sort of thing. Marxist schools have authors. Just as Marxism sprang from the mind of Marx, so we have Leninists, Maoists, Trotskyites, Gramscians, Althusserians, to name a few. Note how the list starts with heads of state and grades almost seamlessly into French professors. Pierre Bourdieu (1993) once noted that if the academic field is a game in which scholars strive for dominance, then you know you have won when other scholars start wondering how to make an adjective out of your name. It is, presumably, to preserve the possibility of "winning the game" – of being recognized as an intellectual titan, or at least, being able to sit at the feet of one – that intellectuals insist on continuing to employ just the sort of Great Man theories of history they would scoff at in discussing just about anything else. Indeed, Foucault's ideas, like Trotsky's, are never treated as primarily the products of a certain intellectual milieu, as something that emerged from endless conversations and arguments in cafés, classrooms, etc., but always as if they emerged from a single man's genius. Here, too, Marxism seems entirely within the spirit of the academy.

Schools of anarchism, in contrast, always emerge from some kind of organizational principle or form of practice: Anarcho-Syndicalists and Anarcho-Communists, Insurrectionists and Platformists, Cooperativists, Individualists, and so on.[1] Anarchists are distinguished by what they do, and how they organize themselves to go about doing it. And indeed this has always been what anarchists have spent most of their time thinking and arguing about. They have never been much interested in the kinds of broad strategic or philosophical questions that preoccupy Marxists, such as, "Are the peasants a potentially revolutionary class?" (anarchists tend to think this is something for peasants to decide) or, "What is the nature of the commodity form?" Rather, anarchists tend to argue about what is the truly democratic way to go about a meeting, at what point organization stops being about empowering people and starts squelching individual freedom. Is "leadership" necessarily a bad thing? Or, alternately, about the ethics of opposing power: what is direct action? Should one condemn someone who assassinates a head of state? Is it ever okay to break a window?

Marxism, then, has tended to be a theoretical or analytical discourse about revolutionary strategy. Anarchism has tended to be an ethical discourse about revolutionary practice. Now, this also does imply that there is a lot of potential complementarity between the two. There is no reason why one couldn't write Marxist theory, and simultaneously engage in anarchist practice; in fact, a lot of people have, including me. [2] But if anarchism is an ethics of practice, it means nothing to say you are an anarchist unless you are doing something. And it is a form of ethics that insists, before anything else, that one's means must be consonant with one's ends; that one cannot create freedom through authoritarian means; that as much as possible, one must embody the society one wishes to create. Therefore, it's very diffi cult to imagine how one could do this in a university without getting into serious trouble.

I once asked Immanuel Wallerstein why he thought academics engaged in such sectarian styles of debate. He acted as if the answer were obvious: "Well, the

academy. It's a perfect feudalism." In fact, the modern university system is about the only institution – other than the British monarchy and Catholic Church – to have survived more or less intact from the High Middle Ages. [3] What would it actually mean to act like an anarchist in an environment full of deans and provosts and people wearing funny robes, conference hopping in luxurious hotels, doing intellectual battle in language so arcane that no one who hasn't spent at least two or three years in grad school would ever hope to be able to understand it? At the very least it would mean challenging the university structure in some way. So we are back to the problem with which I began: to act like an anarchist would be academic suicide. So it is not at all clear what an anarchist academic could actually *do*.

## Revolutionaries and the university

If one were to follow Wallerstein's lead, it would no doubt be possible to write a history of academic sectarianism, starting perhaps with the theological quarrels between Dominicans and Franciscans in the thirteenth century – that is, back when the quarrels were literally between rival sects – and tracing it down to the origins of the modern university system in Prussia in the early nineteenth century. As Randall Collins (1998) has pointed out, the reformers who created the modern university system, mainly by putting philosophy in the place formerly held by theology as master discipline and tying the institution to a newly centralizing state, were almost all exponents of one or another form of philosophical Idealism. His argument seems a trifle cynical, but the pattern was repeated in so many places – with Idealism becoming the dominant philosophical mode at exactly the moment that universities were reformed, first in Germany, then England, the United States, Italy, Scandinavia, Japan – that it's diffi cult to deny that something is going on here (Collins 1998: 650):

> When Kant proposed to make the philosophy faculty arbiter of the other disciplines, he was carrying out a line which made academic careers in themselves superior to careers within the church . . . When Fichte envisioned university professors as a new species of philosopher-king, he was putting in the most fl amboyant form the tendency for academic degree holders to monopolize entry into government administration. The basis for these arguments had to be worked out in the concepts of philosophical discourse; but the motivation for creating these concepts came from the realistic assessment that the structure was moving in a direction favorable to a self-governing intellectual elite.

If so, it explains why followers of Marx, that great rebel against German Idealism, can form such a perfect complement to the spirit of the academy – its mirror image, even – while serving as a bridge through which habits of argument once typical of theologians can get carried over into domains of politics.

Some would argue (as I think Collins would) that these sectarian divisions are simply inevitable features of intellectual life. New ideas can only emerge from a

welter of contending schools. This may be true, but I think it rather misses the point. First of all, the sort of consensus-based groups I refer to above put a premium on a diversity of perspectives too. Yet anarchists don't see discussions as a contest in which one theory or perspective should, ultimately, win. That's why discussion almost always focuses on what people are going to do. Second, sectarian modes of debate are hardly conducive to fostering intellectual creativity. It's hard to see how a strategy of systematically misrepresenting other scholars' arguments could actually contribute to the furtherance of human knowledge. It is useful only if one sees oneself as fighting a battle and the only object is to win. One uses such techniques to impress an audience. Of course, in academic battles, there is often no audience – other than grad students or other feudal retainers – which makes it all seem rather pointless, but that doesn't seem to matter. Academic warriors will play to non-existent audiences in the same way that minuscule Trotskyite sects of seven or eight members will invariably pretend to be governments in waiting, and thus feel it is their responsibility to lay out their positions on everything from gay marriage to how best to resolve ethnic tensions in Kashmir. It might seem ridiculous. Actually, it is ridiculous. But apparently, it is the best way to guarantee victory in those odd knightly tournaments that have become the hallmark of Collins' "self-governing intellectual elite."

## On the idea of the avant-garde

I seem to have argued myself into something of a box here. Anarchists overcome sectarian habits by always keeping the focus on what anarchists have in common, which is what they want to *do* (smash the state, create new forms of community, etc.). What academics want to do, for the most part, is to establish their relative positions. Perhaps it might be best to take it, then, from the other side.

Anarchists have a word for this sort of sectarian behavior. They call it "vanguardism," and consider it typical of those who believe that the proper role of intellectuals is to come up with the correct theoretical analysis of the world situation, so as to be able to lead the masses on a truly revolutionary path. One salutary effect of the popularity of anarchism within revolutionary circles nowadays is that this position is considered definitively *passé*. The problem, then, concerns what should be the role of revolutionary intellectuals. Or, simply put, how can we get past our vanguardist habits? Untwining social theory from vanguardist habits might seem a particularly diffi cult task because historically modern social theory and the idea of the vanguard were born more or less together. Actually, so was the idea of an artistic avant-garde, and the relation between the three – modern social theory, vanguardism, and the avant-garde – suggests some unexpected possibilities.

The term avant-garde was actually coined by Henri de Saint-Simon (1825) as the product of a series of essays he wrote at the end of his life. Like his onetime secretary and later rival, Auguste Comte, Saint-Simon was writing in the wake of the French Revolution, and essentially was asking what had gone wrong. Both reached the same conclusion: modern, industrial society lacked any institution that

could provide ideological cohesion and social integration, unlike feudal society that had the medieval Catholic Church. Each ended up proposing a new religion: Saint-Simon (1825) called his the "New Christianity," and Comte (1852) termed his the "New Catholicism." In the first, artists were to play the role of the priesthood; Saint-Simon produced an imaginary dialogue in which a representative of the artists explains to the scientists how, in their role of imagining possible futures and inspiring the public, they will play the role of an "avant-garde" – a "truly priestly function" in the coming society – and how artists will hatch the visions that scientists and industrialists will put into effect. Eventually, the state itself, as a coercive mechanism, would simply fade away.[4]

Comte (1852), of course, is most famous as the founder of *sociology*; indeed, he invented the term to describe what he saw as the master-discipline, which could both understand *and* direct society. He ended up taking a different, far more authoritarian approach to societal transformation, ultimately proposing the regulation and control of almost all aspects of human life according to scientific principles, with the priestly role in his New Catholicism being played by socio - logists themselves. It's a particularly fascinating opposition because, in the early twentieth century, the positions were effectively reversed. Instead of the left-wing Saint-Simonians looking to artists for leadership and the right-wing Comtians fancying themselves scientists, we had fascist leaders like Hitler and Mussolini imagining themselves as great artists inspiring the masses, sculpting society according to their grandiose visions, and the Marxist vanguard claiming the role of scientists. The Saint Simonians at any rate actively sought to recruit artists for their various ventures, salons, and utopian communities, though they quickly ran into difficulties because so many within "avant-garde" artistic circles preferred the more anarchistic Fourierists, and later, one or another branch of outright anarchists.

Actually, the number of nineteenth-century artists with anarchist sympathies is quite staggering, ranging from Pissaro to Tolstoy to Oscar Wilde, not to mention almost all early twentieth-century artists who later became Communists, from Malevich to Picasso. Rather than a political vanguard leading the way to a future society, radical artists almost invariably saw themselves as exploring new and less alienated modes of life. The really significant development in the nineteenth century was less the idea of a vanguard than that of Bohemia (a term first coined by Balzac in 1838): marginal communities living in more or less voluntary poverty, seeing themselves as dedicated to the pursuit of creative, unalienated forms of experience, united by a profound hatred of bourgeois life and everything it stood for. Ideologically, they were about equally likely to be proponents of "art for art's sake" or social revolutionaries. And in fact they seem to have been drawn from almost precisely the same social conjuncture as most nineteenth-century revolutionaries, or current ones for that matter: a kind of meeting between certain elements of (intentionally) downwardly mobile professional classes, in broad rejection of bourgeois values, and upwardly mobile children of the working class – the sort who managed to get themselves a bourgeois level of education only to discover this didn't mean actual entry into the bourgeoisie.

In the nineteenth century, the term "vanguard" could be used for anyone seen as exploring the path to a future free society. Radical newspapers – even anarchist ones – often called themselves "The Avant-garde." It was Marx who began to significantly change the idea by introducing the notion that the proletariat were the true revolutionary class – he didn't actually use the term "vanguard" in his own writing – because they were the one that was the most oppressed (or as he put it, "negated" by capitalism) and therefore had the least to lose by its abolition. In doing so, he ruled out the possibility that less alienated enclaves, whether of artists or the sort of artisans and independent producers who tended to form the backbone of anarchism, had anything significant to offer. The results we all know. The idea of a vanguard party dedicated to both organizing and providing an intellectual project for that most-oppressed class chosen as the agent of history, but also, actually sparking the revolution through their willingness to employ violence, was first outlined by Lenin in his pivotal 1902 essay, "What Is to Be Done?"; it has echoed endlessly, to the point where in the late 1960s groups like Students for a Democratic Society could end up locked in furious debates over whether the Black Panther Party should be considered the vanguard of the movement as the leaders of its most oppressed element.

All of this in turn had a curious effect on the artistic avant-garde who increasingly started to organize themselves like vanguard parties, beginning with the Dadaists and Futurists, publishing their own manifestos, communiqués, purging one another, and otherwise making themselves (sometimes quite intentional) parodies of revolutionary sects.[5] The ultimate fusion came with the Surrealists and then finally the Situationist International, which on the one hand was the most systematic in trying to develop a theory of revolutionary action according to the spirit of Bohemia, thinking about what it might actually mean to destroy the boundaries between art and life – but at the same time, in its own internal organization, displayed a kind of insane sectarianism full of so many splits, purges, and bitter denunciations that Guy Debord finally remarked that the only logical conclusion was for the International to be finally reduced to two members, one of whom would purge the other and then commit suicide. (Which is actually not too far from what in fact ended up happening.)

## Non-alienated production

For me the really intriguing question here is: why is it that artists have so often been drawn to revolutionary politics to begin with? Because it does seem to be the case that, even in times and places when there is next to no other constituency for revolutionary change, the place one is most likely to find it is among artists, authors, and musicians; even more so, in fact, than among professional intellectuals. It seems to me the answer must have something to do with alienation. There would appear to be a direct link between the experience of first imagining things and then bringing them into being (individually or collectively) – that is, the experience of certain forms of unalienated production – and the ability to imagine

social alternatives. This is particularly true if that alternative is the possibility of a society premised on less alienated forms of creativity.

This would allow us to see in a new light the historical shift from viewing the vanguard as relatively unalienated artists (or perhaps intellectuals) to viewing them as the representatives of the "most oppressed." In fact, I would suggest that revolutionary coalitions always tend to consist of an alliance between a society's least alienated and its most oppressed. And this is less elitist a formulation than it might sound, because it also seems to be the case that actual revolutions tend to occur when these two categories come to overlap. That would at any rate explain why it almost always seems to be peasants and craftspeople – or alternately, newly proletarianized former peasants and craftspeople – who actually rise up and overthrow capitalist regimes, and not those inured to generations of wage labor. Finally, I suspect this would also help explain the extraordinary importance of indigenous peoples' struggles in that planetary uprising usually referred to as the "anti-globalization" movement: such people tend to be simultaneously the very least alienated and most oppressed people on earth, and once it is technologically possible to include them in revolutionary coalitions, it is almost inevitable that they should take a leading role.

The role of indigenous peoples, curiously, leads us back to the role of ethnography. Now, it seems to me that in political terms, ethnography has received a somewhat raw deal. It is often assumed to be intrinsically a tool of domination, the kind of technique traditionally employed by foreign conquerors or colonial governments. In fact, the use of ethnography by European colonialists is something of an anomaly: in the ancient world, for example, one sees a burst of ethnographic curiosity in the time of Herodotus that vanishes the moment gigantic multi-cultural empires come on the scene. Really, periods of great ethnographic curiosity have tended to be periods of rapid social change and at least potential revolution. What's more, one could argue that under normal conditions, ethnography is less a weapon of the powerful than it is a weapon of the weak. All those graduate students constructing elaborate ethnographies of their departments that they can never publish are really doing – perhaps in a more theoretically informed way – is something that everyone in such a position tends to do. Servants, hirelings, slaves, secretaries, concubines, kitchen workers, pretty much anyone dependent on the whims of someone living in a different moral or cultural universe, are for obvious reasons constantly trying to figure out what that person is thinking and how people like that tend to think, to decipher their weird rituals or understand how they get on with their relatives. It's not like it happens much the other way around.[6]

Of course, ethnography is ideally a little more than that. Ideally, ethnography is about teasing out the hidden symbolic, moral, or pragmatic logics that underlie certain types of social action; the way people's habits and actions make sense in ways in which they are not themselves completely aware. But it seems to me this provides a potential role for the radical, non-vanguardist intellectual. The first thing we need to do is to look at those who are creating viable alternatives for the group, and try to figure out what might be the larger implications of what they are (already) doing.

Obviously what I am proposing would only work if it was, ultimately, a form of auto-ethnography – in the sense of examining movements to which one has, in fact, made some kind of commitment, in which one feels oneself a part. It would also have to be combined with a certain degree of utopian extrapolation: a matter of teasing out the tacit logic or principles underlying certain forms of radical practice, and then, not only offering the analysis back to those communities, but using them to formulate new visions. These visions would have to be offered as potential gifts, not definitive analyses or impositions. Here too there are suggestive parallels in the history of radical artistic movements, which became movements precisely as they became their own critics; [7] there are also intellectuals already trying to do precisely this sort of auto-ethnographic work. But I say all this not so much to provide models as to open up a field for discussion, by emphasizing that even the notion of vanguardism itself is far more rich in its history and full of alternative possibilities than most of us would ever be given to expect. And it provides at least one possible answer to the question of what is an anarchist anthropologist to do.

No doubt there are many others.

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# 11  *Dis-abling* capitalism and an anarchism of "radical equality" in resistance to ideologies of normalcy

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> Look, it's quite simple. We want to put everything in common . . Obviously when
> I say everyone should work I mean all those who are able to, and doing the amount
> suited to them. The lame, the weak and the aged should be supported by society,
> because it is the duty of humanity that no one should suffer .    . . The revolution
> achieved, it will be necessary to begin from the base and work to the top.
>
> (Malatesta 1981 [1884]: 10–11, 36)

## Disability Studies: defining disability

Disability Studies is a relatively new academic field. It springs in part from the
disability rights movement and social change activism spurred largely by people
labeled and marginalized as "disabled" in numerous societies (Barnes *et al.* 2002;
Kafka 2003; Malhotra 2001). Like Feminist and Queer Studies, Disability Studies
provides a conceptual framework for a critique of law, culture, and society.
Disability Studies deconstructs and reconstructs the meaning of disability through
investigating the social construction of disability, the power structures that support
and enhance ableism, and the idea of normalcy. The basic approach that all
disability studies scholars share is that disability is not an inherent trait located in
the disabled person's body and mind, but a result of socio-cultural dynamics that
occur in interactions between society and people defined as disabled.

An important point to address at the outset is that all people are different and
have unique needs. Therefore, "normal," "average," or "able" are all socially con-
structed terms. Disability, from this premise, is seen as a spectrum, not a binary
(dis/ability). The construction of dis/ability as a binary and the placement of
particular individuals on either side is a result of power relations and hegemonic
beliefs about ideal productive bodies and about notions of usefulness, inde-
pendence, and social and economic contributions.

Writing on the notion of anarchy as the antipode of fascism and the fascist
conception that "in unity there is strength – in uniformity there is strength," Alan
Moore (2007) stresses that anarchy is almost starting from the principle that "in
diversity, there is strength." Everybody is recognized as having their own abilities,

agendas, and their own need to work cooperatively with other people in mutual and collaborative approaches. This is in direct contrast to the current neoliberal, capitalist, and modernist narrative that individuals are independent, without the need of community or group support.

Anarchist theory foregrounds diversity as the great social reservoir of human particularity, with people, *all* different, working together *in common* toward mutual goals. Capitalism contributes to the marginalization of those constructed as "dis/abled" by positioning the individual as consumer and producer. Capitalism, especially in its post-war hyper-consumerist form, works to reduce our humanity and citizenship to these two roles, both of which support capitalism. For example, consumption supports the engines of production because people have to sell their labor-power in order to purchase, and capitalism (through the ideological and repressive apparatuses of the state (Althusser 1971; Hill 2004), engages in permanent culture wars to capture and/or inflame people's consumerist material-istic desires and ideological support (Gramsci 1989; Marcuse 1969). But until everyone is respected as being different and not measured according to an imaginary notion of a "normal person," there will be those that are marginalized, disabled, and challenged in a culture that constructs bodies along a binary typology as either "normal" or "deviant."

## Normalizing and its archeology

Bourgeois ideology creates and reproduces a disciplinary world in which people conform to a particular hegemonic set of values and patterns of thought. "Shallow equality" (as contrasted with "radical equality"), normality, and being "average" seem so ingrained that most people take them as neutral terms that have always guided our ways of living and thinking, and as a taken-for-granted way of creating social hierarchies.

In fact, normalcy is a relatively new concept which arose as part of the modernity project in 1800–1850 in Western Europe and its North American colonized spaces. The word "normal" did not enter the English language until around 1840 (Davis 1995; see also Reiser 2006). Prior to the concept of normalcy there was the concept of the ideal (and its corollary, the grotesque). In Roman-Greek culture it was understood that everyone falls beneath this standard. The ideal was perceived as unachievable and imperfection was on a continuum (like a Greek statue). Imperfection was seen as being in various degrees from the ideal and was not penalized as such (Davis 2002).

In the nineteenth century, the concept of normal entered European culture, as it related to the concept of the average; normalcy thus began with the creation of measurements and statistics. Qualities are represented on a bell curve, and the extremes of the curve are abnormal. Statistics were created as state tools (hence their etymology, as stat(e)istics) and, with the advent of modernity, as "political arithmetic" (Porter 1995). It is hard to imagine that before the advent of modernity and capitalism, governing bodies did not make decisions based considerably on crime, poverty, birth, death, and unemployment rates (Porter 1995). This new form

of governance is what Foucault (1990; Foucault *et al.* 2003) characterized as biopolitics. Indeed, it is exactly this new-found ability to measure performances of individuals and groups that makes them governable.

Davis (2002) states that there is a difference between normalcy and normality, in which normality is the actual state of being normal or being regarded as normal, and normalcy is the structural realm that controls and normalizes bodies. It is the ideology behind normality. This ideology is embedded with bourgeois norms, in which the middle class are seen as the "mean." The key argument Davis makes is that ableism and normalization are not unusual practices that we must denounce, but are part of the Western modernist project by definition (for example, modern nation states, democracy, science, capitalism). There are several paradoxes associated with modernism: for example, representational democracy versus individual liberty and capitalism versus equality. Normalcy as an ideology seemingly resolves these conflicts. In regards to wealth, on a curve it is clear that not all can be wealthy. Some, that is the capitalist class profiting from the labor power of workers, have to be in the (richest and most politically and culturally powerful) margins of the curve for capitalism to be sustained.

Many fight for equality of opportunity, others for more equality of outcome, but what we should be fighting for at the same time is a world of "radical democracy" founded on genuine respect for diversity and difference, respect for the unique individual in her "being-there," a transformed and transformative conception of "radical equality" within what some would see as an anarchist-socialist society of radical libertarian solidarity and mutual aid or a democratic Marxist society.

The concept of the norm, unlike the ideal, implies that the majority of the population must somehow be around the mean. In a normalizing society, everyone has to work hard to conform to norms, albeit that some of the norms are niche norms (for example, lifestyle, fashion, consumption patterns) while others are more societal (with a standard "acceptable" range of pro-capitalist ideologies), but people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups, are scapegoated for not being able to fit these standards. There is a need for people at the margin, in order to highlight and valorize "normalcy" by contrasting it with a demeaned and derided "abnormalcy." Davis (2002) also notes that almost all the early statisti-cians were also known eugenicists, unsurprising perhaps since the notion of the norm and the average divided the populous into standard and substandard populations. Difference is thus projected onto stigmatized populations so all others can strive for some illusory normalcy.

Difference (especially major, transgressive difference) is what normalcy fears, represses, and fights against. By some measure, this framework can be applied to the privileges held by any dominant position, but for the disability community this framework can be particularly useful in rendering the social construction of the "abled-body" visible. The more we understand how the disabled body is manifested, the more we understand how the abled-body is too. By breaking down the socially constructed binary of normal/abnormal we can perhaps begin to truly see a world of difference.

But we must first understand that the disabled body is a social construction rather than an innate quality. Our ideas of health and bodily function within the US and the rich white capitalist world, for example, are carried out by mostly white, heterosexual, able bodied, wealthy. American-dominated media carry this entire "imaginary of ability" and its negation around the globe, infiltrating non-capitalist cultural schemata. It thus appears that the entire concept of Western "normalcy" needs to be radically "decolonized" (Smith 1999). Such "decolonizing" of concept and method is central to any social-anarchist reconceptualizing of what needs to be done in creating more inclusive post-capitalist societies on a decentralized planetary scale. Vestiges of "colonialist" concepts lie everywhere inside bourgeois systems of knowledge production, theory, and practice, underpinning virtually all epistemologies now in circulation or that are accepted in the academy.

Disability is not based on a binary, but a multinary. It is an understanding that all are different. It is, alongside other "subaltern" and resistant ideologies and movements, a movement that fights against normalcy, averaging, standardization, and conformity. Self-repression, by valorizing normalcy and subjugating difference, twists and perverts our identity and who we truly are. Normalizing normalcy is what capitalism wants and what nature rejects. Therefore, in this sense, as in others, capitalism is at war with nature. It is for this reason that nature is being genetically modifi ed and enhanced to be controlled, normalized, and standardized for the purpose of effective production, marketing, and consumption. We have one picture of what a perfect apple looks like, while knowing that there are many types of apples in all different shapes and colors. This holds true with all plants (and people as well), but as science and society strive to control, they find themselves destroying what they love so much: a diversity of plants, a diversity of life, or to our great dismay, a diversity of human life. That diversity of life is celebrated in initiatives such as "biodiverse resistance" (Biodiverse 2007) and in its working vision of a society in which hierarchies are abolished, food and energy sources are ecologically sustainable, and all people are recognized and accepted for who and what they are.

This is what a social-anarchist approach to biodiversity will seek to foreground and implement. An anti-authoritarian framework for dealing with "alter-ability" will struggle against tendencies toward top-down managerialism in social service provision by the existing state (Searing 2002). More importantly, it will encourage the less able to build their own alternative structures of useful activity integrated within a cooperative framework, especially at the scale of households and neighborhoods, and local "peer circles" for small-scale projects (for example, cooking, teaching, autonomous health care, child care), as sketched in Herod (2007: 11). Herod sees households in a proto-anarchist society (forming the new in the shell of the old) as follows:

> Households are units of roughly two hundred people cohabiting in a building complex that provides for a variety of living arrangements for single indivi-
> duals, couples, families, and extended families. The complex has facilities for

meetings, communal (as well as some private) cooking, laundry, basic educa-
tion, building maintenance, various workshops, basic health care, a birthing
room, emergency medical care, and certain recreational activities. Households
are managed democratically and cooperatively by a direct assembly of
members (the household assembly).

Those with alter-abilities could be far better included in such flexible structures
for togetherness than anything presently existing today. James Herod's framework
is highly suggestive for how to integrate *all* persons, whatever their capacities, into
a new kind of society of radical mutual aid.

## Capitalism and the consumer

Capitalism at its core desires to be as efficient as possible by any means necessary,
standardizing the workforce and consumer base. Capitalism promotes divisions
and hierarchies among people's identities, intellects, and abilities, as well as
dividing people into classes and class strata based on their relationship to the
means of production. Capitalism seeks the standardization of the consumer so
that both the production and consumption of the product can be standardized.
Furthermore, capitalism views customization for certain individuals (for example,
the disabled) as slowing down production and decreasing profits. A significant
proportion of the poor across the planet, perhaps some 20 percent, are among those
labeled as "disabled," and thus excluded from gainful employment. In this sense,
disability appears as both a cause and consequence of poverty (DFID 2000). Social
justice scholars need to re-think equality and standardization and start a conver-
sation on the merits of human variation. If we respect diversity and difference, we
begin to resist normalcy and shallow "surface equality" in the bourgeois sense.
Capitalism promotes the false premise that people are individuals and are indepen-
dent of others, but we are in fact interdependent and are only able to have pure
social progress if all benefit together. That is at the heart of Malatesta's (1981
[1884]: 10) conception that "we want to put everything in common." He saw that
in the context of social revolution, where the masses of workers begin to rebel with
the idea of getting rid of bosses and governments and only count on their own
strength (Malatesta 1981 [1884]: 28).

   This is a conception of class struggle anarchism (and also of class struggle
Marxism/socialism) opposed to governments based on bourgeois conceptions of
representative democracy and normalcy. As Davis (2002: 109–10) stresses, this in
actuality is not democracy, but "normocracy." What we need is a deep radical
democracy within an anti-authoritarian framework of social being and mutual aid,
a network of federated communes working together in radical solidarity, where
ability and its antipode are radically reconfigured. Goldman (1996: 393–394)
stresses that "no revolution can be truly and permanently successful unless it . . .
strives to make the revolution a real revaluation of all economic, social and cultural
values," mindful that "only the libertarian spirit and method can bring man [sic] a
step further" (1996: 393).

## Dis-abling capitalism: moving forward

Future research and analysis in social-anarchist theory and praxis should better focus on several points, exploring the need to:

*   *give the affected individuals a voice*   . This means narratives where those socially classified as "disabled" speak from their worlds, part of a radical ethnography of ableism and its deconstruction from within. These are not "human interest" stories – as bourgeois media sometimes foreground reports on those physically or mentally "challenged" (the popular term of bourgeois political correctness today) – but radical narratives, voices of the oppressed resisting their oppression (for example, Fries 1997; Kleege 1999; Clare 1999; Michalko 1998; Charlton 1998).
*   *develop an anarchist-socialist radical psychiatry and conception of "mental illness,"* building on work by Laing, Szasz and others (see Moncrieff 1997). Mental ableism must be a key focus for struggle, inquiry, and analysis. Looking at autism, we need to develop social-anarchist perspectives based on major works like Nadesan (2005), a study by the mother of an "autistic" child that explores the social practices and institutions that mold the way we think (and act) regarding autism, and what effects this has on those labeled "autistic," others, and their loved ones. Also exemplary in revealing the social construction of autism, and bringing in the "voice" (verbal and non-verbal) of people with autism is the work of Doug Biklen (1992, 2005).
*   *ground anarchist analysis in the ongoing work of disability rights activists and researchers* , sometimes bourgeois in orientation, such as the Society for Disability Studies and similar discourse communities and nodes of resistance.
*   *foreground more empirically the dimension of social class in analyses of "dis/ability,"* as reflected in the research and activism of the Barefoot Social Worker collective in the UK, challenging the "prevailing culture of managerialism" in dealing with disability. Ideologies of ableism intertwined with social class are at the very heart of what social workers are confronting in their daily practice (Searing 2006, 2002). Moreover, social work methods, value bases, and practices need to be "authenticized" everywhere, especially among the social majorities of the planet (Ling 2007: 18–24, 26–32), with theory and practice grounded in indigenous cultures.
*   *learn to "talk plain,"* to develop anarcho-socialist discourse in a language, style, and format that is readily understandable to working people and people with various (learning, cognitive, sensory) impairments. One major example in the anarchist heritage is Malatesta's (1981 [1884]) dialogue between two Italian farmers on the nature of capitalism, their own exploitation, and the workers' struggle. Much of Emma Goldman's work is also in readily accessible, comprehensible English. Radical thought in plain language should be a fundamental principle of all democratic discourse. We also need more graphic novels like Alan Moore's     *V for Vendetta* ,  Marjane Satrapi's

*Persepolis* or Charles Burns' *Black Hole*, but geared to explicating problems such as ableism through the optics of anarchist-socialist class struggle.

- *make our presentations, conversations, and writings accessible to all    .* Utilizing the principles of universal design means that multiple modalities are used when speaking and presenting, as we all have different and preferred ways of accessing information (Burgstahler 2001). Some are auditory learners and some understand better by having visual examples or mind maps, in order to capitalize on our multiple intelligences and strengths (Gardner 1983). This entails presenting ideas in multiple formats (written, verbal, pictorial) and not assuming that our audience can hear, see, or read in order to participate in the discussion.

- *create more concrete teaching materials for "informed resistance" against ableism and its ravages.* This means creating a radical pedagogy of dis-abling capitalism that can be integrated into a constructivist "inclusive" classroom without walls (Marlowe and Page 1998). One approach is within a "curriculum of empathy" that concentrates on schooling social imagination, through interior monologues written by students (Christensen 2000: 6–7, 134–137) of what may be in the minds and hearts of the "disabled," such as imaging and imagining an hour or day in the life of a sightless, soundless, limbless, or other "different-bodied" person. Radical empathy with "dis/abled" lifeworlds needs to be galvanized through requisite scaffolding along the lines of Vygotsky for learners of all ages (Berk and Winsler 1995).

## In sum

Fundamentally, we need to regard disability as a continuum and a prism that enriches our understanding of the world. Through this lens we can question the construction of disability itself. We don't need to imagine being disabled in order to interrogate our own ableism. Why is a certain condition defined as a disability? What interests do such definitions serve? What are the full implications of constructing labels? One might interrogate, under this prism, the ways we can all create inclusive classrooms and communities that eliminate disabling barriers and attitudes. Some specific examples would include questioning the use of ableist language in the classroom (Ben-Moshe *et al.* 2005) and within social movements (see May and Ferri 2005, for a critique of the use of ableist metaphors in women's studies). When students say that an idea is "lame" or "retarded," it provides a great teaching moment to question their assumptions about disability as a negative entity.

Moreover, we need to be material, to stress what Marx called the "this-sidedness of thinking *in practice*" (Marx 1845: 535), in part through teaching materials that help build our anarcho-pedagogical praxis. As Emma Goldman (1996: 402) reminds us: "The ultimate end of all revolutionary social change is to establish the sanctity of human life, the dignity of man [sic], the right of every human being to liberty and well-being." Taking these teachings seriously, we can creatively seek to include rather than marginalize individuals who are "different" than the socially

constructed "norm," potentially yielding a society that serves everyone's interests alike.

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# Section Three

# Pedagogy

This volume helps demonstrate the multi-faceted nature of anarchist thinking, praxis, methodologies, and theory in today's bureaucratic and hierarchical university and public school setting. Luckily, anarchists have devised many creative and practical ways in which scholars, teachers, and students can resist the traditional notion of what schooling means in today's society. Because traditional schooling has been oppressively linked to the State and capitalism, institutional education has been highly dismissive of non-dominant cultures and has been subtractive and colonial in its attempt to fashion people as workers, managers, and owners. Thus, traditional education has amounted to what Michel Foucault called a colonization of our souls.

This section, then, seeks to explore what anarchism can offer toward envisioning new pedagogical forms and educational experiences, and the authors here have included a variety of ways in which our goals of creating a new society can be realized. Richard Kahn's piece opens this section with a strong case for revisiting and recognizing the work that Ivan Illich did in bringing anarchist theory to the educational context, focusing on what Illich called "Epimethean individuals," meaning those who are dedicated to reason, ecological sustainability, and a more open and free society. William Armaline's essay argues that a new form of anarchist praxis needs to be realized, as well as shifting our epistemological framework to include "alternative and subversive practices in education." Maxwell Schnurer and Laura K. Hahn take a different approach to exploring anarchist pedagogy, presenting their argument partly as a fictional account that opens up space for new ways of exploring and creating anarchist pedagogies, constituting what they characterize as a "future-fiction narrative utopian tale."

Abraham DeLeon and Kurt Love also focus on anarchist theory and education, aiming to establish anarchist theory as not only a mode of praxis and political organization, but also as a lens of theoretical and epistemological critique against traditional school subjects such as social studies and science. Stevphen Shukaitis' essay warns us about the dangers of creating an academic field known as "anarchist studies" as an "object" of study, instead urging us towards creating "a politics of knowledge constantly elaborated within a terrain of struggle." Lastly, Colman McCarthy's chapter explores anarchist pedagogy from the perspective of

pacifism, asserting that anarchism needs to be more closely aligned with a politics of peace and pacifism.

These essays reveal the multi-faceted nature of anarchist thought in the academy, and hopefully will begin to help open a dialogue about the potential role that anarchism can play in organizing a new society and making an educational system that allows for holistic pedagogical experiences. Through "education," broadly construed, let us begin that journey towards envisioning a non-hier-archical, post-capitalist, and post-State future.

# 12 Anarchic epimetheanism

## The pedagogy of Ivan Illich

*Richard Kahn*

> We now need a name for those who value hope above expectations. We need a
> name for those who love people more than products ... We need a name for those
> who love the earth on which each can meet the other ... We need a name for those
> who collaborate with their Promethean brother in the lighting of the fire and the
> shaping of iron, but who do so to enhance their ability to tend and care and wait
> upon the other . ... I suggest that these hopeful brothers and sisters be called
> Epimethean men.
>
> (Illich 1970: 115–116)

> The time of prophecy lies behind us. The only chance now lies in our taking this
> vocation as that of the friend. This is the way in which hope for a new society can
> spread. And the practice of it is not really through words but through little acts of
> foolish renunciation.
>
> (Illich in Cayley 2005: 170)

For decades the educational left has dwelt at length on the iconic theories of critical
pedagogy as developed by the radical Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and those
under his influence. The result has been the wide adoption of a set of ideas relating,
in part, to the need to articulate a politicized definition of literacy in which one
reads both the world and the word, to foment popular education as a form
of historical praxis, to understand how educational institutions reproduce the
oppressor and oppressed relationship, and to militate for schools as a possible
source/site of human emancipation and resistance. However, despite revolutionary
concerns for autonomy, love, and hope in Freire's philosophy of education,
Freirian critical pedagogy can only uneasily be linked to an anarchistic political
and pedagogical vision as outlined by Ivan Illich.[1]

In fact, while there are attempts to integrate a Freirian critical pedagogy into
educational theories of anarchism generally, the conceptual foundation for doing
so is arguably tenuous.[2] While a self-avowed "libertarian" educator (Freire 2000a:
54) – a moniker which thereby locates Freire within a tradition that includes Illich
(and his circle), as well as social anarchist educators such as Paul Robin, Jean
Grave and Francisco Ferrer – historians of libertarian education such as Joel
Spring (1998) note that the libertarian educational tradition is also composed of

anarcho-individualists such as Max Stirner and *laissez-faire* progressives such as A.S. Neill or the Free School movement that bear scant resemblance to a Freirian pedagogy. Thus, while Freire is undeniably the most curricularly visible of the liberatory educators today, the growth of Freirian pedagogical praxis may have wittingly or unwittingly blocked other libertarian paths that the educational left may have otherwise fruitfully taken.

In this essay, I would like to explore one of those paths – the Christian anarchist pedagogy of Freire's friend *cum* critic, the renegade and apophatic priest, Ivan Illich,[3] who historically played a sort of Bakunin and Tolstoy to Freire's Marx. [4] Illich, who in fact helped to free Freire from prison, provided him with safe shelter at his Center for Intercultural Documentation, [5] and translated some of his first works, spoke not for the "pedagogy of the oppressed" but initially for the social disestablishment of schools and then later of the dehumanizing aspects of social institutions and systems generally. Against the common-sense defense of education as (at least potentially) a public good to be conserved, Illich counseled that people have always "known many things" (Cayley 1992: 71) without curricula and called for a defense of vernacular values and convivial tools that could meet people's needs without becoming ends in themselves such as contemporary public education systems had.

Illich's greatest counsel, though, was in hailing the need for a return of Epimethean individuals – anarchists who would be wedded to the earth and its sustainable limits, support matriarchal principles of gifting and caring, and who would represent a political culture founded on a more holistic relationship to Reason than had previously been produced by post-Enlightenment intellectuals. Interestingly, despite Illich's obvious genius, fame, and continued importance for an age of social and ecological crisis, until very recently his work has been curiously absent from academic debates about the politics of education (Morrow and Torres 1995; Gabbard 1993). But even of that work which has emerged, almost none remarks upon Illich's attempt to develop an anarchistic morality called "Epimetheanism" – a fact that Illich himself addressed, reflecting that the idea of Epimetheanism was to his mind the most important element of *Deschooling Society* and interestingly the one that was least discussed during his tenure as a public intellectual (Cayley 1992).

## Beyond Prometheanism

The critical theorist Herbert Marcuse attempted to provide imaginative episte - mological and hermeneutical "conceptual mythologies" (Kellner 2006) to read the world in novel ways and provide openings for alternative modes of being. In*Eros and Civilization*, Marcuse offers the archetypal images of Orpheus and Narcissus as possible "culture-heroes" for the politics and culture of what he termed "the Great Refusal" (Marcuse 1966: 161) of Promethean culture. In Greek mythology, Prometheus was the Greek titan (whose name means "fore-thought") who unapologetically stole the element of fi re from the gods to give to humankind because his brother Epimetheus (or "after-thought") was required to gift traits to

all the beings of the earth but, lacking fore-thought, gave them all away before reaching humanity. As a result of Prometheus's theft of the divine fire, he was condemned to eternal bondage on a mountaintop where an eagle would perch to feed upon his liver in perpetuity. The figure of Prometheus has historically come to symbolize humanity's prophetic, educative, and justice-seeking aspects, and in this way Prometheus became the favorite classical mythological figure of Karl Marx. Via the Marxist reading, Prometheus is emblematic of the human potential for daring political deeds, technological ingenuity, and general rebellion against the powers that be to improve human life, and it is in this sense that we can describe Freirian critical pedagogy as very much a Promethean pedagogical movement for social change.

However, Prometheus is also representative of the industrial strivings of modernity to produce solutions to what are perceived to be the given problems of natural scarcity and worldly imperfection through the ideology of progress. It was in this sense that Marcuse sought liberation from the modern figure of Prometheus – whom he understood as representing "toil, productivity, and progress through repression . . . the trickster and (suffering) rebel against the gods, who creates culture at the price of perpetual pain" (Marcuse 1966: 161).

Illich undoubtedly followed Marcuse in searching for an antidote to unbridled social Prometheanism, which he perceived at work both in the shadowy future of supposed techno-utopia as well as in the social justice and environmental zeal of so-called progressives. Illich revisits the Prometheus story as the mythic origin of patriarchy and *homo faber*, or "man the maker." Illich highlights the feminine role played in the myth by Pandora (the infamous keeper of the box of all worldly evils and one good, hope), whom Prometheus counsels his brother Epimetheus not to marry as he believes her to be divine punishment upon humanity for their acquisition of fire. In Ancient Greek versions of the myth, which have been the dominant interpretation until today, Pandora was pictured as little more than a curious, seductive, and destructive influence upon the world. Alternately, a mixture of Eve and Lot's wife from the Book of Genesis, patriarchal society has tended to represent Pandora as a woman who is the root of a troubled human existence through the opening of her box and the unleashing of all of its negative contents. By contrast, in Illich's reading of the myth, Pandora was an ancient fertility goddess whose name meant "All Giver," and in marrying her Epimetheus thereby became wedded to the Earth and all its gifts. Illich emphasizes that Pandora was the keeper of hope and he interprets Pandora's box as really a sort of Ark of sanctuary. Hence, for Illich, Epimetheus was not the dull-witted brother of Prometheus-the-savior but rather the ancient archetype of those who freely give and recognize gifts, care for and treasure life (especially during times of catastrophe), and attend to the conservation of seeds of hope in the world for future others.

To Prometheans, Epimetheans are well-meaning simpletons who have not seen or responded to the future peril which is the context for their present deeds and, in fact, this has arguably been the enduring reception of Illich's own legacy as a political theorist of anarchism. But from the reverse perspective offered by Illich,

it is Epimetheus who remains freely convivial with the world while the progenitor of the new world, Prometheus, remains bound and chained by his own creative deed. Though the Prometheus myth portrays him as humanity's benefactor, from a counter-perspective perhaps the failure of Epimetheus to gift humanity a trait was itself a type of gift – a non-act that attempted to deliver hope in the face of expectation. Therefore, Epimethean anarchism provides a collaborative standpoint to a revolutionary Promethean humanism, one which offers stoic hindsight on the utopian dream of human progress and justice and which attempts to offer faith in humanity that is based, not in ideology – the Epimethean world is in a sense *after*-thought – but in the spiritual recognition of the potential for autonomous experiences and of mutual aid.

## For convivial relations

As outlined by Illich, Epimetheanism represents a counter-pedagogy to both contemporary technocratic forms of institutional social reproduction and the versions of critical pedagogy that oppose technocratic education on behalf of an ethic of social justice that is conceived as the equitable distribution of modern life's benefits. Through his adoption of an anarchistic standpoint that questioned both the "progress" of industrial society and the progressivism of its Promethean emancipators, Illich became undoubtedly one of the most perceptive and radical theorists of the hidden curriculum to date. For his work not only interrogated the overt curricular material of educational institutions in relationship to that which is systematically avoided therein, but he extended this analysis to the deepest cosmological level of society through the revelation of the overt Prometheanism of our present global society and its methodical avoidance of Epimethean practices and values.

   Having initially realized that society's hidden curriculum (Illich 1970: 74) manufactures schools in order to introject forces of domination into student bodies (akin to Freire's idea of "banking pedagogy"), Illich went on in his later work to insist that, in a highly professionalized and commoditized media culture, all aspects of life either promote themselves as educative or increasingly demand some element of training as a cost of unchecked consumption. Under such conditions, the being possessing wisdom, *homo sapiens*, becomes reduced to *homo educandus*, the being in need of education (Illich 1992a); and in an age when the computer becomes the "root metaphor" (Illich 1992b) of existence, this reduction then becomes further processed and networked into the lost reality of *homo programmandus* (Illich 1995). Therefore, Illich became increasingly concerned that contemporary education had become synonymous with a demand for global fascism, such that it was unthinkable from the perspective of one belonging to the educational system that a person or persons could manage to live decently, even amidst conditions of hardship, when left to dwell according to their own autonomous devices and needs. Thus, Illich came to propose a negative definition of education as the heteronymous formula: "learning under the assumption of scarcity" (Illich 1992a: 165); whereas, in his opinion, the practice of cultural

autonomy necessarily tends towards an epistemological awareness of life's natural abundance and human security within the worldly order of things.

In a manner that seems quite congruent with Illich, in *Capital*, Marx (1990: 548) wrote:

> In handicrafts and manufacture, the worker makes use of a tool; in the factory, the machine makes use of him. There the movements of the instrument of labor proceed from him, here it is the movements of the machine that he must follow. In manufacture the workers are the parts of a living mechanism. In the factory we have a lifeless mechanism which is independent of the workers, who are incorporated into it as its living appendages.

But for Marx, the alienation of the worker's productivity as it is subsumed within the industrial system through rationalized exploitation is not only inhumane but also an obstacle to the historical growth of human productive forces (Feenberg 2002: 66). Hence, in response, Marxist Prometheanism attempts to organize politically around normative demands for a more humane future that can only be realized, in part, through the liberated development of society's technical productivity. Illich's Epimethean response to the inhumane industrial social system, by contrast, is closer to Audrey Lorde's (1990: 287) in the sense that "the master's tools will never demolish the master's house."

It is in this respect that Illich generally chose to speak of "tools," and not technology or machines, both because it was a "simple word" (Cayley 1992: 108) and because it was broad enough to:

> subsume into one category all rationally designed devices, be they artifacts or rules, codes or operators, and .. . distinguish all these planned and engineered instrumentalities from other things such as food or implements, which in a given culture are not deemed to be subject to rationalization.
>
> (Illich 1973: 22)

Therefore, for Illich, "tool" includes not only machines but any "means to an end which people plan and engineer" (Cayley 1992: 109), such as industries and institutions.

Illich's anarchism did not seek to demonize tool-making in the manner that has taken place amongst extreme sects of anarcho-primitivism. Illich himself was "neither a romantic, nor a luddite" and he believed "the past was a foreign country" not worth endorsing (Cayley 1992: 188). Neither a technophobe, nor anti-civilization, Illich's views were instead wedded to a kind of impractical practicality. In this way he remained committed to a hope for "postindustrial" conditions and spent much of his life defending forms of "convivial tools" (Illich 1973) that represent the obverse of rampant technocracy and the globalization of corporate development (Illich 1970). By definition, Illich's "tools for conviviality" promote learning, sociality, community, "autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment" (1973: 27). These

tools work to produce a more democratic and ecologically sound society that is "simple in means and rich in ends" (Cayley 1992: 17) and in which individuals can freely communicate, debate, and participate throughout all manner of a cultural and political life that respects the unique "balance among stability, change and tradition" (Illich 1973: 82). Through the idea of conviviality, then, Illich proposed positive norms to critique existing systems and construct sustainable options using values such as "survival, justice, and self-defined work" (1973: 13).

Tools do become counterproductive for Illich when they become systematically industrialized so as to additionally produce "new possibilities and new expectations" that "impede the possibility of achieving the wanted end" (Tijmes in Hoinacki and Mitcham 2002: 207–208) for which they were made. When this occurs, he argued, tools turn from being "means to ends" into the ends themselves, and they thus alter the social, natural and psychological environments in which they arise (Illich 1973: 84). Remarking that "Highly capitalized tools require highly capitalized men" (Illich 1973: 66), Illich implied that it is necessary that people struggle to master their tools, lest they be mastered by them (22). For when people uncritically operate tools that amplify human behavior and needs beyond the limits of natural and human scales, tools move from being reasonably productive and rational to paradoxically counterproductive and irrational (Illich 1982: 15). For instance, we see examples of this in the present development of the global communications network, in which members of society are subjected to the Moore's law version of "keeping up with the Joneses" to the extent that failing to remain technologically contemporary veritably excludes one from partaking of the dominant trend in social life generally. Of course, from an anarchistic Epimethean point of view, this may ironically be exactly the way out of the present problem.

Illich's anarchistic critique of counterproductive tools is thus related to Max Weber's concept of "instrumental rationalization," as well as variant formulations proposed by Frankfurt School members like Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse. For Weber, the process of instrumental rationalization resulted in the bureaucratization and disenchantment of existence, a sort of mechanized nullity brought about by "specialists without spirit" (Weber 1958: 182). Likewise, Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) sought to critique the irrationalism produced by culture industries bent on reifying the rational in the form of fetishized commodities. Lastly, Marcuse (1964), in his notion of a "one-dimensional" world in which modern technology and capitalist instruments organize a society of domination in which any possible opposition becomes rationally foreclosed by it, posited the Frankenstein's monster of Promethean technologization in a manner quite comparable with Illich.

Again, it is important to consider that anarchists and other political radicals respond differently to the problems outlined above. One avenue for political response would be to work to critically name the social system's various aspects and to march through its institutions, or to otherwise act transformatively at its margins, in such a way as to attempt to turn the potentials of the social mechanism

towards the greater good. This "Dare to struggle, dare to win!" philosophy is quintessentially Promethean in character. For his part, Illich looked upon the growth of contemporary industrial horrors like planned nuclear terror (Illich 1992a: 32–33) and the ubiquitous reality of a dehumanized, cybernetic "Techno-Moloch" (Illich 1995: 237) in which people more and more come to fashion their obedient lives as the necessarily catastrophic outcomes of a modern industrialism that has moved those who renounce it to a political position that is beyond words. As Adorno (2000) wrote, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (210), and Illich similarly believed that the most moral response we might now make in the face of unprecedented socio-ecological crisis is to silently refuse to engage in debate about it.

For the Promethean progressive, this is a cynical answer and a likely buttress to the "culture of silence" (Freire 2000a). However, to the Epimethean anarchist, it is a direct attempt to be the change that one wants from the world and Illich surmised that for those who stand in fear of their impotence in the face of worldly constraints (which today is no doubt a great many), such voluntary renunciation is a way back to a life of freedom and of the recognition that one always maintains agency that transcends the system (Cayley 2005). Therefore, it may be concluded that Task Prometheans and Epimetheans maintain different orders of love for the world. The Promethean impulse is towards loving the world enough to want to sacrifice our individual interests in the name of a collective fight for the global betterment of others' suffering. However, Epimethean love is conserved specifically to the domain of our individual interests inasmuch as it emerges in response to our own singular awareness of pain. Epimetheans, then, actively love the world through careful attendance to their own suffering and the immediate personal conditions that provide for it.

## The gift of love as an after-thought

Even a casual reader of the work of Paulo Freire will immediately recognize that one of his primary themes is love. As an educator, Freire maintained a sensual love for people's culture and an ethical love for people's freedom. Like Freire, Illich's pedagogy too is informed by love, but it is necessary to understand the key difference between Freire and Illich on this point even as we recognize their similarity. For Freire (2000a: 89–90), love is the precondition of dialogue and for Promethean pedagogy in the world:

> Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause – the cause of liberation. And this commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical. As an act of bravery, love cannot be sentimental; as an act of freedom it must not serve as a pretext for manipulation. It must generate other acts of freedom; otherwise, it is not love.

Thus, for Freire, love is the progenitor of thought, politics, and the generative naming of the world as part of the empowerment project that is "cultural action for freedom" (Freire 2000b).

Conversely, as an Epimethean, Illich's anarchic love comes closer to being the free expression of self-renunciation from the quest to manage power, whether equitably or not. This is not a statement on his part about the ontological quality of love, but rather a deeply personal moral response to the historical awareness that something fundamentally terrible has occurred in the world. As such, Illich's love does not aim in the direction of organized conscientization or the development of social movements' cognitive praxis but rather it attempts to silently demonstrate a commitment to a future of mutual trust by changing one's mind about political strategy and choosing to opt out of a society predicated on the Big Lie. Anarchic Epimetheanism is therefore convivially philosophical, as Illich reflected: "I remain certain the quest for truth cannot thrive outside the nourishment of mutual trust flowering into a commitment to friendship" (Illich in Hoinacki and Mitcham 2002: 235).

In musing on love and friendship, the later Illich repeatedly returned to the Christian parable of the Good Samaritan as the paramount teaching on the corruption of care under modern industrial capitalism (Cayley 1992, 2005; Hoinacki and Mitcham 2002). In this story related in the Gospel of Luke, a traveling Jew is robbed, beaten and left for dead by the side of the road. In his miserable state, priestly castes of Jews look upon him and choose to pass him by. However, the suffering Jew is also seen by a traveling Samaritan (then an arch-enemy of the Jewish people[7]), who instead shows the Jew great mercy, gives him hospice, and takes responsibility for him. Interestingly, Illich interprets this parable as being not about the gift of charitable love by the Samaritan but rather about the gift by the Jew. In Illich's view, the Jew's very wretchedness provoked disease in the Samaritan (i.e., it made him sick to his stomach) and this feeling was thus the Jew's gift of love for the possibility of another way of life. In responding to this feeling, so as to abate it, the Samaritan was led to renounce the assurance of their respective identities as both Jew and Samaritan within society and to move toward a new relationship built out of their suffering together. Hence, for Illich, this foolish act of renunciation on the part of the Samaritan became the precondition for his acceptance of a common gift of freedom made imminent through his act of caring reciprocity.

Epimethean "care" is therefore far removed from liberal care. According to Illich, it is not to be confused with the gratuitous charity of the rich. Neither should it be mistaken for the commodity that is managed health care produced by professional experts who define the difference between the able and disabled, on the one hand, and the normal and abnormal, on the other. Epimethean care is also not an intellectual position in which one "thinks" one cares enough to want to transform the world in the name of abstract experiences of oppression. Quoting John McKnight, Illich described these forms of care specifically as "the *ugly* mask of love" (Cayley 1992: 215).

Once queried as to his feelings about media reports concerning rampant starvation and illness in African children, Illich responded emphatically (in Cayley 1992: 216–217):

> My immediate reaction is, I will do everything I can to eliminate from my heart any sense of *care* for them. I want to experience horror. I want to really *taste* this reality about which you report to me. I do not want to escape my sense of helplessness and fall into a pretence that I care and that I do or have done all that is possible of me. I want to live with the *inescapable* horror of these children, of these persons, in my heart and know that I cannot actively, really, love them. Because to love them – at least the way I am built, after having read the story of the Samaritan – means to leave aside everything which I'm doing at this moment and pick up that person . . . I consider it impossible. *Why pretend that I care?*

The existential pointedness of Illich's final question – and its demand that we radically renounce our dreams for a better world to the degree that these dreams are not our own but rather the cultivated nightmares of various orders of political machinery – most likely takes us far afield of much of the dominant discourse of education today.

Freire (1997: 76) repeatedly asked that we dream "the possible dream." But, today, what dreams are in fact possible? We might rephrase this to ask: is critical pedagogy in need of a pedagogy of anarchic Epimetheanism? Or conversely: is an Illichian pedagogy of anarchic Epimetheanism in need of a Good Samaritan? The present regathering of anarchism as an important social movement that is working to challenge dominant paradigms in philosophy, politics, and pedagogy perhaps allows us to intone such questions with real seriousness for the first time in decades. Forever on the margins of academic life, the particular form of anarchist pedagogy articulated by Illich has been veritably ignored by major trends in educational theory and practice since the 1970s. This has been mainly due to anarchic Epimetheanism's voluntary renunciation of the terms by which it could have obtained institutional legitimacy and power. The challenge now is not simply to restore Illich's thought to academic primacy and have him taught alongside Freire in schools of education – a Promethean venture. Rather, the hope now at hand may lie in our scholarly capacity to opt-out of the excited drive to reconstruct education once again in the hope of a better world and to recognize the programmatic suffering of our institutionalized existence as students and teachers. In this manner, we may begin again to speak with one another quite simply and directly as friends born of the request and deliverance of Epimethean aid.

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# 13  Thoughts on anarchist pedagogy and epistemology

*William T. Armaline*

This essay will speak to anarchist pedagogical praxis. By this, I mean teaching or learning practices that are shaped by and also shape anarchist theory. Given the great diversity of anarchist theory, as illustrated by this reader, how might we conceptualize an anarchist pedagogy (philosophy of teaching and education) and epistemology (construction of "knowledge")? How might we develop space for physical, intellectual, and artistic growth free from hierarchy and domination? In the following sections I present a possible conceptualization of anarchist pedagogy and illustrate the need for developing alternative and subversive practices in education. In closing, I present some pragmatic steps for educators and students alike to create and employ anarchistic pedagogical space.

## An anarchistic notion of education

It is not my aim, nor is it appropriate or possible, to define anarchist pedagogy here in any definite or exhaustive way. Perhaps the most consistent characteristic of anarchist theory is that it claims to have few "answers" or proper "Truths." Anarchists have historically differed from others in the dedication to democratic means for democratic ends, in the sense that "the outcomes are prefigured by the methods" (Franks 2006: 93). In praxis, this anarchist or libertarian-socialist method of reflexive theory involves:

> the consideration of whether libertarian methods are 1) consistent with the type of agency they wish to appeal to and 2) the aims they wish to achieve – that provides the framework of evaluation. .    . . It also provides a useful method for indicating areas that lack clarity and reveals contradictions or omissions in various anarchist program[s].
>
> (Franks 2006: 97)

Anarchism is fluid. It changes with the needs and will of those who (re)produce it. Anarchist theory contains a component of self-reflection and self-critique. This suggests that an anarchist pedagogy might reflect a similar humility toward "Truths" in a fluidity of form such that educational space can adapt to the needs and perspectives of those who create and participate in it.

These postmodern and poststructural methodological trends of contemporary anarchism also bolster the idea that none of us can claim to define anarchism, or what an anarchist society *should* (or even worse, "will") look like and impose those views on others. That would be a claim to power – the power to define the world and future of others without their participation and consent. If I am correct in thinking that anarchism is fundamentally opposed to hierarchical domination, such claims to power would not be consistent with any conception of anarchism or anarchist theory. In short, only the people of emergent anarchist communities can decide what an anarchist society "is" or might "look like" through the revolutionary praxis of creating anarchist communities, organizations, and societies.

Yet, as this book and its readers suggest, now might be a good time to spark dialogue and action toward realizing anarchism. Is it so clear when and how, and over how long a period of time, anarchist revolutionary praxis will or would take place? Perhaps we are on this metaphorical doorstep, and perhaps not. In any case we should not be kept from sharing our own perspectives on liberation.

For example, I cannot present myself as objective, or "value free" on the topic of what anarchism might look like, and what I think its most desirable forms and important tasks might be. I share the subjective position that a unique substantive characteristic of anarchism is the central concern with deconstructing all forms of oppressive hierarchy. From here, it may be possible to democratically reconstruct communities in a way that maximizes all people's ability to realize their creative capacities, and have them recognized and rewarded in a cooperative system of horizontal free-association, comprising what has sometimes been referred to as "libertarian socialism" (see Guerin 1970; Rocker [1938] 1989; Chomsky 2005).

Anarchism arguably tends toward democracy, such that people share in political voice, power, and the distribution of shared resources. As educational philosopher John Dewey (1938, 1944) suggested, democratic engagement and the (re)creation of open democratic space is something that flourishes when educational environments reflect similar democratic power and organizational structures. An anarchist pedagogy might seek, similarly, to minimize tyranny and coercion while maximizing the voices of all who participate.

Educational scholars such as Dewey (1938, 1944) and Freire (1970) have suggested and demonstrated the liberating possibilities of minimizing power relationships in learning environments (between "teachers" and "students" for example) such that space is created for the active deconstruction of oppressive elements of society and the creation of situated knowledge and grassroots community. This is to say that in free educational space *everyone* is a "teacher" and a "student" in the sense that learning and the creation of knowledge is a mutual and reflexive activity. Everyone in a free educational space brings something valuable to the table, and just as in theoretically democratic societies, everyone would be encouraged to bring their perspectives, thoughts, and situated know - ledge(s) to light.

Libertarian theorists have offered an interpretation of pedagogy and the notion of human intellectual and cultural nourishment that is also worth noting here:

> whatever does not spring from a man's [sic] free choice, or is only the result
> of instruction or guidance, does not enter into his very being, but remains alien
> to his true nature; he does not perform it with truly human energies, but
> merely with mechanical exactness.
>
> (Humboldt 1969: 76)

In his work, Humboldt continues to describe this student-as-object as many
progressive educators and students describe those who simply "do school." In
"doing school," a student gives themselves over to the hierarchy of meritocratic
schooling – working only for the sake of meeting the requirements of an authority
figure, grade, credential, set standard, and so forth. As a result, such students
are constructed as "intelligent" and "successful" by those with the power and
supposed legitimacy to do so. Students "doing school" are rewarded for their work
and obedience with various stamps of approval (good grades or an honors certifi-
cate, for example) and the material and status rewards that follow (employment, a
nice car or house, credentials, or further educational opportunities). However,
students and teachers who simply "do school" must sacrifice their free will and
unconstrained creative capacities to meet the goals and address the questions
determined by authority. Thus we may see those who are rewarded for "doing
school" and "admire what he [sic] does, but despise what he is" (Humboldt
1969: 76).

   We are socialized to admire those who "succeed" in school – manifested as
getting good grades and valuable credentials. Especially for those who already feel
alienated from schooling, we might simultaneously find the sacrifice of our own
identities, desires, and curiosities necessary for meritocratic success unappealing.
So, perhaps another unique feature of an anarchist pedagogy would be an
underlying assumption that everyone has the natural capacities for curiosity and
the creation of knowledge. The goal of anarchistic pedagogical space could be to
provide an unrestrictive and resourceful environment through which students and
teachers can explore their curiosities, creative desires, and their relationships to
others in the community and world. In his writings on the human capacities for
language and learning, Chomsky (2003 [1971]: 164) expands on these ideas from
a distinctly anarchist perspective:

> [T]he purpose of education, from [the libertarian socialist point of view],
> cannot be to control the child's growth to a specific, predetermined end,
> because any such end must be established by arbitrary authoritarian means;
> rather, the purpose of education must be to permit the growing principle
> of life to take its own individual course, and to facilitate this process by
> sympathy, encouragement and challenge, and by developing a rich and
> differentiated context and environment.

   It is important to note that Chomsky's position here is also one situated in real
experience. His primary education came from a "Dewey-Democratic Free School"
in New York City where he was known to read and work voraciously. That is, until

he entered a mainstream public high school with the competition, grades, and strict curriculum structure more familiar in our meritocratic farce of an educational system. It was here that he "learned" to hate school (Chomsky 2003). As discussed in the following sections, what I am proposing here as an anarchist pedagogy may be seen in direct contradiction and opposition to dominant meritocratic schooling in the United States (and elsewhere), and the oppressive systems it helps to reproduce.

From the brief conversation thus far, I will suggest the following as primary characteristics of an anarchist pedagogy. First, it would be humble in its approach to "Truth" and recognize knowledge (see Freire 1970) as something created and constructed. All people would be seen as the subjects and creators of history, truth, and knowledge, rather than the object of those with the power to construct such "Truths" in dominant culture. Second, it would create space for the deconstruction of oppressive practices, systems, and ideologies in and outside of the "classroom." Part of this process could include the deconstruction of US meritocracy as a whole, such that pedagogical space might be free of coercive tools such as grades. Simultaneously, this pedagogical space should refl ect a horizontal democracy where students and educators engage in freely associated cooperative learning and activity rather than individual competition and mutual alienation. Finally, it would approach all people as capable and worthy of curiosity, learning, teaching, and creation. As previously suggested, anarchistic pedagogical space might seek to nurture individuals' growth through providing challenges, resources, and diverse possibilities for experience. Students and teachers in this environment may then pursue curiosities and inquiries that     *they*  find personally and/or collectively engaging and provocative.

## Why might we need anarchist pedagogy?

Anyone who has taught in the public school or university system can attest to the prevalence of the state standardized test and curriculum. "Scantron" or "bubble" sheets are met by collective sighs of misery and monotony as students prepare their number 2 pencils for the mind numbing and inherently coercive experience ahead. Though most of the US population can at least relate to the feelings of dread, despair, alienation, and sheer boredom that often accompany this practice, such tests and the educational philosophies that support them remain dominant in the United States.

Reforms such as "raising academic standards," implementing standardized testing curricula, and using standardized (increasingly high stakes) tests for the assessment of teachers, schools, and students are the common strategies of standardization advocates for public schooling. Born out of the Cold War and the corporatization of schools, rejuvenated in the 1980s following the *Nation at Risk* reports, and practically celebrated in the contemporary era, the standardization movement has not only been heralded as the cure-all for schools, but has become "common sense" (indeed, hegemonic) in shaping the national discourse on educa-tional policy (Spring 1997, 1998; Apple 1997, 2000; Armaline and Levy 2004).

Marked most clearly by federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation and its effects, the standardization movement successfully reinforces dominant episte-mologies, and exacerbates educational and socio-political inequalities – especially along lines of race, ethnicity, and class (Armaline and Levy 2004). As the standardization movement developed in conservative and mainstream political discourse, critical theorists, teachers, and teacher educators drew from neo-Marxist, feminist, and postmodern theories to develop "critical pedagogical theory" as a conceptual approach to education and the praxis of instruction (Anyon 1980; Apple 1997; Aronowitz and Giroux 1985; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Carnoy and Levin 1985; Giroux 1991; McLaren 1989, 1997). Critical theorists of all flavors have represented the educational "left" in critiquing public education for generally: (1) reproducing educational and other social inequalities (Anyon 1980, 1995, 1997; Kozol 1991), (2) reproducing the dominant ideological belief that knowledge is an objective thing to be collected and unquestionably "banked" in the minds of students – of which only      *certain*  types of knowledge and its expression are acceptable and legitimate (Freire 1970; Spring 1997).

As also suggested by socialist educational theorists of all sorts (Norton and Ollman 1978; McLaren 1989, 2005, 2006), it is this very hierarchical, bureau-cratic, corporate organization of schooling and learning in the US that provides the socialization and ideological distribution necessary to reproduce capitalism and other oppressive systems such as racism and patriarchy. The school, not coincidentally, is where the "pupil" learns obedience and submission to authority – particularly that of, or legitimated by, the state (Spring 1997, 1998). It is where the "pupil" first participates in the US false meritocracy and dominant, free market, "hard work is the secret to success" ideology. Those "pupils" who resist the authority of the state and its schools risk sanction. If you refuse to participate in "high stakes" testing, you may fail to graduate, or receive a demoted credential. If one questions authorities, such as teachers or principals, directly, one risks retalia tion. In impoverished schools "of color," any such resistance to state authorities or rule breaking can result in police, juvenile justice, and potentially interven-tion(s) by the child welfare system (Feagin 2001; Advancement Project 2005).

As suggested some time ago by radical intellectuals such as Gramsci (1971), it is possibly a matter of strategy for us to consider pedagogy in any attempt to remake our communities in a way that reflects our mutual desires and needs. The perceived urgency of our action may depend on one's privilege of distance. As Bruce Western (2006: 12, 18) demonstrates in his recent work, the amount and quality of schooling one "receives" as an African American male signifi cantly affects his already disproportionate chances of being incarcerated: "[By 2000] imprisonment became commonplace for young black men, more common-place than military service or college graduation. . . . One in three black dropouts were locked up, compared to just one in twenty-fi ve of their college-educated counterparts." For the African American community, a dominant system of education that reproduces racial inequality has immediate and tangible negative effects worthy of attention and action – manifested in the very real and high chances of being caged by the state. Further, the US carceral system is now the

largest and most sophisticated in the world, caging approximately 2.3 million people (nearly 1 in 100 adults in the US, over half of whom are African American, and a great majority of whom are impoverished and/or people "of color") at the public cost of anywhere between $30,000 and $80,000 per head, per year (Western 2006). In fact, the US carceral system and police state has now proven: (1) obsolete in its supposed attempt to somehow diminish "crime" and (2) financially and socially unsustainable (Davis 2003). The disproportionate caging of the poor and people of color, and the sheer unprecedented rate and amount of incarceration in the US is directly connected to (among other things) structured educational inequalities along lines of race, class, ethnicity, and gender. This connection is now obvious to the extent that many researchers openly discuss a "schoolhouse to jailhouse track" (Advancement Project 2005) for the poor and/or people "of color" in the US.

In response to the domination exacted through state schooling and imprisonment, educators, students and community members have organized to re-appropriate resources from the police state and sabotage policies meant to prioritize state coercion over community autonomy and self-nourishment (see the "Books Not Bars" program, Ella Baker Center 2008). In concert as a high school teacher and university professor, I feel compelled to develop and employ alternative pedagogical strategies and epistemological philosophies to the dominant educational paradigm. In fact, this may be a good time for such a stance. Even the relatively moderate, liberal American Association of University Professors (AAUP 2007: 61) suggests that resistance to dominant state surveillance and regulation of higher education is needed:

> Calls for the regulation of higher education are almost invariably appeals to the coercive power of the state . . . Modern critics of the university seek to impose on university classrooms mandatory and ill-conceived standards of "balance," "diversity," and "respect." We ought to learn from history that the vitality of institutions of higher learning has been damaged far more by efforts to correct abuses of freedom than by those alleged abuses. We ought to learn from history that education cannot possibly thrive in an atmosphere of state-encouraged suspicion and surveillance.

For those of us working "in the system" as a professor, teacher, or student, it is difficult to resolve the sometimes conflicting demands of politics and survival. We, at times, strongly disagree with the institutions that funnel food onto our tables and rent to our landlords. But there is, as the AAUP stance above suggests, room to employ alternative pedagogical approaches in the space provided by "freedom in the classroom" – a shrinking commodity for many high school and primary school teachers via No Child Left Behind legislation (Armaline and Levy 2004). As educators and students, we share significant agency in how, or if, curriculum is employed in educational environments. As community members, we have some agency in how we support and what we demand for educational space and resources. To this extent, we have the agency to create educational space where anarchist pedagogy could be employed.

This is not to suggest some conspiratorial, revolutionary "call to arms" against the state, or Starbucks, or WalMart, or whoever. The argument need not go that far – even if one would like it to. I simply mean to suggest that dominant approaches to education are extremely problematic in the US, especially for those who would like to address current and long-standing racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and gendered inequalities. That said, an anarchist pedagogy deserves consideration as much as any other alternative approach – even by the restrictive rules of "scientific method" in which all possible alternatives may only be excluded through tangible "proof" or "evidence."

If this is, theoretically, a democratic nation/society we have the collective right to reconstruct our educational system, and any other institution or practice that we wish; though we all may differ in our conceptualizations of democracy. . . . Still, our agency as educators and students provides us the opportunity of "freedom in the classroom" and (theoretically) the "freedom of speech" to explore a wide variety of ideas, methods, and substantive areas of study. In his work on the human capacity to learn and the potential roles of scholarship, Chomsky (2003 [1969]: 182) identified subversion as fundamental in the formation of new, creative, and fresh ideas and worldviews:

> In its relation to society, a free university should be expected to be, in a sense, "subversive." We take for granted that creative work in any field will challenge prevailing orthodoxy. A physicist who refines yesterday's experiment, an engineer who merely seeks to improve existing devices, or an artist who limits himself [sic] to styles and techniques that have been thoroughly explored is rightly regarded as deficient in creative imagination. Exciting work in science, technology, scholarship, or the arts will probe the frontiers of understanding and try to create alternatives to the conventional assumptions. If, in some field of inquiry, this is no longer true, then the field will be abandoned by those who seek intellectual adventure.

Let us assume, for the sake of fun if nothing else, that we seek here to be intellectually adventurous in the sense previously described. In that case, I humbly present some suggestions for how we might employ and create more space for anarchist pedagogies.

## Suggestion for thought and action

I have suggested here that an anarchist pedagogy might have the following characteristics: (1) a humble, postmodern/poststructural approach to "Truth," (2) a central concern with creating pedagogical space free from tyranny, coercion, and hierarchical domination, such that horizontal freely associated democracy might take shape in and outside of the "classroom," and (3) an epistemological approach where all people are the capable subjects and creators of knowledge and history. Let us also further consider some possibilities for translating this necessarily vague conceptualization into action.

### Counter the "organized despair" of dominant schooling

In being "intellectually adventurous" we might want to examine pedagogy outside the reaches of state control and curriculum. Strangely enough, the area of martial arts might offer some useful points of interest. Specifically, the philosophical writings of the revolutionary martial artist Bruce Lee (Lee [1975] 1999, [1963] 1999) document a pedagogical practice and approach that seems to mirror anarchistic forms of pedagogy and epistemology.

For centuries, pedagogy and practice in the Chinese martial arts [1] has been primarily organized in a hierarchical, patriarchal, exclusionary (along lines of race/ethnicity, gender, and so forth) manner where dedication to one's stylistic and pedagogical lineage holds the utmost importance. Similarly, dominant forms of schooling in the US tend to emphasize the "mastery" of particular "legitimate" forms of language, bodies of knowledge, canons of literature, theoretical traditions, and methods of inquiry. Lee ([1975] 1999: 15), seen by many as revolutionary in deconstructing Chinese and Japanese (globally dominant at the time) traditional methods of martial instruction and method in the 1960s and 1970s, eloquently referred to these pedagogical practices as a form of "organized despair" – where the few students not excluded from participation (via race, ethnicity, class, or gender) were forced to constrain their own free martial exploration and expression through rote simulation of "form" and patterned movement:

> In the long history of martial arts, the instinct to follow and imitate seems to be inherent in most martial artists, instructors, and students alike. This is partly due to human tendency and partly because of the steep traditions behind multiple patterns of styles . . . [M]ost systems of martial art accumulate a "fancy mess" that distorts and cramps their practitioners and distracts them from the actual reality of combat, which is simple and direct. Instead of going immediately to the heart of things, flowery forms (organized despair) and artificial techniques are ritualistically practiced to simulate actual combat. Thus, instead of "being" in combat, these practitioners are "doing" something "about" combat.

In response to what he viewed as the "organized despair" of traditional martial arts, Lee first opened instruction to all people – regardless of race, ethnicity, class, gender, or perceived "ability." He suggested that the martial "path" could be a non-linear personal journey led centrally by a commitment to "truly expressing one's self" and endlessly striving for inner and outer peace (however defined) through a critical, personal exploration of existent and emergent bodies of martial knowledge. This was a journey in which all people could participate from any variety of standpoints to learn from and contribute to a collective body of martial knowledge. A "good teacher," in Lee's eyes, could not "teach" a student how to fight or defend themselves in the proper sense. Rather, a "good teacher" or "great master" helped their peers to experiment with a wide variety of physical and psychological techniques to find their *own* suitable martial toolkits.

As we might design pedagogy consistent with the complexities and challenges of realizing anarchism, Lee designed his philosophical and pedagogical approach as consistent with the realities of martial combat – as organic, chaotic, unpredictable, and alive. I mean to propose here that we view standardized, state schooling as a form of "organized despair" that we might counter with pedagogical approaches and space that treats knowledge and history as equally fluid, unpredictable, and wonderfully alive. As Lee suggested, consistent with Dewey's (1938) theories on the relationship between experience and education, one could only learn to fight – or to truly express him/herself – through the act of fighting, or martial expression. Let us, as educators and students, also escape the "silly mess" of educational curriculum that begins from the stagnant, dead state "standards." Let us begin with the very real and immediate curiosities and needs of those participating in whatever educational spaces we create.

There is no reason, even under our current conditions of state surveillance and curricular control that we cannot begin from questions such as: "What kind of society would we like to live in? What are our curiosities and desires? How can we help each other to explore our curiosities, desires, and visions of a future world?" This seems like a purely philosophical point, but it is meant to be practical. Within the dominant form of schooling, teachers and students begin, tangibly, from the standards and expectations determined by any number of alienating authorities (typically, the state). As students and teachers we can shift this focus if we make the conscious decision to do so. For example, unlimited and unrestrained types of creative expression might be employed in the classroom as "extra credit" to reduce the coercive effects of grades; students can be brought into the *design* of their own courses through democratic processes (an educational experience in itself); students can be encouraged to work together in cooperative environments to tackle questions and (social) problems of their interest and choosing; students and teachers can form solidarity in resisting otherwise oppressive practices, such as standardized testing (Armaline and Levy 2004); and so forth. In this emergent model, we could nurture one another as reflective, relatively autonomous, critical actors in the collective, democratic creation of knowledge and history – even within seemingly restrictive environments.

### Consider a new epistemology for new communities and a new society

If we are all treated as the creators of knowledge and history, then it follows that we may come to constantly shifting conclusions about what skills and knowledge might be important in and through the realization of anarchism. Just as authorities did in the early colonial period of the US (Spring 1990), we might decide that some level of agricultural knowledge and skills are collectively important for the restructuring of our communities and political-economic system. That is, we may realize that people in a libertarian-socialist context may need to have more diversified (versus modern specialization) forms and expressions of knowledge and skill.

This means that we should question and reconsider our dominant notions of the "classroom" and learning process. Let us, for example, consider the pedagogical possibilities of the forest or garden. Let's unbind ourselves from our notebooks, computers, and desks to explore the pedagogical possibilities of movement and physical activity (see also Farber 2001, for the pedagogical possibilities of physical movement and awareness). Let us, in the end, as we reconsider our pedagogical practices and spaces, do so in light of the needs and desires of an anarchist society.

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# 14 Accessible artifact for community discussion about anarchy and education

*Maxwell Schnurer and Laura K. Hahn*

This project was initiated with the mutual goal of creating something that would be useful to initiate discussions about anarchy and education in diverse learning situations. Struggling through the limitations of conventional lesson-plans, our cooperative work emerged as four short stories. We argue in this essay that a future-fiction narrative utopian tale is a useful artifact to elicit reflective discussions about some pitfalls and tensions that emerge as learning individuals become more autonomous.

## The problem: recuperation of autonomy through school

Many anarchist thinkers such as Alexander Berkman see the academy as fundamentally bankrupt, or, even more dangerous: seductive. Berkman places school along with religion as a tool of capitalist leaders to train and make people docile. Berkman challenges academic work because it teaches the oppressed to side with those in power. He seems to accuse the slippery nature of schooling curriculum as being potentially camouflaged. Berkman describes *recuperation* – the use of radical symbols to justify and maintain status quo power dynamics – when he criticizes learning institutions. As knowledge workers attempting to outline an example of anarchist educational curriculum we considered it ethically valuable to reflect on the implications of our work in terms of autonomy. We wondered, for example, would our lesson plan be used in advanced high school classes to educate elite audiences or to justify hierarchical models of learning? Could we craft something that was accessible to non-university audiences? As we reflected on the potential ways our contribution could be used to control, delineate, and dominate, we felt increasingly trapped within the confi nes of conventional academic writing.

If our project was useful, we needed to name the subtle and explicit acts of control that were happening in the construction of the academic work visible in the writing itself. Engaged in self-critical reflection, we felt that the very means of expression produced within the modern university are deeply entrenched in power roles which discourage autonomy. Motivated by the Foucault-initiated critical inquiry of the disciplinary modes of the classroom in *Discipline and Punish* – timetables, rows of desks, testing to develop hierarchy, ranking, and evolving

modes of self-disciplining – we wanted to consider the disciplinary implications of our work.

Diverse scholars have articulated the many ways that modern academic work is complicit with the violence of modern multinational corporate state-permeable imperialism. David Bleitch (1995) outlines the many ways in which modern academic discipline has become more reliant on testing, labeling, and social norms to develop what he calls a "military thought" style whose wholesale usage suggests a kind of investment in thought patterns of violence and obedience. AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power (ACT-UP) organizer Maxine Wolfe describes in terrifying detail how academic writers have distorted and exploited social movement work often for their own gain including leaving mention of women out of the 1988 women-organized Shea Stadium demonstration. [1] Henry Giroux's (1988, 2000, 2003) relentlessly critical work on corporate distortions of semi-autonomous spaces within educational confines points to the ever-increasing limits on free thought and inquiry. The corporate presence in the educational system turns the school from a public space into "training grounds for educating students to define themselves as a consumer rather than as multifaceted social actors" (Giroux 2000: 172). Academic work on anarchy is certainly not free from these pressures.

Recognizing the hierarchical dynamics of academic spaces and the flattening out of academic writing, we turned to Italian communist Antonio Gramsci for an explanation of intellectuals (in this case teachers and authors) and their role in recuperation of the oppressive powers of the state. In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci (1971) distinguished traditional intellectuals who worked in service of state power from organic intellectuals who he deemed "permanent persuaders" – community thinkers with community *ethos* who helped critically to uncover coercion. Although we are not organic intellectuals, Gramsci's concept suggests that academic sites *can* be used as a space to highlight the contradictions and compromises of statism and oppression. Or it can be used as Berkman indicates as the "leopard changes his spots" without changing its carnivorous ways, as a means of covering up these ruptures, and tamping down further inquiry.

As individuals, we share a vision of practical anarchy which encourages a development of self-knowledge and a building of community based on organizing with the goal of mutual aid for community and self-liberation. But how to create anarchist educational methods that encourage autonomous thinking skills and not elicit more coercion? To answer this question meant not just thinking about what we wrote, but also how we wrote it.

## Methodology: fiction/anarchy

Fiction offered a chance to write something that is engaging to read and gave us the flexibility to rewrite the world. Pointing to the impermanence of the current system, we could imagine a new world where our dreams were in operation. In our writing, we drew from a handful of examples of politicized futuristic fiction.

Living in rural northern California, Ernst Callenbach's *Ecotopia* novels are a part of the antecedent fabric of lived activism. Callenbach writes about a future

where northern California, Oregon and Washington split from the corporate/military dominant United States and develop steady-state ecologically sustainable modes of living. Whether it is a "US out of Humboldt Count" bumpersticker, or the Kinetic Sculpture Race, where pedal powered vehicles lurch over miles of sand, water and roads in a living performance of sustainable transit; Callenbach's stories act as a shared reference, and an opportunity for political mobilization based on mutual understanding where we live.

Could we write something that would encourage the reader to think about the anarchist learning, and even to be internally critical? Could we write it so that it could be shared around forest defender campfires and assigned to graduate seminars? As teachers whose purpose it is to study social movement and protest history, much of our time in the classroom covers the ways to help students to recognize their own agency, and see the limitations of the spaces we convene. Our motivation was to focus the self-critical lens upon our own work and writing. In early discussions of this essay we talked about how constrained we felt in writing and teaching in university settings. We discussed a typical list of restrictions: the lack of historical awareness; racism, sexism, homophobia, and statism implicit in much of the framework of modern learning systems; the lack of connections between teaching methods and learners; the punishment of professors who attempt to give up or share institutional power with students; student, teacher, and administrator apathy; lack of resources, time and reward for teachers engaged in radical pedagogy; and the inherent bureaucracy of the university.

While acknowledging the restraints on the formats, we decided to focus on what we wanted. Putting pen to our desires, free of the usual and well-documented constraints, and open to the possibilities of different modes of learning, we developed characters, questions and themes for our writing. The narrative form is ideally suited to both the content and goals of our work in three primary ways. One, narratives are uncontrollable lyric space – where the reader is encouraged to imagine along with the text. In story-telling and collective reflection people can position themselves or challenge the story construction itself, but the tale is less important than the considerations that emerge from the telling.

Two, the narrative form attempts to broaden the scope of who gains access to intellectual ideas. The principal strength of narrative research is that it gets at the heart of how people come to know and communicate experience. Sillars (1991) contends that the best anyone can know about others is how they make sense of their experience through the discourse they share. Narratives highlight the partialities and complexities of human experience and interactions as people share their discourse with one another. Narrative research takes researchers to the very communication people use to convey events and represent their worldly existence.

Three, narratives are how we constitute our reality and the narrative paradigm does not suggest that people are able to achieve a true understanding of experience through the organization of their discourse into narrative accounts. Instead, narrative is a creative process by which people mesh meaning and experience and use it to make sense of their worlds (Polkinghorne 1988). Narrative meanings are partial and cannot fully capture events as they actually happen. Instead,

meaning takes shape in the very nature of human experience itself (Carr 1986; Spence 1982). This suggests that provocative narratives can help to draw out new meanings.

Considering the difficulties and constraints inherent in writing for the academic world and the possibilities of narrative for considering and imagining autonomous learning, we offer this artifact for your consideration. We hope it evokes provocative exchanges around forest defender campfires as well as the classroom.

## Artifact

### *Jackson*

"Dude, are you ready yet?" asked Mad Dog stumbling into Jackson's tent. The aroma of the smoldering fire followed him in.

"I've still got a few things left to pack," said the clean-shaven Jackson as he (more hurriedly than he would prefer), unstuffed his tattered but well-loved duffel bag. The intrusion of Mad Dog's furry face made Jackson refl ect on their long friendship and he smiled at their differences as he packed.

Jackson had to fill his bag with the supplies he anticipated were "critical for contributing to the learning opportunities awaiting him," as the invitation had been worded. He was precise about everything he did, and stored away each tool carefully despite the verbal pressures of Mad Dog. Just as medical doctors used to carry bags fi lled with tools of measurement and diagnoses, Jackson felt equally obligated to carry the things he would need to investigate.

His friendship with Mad Dog emerged over their mutual interest in the outdoors – Mad Dog loved to sketch images of ferns and rocks far afield, and Jackson was almost pathologically interested in honey bees.

Nervous about his departure to the new mutual learning exchange, casually referred to as a pod, Jackson wondered about his place on the team he had only known through 'net discussions.

"Do I have everything?" asked Jackson. "I've got my journal, sketch pad, that little 'scope, that new mp3 we bought the other day, the Funky Flute Five."

"Don't forget these," offered Mad Dog as he tossed Jackson a pack of cigarettes. "I know you don't smoke, but I bet all of the other cool podsters do," Mad Dog explained. "And if you are going to convince them to become bees you'll need to smoke to calm them down." He smiled.

"Thanks man," said Jackson as he stuffed the cigarettes safely into his jacket pocket laughing.

Jackson wondered if he and Mad Dog would stay friends as they moved away to pods in opposite directions. Although he was a bit sad about leaving this beautiful coastal community in which he had grown up, his face flushed when he thought about discussions with other bee fanatics. *Bees* represented for Jackson a paradigm-like social model, one that promised the remedy for so many human ills. Issues of identity politics, the relationship of humans with nature, and even international trade could be transformed if humans could only learn from bees!

In many ways his choice of a rural pod, so far away, was a decision made by his interest in himself thinking more like bees. So earnest was his belief that intellectual exchanges and mutuality would characterize the conversations among his learning community – that he might be a part of development of ideas so large that one person could never imagine them alone. As Jackson prepared for his new life he felt a power behind the lyrics of the old song, BattleFlag, "Got a revolution behind my eyes . . ."

"You know Mad Dog, I think I will be able to solve so many mysteries in my pod," Jackson proudly stated as he carefully arranged the bee jacket, gloves and a video camera into his bag – all necessities for documenting the behaviors of the bees in his hive. "And you know what? The new facilitator of the pod, Osiris, she said that I will have the latest in bee technology at my disposal! Isn't that cool?"

"I guess," sighed Mad Dog. "You've been freaky about bees ever since we were small."

"I know," Jackson admitted. Despite his young age, Jackson had already spent years thinking, reading, and discussing the subject with hundreds of other people. While he realized that Mad Dog and the rest of his friends, and for that matter, all of his families were sick of his bee passion, he couldn't help it. Ever since he first read about Colony Collapse Disorder he was hooked on the mystery and majesty of honey bees. Perhaps because of their ever declining numbers, they represented a noble choice to live together. To Jackson, the most romantic of all possibilities was that of self-sacrifice: the bees are aware of their compromised immune system and are flying off to die alone rather than infect and compromise the entire hive.

"Hey! Snap out of it. Where did you go? Are you thinking about bees again? Geez, let's go get a beer before your ride gets here," suggested Mad Dog.

"Sure, where to?"

"The usual, don't you think?"

"Of course," smiled Jackson as they headed out to their favorite pub, "The Orchid," a narrow bar with some tables where they could hunch over and argue about bees and music.

After a few beers, Mad Dog dropped him off at the hitching post where he awaited his ride to the new pod. He was quickly picked up by a man of similar age but who wore the face of one long-scarred by inner torment. The car also contained a lanky young man named Graham, who introduced himself by saying simply, "Hey man."

### Ernie

The communal car screeched to a halt and the two riders in the front seat hopped out, Ernie, the shorter driver handed the keys to Jackson with an unpleasant sneer. "Have a good time in your new *pod*," he snarled.

After the car had driven away, the young man turned to his taller companion and began a long-familiar diatribe. " *Owning* our education," Ernie spat, "what a joke. That just means reading comic books and drawing fl owers and calling it *learning*. It used to be called school work because you had to WORK! This is

education you could buy at a tag sale! That kid thinks he knows about honey bees because he watched some in a field. He is in for a serious disappointment."

Ernie was small for the size of his voice, and standing next to Graham, reed thin and tall to the extreme, he looked almost squat, with an overcoat and squared shoulders.

"I don't care, man, you can't break other people's stuff – it isn't cool," whispered Graham in his nasally voice.

"But it isn't *other* people's stuff, it's my stuff too." Inside he seethed. A hundred years ago, people walked out on the evil iron clad education system and supposedly took it back. They spent fifty years learning on their own – dismantling schools and building education centers all over the place, he thought to himself. "It is the foundation of this god-damn place that this instructional stuff is mine to fulfill my education desires, so I'm going to do just that." Sweat dripped down Ernie's face as he turned to scowl at Graham.

As if remembering his mission, he walked briskly to the education center with Graham trailing behind him muttering objections.

When Graham caught up to his friend, Ernie was standing outside of a small two-story building strewn with windows and decking.

"Look man, the education centers only worked because half of the people never use the damn thing. Getting computers in every house was easy, but people just play solitaire and find out when the cinema is playing. And as for this place . . .," Ernie seemed to square off against the building itself, and was startled when a young woman emerged from the door.

"Hey Graham. Hello Ernie. Whatcha doing here this early?" said a young woman with long black hair wrapped in a casual pony-tail.

Surprisingly, it was Graham who spoke first, "Oh yeah, Hi Soo Kim, I'm just here with Ernie . . ."

"Are you here working?" said Ernie with a slight glare.

"Yeah, I'm using the microscopes to look at quartz cell structure and vid-conferencing with some rock guys down south," explained Soo Kim. "Rocking podsters down south," she quickly corrected herself with a chuckle.

With a snort, Ernie suddenly turned and walked around the corner of the building talking as he went. "See, people like Soo Kim used to go to Universities – where there were whole giant gatherings of people interested in rocks meeting and talking at once. Can you imagine how much more efficient she would be if she had someone to teach her? How much better her life would be?"

"Ah, Ernie, don't talk like I'm not here. I think I'm learning a lot. Bottom line is that talking to other people about the rocks that I'm interested in makes sense. Why would I want to be forced to learn stuff? I like it just fine *this* way." Soo Kim had followed Ernie and Graham around the corner.

Ernie abruptly turned around causing him to have to shield his eyes from the sun while he lectured the other two. "I mean no insult to your *rocking podsters*, Soo Kim, but you haven't read the old books – hundreds of smart people would spend years together, sometimes working on the same project, it was amazing! Now-a-days, everyone starts from scratch and gives up when it gets too hard. For

the two-hundred years before the great exodus from schools, we doubled our understanding every few years, constantly striving; now we wallow in self-reflection and call it learning."

Both Graham and Soo Kim stared at Ernie. Given that Graham was Ernie's friend and Soo Kim had spent years around Ernie, they could both tell that he was beyond his traditional snide outrage. Today he seemed more determined.

Ernie wheeled and with a few more steps stood between blackberry bushes on a muddy patch in front of an electrical/data panel.

"Wait!" yelled Graham as Ernie shouldered off his trenchcoat and set a gym bag gently on the ground. Ernie turned.

"How come you are gonna stop people from learning? My mom uses this thing to find out when her beach grass people meet up so she can make baskets. Beth-Anne talks to people about those old movies, man." As if realizing the impact for him, Graham quickly added, "People will miss their rides man . . ."

Seeing Ernie draw rubber handled plyers and a huge pair of metal snips out of his duffle, Soo Kim understood what it was he intended, saying, "Ernie, you shouldn't do that."

He was fast to reply. "The education center is built to allow any one of us to fulfill our educational desires – today mine are to destroy this data network."

Soo Kim wasn't convinced. "Uh uh, not if your learning makes it harder for other people to learn! You can't study fire-making in the living room while people are trying to sleep. You can't cut people up to study their anatomy!"

Ernie turned, almost snarling. "I'm not violating anyone, I'm setting them free from this fiction. I'm cutting the umbilical cord and forcing us to breathe fresh, free air. We need something to drive us forward, and this . . .," he paused while searching for the word, ". . . relationship with learning is killing us. Sure, more people know about the tides now, but we used to learn more, faster. Think about your microscope – for a hundred years, they struggled to see ever smaller and smaller spaces in our world, making better microscopes. But it has been more than a hundred years since we've seen a better microscope. We've stopped that process, in our desire for autonomous learning, we found out that humans won't learn unless they are pushed, given their own free will, they will choose sloth."

"Then build a better microscope, gather together with people on the network every Thursday to re-create the kind of learning you read about, don't destroy the learning center!" explained Soo Kim.

"I don't want to be shunted off, encouraged to be some token dissident who convinces everyone that the networked system of mediocrity actually works. There is a reason I seldom come here and it isn't because I don't like microscopes, but rather because the whole idea of this place is poisonous."

Ernie had been systematically unwrapping insulation from a giant cable which poured out of the wall of the education center. With a sharp knife he isolated several colors of wire and after connecting some grounding wires began consulting a small notebook.

"You want to know what I've been learning?" he asked, aware that Graham and Soo Kim were a captive audience. "During the Nazi regime, a lot of Jews and

dissidents fought back against the Nazis in guerrilla war. They knew that blowing up backwoods train tracks worked to prevent arms shipments, but more importantly they knew to raid information outposts, destroying records of who was marked for death. Animal liberation activists used to destroy breeding records and computers of fur breeders. You might call it making war on the infrastructure." He began snipping wires and suddenly the power failed in the education center.

Graham was the first to speak. "Well you did it now. There are a lot of people who can't get connected right now. No meetings, no books, no rides .. I still don't understand how this helps what you believe?"

Soo Kim joined him. "Yeah Ernie. This just sucks – now lots of people can't get what they want."

"Freedom doesn't mean being free from struggle, Soo Kim," yelled Ernie as the pod dimmed its lights and somewhere inside began a fatal beeping sound.

### Osiris

"Damn it! What's wrong with me?" Osiris muttered as she awoke in a panicked sweat. Although she had prepared herself for the first gathering of the new pod members, she was haunted by a pang of questions, overall uncertainty, and self-doubt. As to the cause of such misgivings she could not name. "I've got to shake this feeling." Packing a small tote, she headed out to the beach, for staring into the waves, was always her route to calm and centeredness.

As she watched the family of sea lions, she isolated the root of her troubled state – fear. "Ah," she breathed, "yes, I am afraid. But of what?" Trying to identify the source of her anxiety, she ran through all of the wonders of this new pod. She quickly jotted down her fears and decided to take each one at a time.

> There would be a collection of people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, experiences, and trades, many more learners than she had ever worked with before.

"That's easy," she said aloud. "I'm not responsible for all of these people to learn, only to share time and space together." She had no lengthy preparations for the gathering of new learners, they were all expected to come with whatever knowledge they had, her job would be to facilitate – to help guide investigation without leading. If there was one gift she felt comfortable with, it was her ability to help clarify and articulate disagreement. Recently, she had been called into town from her wooded enclave, to help mediate disagreements.

> She would be in the company of others who were really passionate about bees – but passionate in such different ways that *her* contributions might not be valued.

She smiled seeing this written down, knowing that it wasn't really about credit. She knew from reading the notes from the exodus that expectations of what one

might learn in collective learning experiences was counter-productive – self-limiting – you might say.

"I need to take a leap of faith," she said to herself as the breeze picked up on the beach. She contemplated the last item on her list.

> It is weird to have so many people coming to this place. This pod is three days' journey away from another pod (instead of the traditional one day). Am I facilitating just because my pod is rural and still has bees?

As she considered this fear she thought about the changes that non-linear 'net based learning had enabled. In the world, where most people lived in small places, it was unusual to go somewhere to learn.

The new technology allowed for greater and far reaching conversations with those unable to physically travel to the pod. Initially, she had thought there was little need for the pod as the conversations on the 'net had been so fertile. But everyone loved her photographs of bees – and many expressed envy at her ability to see bees floating near her dwelling in the woods. Eventually that interest had turned into a massive undertaking for people to come explicitly to learn about bees.

Really, this isn't that different from what people do, many learned by exploring, but rarely did people go so far to learn. When people wanted to learn about timber harvesting they would camp in the forest for days. When they inquired about migration patterns they would visit the ocean to observe the great journey of the whales or birds (depending on their bioregion). When they wanted to study art they would visit the studios of local artists or create great graffiti murals around the community. If there were questions of philosophy they would gather in the comfort of a home to share an organic vegan meal and theorize well into the early morning.

Maybe I'm really afraid that this learning cooperative will be seen as new experts. "Teams of specialists" were long a thing of the past, but some people's voices would drown out others in the room. Well, that's where I come in – I'll help to make sure that everyone's voice is included.

This last item on her list gave her pause, and, she had to admit, was the source of her anxiety. While she was grateful for not being the "person in power," she guiltily wondered what that must have been like to have been able to give orders to *her* learners. Her grandparents had been "Professors" in the old system and she imagined their world. What would it feel like to single handedly create and design the curriculum to guide the learning process? What kind of panic would she have then!

### Sophie

"Oh I don't mind dying. It isn't the worst thing that's ever happened to me," Sophie said with a faint smile.

Elena looked on with a grimace – also a strong woman, it wasn't easy to see her friend and mentor dying. It was even worse to see all of her hard laid plans to document Sophie's story falling on the ears of these random people.

For years, Elena had been pressuring Sophie to talk about her history. Sophie was a local legend, a woman for whom learning obviously meant a great deal. She was renowned among the bioregion for her ability to explain literature, define words, articulate the most difficult book ideas in common-sense terms, and relentless in her dedication to shared learning. Since the great change, many people had offered up their dying moments to be a shared learning space, and Sophie's dying was a real chance for everyone to learn something.

"My dear," said Sophie, relaxed on a bed, positioned in a wide sunny room, "I can see you fretting about the people here. Perhaps it is a good place to remind you to *embrace change* for it is the only thing constant in this universe."

Smiling, despite ragged eyes, the aged woman looked over the group of people before her. "Today someone destroyed the communication network. And so my dying moments are also one of change, given to the people who happened to be around me. Fitting that I should die as an instructional lesson, given that my mother conceived me, and then received educational credit for her studies to become a mother – all the books she read, all of the people she talked to. At that time it was considered 'forward thinking education at the time . . .'"

She could see the dead looks in their eyes. She knew that having grown up in a world of free and ever-engaging learning, the idea of *credits* for learning didn't even make sense. In a way, it made her happy that her stories didn't make sense, that things had changed that much.

She paused, enjoying the time to be alone in her thoughts – the young people sat quietly, aware enough to be respectful.

"I only have a few things to say. Understand that change is never as crisp and clear as they write about in books or on the 'net. Change takes time and moves slowly, for what we really are talking about is changing people's minds. My parents were radicals – they were lesbian lovers in a time before free unions, and they taught their children at home."

"So when I went to school, I knew that the way that they taught wasn't for me." If I were to say that I was one of the initiators of the great exodus, they would perk up, Sophie thought to herself. Like the presidents and so-called great men of history, the famous radical generation who walked out of high schools and universities had evolved into legend. The participants of the exodus had, in creating the story, laid a moral barometer – a kind of spirit of free inquiry based in daily life. For the last fifty seasons, it had transformed everything about the world, creating a generation that understood the world fundamentally differently. She was the last of her time, and the last to remember how it used to be.

"It was never about credit," she said quietly, as if her audience could possibly follow her thoughts. "There were so many angry, dissatisfied learners, stuffed into desks in rows and rows like canned vegetables. We all felt it, but defection was so terrifying – acting outside of the expectations meant you would lose friends, jobs, everything."

"I used to have strength. In my youth I pushed and pulled, carving out great segments of learning for myself, almost all driven by my own curiosity. With

friends, lovers and family, I discovered as many ideas as I could handle, always sharing, talking and leaping to the next idea."

Sophie coughed and seemed to strain for a breath. One of the young boys – only slightly older than ten went and got a cup of water, holding it out until Sophie took it with a smile.

"You can't imagine how many people didn't make it," she croaked and sat silent as the crowd shed a few tears.

"Now listen carefully. This is the second and the most important thing I know. Trust that same impulse that made someone destroy the net – dissent. Relentless, unwavering dissent." A few faces in the crowd couldn't stand it – respect or not, they started to mutter.

"Fine! Fine! Dissent from the tradition that says you have to listen to an old woman's dying words if you want. But do it after I'm done. Now, understand that there is much real in this world. Soil, insects, a kiss in the evening, a belly full of summer corn . . . Those things are real. So learn from those things that are the most real in your life. Listen to the bugs, follow your desires, and always, always dissent."

Eyes closed, Sophie relaxed on the pillow, and sensing the end, all muttering stopped.

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# 15 Anarchist theory as radical critique

## Challenging hierarchies and domination in the social and "hard" sciences

*Abraham DeLeon and Kurt Love*

Although the past twenty years in the United States has seen enormously repressive legislation enacted in the name of "security" or to guarantee that "no child will be left behind," radical political struggles have gained intensity to resist the neo-liberal era that we find ourselves currently in today (Day 2004). But, as two scholars in the field of education, anarchist theory excites us in ways that other radical theories have been unable to capture. Unfortunately, anarchist theory has been omitted when scholars have conceptualized radical pedagogies in education. Although education, we would argue, has always been an integral component to anarchist theory, it has been glaringly overlooked in how we have conceptualized "critical theory" in education. In education, the dominant radical paradigm is critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy is a framework that allows teachers to challenge social problems, build democratic classroom communities, encourage social activism, and deconstruct ideology that students encounter on a daily basis (Kincheloe 2004; McLaren 1994). Critical pedagogy demands one to be critical of power structures as they are embedded in history, government, capitalism, and the mass media (Kincheloe 2004; Shor and Pari 1999). Although we feel that anarchist theory adds to critical pedagogy, we wanted to explore ways that anarchism can inform a theoretical and epistemological critique of social studies and the "hard" sciences.

Our fields of study (secondary social studies and science education) are rooted in historically oppressive paradigms (Code 1991; Ross 2006). For clarification, social studies in the United States have meant the study of history (both US and global), civic governance, sociology, geography, world cultures, and economics and other social sciences and humanities, like anthropology and cultural studies (Zevin 2007). The "hard" sciences we are defining as those that are traditionally described as using a scientific method for "objective" research, such as the earth, biological, chemical, and physical sciences. Both content areas contain glaring omissions, such as questions concerning social organization, the implicit acceptance of hierarchies, the subjectivities of researchers, and critiques of "objectivity." With these present, we decided to focus on key areas where we believe oppression is legitimated, such as the hierarchical ordering of know-ledge, the implicit acceptance of domination, and the blending of science with corporate interests. Although we limited our analysis to these, we believe they are

fundamental to how students engage historical, sociological, and scientific think-ing. If we are to build a new society, these epistemological foundations must be challenged to help demonstrate the oppressive nature inherent in socially con-structed notions of what "knowledge" is. Before we delve into our critique, we need to define first how we have conceptualized "anarchism" for the context of this chapter.

## What do we mean by "anarchism"? An overview

Despite the common mischaracterization of anarchism as violent and chaotic, especially in mainstream media sources, anarchist theory is informed by the autonomy of the individual, the importance of small and localized communities, the move towards more organic communities and organizational structures, social justice, and the freeing of our desires (Bowen and Purkis 2005; Guerin 1970; Sheehan 2003). We have narrowed our focus to those specific aspects of anarchism that we will utilize: critique of the state, opposition to the reification of hierarchies, and a more complex understanding of power.

Anarchists contend that the state, with its official discourses, punitive measures, and hierarchical organization does not allow human beings to coexist peacefully with their environment, form meaningful relationships, or participate in how we are governed (Guerin 1970). The state is structured hierarchically and does not allow full participation nor does it encourage social activism and community building. The state perpetuates class oppression by effectively ignoring the needs of workers and the poor. Unlike their wealthy and elite counterparts, the working classes and poor do not have access to quality education, a voice in government, and are tied to a wage-based system that, in some respects, represents a new form of slavery (Sheehan 2003). The state aids in subverting individual and group rights and anarchists insist upon dismantling, critiquing, and challenging illegitimate authority. Besides excluding and coercing people, states also have complex and rigid hierarchies.

Hierarchical systems do not allow for true participation and help sustain power structures. For example, the creation of racial hierarchies (with Europeans at the top and the "Other" at the bottom) was responsible for one of the many justi-fications of African slavery and Native American genocide. Hierarchies sustain and reproduce oppression. Other theories, such as feminism and eco-justice, also point to the inherent problems in the hierarchies of patriarchy and anthropo-centrism (Mies and Shiva 1993; Plumwood 2002; Riley-Taylor 2002; Shiva 2005; Tong 1998). Anarchists contend that we must have the freedom to make decisions, participate in the political process, and build community through activism and democratic participation (Bowen and Purkis 2005; Guerin 1970). The state and the hierarchies that sustain it are influenced by power in its various manifestations.

Foucault (2000) viewed power in a much different way than it had been historically conceived and has influenced anarchist conceptions of power as well (May 1994). Stepping away from the notion of *power over*, Foucault introduced the concept of the *fluidity* of power. Power is not something that we possess per

se, but works through us. In this way, power is also productive (Foucualt 2000). Power is not just in a single person but is present within the entire operation of all institutions. As Todd May (1994: 61) writes,

> Power, as we have seen, constitutes for the anarchists a suppressive force. The image of power with which anarchism operates is that of a weight, pressing down – and at times destroying – the actions, events, and desires with which it comes in contact.

Rethinking and re-imagining institutions that perpetuate unequal power relationships are concerns for anarchists that want to confront power and its manifestations. This short summary will help us to move towards how anarchism can be incorporated into an epistemological critique of the social and "hard" sciences.

## Employing an anarchist critique: rethinking the "sciences"

Social studies in public schools developed from the social sciences and the humanities (Zevin 2007). Although each of these content areas has unique features that differentiates them easily, there are certain common "threads" that run through each. Because of space constraints I will focus on three themes: human civilization as a linear march towards "progress"; omission of power and its manifestations; and finally, the implicit acceptance of the state and its "official discourses." These are common themes found in most social studies content.

Loewen (1995) analyzed history textbooks and found "heroes" overcoming odds, the march of Western civilization towards a "better" future, the invisible nature of capitalism, and the ultimate victory of "good" over "evil." Unfortunately, history is overwhelmingly concerned with the accomplishments of White men, business, and the State. Using anarchist theory as a lens, we know that history is wrought with the struggles of workers, the poor, people of color, and women. The accomplishments of groups with little social or economic power have been glaringly omitted from the narrative of American history. Like these omissions, capitalism's need for a low-paid, exploited working class and an alienated society (from nature, community, and our desires) are also absent. Another glaring omission is power and its manifestations.

As poststructuralist theories have demonstrated, power manifests itself in a variety of different ways (Foucault 2000). Whatever the context, anarchists recognize how power manifests itself in these various ways and in multiple contexts. If a society is built on domination and exclusion, then this will be manifested in the institutions that human beings build. For example, some anarchists have argued that changing our lifestyle will not only enhance our ability to see past the mirage of capitalist society, but will also aid in the development of a revolutionary spirit (CrimethInc 2001). Lifestyle decisions such as squatting or open relationships of intimacy have pushed anarchists to recognize the potential that radical lifestyle actions can have in freeing our minds from oppressive social norms. As Seán Sheehan (2003: 133) argues:

> Ultimately, anarchism is not trying to suggest that contesting issues of
> sexuality can ever be a substitute or replacement for political struggle, that the
> perfect orgasm leads to better class war, but what anarchists insist on is . . .
> that issues of sexuality and desire are intimately bound up with exercise of
> political power and questions of authority.

Sheehan effectively captures the tension in anarchist theory between the political
and the personal and how subverting this cumbersome dichotomy can help people
in questioning traditional power structures.

The last theme that we want to address that is present in the social studies is its
implicit acceptance of the State. Anarchism has always had a hostile relationship
with the state because it inhibits, controls, and limits the creative nature of
individuals and communities (Sheehan 2003). Instead of celebrating the state, the
social studies should problematize it as not being congruent with a free and open
society. We would contend that social studies needs to be devoted to studying how
communities have not only faced capitalism but also sought to change the rela-
tionships it engenders. Students need to have the room to conceive of new possi-
bilities for social organization outside of the logic of institutionalized coercion and
control as it is embodied in the state, capitalism, "White" supremacy, patriarchy,
and anthropocentrism.

Similarly, the embedded power of science often goes unquestioned, especially
in the context of elementary and secondary education in the West. This is not even
a process that teachers can usually articulate – either because of the lack of this
discourse in teacher education programs and college level science courses, or due
to the demands teachers experience from curriculum, testing, and administration.
This ongoing omission of critique, with a simultaneous construction of science as
*de facto* "progress" and morally just in its designs of nature ruled by humans can
play into supporting a hierarchical partnership of the state and capitalism resulting
in profit over social freedom and ecological sustainability.

Feminist theorists have critiqued science's discourses of power and argue that
"objectivity" (a Eurocentric and androcentric historical view of science) and an
anthropocentric science (which puts humans in a position of domination over
nature) both constitute power structures that perpetuate oppression and hierarchies.
Donna Haraway (1988) argues that objectivity is a totalizing concept of "Truth"
and that knowledge is situated. Haraway argues that a researcher needs to step out
of her self to collect, analyze, and report data. This relocation, she argues,
distances us from the knowledge construction processes that are rooted in neo-
liberal fantasies of unbridled capitalism, industry, profit, and competition.

Claiming that science is "objective" has great implications for global markets
and social institutions like education. Science has increasingly become the tool of
corporations and governments to fulfill their agendas. "Objectivity" is used as a
protective veil to allow governments and corporations to abuse science for profit.
Science has become more focused on war technology and less on the global
concerns and conditions with which people live on a daily basis, especially those
who are poor. Rampton and Stauber (2001: 205–206) argue:

the most dramatic trend influencing the direction of science during the past century, however, has been its increasing dependence on funding from government and industry . . . A number of factors have contributed to this reality, from the rise of big government to the militarization of scientific research to the emergence of transnational corporations as important patrons of research.

This passage demonstrates a way in which science is abused for corporate profits. But this is not the only way, as government or private companies fund approximately 80 per cent of the medical studies published in top journals, such as the *New England Journal of Medicine* Furthermore, the amount of money spent on science research in the area of human diseases is overwhelmingly in non-life threatening conditions. The profit-motive is driving medical research for impotence and obesity, while the millions who are afflicted with malaria and tuberculosis receive little to no assistance from transnational pharmaceutical companies (McMurtry 1998).

Eco-justice theorists identify connections with racism and unhealthy environ-mental conditions. Kozol (1991) has drawn considerable attention to these in cities like East St. Louis with chemical pollution from Monsanto, raw sewage, and high levels of lead in the soil, to the South Bronx where birth rates are equivalent or worse than third world nations. Shiva (2005) has described in detail that these patterns are playing out globally with companies like Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola depleting and polluting the public water supply in India, and the continual global destruction of biodiversity in ecosystems. Schools and science classrooms are largely devoid of these discussions and realities of the current abuses of science and scientific research. Without these critical conversations, schools produce passivity, docility, and conformity to support the desires of the military-industrial-media complex.

## Where should we go from here?

Social studies and science classrooms can be sites of empowering discourses that question coercive hierarchies. The first step in this process is for teachers to continue their own research and begin to think critically about *what* we teach and introduce critical topics. Second, teachers need to actively create classroom environments that are empowering for both teachers and students. Teaching is a process that can be socially liberating, deeply connected to community movements, and ecologically just. Irwin (1996) argues that teachers are both technically (through curriculum, high-stakes testing, and supplies) and bureaucratically controlled (through time, organization of the institution of schooling, and pacing). We argue that the state operationalizes and mandates these controls in order to produce conformity in education that results in docile student bodies.

Teachers and researchers in the various fields of education can include anarchist theory not only as an analytical "lens" for critique, but also to garner ideas on how to effectively resist capitalism and its various manifestations. We feel invigorated

in the ways that anarchist theory pushes us towards new forms of non-authoritarian and non-hierarchical forms of social organization, and rethinking capitalism as a social and economic system. Whatever the context, anarchist theory forces us to recognize ways in which we can build a new society based on cooperation, the freeing of desire, and mutual aid. We model our vision, like other theorists in the field, on an anarchism that has, at its core, socialist and communist conceptions. Anarchist theory offers a revolutionary perspective that can promote genuine reconceptualizations of empowered learners and strong communities that work towards social and ecological justice. We urge teachers and researchers to take up anarchist theory in their own research and teaching which will expose us to new ideas and force us to engage with radical political struggles that will make our world a place where we can free our desires and live without the dead weight imposed on us from above by institutionalized domination, coercion, and control.

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# 16 Infrapolitics and the nomadic educational machine[1]

*Stevphen Shukaitis*

Stay just as far from me as me from you.
Make sure that you are sure of everything I do.
'Cause I'm not, not, not, not, not, not, not, not
Your academy.

<div align="right">(Mission of Burma, "Academy Fight Song")</div>

Anarchism has an ambivalent relationship to the academy[2]. This is, when one takes a second to reflect, not so surprising. How can one maintain any sense of ethical commitment to non-hierarchal, non-exploitative relationships in a space that operates against many of these political ideals? And how to do so without creating a space or knowledge that can be turned against these political goals themselves? As Marc Bousquet and Tiziana Terranova (2004) remind us, the institutional setting of the university is not a location outside the workings of the economy (i.e. it is *not* a bubble nor an ivory tower), but is very much a part of it, existing within the social factory and producing multifarious forms of value creation and the socialization of labor (the development of "human capital" and the ability to brandish forth credentials to obtain employment, practices of knowledge, infor - mation, and organization that are used throughout the entire social field) (Bousquet 2008; Harvie 2006). This is the case, broadly speaking, both for the classical university, which played an important role in the process of state building and the creation of national culture, and for the neoliberal university, which is more geared to the development of new forms of innovation and creativity. That is to say, of course, innovation and creativity understood primarily as those forms that can be translated into new intellectual property rights, patents, and commodifiable forms of knowledge and skills. Thus, there is no "golden age" of the university that one can refer to or attempt to go back to; it is not a "university in ruins" that can be rebuilt to return to its former glory precisely because it is a space that has always played a role in creating and maintaining questionable forms of power (Readings 1997).

   Anarchism, except for perhaps a few strains of individualist orientations, cannot find a home in such a space without betraying itself. But the realization that anarchism can never really be *of* the university does not preclude finding ways to

be in the university and to utilize its space, resources, skills, and knowledges as part of articulating and elaborating a larger political project. As Noam Chomsky (2003: 19) argues,

> It would be criminal to overlook the serious flaws and inadequacies in our institutions, or to fail to utilize the substantial degree of freedom that most of us enjoy, within the framework of these flawed institutions, to modify or even replace them by a better social order.

While the extent of this "substantial degree of freedom" might very be debatable within the current political climate of the university and more generally, the point nevertheless remains: that one can find ways to use the institutional space without being *of* the institution, without taking on the institution's goals as one's own. It is this dynamic of being *within* but not *of* an institutional space, to not institute itself as the hegemonic or representative form, that characterizes the workings of the nomadic educational machine.[3] It is an exodus that does not need to leave in order to find a line of flight.

This essay argues against the creation of a distinct area of anarchist studies within the academy in favor of an approach to education based on creating under-commons and enclaves within multiple disciplines and spaces. In other words, to disavow anarchism as *object* of anarchist studies in favor of a politics of knowledge constantly elaborated within a terrain of struggle. The impossibility of anarchism *qua* "Anarchist Studies" proper, far from closing the question of the politics of knowledge from an anarchist perspective, opens the matter precisely from the perspective that more often than not this occurs in the infrapolitical space of what James Scott (1990) and Robin D.G. Kelley (2002) call the "hidden transcript of resistance," the space of minor knowledges and experiences that do not seek to become a major or representative form, instead forming tools from discarded refuse and remains.

If there is one thing that can be gleaned from the history of autonomist political thought, it is that the social energies of insurgency and resistance to capitalism, when turned against themselves and re-incorporated into the workings of state and capital, determine the course of capitalist development. That is to say that capitalism develops not according to its own internal structural logic, but according to how it manages to deal with and utilize the social energies of its attempted negation. Similarly, if one heeds the recent analysis that many people, drawing from this tradition, have made of the university (www.edu-factory.org), one can see how the university has come to play an increasingly important role in the social field as a space for economic production and struggle.

This is why it would be absurd to assert a space in the university for the continued development of anarchist thought in an institutionalized way, for instance as a department of anarchist studies or similar form. What at first might seem as if it could be quite a victory for subversion could just as easily be turned into another profit-making mechanism for the university, creating the image of subversion while raking in tuition fees. There are numerous programs as well as

institutions (to remain nameless for the moment) who constantly turn their "radical image" into an improved bottom line while all the while operating on a solidly neoliberal basis, strangely enough without this seeming to sully the luster of their radical credentials. Meanwhile, institutions that have attempted to run their operations in line with their stated politics have endured a whole host of other pressures and dynamics leading to many difficulties including programs closing down.[4]

This makes the position of the subversive intellectual in the academy quite odd, precisely because the finding of space might be the very act of delivering capital its future. But in another sense, given capital's dehumanizing tendencies, no one is ever in a comfortable relationship to it. As argued by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney (2004: 102), the role of the subversive intellectual in (but not of) the university, is like a thief who steals what she can from it, using the space to form a "collective orientation to the knowledge object as future project." This would be to utilize the space provided by the university, not as a goal in itself, nor to assert one's right to such a space, but to accomplish something within this space. In other words, the fact that one has managed to create a space to discuss anarchist politics does not mean that one has accomplished anything just by that in terms of creating a more "radical" university. It is what one does with this space that is the core politics within the university, more so necessarily than the specific content. In this way at times an engaged but tepid liberal politics can very well yield material effects and outcomes that are more radical in their effect than a radical politics without means of its own realization. It is a politics based more on process and ethics of transformation rather than the claiming of territory. However, radical knowledge production does not form itself as a fixed object and space, but one that constantly moves and morphs across disciplines, frontiers, ideas, and spaces. It is a form of knowledge production that comes not from a perspective of separation but rather constant self-institution and questioning of the foundations that support it.

Rather than necessarily assert and affirm an identity or space, these forms of knowledge production develop in exodus, in the maroons and hidden alcoves of the university, in the constantly moving spaces that James Scott (1990) and Robin D.G. Kelley (2002) call the hidden transcript. This hidden social transcript encompasses not just speech but also an array of practices bound to the particular location – which is both mediated and created by those practices – and so is marked between such and the public transcript often through ongoing struggle and con- testation. Between the hidden and public transcripts exists a third realm of politics, "a politics of disguise and anonymity that takes place in public view but is designed to have a double meaning or to shield the identity of the actor" (Scott 1990: 19). Arguably, the overlooking of this space might in many ways suit the needs of the social actors who articulate their freedom dreams by constantly reinventing and reinterpreting their cultural practices as a part of this third realm of politics, of the infrapolitics of resistance that creates a space for dreams of transcendence and autonomy to exist in a seen (yet unseen) manner. Radical academics, when they find a space in the academy, can use their position to create

room and possibilities for organizers to use it for their ends, to orient their work towards the needs and desires of organizing, rather than fixing them as objects of study.

This is to think about the autonomous institution of the nomadic educational machine as a process of subjectivation, on constant becoming, which avoids fixed institutionalization: as the constant movement of constituent power through the undercommons, as one more instance of creating a transformation machine for the development of radical subjectivity exterior to capital's appropriation without needing necessarily to find a physical exteriority to capital. The undercommons exist as the forms of self-organization developed by the despised and discounted who no longer seek to develop a form through which their marginalization be can countered by a recognized form of being in public. In other words the under-commons are the spaces in which forms of self-organization exist that no longer seek the approval or recognition of their existence but more often than not get along much better without it (Harney 2008). This is not an institution in any sort of Habermasian sense with clearly defined speech acts and reasonable debate. The nomadic educational machine rather is a transformation machine; it is a process for structuring an exteriority of knowledge production to the dynamics of capitalist valorization through educational labor and production, an exteriority that is not necessarily physical but often temporal, intensive, and affective in its nature (Patton 2000).

This is the problem (or one of them) that confronts "anarchist studies." What might seem at fi rst a relatively straightforward phrase quickly becomes more complicated. What does anarchist studies mean and who will benefit from establishing this field of study? All too easily, anarchist studies become nothing more than the study *of* anarchism and anarchists by anarchists, weaving a strange web of self-referentiality and endless rehashing of the deeds and ideas of bearded nineteenth-century European males. This is perhaps a bit too harsh, but is in general an accurate observation. That of course is not to deny or denigrate the importance and value of movement histories and studies, as they often provide a wealth of insight and information. The problem is when seemingly all other forms of knowledge production that could be encompassed within the framework of anarchist studies become forgotten within the endless repetition of the same histories and ideas. By too easily slipping "anarchist studies" into the "study of anarchism," the *of* has constructed anarchism as a pre-given object that one stands outside as object of knowledge that can be examined, probed, and prodded, rather than as a common space of political elaboration and the development of new ideas and knowledge as a part of this politics. In other words what is lost is the sense of anarchist studies as the elaboration of ideas and knowledges useful to further developing anarchist politics, such as studying the workings of healthcare to financial markets, from the movement of emboli to the movement of the social, approached from a way that is deeply connected to questions posed by social movement and struggles.

In either case it is an approach to knowledge production geared toward the twin imperatives of creating blockages in circuits of oppressive forms of power as well

as prefiguring liberatory forms of sociality. There is also a tendency in this dynamic to reduce anarchism to its linguistic instantiation that then further reduces it to only a specific kind of politics.[5] In other words, we cannot reduce anarchism to the mere use of the word "anarchism," but rather might highlight and propose social relations based on cooperation, self-determination, and negating hierarchal roles. From this perspective, one can find a much richer and more global tradition of social and political thought and organization that while not raising a black flag in the air is very useful for expanding the scope of human possibilities in a liberatory direction. The conjunction of anarchism and anthropology has been quite useful in this regard (Graeber 2004). There is also much to learn from postcolonial thought, queer studies, black and Chicano studies, cultural studies, and feminism. Some of the most interesting anarchist thought to emerge within recent years has explored these conjunctions and connections with great success.[6]

The workings of the nomadic educational machine are closer to the operations of a diffuse cultural politics than what would be commonly recognized as an educational project. David Weir makes the intriguing argument that anarchism's great success as a form of cultural politics (particularly within the spheres of art, music, and in creative fields generally) is because of the inability to realize anarchism's political goals in other ways (Weir 1997). But there is more to it than an inability to realize political goals, particularly when the realization of these goals is almost always understood to be the creation of a hegemonic space or situation, such as replacing a particular territorial nation-state with a newly created anarchist non-state. Rather than seeing the success of anarchist cultural politics as connected to a failure to create hegemonic forms, one can see it rather as based on a  continued refusal of institutionalizing forms that contradict the nature of anarchist politics. It is seeing the educational dynamics that exist within the hidden configurations of knowledge production circulating in the undercommons, a process that is just as much about the articulation of ideas through the arts and culture. The nomadic educational machine is a fish that swims in the secret drift of history that connects medieval heresy to punk rock, from Surrealism to Tom Waits; and it is this submerged history from which insurgent movements draw theoretical and imaginal substance and inspiration from, to forge tools and weapons for resistance (Marcus 1989).

The nomadic educational machine exists as a diasporic process of knowledge creation within the undercommons. But more than existing within a diasporic configuration, the workings of the nomadic educational machine are necessary for the articulation of this space itself. That is to say that there are forms of knowledge and interaction that constitute a particular space and an approach to education such that it is not clear or perhaps even possible within such to clearly delineate where education and life are different. Paul Gilroy, in his description of the black Atlantic as a transnational, transversal space created by the movement of blacks across the Atlantic, suggests the idea of a partially hidden public sphere (Gilroy 2003). The black Atlantic, constituted by the movement of black people both as objects of slavery, colonialism, and oppressive forces as well as in motion seeking autonomy and freedom through real and imaginary border crossing, can be considered part

of this space. While the space described is certainly visible in the physical sense, it is nonetheless a space of history, politics, and social interaction that has often been overlooked as a site of cultural production and analysis.

There are a variety of reasons for the overlooking of spaces such as the black Atlantic as a site of cultural analysis and production. In addition to longstanding racism and conceptions of displaced people as having no history or culture (or at least not one that deserves the same level of analysis as others forms of culture or history) that preclude a serious consideration of such a space, are factors created by the relative inability of the social sciences (sociology in particular) to analyze social forms outside the nation-state. The social sciences, having evolved concomitantly with the rise of the modern rationalized nation-state, tacitly assume that social and cultural phenomena correspond to national and state boundaries, and are often read as if it were the case even when it is not so. The continued existence of ethnic absolutism and cultural nationalism also creates difficulties in analyzing forms of cultural production that violate these clearly defined political, racial, and cultural boundaries which are assumed to constitute natural pre-existing fixed and immutable categories.

The creativity of what the nomadic educational machine is the articulation, preservation, and reinterpretation of cultural and social forms as part of this partially hidden public sphere, as a part of the hidden transcript. The public transcript, or the self-representation of power, more often than not totally excludes and often denies the existence of the social forms developed in this partially hidden public sphere. But this exclusion from the gaze of power, in the blackness of the undercommons, is not necessarily something to be decried or banished, but could very well provide the basis upon which to build a radical cultural politics not instantly subsumed within the optic of the spectacle and the mechanisms of governance. Indeed, there is often a great effort put forth in what Roger Farr (building on Alice Becker-Ho's work on gypsy slang) describes as a strategy of concealment, one which builds affective and intense bonds and politics around the refuge of the opaque space, the indecipherable gesture (Becker-Ho 2000; Farr 2007). Jack Bratich has also done very interesting work on the panics that secrecy, or even just the appearance of secrecy, has caused within the left and more broadly. While some concern is valid around closed circles (perhaps to avoid the emergence of informal hierarchies, as Jo Freeman has famously argued), one cannot forget how much of the history of revolts and insurrections are founded upon conspiracies both open and not, with the ability to cloak such plans oftentimes quite important to their success or even mere survival (Bratich 2008).

It would be arguable that in a sense the overlooking of this space in many ways suits the needs of the social actors who articulate their freedom dreams. Constantly reinventing and reinterpreting their cultural practices as a part of this third realm of politics, the infrapolitics of resistance creates a space for dreams of trans - cendence and autonomy to exist in a seen yet unseen manner. This corresponds well with the two notions of politics that Gilroy poses: the politics of *fulfillment* ("the notion that a future society will be able to realize the social and political promise that present society has left unaccomplished. It creates a medium in which

demands for goals like non-racialized justice and rational organization of the productive processes can be expressed") and the politics of *transfiguration* (which "emphasizes the emergence of new desires, social relations, and modes of association . . . and resistance between that group and its erstwhile oppressors") (Gilroy 2003: 63). While he describes the politics of fulfillment as much more willing to play along with western rationality and the dynamics of the state political process (and thus to exist in full view), the politics of transfiguration has a  profoundly different character that makes such unlikely. The politics of transfiguration focuses on the sublime and the creation of new forms of social relations and realities. Thus while the politics of fulfillment can show its designs in full view (for the most part), the politics of transfiguration have a more subversive character, that which expresses itself in the partial concealment of double coded articulations and the infrapolitics of the partially hidden public sphere.

It is in this space that the arts figure so prominently. The formation of the space itself, as a site for interaction, can itself be considered a form of social sculpture or aesthetic activity. And in so far as it also creates channels for the development and articulation of knowledge through social interaction, also a form of education. From folk songs to tap dancing, theater, tales, and more recently movies, are all involved in creating what Gilroy (2003: 63) describes as "a new topography of loyalty and identity in which the structures and presuppositions of the nation-state have been left behind because they are seen to be outmoded." This is the space, as much as it isn't a space at all, where the freedom dreams that Kelley explores come to be and are retold, reinterpreted, and re-dreamt in a million new combinations. Although Kelley (2002) laments that in a world where getting paid and living ostentatiously seem to be held as the ends of the black freedom movement, this is the space where to build radically democratic public cultures, to acknowledge and foster the social force of creativity and imagination. In its transmutable, transversal form created and maintained by these articulations that enable there to be discussion about creating a radically democratic public culture even if the existing political context or situation prevents such conversations from happening openly.

The diasporic aesthetic, which characterizes the form of appearance of the nomadic educational machine (as well as its partial non-appearance), is the social function and creativity displayed by the articulations of those who through displacement and marginalization must partially hide or conceal sections of their expression, often times in plain view, so that they may continue to exist under marginalizing or oppressive conditions. It is the voice, to borrow from the ideas of the Zapatistas, which must hide itself in order to be seen. It is the expression of those who bow before the master during the day in order to pilfer the grain warehouse at night. It is the space created by, containing, and sustained by the articulations and dreams of those who dream out loud in semi-opaque manners. It is not the will be misunderstood, but rather a question of who wants to be understood by, and who wants to remain an incomprehensible glyph towards. As Nietzsche once observed, the only thing worse than being misunderstood is being *totally* understood, for that is indeed truly the end.

There is an odd parallel between social scientists that have difficulty under-standing and theorizing liminal and recombinant spaces as those in diasporas and the on-going failure of well intentioned, largely white progressive political forces to appreciated forms of resistance and subversion that occur within displaced communities in an on going manner. As traditionally sociologists have seemed stymied by non-state forms of social analysis, the left in general often fails to appreciate politics aside from marches, rallies, and other visible manifestations. But the result is similar: the failure to understand a large segment of social reality because it does not jive with existing conceptual and analytical frames of reference. And if there is anywhere that an actual anarchist educational project can find a home, it is here within these spaces and enclaves, rather than in the brightly lit halls of academia or in the company of polite conversation.

It is this task of the constant renewal of the grounds of politics, of finding a way to create a space for subversion, sabotage, and learning within social movement, that is the task of the nomadic educational machine. It is also the same process engaged in by people drawing from the history of militant inquiry and research within autonomist politics (Shukaitis and Graeber 2007). [7] This is a constantly renewing process, not a onetime thing but rather an orientation towards tracing out the development of the grounds on which struggles occur and constantly rethinking on those shifting grounds. It becomes the task of continuing in the tradition of nomadic thought, of embodying and working with philosophy as described by Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 109), which is to say in the creation of concepts through processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Calling forth "not the one who claims to be pure but rather an oppressed, bastard, lower, anarchical, nomadic, and irremediably minor race . . . it is this double becoming that constitutes the people to come and the new earth."

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# 17 Anarchism, education, and the road to peace

*Colman McCarthy*

One of the major draws on the US lecture circuit some one hundred years ago was Prince Peter Kropotkin. In October 1897, the revered "father" of modern anarchism, who was born to nobility in Moscow in 1842, addressed the National Geographic Society in Washington. In New York City he lectured to audiences of 2,000 people. In Boston, large crowds at Harvard and other sites heard him speak on the ideas found in his classic works, *Mutual Aid; Fields, Factories and Workshops; Law and Authority; The Spirit of Revolt,* and *The Conquest of Bread.*[1] Admission was 15 cents, sometimes a quarter, or else free so that (as Kropotkin desired) "ordinary workers" would be able to attend. Kropotkin came back to America for another tour in 1901. In Chicago, Jane Addams, the director of Hull House who would win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931, was his host. Emma Goldman (who believed that "organized violence" from the "top" creates "individual violence" at the "bottom") and Clarence Darrow praised him then, as would Lewis Mumford, Ashley Montague, and I.F. Stone years later.

The prince, a serene and kindly activist-philosopher and the antithesis of the wild-eyed bomb throwers who commonly come to mind when anarchism is mentioned in polite or impolite company, enjoyed packed houses when the military muscles of American interventionism were being flexed with great fervor. In 1896, Marines were dispatched to Corinto, Nicaragua under the guise of protecting US lives and property during a revolt. In 1898 Marines were stationed at Tientsin and Peking, China to ensure the safety of Americans caught in the conflict between the dowager empress and her son. The following year, Marines were sent to Bluefields, Nicaragua to keep their version of the peace. Then it was back to China, ordered there by the McKinley administration to protect American interests during the Boxer rebellion.

Political Washington couldn't fail to notice that Kropotkin was on the loose, going from one podium to another denouncing the favored form of governmental coercion, the military:

> Wars for the possession of the East, wars for the empire of the sea, wars to impose duties on imports and to dictate conditions to neighboring states, wars against those "blacks" who revolt! The roar of the cannon never ceases in the world, whole races are massacred, the states of Europe spend a third of

their budget on armaments; and we know how heavily these taxes fall on the
workers.

Unfortunately, we don't know, or choose not to know. If it were the opposite, the
lives and thoughts of nineteenth- and twentieth-century anarchists would be as
discussed and studied in schools as those of the politicians who raise the funds for
wars and the militarists who are paid to do the killing. After Kropotkin's second
lecture tour, with the crowds growing larger and the prince's message growing
bolder, Congress took action. It passed a law in 1903 forbidding anarchists to
enter the country. In a letter to Emma Goldman, Kropotkin described an addled
and anxious America that "throws its hypocritical liberties overboard, tears them
to pieces – as soon as people use those liberties for fighting that cursed society."

In the courses on pacifism and nonviolence that I've been teaching in law
school, university, and high school classes since 1982, students get full exposure
to Kropotkin. In the first minutes of the semester, I cite the Russian's counsel
to students: "Think about the kind of world you want to live and work in. What
do you need to build that world? Demand that your teachers teach you that."
Hidebound as they are to take required three-credit courses that current curricula
impose on students, and a bit unsteady on exactly how to pursue the art of
demanding, only a few are up to acting on Kropotkin's call. For me, it's a victory
if students make demands on themselves and dive into Kropotkin on their own,
inching a bit closer to a theoretical understanding of anarchy.

To get their minds in motion, I ask students what word they first think of when
anarchy is mentioned. "Chaos," they answer, "anarchy is chaos." I am consistently
surprised by their responses linking anarchy with chaos. However, when I con-
ceptualize chaos, these types of questions come to mind: What about the 40-odd
wars or conflicts currently raging on the world's known and unknown battlefields?
Isn't it chaotic that between 35,000 and 40,000 people die every day of hunger or
preventable diseases? Doesn't economic chaos prevail when large numbers of the
world's poor earn less than $1 dollar a day? Isn't environmental chaos looming as
the climate warms? Aren't America's prisons, which house mentally ill or drug
addicted inmates who need to be treated more than stashed, scenes of chaos? All
of these questions address the real chaos that is occurring in the world today.
Anarchists aren't causing all that, but rather (it might be said) are trying to prevent
it. Instead, it falls on those lawmaking legislatures instructing the citizens, raised
to be faithful law-abiders, on what is the public good: Laws. Laws. Laws. They
make us more "civilized," say our lawmaking betters. The problem is, laws are
made by people and people are often wrong, so why place your faith in wrong-
headedness?

The root word of anarchy is *arch*, Greek for rule. A half-dozen archs are in play.
Monarchy: the royals rule. Patriarchy: the fathers rule. Oligarchy: the rich few rule.
Gynarchy: women rule. Stretching it a bit, there is Noah's-archy: the animals rule.
(Pardon the pun. No, wait. Don't pardon it. A certain strain of anarchists, I fear,
tends to brood, so a laugh now and again can be useful.) And then we arrive at
anarchy, where no one rules. Fright and fear creep into students' minds, especially

those who suspect that anarchists are high-energy people with chronic wild streaks. With no rules, no laws, and no governments, what will happen? The question is speculative, but instead of fantasizing about pending calamities that might happen, think about the calamities that are happening now: war, poverty, and the degradations of violence sanctioned by political power and laws. Indeed, as Kropotkin himself once warned:

> We are so perverted by an education which from infancy seeks to kill in us the spirit of revolt, and to develop that of submission to authority; we are so perverted by this existence under the ferrule of a law, which regulates every event in life – our birth, our education, our development, our love, our friendship – that, if this state of things continues, we shall lose all initiative, all habit of thinking for ourselves. Our society seems no longer able to understand that it is possible to exist otherwise than under the reign of law, elaborated by a representative government and administered by a handful of rulers. And even when it has gone so far as to emancipate itself from the thralldom, its first care has been to reconstitute it immediately.

Extending these points, on November 17, 1921, Mohandas Gandhi wrote in his journal:

> Political power means the capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbor. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no state.

The solution to the dilemma, at least in the anarchism to which I subscribe, is to remember that either we legislate to fear or educate to goodness. Law abiding citizens are fear abiding citizens, who fear being caught when a law is broken or disobeyed. Fined. Shamed. Punished. When a child is educated to goodness, beginning in a family where the adults have a talent or two in solving their conflicts without physical or emotional violence, he or she is exposed to lessons of kindness, cooperation, and empathy that leads to what might be called "the good life."

Anarchists, especially when they dress in all-black and mass-migrate to protests at the World Bank or International Monetary Fund conclaves, don't do much to persuade the public to sign on when they shout epithets at the hapless bureaucrats and papercrats crawling into work. The verbal violence serves mostly to reinforce the perception that anarchists are more generally violent, conjuring the age-old image of the bomb-thrower. It's true enough that anarchists have thrown bombs in isolated demonstrations, although we know that the greater threat are the bomb-droppers (beginning with the two atomic bombs dropped on the Japanese people, and the 35 more tested in the Marshall Islands during the late 1940s and early

1950s – not to mention US bombings in the last 60 years of China, Korea, Guatemala, Indonesia, Cuba, Congo, Peru, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Grenada, Libya, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, and Yemen, to name a few, constituting what Martin Luther King, Jr. once called "the world's greatest purveyor of violence"). To me, and to counter the violence of the state, anarchism needs to be twinned with pacifism. Violent anarchism is self-defeating, and bangs its head into the truth once stated by Hannah Arendt in her essential work *On Violence*: "Violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world."

And yet, if any creed is less understood than anarchism, it is pacifism. The uneducated equate it with passivity. The really uneducated pair it with appease-ment. Among the latter is the late Michael Kelly, whose column "Pacifist Claptrap" ran on the *Washington Post* op-ed page on September 26, 2001:

> Organized terrorist groups have attacked Americans. These groups wish the Americans not to fight. The American pacifists wish the Americans not to fight. If the Americans do not fi ght, the terrorists will attack America again . . . The American pacifists, therefore are on the side of future mass murders of Americans. They are objectively pro-terrorist.

A week later he was back with more, in a column arguing that pacifi sts are liars, frauds, and hypocrites whose position is "evil." Kelly, whose shrillness matched his self-importance, was regrettably killed in Iraq in April 2003, reporting on a US invasion that he avidly and slavishly promoted.

The pacifist position on countering terrorism was more astutely articulated by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in a lecture on February 24, 2002, at St. Paul's Cathedral in Boston: "The war against terrorism will not be won as long as there are people desperate with disease and living in poverty and squalor. Sharing our prosperity is the best weapon against terrorism." Instead of sharing its wealth, however, the United States' government hoards it. Among the top 25 industrial nations, it ranks 24th in the percentage of its GNP devoted to foreign aid.

Furthermore, pacifists are routinely told that nonviolent conflict resolution is a noble theory, but asked where has it worked? Had questioners paid only slight attention these past years, the answer would be obvious: in plenty of places, as the following list of recent examples nicely illustrates.

- On February 26, 1986, a frightened Ferdinand Marcos, once a ruthless dictator and a US-supported thug hailed by Jimmy Carter as a champion of human rights, fled from the Philippines to exile in Hawaii. As staged by nuns, students, and workers who were trained by Gene Sharp of the Einstein Institute in Boston, a three-year nonviolent revolt brought Marcos down.
- On October 5, 1988, Chile's despot and another US favorite, General Augusto Pinochet, was driven from office after five years of strikes, boycotts and other forms of nonviolent resistance. A Chilean organizer who led the demand for free elections said: "We didn't protest with arms. That gave us more power."

- On August 24, 1989, in Poland, the Soviet Union puppet regime of General Wojciech Jaruzelski fell. On that day it peacefully ceded power to a coalition government created by the Solidarity labor union that, for a decade, used nonviolent strategies to overthrow the communist dictator. Few resisters were killed in the nine-year struggle. The example of Poland's nonviolence spread, with the Soviet Union's collapse soon coming. It was the daring deeds of Lech Walesa, Nobel Peace Prize winner, and the nonviolent Poles on the barricades with him that were instrumental in bringing about this change.

- On May 10, 1994, former political prisoner Nelson Mandela became the president of South Africa. It was not armed combat that ended white supremacy. It was the moral force of organized nonviolent resistance that made it impossible for the racist government to control the justice-demanding population.

- On April 1, 2001, in Yugoslavia, Serbian police arrested Slobodan Milosevic for his crimes while in office. In the two years that a student-led protest rallied citizens to defy the dictator, not one resister was killed by the government. The tyrant died during his trial in The Hague.

- On November 23, 2003 the bloodless "revolution of the roses" toppled Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze. Unlike the civil war that marked the power struggles in the 1990s, no deaths or injuries occurred when tens of thousands of Georgians took to the streets of Tblisi in the final surge to oust the government.

Twenty-five years ago who would have thought that any of these examples would be possible? Yet they happened. Ruthless regimes, backed by torture chambers and death squads, were driven from power by citizens who had no guns, tanks, bombs, or armies. They had an arsenal far superior to weapons of steel: weapons of the spirit. These were on display in the early 1940s when Hitler's Nazi army invaded Denmark. Led by a defiant King Christian X, the Danes organized strikes, boycotts, and work stoppages, and either hid Jews in their homes or helped them flee to Sweden or Norway. Of this resistance, an historian quoted in the landmark 2000 film *A Force More Powerful* observed that

> Denmark had not won the war but neither had it been defeated or destroyed. Most Danes had not been brutalized, by the Germans or each other. Non - violent resistance saved the country and contributed more to the Allied victory than Danish arms ever could have done.

Only one member of Congress voted no against US entry into the Second World War: Jeannette Rankin, a pacifist from Montana who came to the House of Representatives in 1916, four years before the 19th amendment gave women the vote. "You can no more win a war than win an earthquake," she famously said before casting her vote. The public reaction reached so strong a virulence that Rankin had to be given 24-hour police protection. One of her few allies that year was Helen Keller, the deaf and sightless Socialist who spoke in Carnegie Hall in New York:

Strike against war, for without you no battles can be fought. Strike against manufacturing shrapnel and gas bombs and all other tools of murder. Strike against preparedness that means death and misery to millions of human beings. Be not dumb obedient slaves in an army of destruction. Be heroes in an army of construction.

Students leaning toward anarchism and pacifism often ask how the principles of both can be personalized. I suggest that one start by examining where you spend your money. Deny it to any company that despoils the earth. Deny it to any seller of death, whether Lockheed Martin (the country's largest weapons maker) or to sub-contractors scattered in small towns in all regions of the land. Deny it to the establishment media that asks few meaningful questions and questions few meaningless answers. In short, "live simply so others may simply live," which is perhaps the purest form of anarchy.

In my own life, I've tried to do it by means of a cruelty-free vegan diet, consuming no alcohol, caffeine, or nicotine, and getting around Washington mostly by a trusty Raleigh three-speed bicycle. Is any machine more philosophically suited to anarchism than a bicycle? Is there an easier way to practice anarchism than joyriding on two wheels? Being street smart, which means being totally considerate of other travelers and pedaling safely, I think of all the useless laws the anarchist-cyclist can break: riding through red lights, stop signs, one way signs – all the while getting a feel for outdoor life and its weathers, those balms cut off by windshields.

Speaking experientially – meaning 35 years and more than 70,000 miles of motion by leg-power – I've become an autophobe. In the clog of traffic, when car owners are penned like cattle on a factory farm and torture themselves in massive tie-ups, I remember some lines by Daniel Behrman in his minor 1973 classic from *Harper's Magazine*, "The Man Who Loved Bicycles":

The bicycle is a vehicle for revolution. It can destroy the tyranny of the automobile as effectively as the printing press brought down despots of flesh and blood. The revolution will be spontaneous, the sum total of individual revolts like my own. It may already have begun.

William Saroyan likewise wrote in his introduction to 1981's edited volume *The Noiseless Tenor*, that "the bicycle is the noblest invention of [hu]mankind." Amen to that, but only if you add that anarchism is a close second.

# Section Four

# Praxis

Praxis is a term well known to radicals as constituting a blend between theory and practice. This concept is important to radicals of all stripes, and particularly anarchists, since theory without action often appears self-indulgent and action without theory can be reactionary. For example, Marx (Marx and Engels 1976: 5) problematizes abstract theory devoid of practice brilliantly in *Theses on Feuerbach*, observing that the "philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it." Paulo Freire brought the abstract term to the streets in his historical book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire (2000: 27) states that the oppressed, through using theory to guide practice – and practice to refine theory – will gain their liberation: "They will not gain this liberation by chance but through the praxis of their quest for it, through their recognition of the necessity to fight for it." It is here in this section that we will see the complex and often messy entanglement of theory clashing with action and action clashing with theory.

For anarchist academics, this serves as a staging ground for critical self-reflection. As workers in rigid and hierarchical institutions; as teachers in classrooms that are oftentimes inherently undemocratic; and as scholars producing knowledge in fields that largely have ignored anarchist perspectives, the pieces contained in this section highlight the tensions that specifically are pervasive in such contexts, while others illuminate these tensions by focusing on praxis as it occurs in various social movement formulations.

For example, working-class sociologist and musician Deric Shannon writes about striving to empower students conceptually while cautioning against the ossification and domestication that has accompanied the entrance of other (radical) theoretical perspectives into academia. Animal rights activist and scholar Steve Best argues that the liberation of all life must be fundamental to a consistent anarchist praxis. Lisa Kemmerer, naturalist and philosopher of religion, notes the deep connections between anarchism and faith. Alternative globalizationist Jeff Juris highlights the cultural logic of networking and its link to anarchist praxis. Feminist mother and anti-war activist Caroline Kaltefleiter writes on the "Riot Grrrl" movement, critically assessing the history and present of a movement in which she herself is a participant. And finally, pattrice jones argues for a comprehensive "natural anarchism," outlining the ways in which anarchists can learn from

those elements of our world that are typically ignored. In the end, true to the origins of the concept of praxis, these scholar-activists take seriously the notion that theory ought to be deployed, reflecting the essential "action" aspects of anarchism.

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# 18  As beautiful as a brick through a bank window

## Anarchism, the academy, and resisting domestication[1]

*Deric Shannon*

Anarcha-feminist Peggy Kornegger (1996: 156) wrote that in her formal education in American public schools, "as a woman I was relegated to a vicarious existence. As an anarchist I had no existence at all." As a fellow anarchist, her words echo my own experience from high school through my graduate education. With few and rare exceptions, such as my graduate feminist theory classes, the typical experience exposed me to academic work hostile to anarchism and to working-class perspectives in general. Most ironic in my case is that I returned to higher education after a seven-year hiatus with the explicit purpose of learning more about radical politics – something that has always been important to me as a working-class youth from Indiana who has experienced poverty and unemploy - ment. This chapter will briefly outline my experience (and transformation) as a working-class person in the academy and in the process developing a general critique of academia.

While anarchism was notably absent in my formal education, I am not suggesting that I didn't learn anything useful in the Academy. For instance, it was in the university that I first learned about the Frankfurt School and critical theory. It was in a feminist theory class that I first realized how knowledge is constructed by, for, and in the interests of dominant groups – sometimes in very subtle ways. I  learned that power was not just located in structures like "the state" and "capitalism" and that culture was not of secondary importance as classical Marxists and many classical and (unfortunately) contemporary anarchists claim. While I now know first-hand that the Academy can be a site for learning radical politics, it soon became clear that it was also a place mostly divorced from practice, leaving educated people with a lot of knowledge but little potential for taking action.

Nevertheless, like many contemporary anarchists, my entrée into radical politics was in the form of zines, pamphlets, books from AK Press and other radical publishers, underground music (especially politicized punk rock), and events held at infoshops. Unfortunately, I didn't have academic colleagues to discuss theory and practice with, or professors that introduced these ideas in classes. Rather, I talked about anarchism with fellow activists at Anti-Racist Action meetings, at Food Not Bombs gatherings, and at my workplaces with pasta cooks, dishwashers, and the folks doing preparatory work for the rest of the kitchen staff. Anarchist

theory was, then, something that bled into my radical practice, not from the classroom but from the workplace. It eventually informed how I would read academic theory, bleeding into my activist practice, forming that nexus that we call praxis.

Now that I have had the opportunity to teach courses on social theory, revolutionary social movements, and various forms of structured inequalities, I have also had a chance to teach students about anarchism. It is a joy to see students go away from a class with the predictable misunderstandings cleared up. It has been fulfilling to see students radicalized in the classroom. It has both humbled me and made me happy when students have challenged my own beliefs and, in many cases, helped shape them.

These experiences, however, have not come to me without some ambivalence. Feminist scholar Dorothy Smith (as excerpted in Calhoun *et al.* 2007: 316), for example, has written about how the construction of knowledge is yet another piece of the relations of ruling in our society:

> The governing of our kind of society is done in abstract concepts and symbols, and sociology helps create them by transposing the actualities of people's lives and experience into the conceptual currency with which they can be governed. . . . The relevancies of sociology are organized in terms of a perspective on the world, a view from the top that takes for granted the pragmatic procedures of governing as those that frame and identify its subject matter.

## Scholarship and privilege

I agree that scholars are complicit in maintaining ruling relations, holding a privileged space of knowledge production. This raises an interesting dilemma: how do we exist simultaneously as radicals and academics? It should be no surprise that non-academic radicals question whether there can be such a thing as "anarchy in the Academy," as the title of this collection implies. When one looks at what has happened to other liberatory perspectives once they have been institutionalized in academic work, the possibilities for a future anarchist scholarship look bleak. For instance, Patricia Hill Collins (2006) writes about how feminism has increasingly become encountered by students in women's studies classrooms, divorced from political practice, written in a privileged language for those privi-leged enough to enter the university. Likewise, Marxist scholars such as Marcuse noted a tendency towards careerism in students as Marxism became firmly entrenched in the Academy (Bourne 1979).

As such, the question of whether or not we can use the Academy as a space for libertarian transformation may not be fully answerable. Indeed the very idea itself is problematic. However, for those of us "anarchist scholars" who do work in academia, it is necessary to make attempts at resisting this institutionalization – and domestication – of the ideals that separate us from other academics: namely, our anarchism. The following, then, is a list of suggestions to aid in resisting the careerism, institutionalization, and domestication that other liberatory perspectives have found part and parcel of their entrance into the Academy. This is a beginning

of a conversation among anarchist scholars and is not intended as a set of moral proscriptions or the last word on "what is to be done" in our peculiar situation – those of us employed by the state who wish to see it dismantled, or who work in privileged institutions while wanting to bring an end to these kinds of hierarchical arrangements. It is my hope that this conversation continues in other venues as we collectively attempt the "impossible."

### Meet me in the streets! Destroy the right wing!

This suggestion shouldn't be a surprise to any radical scholar. Too often academics sit comfortably behind their chairs and theorize with no political practice. This is part of why we hear so little about anarchism from radical scholars. We don't require an academic study to tell us that interest in anarchism is rising. Nor do we require a paper published in a top-tiered journal (as identified by the Academy itself!) for us to know that anarchism is beginning to eclipse other liberatory perspectives as practiced in the streets. Of course academics, as in so many other cases, are often the last to know. That is partially why academics do not discuss anarchism or anarchist ideas in our classrooms – even those taught by "radicals" – since academics, too often, aren't in the streets.

And "in the streets" is where anarchist political practice is growing. Anarchist scholars such as Ferrell (2001), Day (2005), Best and Nocella (2006), and Graeber (2008) have noted anarchist practice in a variety of social movement contexts over several years. Decentralized networks such as Food Not Bombs, IndyMedia, Reclaim the Streets, and Critical Mass have spread across the United States and beyond. Likewise, anarchists took organizational and confrontational roles in the Battle of Seattle and continue to do so at G8 Summits, political meetings for "free trade" zones, and the gatherings of our banking, corporate, and political masters such as the Republican and Democratic National Conventions. While there are many anarchist scholars in the streets documenting and participating in these events (such as the individuals that appear in this volume), we, as anarchist scholars, cannot repeat the same mistakes made by scholars in other liberatory perspectives. We must *remain* in the streets.

### Talk openly and reflectively about self-interest

As academics writing about anarchism, there is a degree of occupational self-interest involved in publishing our work – especially those of us who work at research-intensive institutions. It does no good to ignore the fact that careers are sometimes built out of radical politics in general and anarchism in particular. This is not to suggest that we should resign our jobs (which, after all, do allow us to teach anarchist ideas to a new generation). It is, however, important that we acknowledge our career interests openly and honestly. Again, careerism has infected a number of other liberatory perspectives. If we are to avoid that, it requires open, honest, and more importantly, reflective conversations about self-interest and our work.

### Talk with students about institutional constraints

Teaching about democratic and anti-authoritarian perspectives in the university classroom sometimes feels like a schizophrenic project, mainly because the university classroom is inherently hierarchical. It is almost impossible to equalize the environment and its power relations. Yet, we try to create spaces for democracy and anti-authoritarianism within the confines of what often feels like a mental jail. I will not list the numerous ways that teachers suck the creativity, critical thought, and assertiveness from students or otherwise generally beat them with ideological sticks. It is not necessary, however, to ignore those constraints or not discuss them with students. It also gives us a chance to put forward our own ideas about what education might look like in a different kind of world divorced from these sorts of institutional arrangements. And it invites students to challenge the often unquestioned authoritarian classroom and consider, by extension beyond the classroom, other similar institutional and authoritarian arrangements. Critical thinking is empowering!

### Resist ideological rigidity

All too often, theoretical perspectives become ossified by their own outmoded, doctrinaire, and dogmatic discourses. When this happens, they fail to live and grow. This does not have to be true for anarchism, and indeed has not been true outside the halls of the Academy. Classical anarchism gave us tools to conceive of an egalitarian economic order without the need for state directives. Anarchism, however, is not bound by the economic reductionism of Marxism, and we have moved well beyond the days when "hierarchy" simply meant "the state and capitalism" while relegating structured inequalities and institutionalized coercion such as patriarchy, "white" supremacy, hetero-normativity, and anthropocentrism to secondary importance or ignoring them altogether.

   We can and must build an anarchism of difference that opposes all relations of domination, carefully not privileging one form of oppression over another (how exactly does one measure those things against each other anyway?). We are actively working for a reconfiguring of society that is unprecedented, unpredictable, and perhaps most important, incredibly complex. Those dogmatic doctrinaires that denounce others for breaking with theoretical orthodoxy guarantee that past mistakes will be repeated and anarchism will become defanged and rendered harmless. Most scholars have met those in the Academy (and outside!) that cannot look at the world without ideological blinders. Anarchist scholars should avoid this if we are to chart our own course rather than follow in the wake of (an almost completely careerist) academic Marxism.

### Write, publish, and discuss outside of the academy

Luckily for us academics, there are spaces to publish, write, and talk with other radicals outside the academy that do not require our work to be boring, repetitive,

and written in a language that is barely decipherable to anyone without a graduate degree. We should use those places, not only for our own benefit, but for the benefit of other radicals who can get something from reading, discussing, and critiquing the work we do, as well as the new ideas and salient criticisms *we* can get from those venues. If anarchism in the Academy is to resist domestication, anarchist scholars must not remain insulated from the active anarchist milieu outside of the confines of academia. Likewise, we must bring anarchism into the classroom and share it with students – and they with us.

### Do not pull punches

Too often radicals use hegemonic normative discourses and the passive voice to describe what's happening in the world. For instance, there is no reason to say that, "The United States puts more criminals in jails than any other industrialized country," rather than simply saying, "The United States cages more people than any other industrialized country." Likewise, there is no need to talk about "violence against women" when we are really talking about "men's violence against women." This kind of list could go on and on. A liberatory and consistent anarchism would not pull discursive punches to avoid alienating students. Rather, we should be describing social reality from our perspective – after all, our students have agency and know that we are choosing our words. And all of us, unfortunately, are intimately familiar with the discourses and frames employed in the service of hegemonic ruling practices. We should be providing an alternative to that.

## In sum

When I was living in Muncie, Indiana, I got a pamphlet from the Secret Sailor infoshop in Bloomington. While I lost the pamphlet long ago, I still remember the ideas of one Situationist-inspired essay on property destruction. The author suggested that when we destroy property, like tossing a brick through the window of a bank, we demonstrate to people that Empire is not invincible. When we break the doldrums of our routine existence, especially when it is spent in the fantasy world of capitalist economics and state authority, we create spaces for people to recognize the complete spectacle that we (allow ourselves to) live in. Doing this, we create beauty and open the possibilities of resistance.

   I cannot say that I agree completely with this essay's analysis. Nevertheless, I am sure we would both agree that a brick through a window of the institutions that enslave us can be a beautiful thing. While I remain skeptical that anarchism can exist in academia without co-optation and institutionalization, I do keep some hope in the workings of the classroom. There we have the opportunity to create the radical beauty described in the zine article. The classroom ironically gives us the ability to demonstrate just how ridiculous the institution of higher learning can be! We can try to help students recognize how our everyday existence has become such a routinized, bland, boring, and often violent spectacle. We can provide them

with the conceptual bricks to throw through the institutional windows of taken-for-granted oppressions. And we can show them that there are possibilities for doing things another way, that we don't have to live like this if we choose not to do so. But we also need to be on the watch so that anarchism does not suffer the same fate that other liberatory perspectives have in the Academy. It is my hope that this essay will be a beginning step in a discussion about these tensions and what might be possible in the future.

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# 19  Rethinking revolution

## Total liberation, alliance politics, and a prolegomena to resistance movements in the twenty-first century

*Steven Best*

It seems lost on most of the global anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist Left that there is a new liberation movement on the planet – animal liberation – that is of immense ethical, environmental, social, economic, and political significance.[1] But because animal liberation challenges the anthropocentric, speciesist, and humanist dogmas that are deeply entrenched in socialist and anarchist thinking and traditions, Leftists are more likely to mock than engage with it.[2]

Since the 1970s, the animal liberation movement has been one of the most dynamic and important political forces on the planet. Where "new social move‑ments" such as Black Liberation, Native American, feminism, Chicano/a, and various forms of Green and identity politics have laid dormant or become coopted, the animal liberation movement has kept radical resistance alive and has steadily grown in numbers and strength.

Unlike welfare approaches that lobby for the amelioration of animal suffering, the animal rights and liberation movements demand the total abolition of all forms of animal exploitation. Seeking empty cages not bigger cages, urging the most radical form of egalitarianism rooted in the common needs and preferences of all sentient life forms, animal liberation is the major anti-slavery and abolitionist movement of the present day, one with strong parallels to its nineteenth-century predecessor that successfully ended the bondage of African Americans in the United States. As one major expression of a complex and diverse global animal liberation movement, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) has cost exploitation industries hundreds of millions of dollars in property damage and has decommissioned numerous animal exploiters through raids and sabotage, as well as liberating countless numbers of animal slaves.[3]

Operating on a global level – from the UK, US, Germany, France, Norway, Russia, and Croatia to Taiwan, Mexico, and South Africa – animal liberationists attack not only the growth and consumer-oriented ideologies of capitalist states, but the property system itself with hammers, boltcutters, and Molotov cocktails. Fully aware of the totalitarian realities of the corporate-state complex, the animal liberation movement breaks with the fictions of representative democracy to undertake illegal direct action, sabotage, and break-ins for animals held captive in

fur farms, factory farms, experimental laboratories, and other gruesome hell holes where *scores of billions* of nonhuman sentient beings die each year. Many in the animal liberation movement, as anarchists or Leftists of some kind, support human and Earth liberation struggles and articulate a systemic theoretical and political vision of total liberation that escapes "single issue" politics – such as dominates the approach of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), and many humanist struggles themselves if conducted apart from a multiperspectival theory of power and alliance politics.

Since the fates of all species on this planet are intricately interrelated, the exploitation of animals cannot but have a major impact on the human world itself. Human, animal, and Earth liberation are interrelated projects that must be fought for as one. This essay asserts the need for more expansive visions and politics on both sides of the human/animal liberation equation, as it calls for including Earth liberation into the political equation and initiating new forms of dialogue, learning, and strategic alliances on all sides. Each movement has much to learn from the other, yet all assert their dogmatic distance. In addition to gaining new insights into the dynamics of hierarchy, domination, and environmental destruction from animal rights/liberation perspectives, Leftists should grasp the gross inconsistency of advocating values such as peace, non-violence, compassion, justice, democracy, and equality while exploiting animals in their everyday lives, promoting speciesist ideologies, and ignoring the ongoing holocaust against other species that is a prime driver of planetary omnicide and biological meltdown.

Thus, I urge the importance of rethinking human and animal liberation move - ments (my focus here) in light of each other. The domination of humans, animals, and the Earth stem from the same violent mindsets, instrumentalist attitudes toward nature and all life, and a pathological will to transform difference into hier - archy. These complexities can only be understood and transformed by a *multi- perspectival theory* and an *alliance politics* broader and deeper than anything yet created, evolving as a struggle for *total liberation*. While I renounce reformist, single-issue, and mainstream or conservative politics, I also emphasize that the Left – from Kropotkin and Marx to Bookchin and beyond – has been utterly incapable of overcoming the speciesism and antiquated views of animals and nature embedded in the radical secular traditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

## Animal liberation and the left

*Speciesism* is the belief that nonhuman animals exist to serve the needs of the human species, that animals are in various senses inferior to human beings, and therefore that one can favor human over nonhuman interests according to species status alone. Like racism or sexism, speciesism creates a false dualism between one group and another in order to arrange the differences hierarchically and justify the domination of the "superior" over the "inferior." Just as in the last two cen - turies Western society has discerned that it is prejudiced, illogical, and unaccept- able for whites to devalue people of color and for men to diminish women, so it is

beginning to learn how utterly arbitrary and irrational it is for human animals to position themselves over nonhuman animals because of species differences. Among animals who are all sentient subjects of a life, these differences – humanity's false and arrogant claim to be the sole bearer of reason and language – are no more ethically relevant than differences of gender or skin color, yet in the unevolved psychology of the human primate they have decisive bearing. The theory of speciesism informs the practice, manifesting in unspeakably cruel forms of domination, violence, and killing.

The prejudicial and discriminatory attitude of speciesism is as much a part of the Left as the general population and its most regressive elements, a glaring moral failing which calls into question the Left's characterization of their positions and politics as "radical," "oppositional," or "progressive." While condemning hierarchical domination and professing rights for all, the Left fails to take into account the weighty needs and interests of billions of oppressed animals. Although priding themselves on holistic and systemic critiques of global capitalism, Leftists fail to grasp the profound interconnections among human, animal, and Earth liberation struggles and the need to fight for all as one struggle against domination, exploitation, and hierarchy. If Marxism, socialism, anarchism, and other Left traditions have proudly grounded their theories in science, social radicals need to realize that science – specifically, the discipline of "cognitive ethology" which studies the complexity of animal emotions, thought, and communications – has completely eclipsed their fallacious, regressive, speciesist concepts of nonhuman animals as machines or instinct-driven robots devoid of complex forms of consciousness and social life.[4]

From the perspective of ecology and animal rights, Marxists and other social "radicals" have been extremely reactionary forces. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels lumped animal welfarists into the same petite-bourgeois or reactionary category with charity organizers, temperance fanatics, and naive reformists, failing to see that the animal welfare movement in the US, for instance, was a key politicizing cause for women whose struggle to reduce cruelty to animals was inseparable from their struggle against male violence and the exploitation of children. Similarly, in his work, *On the History of Early Christianity*, Engels belittled vegetarians and anti-vivisectionists with no understanding of the importance of these issues for reducing human cruelty and moral progress.

Far more influential, no doubt, was the crude materialist theory of nonhuman consciousness, whereby Marx attributed free will and thought process only to evolved human life. In works such as the *1844 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, Marx advanced a naturalistic theory of human life radical for the time, but like the dominant Western tradition he posited a sharp dualism between human and nonhuman animals, arguing that only human beings have consciousness, communicative abilities, and a complex social world. Denying to animals the emotional, social, and psychological complexity of their actual lives, Marx argued that whereas animals have an immediate and merely instinctual relation to productive activity, human labor is mediated by free will and intelligence. In Marx's humanist metanarrative that links social progress to the domination of

nature, animals exist as part of the natural world for us to "humanize," as humanity evolves in and through its technological transformation and control of nature.

Benighted, exploitative, and supremacist views of animals run from one school of Leftism to another. One finds a glaring example of Dark Age thinking and speciesism in a twentieth-century anarchist theorist, Murray Bookchin, noted for his pioneering effort to unite ecology and anarchism into a new viewpoint of "eco-anarchism" or "social ecology" that insists an ecological world is impossible without radical democracy and social revolution. Since his first ecological writings in the early 1950s, Bookchin condemned the industrialization of agriculture, such as led to the horrors of intensive confinement of animals in systems of factory farming, and advanced a more traditional and ecologically sound form of farming that was organic and small-scale. He referred to animals as "sources of food" and advocated something like what today is called "humane agriculture," and thus never challenged the speciesist assumption that animals are mere resources for human use. Bookchin, like the Left in general, never advanced beyond the welfare view that we have every right to use animals for our purposes, so long as we do not cause them unnecessary suffering and that we kill them "humanely." Thus, Bookchin, like the Left as a whole, ultimately espouses the same welfarist views that permit and sanctify some of the most obscene forms of violence against animals within current capitalist social relations, speaking in the same language of "humane treatment" of animal slaves used by vivisectors, managers of factory farms and slaughterhouse operators, fur farmers, and bosses of rodeos and circuses.

Oblivious to scientific studies that document reason, language, technology, culture, and art among various animal species, Bookchin reproduced the Cartesian-Marxist mechanistic view of animals as dumb creatures devoid of reason, language, and culture. In Bookchin's terms, animals therefore belong to "first nature," relegated there along with rocks, trees, and other insensate objects, and reserved the self-conscious and effervescently creative world of "second nature" for humans, as they alone make the ascent from instinct and mere sensation to self-consciousness, language, and reasoning. Despite his evolutionary and naturalist metanarrative of the development of life and "subjectivity" along increasingly complex lines that culminated in the human brain and society, Bookchin nevertheless erects a Berlin Wall between nonhuman and human animals and fails to see – as Darwin pointed out in the 1870s – that our alleged differences with animals turn out to be differences in degree, not kind. Following traditional philosophical reasoning, he reserves the term rights for humans, not animals, as only humans, he argues, live in moral communities and make the kind of social contracts that makes such talk meaningful. But this is an arbitrary rejection of the concept of animal rights which fails to see that the fundamental purpose of rights is to protect interests, and animals have important interests to protect – specifically, from the murderous and rapacious hands of human beings.

Like the Left in general, Bookchin and social ecologists fail to theorize the impact of animal exploitation on the environment and human society and psychology. The environmental question is particularly important for social ecology, and

so it is curious that it has by and large failed to mediate analysis of the ecological crisis with the exploitation of animals in global agribusiness, a major failing as animal-based agriculture is the primary cause of global warming, the main source of water pollution, a key cause of rainforest destruction and species extinction, *and* as it monopolizes land, water, and food resources for feed, not food, and for a product that eventually becomes "food" which promotes an array of diseases and a medical health care crisis. In Bookchin's work, one finds critiques of human arrogance *over* and alienation *from* nature, calls for a "reharmonization" of society with ecology, and emphases on a "new ethics" and "new sensibility" that overcomes the violence inherent in instrumentalism. Yet these important proposed changes apply only to our relation to nature, not to animals, which we seemingly continue to exploit as before. To reduce animals to "nature" and to focus solely on the physical world apart from the millions of animal species it contains is speciesist, myopic, and inimical to the true level of radical changes needed in human consciousness and social relations.

Although since the 1970s Leftists have begun to seriously address the "nature question" left out of their reified ontological concepts that abstracted society from nature and with Promethean pretentiousness conceived of the natural world as an inexhaustible storehouse of riches for human use, so *they have universally failed to grasp that it is the "animal question" that lies at the core of social and ecological issues*.[5] Just as the blatantly sexist attitudes of Left radicals in the 1960s democracy and anti-war movements punctured their critical, progressive, counter-cultural, and enlightened halos, so the overt speciesism which persists throughout the Left disqualifies their claims toward moral leadership and superiority and renders them feeble hypocrites. In a banal, human-all-too-human fashion, Leftists can only mock what they don't understand or can't seriously question due to the crushing weight of speciesism and the social construction of human identity. In short, the modern "radical" tradition stands in continuity with capitalist domination imperatives and, more generally, the entire Western heritage of anthropocentrism, speciesism, hierarchy, violence, domination, power, and instrumentalism. In no way can "radical" Left theories be seen as *a liberating philosophy* from the standpoint of the environment and the *millions* of other species on this planet besides *Homo sapiens*. Ultimately, Leftist theory and practice is merely *Stalinism toward animals*, for the global Gulag of exploitation and a bureaucratic administration of suffering and mass murder that now – for meat consumption alone – takes the lives of over 50 billion animals every year.

## Anarchism, anti-capitalism, and animal liberation

Unlike animal liberation approaches which often are anti-capitalist and anarchist, welfare and rights approaches in the animal advocacy movement are largely apolitical beyond their own causes, although ideological orientations of animal advocates can fall anywhere on the scale from far Right to far Left. In most cases, animal reformists: (1) do not have a grasp of social movement history (with which one can contextualize the significance of animal advocacy); (2) lack critiques of

the inherently irrational, destructive, and unsustainable grow-or-die system of global capitalism; and (3) fail to see the relations between capitalism and animal exploitation (for example, how the immiseration of the south brought on by globalization and neoliberalism force many people into practices like poaching to survive). They thereby proceed without a systemic vision and political critique of the society and global system that exploits animals through industrialized systems of mass production and death.

The structural critiques of capitalism as an irrational growth *system* that is exploitative in nature demonstrate that talk of "green capitalism" or "sustainable development" is sheer folly and distinguish radical theories such as social ecology and Inclusive Democracy from reformist theories that attempt to minimize the destructive aspects of capitalism without calling for revolutionary change. Lacking a sophisticated social, political, economic, and historical analysis of capitalist societies, and seeking reforms in one sector of society in order to alleviate the suffering of animals, much of the animal advocacy movement is well-deserving of the Left critique that it is a reformist, single issue movement whose demands – which potentially are radical to the extent that animal liberation threatens an economy and society deeply rooted in animal slavery – are easily contained within a totalizing global system that exploits all life and the Earth for imperatives of profit, accumulation, growth, and domination.

In bold contrast to the limitations of the animal advocacy movement and all other reformist causes, radical social theorists such as Takis Fotopoulos (a self-proclaimed "libertarian socialist") advance a broad view of human dynamics and social institutions, their impact on the Earth, and the resulting consequences for society itself. Combining anti-capitalist, radical democracy, and ecological concerns in the concept of "inclusive democracy," Fotopoulos defines this notion as:

> the institutional framework which aims at the elimination of any human attempt to dominate the natural world, in other words, as the system which aims to reintegrate humans and nature. This implies transcending the present "instrumentalist" view of Nature, in which Nature is seen as an instrument for growth, within a process of endless concentration of power.[6]

In our current era of reformism and neo-liberalism, Fotopoulos advances an important analysis and critique of global capitalism and the triumph over Social Democracy, the Greens, and other political parties and ideologies. As true of social ecology and Left theory in general, however, the dynamics and consequences of human exploitation of animals throughout history is entirely missing from the Inclusive Democracy theory of nature and ecology and critique of instrumentalism.

Where the Inclusive Democracy critique can take easy aim at the statist orientation of the animal advocacy movement as a whole, the critique requires serious qualification in light of one sector of the movement, albeit small, that advocates animal liberation as part of a broader radical social politics. As evident in the manifestos of the ALF, many animal liberationists understand that the state

is a political extension of the capitalist economy and therefore "representative democracy" is a myth and smokescreen whereby capitalism mollifies and co-opts its opposition. Bypassing appeals to politicians in the pocket of animal exploitation industries, and disregarding both the pragmatic efficacy and ethical legitimacy of existing laws, the animal liberation movement applies direct pressure against animal exploiters to undermine or end their operations and free as many animals as possible. Radical abolitionists are not only anti-state, but anti-capitalist and have a systematic vision (if not concrete analysis) of the forces of hierarchy and the commonalities of oppression. The anti-capitalist ideology of many animal liberationists is specifically anarchist in nature, and there are strong anti-fascist and anti-racist views in animal rights subcultures. Not only are animal liberationists often anarchist in their social and political outlook, they are also anarchist in their organization and tactics. The small cells that ALF activists build with one another – such that one cell is unknown to all others and thereby resistant to police penetration – are akin to anarchist affinity groups in their mutual aid, solidarity, security culture, and consciousness building. Whereas the animal advocacy movement is largely mired in a single-issue politics that will work with the right as well as social progressives to achieve their goals for animals, many in the animal liberation movement reject this myopic opportunism that ties animal groups to corporate and state interests.

The project to emancipate animals, in other words, is integrally related to the struggle to emancipate humans and the battle for a viable natural world. To the extent that animal liberationists grasp the big picture that links animal and human rights struggles as one, and seeks to uncover the roots of oppression and tyranny of the Earth, they can be viewed as a profound new liberation movement that has a crucial place in the planetary struggles against injustice, oppression, exploitation, war, violence, capitalist neo-liberalism, and the destruction of the natural world and biodiversity.[7] In conditions where other social movements are institutional-ized, disempowered, reformist, or co-opted, animal liberationists are key contemporary forces of resistance. They defy corporate power, state domination, and ideological hegemony, and literally *attack* institutions of domination and exploitation – not just their ideologies or concepts – with bricks, sledge hammers, and Molotov cocktails. Where today's radicals are mostly engaged in theory and philosophizing, the ALF, for instance, is *taking action* against capitalism and in defense of life, often at great personal risk. In the post-9/11 climate of intense political persecution of all dissent, human rights activists should recognize that animal rights advocates are on the front lines of exercising and protecting free speech rights important to all resistance movements, and support rather than ignore their struggles.

Yet, for whatever parallels we can identify between the animal liberation movement and Inclusive Democracy, Fotopoulos is critical of animal rights to the degree that it lacks a *detailed and concrete* systemic critique of global capitalism and its various hierarchical systems of power, and *positive and workable* strategies for radical social transformation that dismantles the state and market system in favor of direct democracy. Fotopoulos correctly argues that sabotage actions –

while important, bold, and rare forms of liberation and resistance today that liberate animals and injure or shut down exploiters – are rearguard, defensive, and incapable of stopping the larger juggernaut of capitalist domination and omnicide. Many of the ALM would admit as much. The general thrust of Fotopoulos' critique of the reformist tendencies dominating the animal advocacy movement is correct:

> Unless an antisystemic animal liberation current develops out of the present broad movement soon, the entire movement could easily end up as a kind of "painless" (for the elites) lobby that could even condemn direct action in the future, so that it could gain some "respectability" among the middle classes.

But, as I have been arguing, the insights, learning, and changes need to come from both sides, and the animal standpoint can be highly productive for radical social politics. The animal perspective can deepen the ecological component of social ecology and Inclusive Democracy, and yields a profound understanding of the intricate interconnections between the domination of animals and the domination of humans. The goal of ecological democracy cannot be achieved without working to eliminate the worst forms of animal exploitation such as occur in the global operations of factory farming. Plant-based diets, veganism, and animal liberation all promote sound ecology, provide maximal amount of food and nutrition for the greatest number of people, help to alleviate world hunger, and help preserve the diversity and independence of the world's farmers against the plunder of global agribusiness.

Leftist goals cannot be realized without a profound critique and transformation of instrumentalism, such as which emerged as a form of power over animals then over humans. While animals cannot speak about their suffering, it is only from the *animal standpoint* – the standpoint of animal exploitation – that one can grasp the nature of speciesism, glean key facets of the pathology of human violence, and illuminate important aspects of alienation from and contempt for animals and nature, and in general elucidate key causes of the social and environmental crisis that deepens every day. Any critique of "instrumentalism" as a profound psychological source of hierarchy, domination, and violence must analyze the roots of this in the domination of animals that begins in the transition from hunting and gathering cultures to agricultural society, such that the domination of women and institutionalization of slavery relied on animal breeding models.

The technologies of domination used for slavery (for example, chains, collars, whips, shackles) were first developed as instruments of dominating animals and the very mindset of hierarchy stems from human domination over animals. Once, in the fourth century BCE, Aristotle used animals as the measure of alterity to defined western norms of rationality, it was a short step to begin viewing different, exotic, and dark-skinned peoples and types as non- or sub-human. The same criterion that was created to exclude animals from the human community was also used to ostracize blacks, women, and numerous other groups. The domination of human over human and its exercise through slavery, warfare, and genocide typically begins with the denigration of victims. But the means and methods of

dehumanization are derivative, for *speciesism provided the conceptual paradigm that encouraged, sustained, and justified western brutality toward other peoples*. Throughout history our victimization of animals has served as the model and foundation for our victimization of each other. History reveals a pattern whereby first humans exploit and slaughter animals; then, they treat other people like animals and do the same to them. Whether the conquerors are European imperialists, American colonialists, or German Nazis, western aggressors engaged in wordplay before swordplay, vilifying their victims as "rats," "pigs," "swine," "monkeys," "beasts," and "filthy animals."

## Beyond humanism: toward a broader liberation movement

The challenge of animal rights to anarchism, social ecology, Inclusive Democracy, and other Left movements that decry exploitation, inequality, injustice, and ecological destruction, and advocate holistic models of social analysis is to recognize the deep interrelations between human and animal liberation. The emancipation of one species on the backs of others not only flouts all ethical principles of a liberation movement, it contradicts it in practice. Frameworks that attempt to analyze relationships between society and nature, democracy and ecology, will unavoidably be severely limited to the extent that their concept of "nature" focuses on physical environments and ecosystems without mention of animals. Such views not only set up arbitrary ethical boundaries and moral limitations, they fail on their own grounds which seek to understand ecology apart from the most consequential forces driving the planetary ecological crisis today.

Animal liberation requires that the Left transcend the comfortable boundaries of humanism in order to make a qualitative leap in ethical consideration, thereby moving the moral bar from reason and language to sentience and subjectivity. Just as the Left once had to confront ecology, and emerged a far superior theory and politics, so it now has to engage animal rights. As the confrontation with ecology infinitely deepened and enriched Leftist theory and politics, so should the encounter with animal rights and liberation.

Largely apolitical or single-issue in scope, animal rights advocates fail to grasp how the animal abuses they decry result from the profit imperative, and are part and parcel of a social system that needs to be challenged and transformed in radical ways. The animal rights community generally shows itself to be politically naive, single-issue oriented, and devoid of a systemic anti-capitalist theory and politics necessary for overcoming animal exploitation, speciesism, and uncontrolled growth dynamics precipitating a planetary crisis signaled by species extinction and global warming. To the extent that animal rights activists grasp the systemic nature of animal exploitation, they should also realize that animal liberation demands that they work in conjunction with other radical social movements.

Conversely, human rights advocates need to comprehend the myriad of social and ecological problems that stem from animal exploitation. When human beings exterminate animals, they devastate habitats and ecosystems necessary for their own lives. When they butcher farmed animals by the billions, they ravage rain-

forests, turn grasslands into deserts, exacerbate global warming, and spew toxic wastes into the environment. When they construct a global system of factory farming that requires prodigious amounts of land, water, energy, and crops, they squander vital resources and aggravate the problem of world hunger. When humans are violent toward animals, they often are violent toward one another, a tragic truism validated time and time again by serial killers who grow up abusing animals and violent men who beat the women, children, and animals of their home. The connections go far deeper, as evident in the relationship between the domination of human over animal and the hierarchies of sexism and racism.

The fight for animal liberation demands radical transformations in the habits, practices, values, and mindset of all human beings as it also entails a fundamental restructuring of social institutions and economic systems predicated on exploitative practices. Animal liberation is by no means a sufficient condition for democracy and ecology, but it is for many reasons a necessary condition of economic, social, cultural, and psychological change. Animal welfare/rights people promote compassionate relations toward animals, but their general politics and worldview can otherwise be capitalist, exploitative, sexist, racist, or captive to any other psychological fallacy. Uncritical of the capitalist economy and state, they hardly promote the broader kinds of critical consciousness that needs to take root far and wide. Just as Leftists rarely acknowledge their own speciesism, so many animal advocates reproduce capitalist and statist ideologies.

The next great step in moral evolution is to abolish the last acceptable form of slavery that subjugates the vast majority of species on this planet to the violent whim of one. Moral advance today involves sending human supremacy to the same refuse bin that society earlier discarded much male supremacy and white supremacy. Animal liberation requires that people transcend the complacent boundaries of humanism in order to make a qualitative leap in ethical consideration, thereby *moving the moral bar from reason and language to sentience and subjectivity*. The great moral learning process of human evolution involves ever more people understanding that while differences between humans and among species certainly exist, the similarities are more morally significant. Factual differences, in other words, have no moral relevance in assigning which group has rights and which group does not. Alleged human traits of intellectual and linguistic superiority over animals are no more relevant than appeals to gender, skin color, or sexual preference within the human community.

Animal liberation is the culmination of a vast historical learning process whereby human beings gradually realize that arguments justifying hierarchy, inequality, and discrimination of any kind are arbitrary, baseless, and fallacious. Moral progress occurs in the process of demystifying and deconstructing all myths – from ancient patriarchy and the divine right of kings to Social Darwinism and speciesism – that attempt to legitimate the domination of one group over another. Moral progress advances through the dynamic of replacing hierarchical visions with egalitarian visions and developing a broader and more inclusive ethical community. Having recognized the illogical and unjustifi able rationales used to oppress blacks, women, and other disadvantaged groups, society is beginning to

grasp that speciesism is another unsubstantiated form of oppression and discrimination. Moral progress doesn't unfold merely in the realm of philosophy and ideals, but rather in and through social movements and political struggle.

The human/animal liberation movements have much to learn from one another. Just as those in the Left and social justice movements have much to teach many in the animal advocacy movement about capital logic, social oppression, and the plight of peoples, so they have much to learn about animal suffering, animal rights, and veganism. Whereas Left radicals can help temper antihumanist elements in the animal liberation movement, the animal liberation movement can help the Left overcome speciesist prejudices and move toward a more compassionate, cruelty-free, and environmentally sound mode of living. Articulating connections among human, animal, and Earth liberation movements no doubt will be challenging, but it is a major task that needs to be undertaken from all sides. One common ground and point of departure can be the critique of instrumentalism and relation between the domination of humans over animals – as an integral part of the domination of nature in general – and the domination of humans over one another.[8]

A truly revolutionary social theory and movement will not just emancipate members of one species, but rather all species and the earth itself. A future revolutionary movement worthy of its name will overcome instrumentalism and hierarchical thinking in every pernicious form, including that of humans over animals and the Earth. It will grasp the incompatibility of capitalism with the most profound values and goals of humanity. It will build on the achievements of democratic, libertarian socialist, and anarchist traditions. It will incorporate radical green, feminist, and indigenous struggles. It will merge human, animal, and Earth liberation in a *total liberation* struggle against global capitalism and domination of all kinds. It must dismantle all asymmetrical power relations and structures of hierarchy.

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# 20  Anarchy
## Foundations in faith

*Lisa Kemmerer*

> Religion, the dominion of the human mind; Property, the dominion of human needs; and Government, the dominion of human conduct, represent the stronghold of man's enslavement and all the horrors it entails. Religion! How it dominates man's mind, how it humiliates and degrades his soul. God is everything, man is nothing, says religion. But out of that nothing God has created a kingdom so despotic, so tyrannical, so cruel, so terribly exacting that naught but gloom and tears and blood have ruled the world since gods began. Anarchism rouses man to rebellion against this black monster.
>
> (Emma Goldman 2008)

Early anarchists predominantly emerged in Christian countries. When they commented on established religion, they commented on Christianity. Alexander Berkman (2003: 61) writes: "You know that the Christian Church, like all other churches, has always been on the side of the masters, against the people. . . . The church has persecuted people for their opinions, imprisoned, and killed them." The church cast its future with ruling powers, rather than with commoners. Consequently, the church has been the right hand of government, as Berkman (2003: 40–41) observes:

> OBEY! That is the eternal cry of church and school, no matter how vile the tyrant, no matter how oppressive and unjust "law and order." OBEY! For if you will cease obedience to authority you might begin to think for yourself! That would be most dangerous to "law and order," the greatest misfortune for church and school. For then you would fi nd out that everything they taught you was a lie, and was only for the purpose of keeping you enslaved, in mind and body, so that you should continue to toil and suffer and keep quiet.

Religious structures – the dogmatic power of the Christian church, and its link with oppressive governments – have led many anarchists to reject religion. Yet every religion supports anarchy in religious teachings, even Christianity, providing a critical foundation for spiritually inclined anarchists such as Leo Tolstoy.

In contrast with conventional religious institutions, scriptures provide a wealth of anarchist inspiration well known to anarchists such as Berkman and Proudhon.

After lambasting institutionalized religion, Berkman (2003: 61–62) praises the teachings of Jesus, and contrasts the teachings of Jesus with those of the church as an institution:

> Till this very day institutionalized religion is the Judas of its alleged Savior. . . .
>
> Consider: Jesus wanted all men to be brothers, to live in peace and good will. The church upholds inequality, national strife, and war.
>
> Jesus condemned the rich as vipers and oppressors of the poor. The church bows before the rich and accumulates vast wealth.
>
> The Nazarene was born in a manger and remained a pauper all his life. His alleged representatives and spokesmen on earth live in palaces.
>
> Jesus preached meekness. The Princes of the Church are haughty and purse-proud.
>
> "As you do unto the least of my children," Christ said, "you do unto me." The church supports the capitalist system which enslaves little children and brings them to an early grave.
>
> "Thou shalt not kill," commanded the Nazarene. The church approves of executions and war.
>
> Christianity is the greatest hypocrisy on record. .. . [T]he Christian Church compromised with those in power; it gained money and infl uence by taking the side of the tyrants against the people. It sanctioned everything which Christ condemned, and by that it won the good will and support of kings and masters. Today king, master, and priest are one trinity. They crucify Jesus daily; they glorify him with lip service and betray him for silver pieces; they praise his name and kill his spirit.

Proudhon (2008b: 270) further notes that the gospels cannot be blamed for the stupidity and irreverence of priests and councilmen:

> The ignorance of councils and popes upon all questions of morality is equal to that of the market-place and the money-changers; and it is this utter ignorance of right, justice, and society, which is killing the Church, and discrediting its teachings for ever. The infi delity of the Roman church and other Christian churches is flagrant; all have disregarded the precept of Jesus; all have erred in moral and doctrinal points.

While institutionalized religion in every nation tends to support the status quo, many core religious teachings nevertheless parallel those of anarchy.

This chapter examines the Christian religious tradition in light of basic and pervasive anarchist principles. Many religions' traditions include strong anarchist teachings (as evidenced by the essay "Taoism and Anarchy" 2008), but this essay focuses on the religion most familiar to those in Western nations, Christianity.

## Core anarchist philosophy

What are some of the "most basic" anarchist principles? Proudhon (2008a) defined anarchy as "the absence of a master, of a sovereign" and as the "denial of Government and of Property." In its most basic sense, as the word suggests, anarchy is a social and political philosophy that rejects external authority, "whether that of the state, the employer," or of "established institutions like . . . the church" (Ward 2004: 3). Chomsky (Lane 2008) notes that "the burden of proof is always on those who argue that authority and domination are necessary. They have to demonstrate, with powerful argument, that that conclusion is correct. If they cannot, then the institutions they defend should be considered illegitimate." The anarchist's goal is to replace the status quo with a society variously described as "without government or without authority; a condition of statelessness, of free federation, of 'complete' freedom and equality based either on rational self-interest, co-operation or reciprocity" (Kinna 2005: 5).

Individual liberty is a primary goal of anarchy. Emma Goldman (2008) notes that "governments ordain, judge, condemn, and punish the most insignificant offenses, while maintaining themselves by the greatest of all offenses, the annihilation of individual liberty." She writes that anarchy finds the individual at "the heart of society, conserving the essence of social life; society is the lungs which are distributing the element to keep the life essence – that is, the individual – pure and strong." Goldman claims that the promises of the church and state "are null and void, since they can be fulfilled only through man's [sic] subordination." Thus, anarchy, in the simplest words, "teaches that we can live in a society where there is no compulsion of any kind," and "a life without compulsion naturally means liberty" (Berkman 2003: 145).

Anarchy accuses government of injustice, of causing discontent and violence by defending privilege while enslaving the masses. Berkman (2003: 145) writes that government is the "greatest invader," the "worst criminal," and that it "fills the world with violence, with fraud and deceit, with oppression and misery." He defines government as "organized violence" (2003: 142). Goldman (2008) further points out: "there is hardly a modern thinker who does not agree that government, organized authority, [and] the State, [are] necessary *only* to maintain or protect property and monopoly."

Because government is by the rich and for the rich, anarchy calls for a new economic order. Anarchy recognizes the need for social revolution to reorganize "the entire structure of society" by eliminating both rulership *and* extant economic structures (Berkman 2003: 179). "It follows that when government is abolished, wage slavery and capitalism must also go with it, because they cannot exist without the support and protection of government" (Berkman 2003: 147). Anarchy seeks to free people from economic exploitation through "the abolition of mono-poly and of personal ownership of the means of production and distribution" (Berkman 2003: 147).

Though offering different responses to "particular historical, cultural and political conditions" (Kinna 2005: 20), anarchists have generally agreed that "property in land, natural resource, and the means of production should be held in

mutual control by local communities" (Ward 2004: 2). Chomsky (1970) notes that a "consistent anarchist" will likely be a socialist, and thus:

> will not only oppose alienated and specialized labor and look forward to the appropriation of capital by the whole body of workers, but .. . will also insist that this appropriation be direct, not exercised by some elite force acting in the name of the proletariat.

Goldman (2008) provides ample support for a new economic order, noting property's "gluttonous appetite for greater wealth, because wealth means power; the power to subdue, to crush, to exploit, the power to enslave, to outrage, to degrade." Kropotkin (1905) writes that our "system of private ownership in land, and our capitalist production for the sake of profits, represent a monopoly which runs against both the principles of justice and the dictates of utility." Berkman (2003: 17, 69) notes that private ownership of "land, machinery, mills, factories, mines, railroads, and other public utilities" enslaves workers, and that "[c]apitalism robs and exploits the whole of the people; the laws legalize and uphold this capitalist robbery; the government uses one part of the people to aid and protect the capitalists in robbing the whole of the people." This thievery is upheld unjustly by government, and Berkman (2003: 90) therefore argues that the "means of production and distribution should become public property."

Anarchy is a philosophy backed by practice, advocacy, and ultimately the dream of implementation. Chomsky defines anarchism as a "historical trend of thought and action" (in Lane 2008). Similarly, Kropotkin (1905) defines it as "a principle or theory of life and conduct." Berkman (2003: 187, 231) writes that we have a *duty* to protect liberty, "to resist coercion and compulsion," arguing that "the very foundation of authority and monopoly must be uprooted" and that "revolution is the means." Social revolution, he taught, "entirely changes the foundation of society, its political, economic, and social character" (2003: 180).

Few anarchists expect extant power structures to step down complacently. "Anarchism is a doctrine that aims at the liberation of peoples from political domination and economic exploitation by the encouragement of direct or non-governmental action" (Kinna 2005: 3). Anarchism does not generally suggest that revolutionaries seize power, but rather that they dissolve state power (Biehl 1997). Anarchy entails "direct action, the open defiance of, and resistance to, all laws and restrictions, economic, social, and moral" (Goldman 2008). Many anarchists actively seek to establish a society devoid of hierarchy and government, sharing the means of production and honoring individual liberty (Goldman 2008). Whether establishing a communal lifestyle or planning a revolution, action (philosophy lived) is central to anarchy.

## Christianity and anarchism

In the early twentieth century, Dorothy Day was instrumental in founding the Catholic Worker movement. Day was part of a broader Christian tradition that

honors anarchist teachings in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), and in the life and teachings of Christ, including communities such as the Beguines, Waldensians, Desert Fathers and Mothers, Quakers, Diggers, Doukhobors, and Anabaptists (Anglada 2007: 5). Day put forward a threefold plan to spread Catholic teachings, serve the poor in Houses of Hospitality, and establish "farming communes, models of non-capitalist Christian communal living" (Campbell 2001: 18). "Day eschewed all formal structures and institutionalized means of control" (Campbell 2001: 20), and was committed to "self-organizing cooperative communities, which in political terms has to be described as anarchy" (Ward 2004: 66). Following her lead, many important figures in the Catholic Worker Movement have been anarchists (see, for example, "Christian Anarchism," 2008). Why was Day, a devout Catholic, also an anarchist?

Common to all schools of anarchy is a "rejection of the need for the centralized authority of the unitary state" (Sheehan 2003: 25). Christianity teaches that choosing to have an earthly ruler is tantamount to rejecting the rule of God (I Samuel 8). For Christians, Jesus is "the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). Jeremiah refers to God as "King of the nations" (10:7), and Isaiah reminds, "I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King" (43:14–15). The Psalmist beseeches, "Listen to the sound of my cry, my King and my God" (5:2), and Hebrew prophecy, restated in the gospels, writes of Jesus: "Your king is coming" (Mt. 21:5, Jn. 12:15). The gospel of Matthew refers to Jesus as the child "born king of the Jews" (2:2), and John the Baptist refers to Jesus as the "king of heaven" (Mt. 3:2).

Christianity teaches that God is the one and only true king of humanity. The book of Judges offers a parable and satire on secular kingship (9:7–15), which was originally directed at the bloodthirsty and power-hungry King Abimelech. In this fable, the trees are seeking a king. First they ask the olive tree, but the olive tree asks if they would not prefer to have olives, rather than assign this already busy and useful tree to rulership. They next ask the fig tree, but the fig also asks if they would not prefer to have figs, so they turn to the grape vine, which asks if they would not prefer wine. Finally they appoint the bramble, a useless and prickly plant, painful to encounter, but good for nothing else (Eiselen*et al.* 1929: 366). In the spirit of anarchy, this Christian parable neither recommends nor respects secular rule.

Shaken by the evils of secular power in World War II, German Christians recommitted to honor only heavenly rule, recalling scripture: "We must obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:29). The resultant Barmen Declaration reclaimed Jesus as the one and only authority over the individual: "We repudiate the false teaching that the church can turn over the form of her message and ordinances at will or according to some dominant ideological and political convictions." The Barmen Declaration thus reminds Christians that no secular power, no ruler or elected leadership, can usurp divine authority as experienced by the individual (cf. Isa. 9:6).

In a parable on leadership, Jesus explains his role compared with secular rulers (Jn. 10:3–16):

> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away – and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. .. . So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

This passage recognizes the danger of trusting government: secular leaders always have their own agenda and *will* ultimately prioritize personal interests.

Scripture indicates that rulership and government are anti-Christian, and ought to be denounced, disregarded, and defied by Christians. Jesus taught that one without sin should cast the first stone, to return good for evil, and to turn the other cheek. Jesus taught compassion and sharing. In contrast, centralized governments are vindictive and destructive; they imprison and execute, interrogate and engage in warfare. The well-known Christian reformist Niebuhr (1960: 16) notes that "[p]ower sacrifices justice to peace within the community and destroys peace between communities." Christian reformists have long noted that "any kind of significant social power develops social inequality," and that "it is impossible to justify the degree of inequality which complex societies inevitably create by the increased centralization of power"; from a Christian perspective, power in the hands of a few perpetuates "social injustice in every form" (Niebuhr 1960: 8–9).

Jesus spoke against top-down rulership: "I am among you as one who serves," and every Christian must be "one who serves" (Lk. 22:26–27).

> You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be the first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mt. 20:25–28, also Mk. 10:42–5, 9:35)

Proudhon also looked forward to a time when people would "love and produce simply by the spontaneity of [their] energy," when it would be our "passion to give, as it is today to acquire" (2008b: 429). Berkman encourages anarchists to cultivate "brotherhood," "mutual benefit," and "cooperation" rather than accept top-down authority (2003: 185), and Chomsky writes of:

> freeing labor from all the fetters which economic exploitation has fastened on it, of freeing society from all the institutions and procedure of political power, and of opening the way to an alliance of free groups of men and women based on co-operative labor and a planned administration of things in the interest of the community.

(1970)

The Book of Acts portrays early Christian communities as communal, like the ideal anarchist communities described by Berkman, Proudhon, and Chomsky: "All

who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods to distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:44–45).

> Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. . . . There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. (Acts 4:32–35)

Chomsky asks, "what function, if any, the State can have in an economic organization, where private property has been abolished and in which parasitism and special privilege have no place" (1970).

German Christians, forced to live under the Nazi regime, harkened back to early church communes when they drafted the Barmen Declaration, insisting that "the church establish no rule of one over the other" but that such powers be held by "the whole congregation." They also repudiated "the false teaching that the church can and may . . . set up special leaders equipped with powers to rule." As Anglada (2007: 5) observes: "Throughout the Gospels, Jesus subverts top-down authority and shows another way: the bottom-up and non-coercive way of the cross." Of six schools of anarchy identified by Kropotkin, one was termed "Christian Anarchy" (Kinna 2005: 17). Christian anarchism, as the name suggests, took its lead from biblical teachings, and was associated with an idea of fellowship and individual moral regeneration (Kinna 2005: 18).

Jesus encouraged communities of sharing, stood against greedy capitalistic tendencies, and was accused of "perverting" the nation, instructing citizens not to pay taxes, and claiming to be king and/or the Messiah (Lk. 23:2). The Christian tradition holds that Jesus was innocent of all charges, but this does not mean that he was falsely accused. When asked if people ought to pay taxes, the gospels record how Jesus asked for a coin. On noting the emperor's head and title inscribed on the coin, he replied, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mk. 12:14–17, Mt. 22:17–21, Lk. 20:20–25). Coins in ancient Rome were regarded as the property of the ruler (Eiselen *et al.* 1929: 988). But in the world of Christianity, *all that exists is God's*: the coins *and* the emperor.

Jesus showed little respect for passivity *and* little respect for overt conflict – but not all forms of conflict (Wink 1992: 189). "Jesus was a subversive in the first century Palestine who stood against power and domination. . . . Again and again throughout the Gospels, Jesus challenges institutionalized authority" (Anglada 2007: 4). He did not call for tranquility, but for directive living that "seeks out conflict, elicits conflict, exacerbates conflict" (Wink 1992: 192). Jesus entered the temple and, making a whip of cords, drove out the sheep and cattle held for sacrifice, poured out the coins of the money changers, and overturned tables. Jesus maintained God's law over and against secular law, threatening the wealth and

power of the status quo, for which he was well hated by the powerful few (Carmody and Carmody 1995: 203; Eiselen *et al.* 1929: 894–895).

As was the Christian anarchist, Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910). Later works by this Russian writer and social activist focus on Christian life; in these works he pioneered nonviolent resistance, and overtly encouraged anarchy. Tolstoy "defined authority as 'the means of forcing a man to act contrary to his desires' and contrasted it to 'spiritual influence.' Authority, he argued, encouraged hypocrisy" (Kinna 2005: 56). For a Christian, living into one's faith requires a way of life contrary to mainstream economics and mainstream hierarchy and authority. The state is an "instrument for establishing monopolies in favour of the ruling minorities" (Kropotkin 1905). Institutions associated most closely with government – "laws, police, soldiers, the courts, legislatures, prisons" – exist only to protect the property-owning elite (Goldman 2008). In harmony with Kropotkin and Goldman, Tolstoy renounced the status quo as both unjust*and* unchristian. He writes (1904: 377), if you are a Christian, you "cannot help but meditate on your position as a landowner, merchant, judge, emperor, president, minister, priest, soldier, which is connected with oppression, violence, deception, tortures, and murders, and you cannot help but recognize their illegality."

In his early life, Tolstoy was a hunter and soldier, but as his faith gained importance, he found it impossible to justify such violence. Tolstoy's moral commitment to nonviolence and nonresistance were grounded in the gospels: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer" (Mt. 5:38–39). Reading this, Tolstoy observed that Christians are called to do good by others *always*. "Do not return evil for evil," Tolstoy writes in *My Religion*, "but always do good to all men, – forgive all men" (1885: 115). Echoing Berkman and Proudhon, Tolstoy called attention to the fact that governments do not live up to the expectations of Christianity (1904: 25):

> Christ says, Do not resist evil. The purpose of the courts is to resist evil. Christ prescribes doing good in return for evil. The courts retaliate evil with evil. Christ says, Make no distinction between the good and the bad. All the courts do is to make this distinction. Christ says, Forgive all men; forgive, not once, not seven times, but without end; love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. The courts do not forgive, but punish; they do not do good, but evil, to those whom they call enemies of society. Thus it turns out, according to the meaning, that Christ must have rejected the courts.

The Bible teaches Christians that they must struggle "against the rulers, against the authorities" (Eph. 6:12), and that those who would follow Jesus cannot "take any part in government" ("Christian Anarchism" 2008), for "[c]ursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere fl esh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord" (Jer. 17:5). Tolstoy longed for a world in which Christians might follow the teachings of Jesus instead of accommodating secular rule. He understood that, even by "voting for legislative, judicial, and executive offi cials,"

Christians "make these men [an] arm by which we cast a stone and deny the Sermon on the Mount" ("Christian Anarchism" 2008). In *The Kingdom of God is Within*, Tolstoy calls Christians to refuse to participate in violence, including both law enforcement and the military, because both are designed to harm others.

Goldman (2008) notes that anarchism is not merely a philosophy, but a "living force in the affairs of our life." Like anarchy, religion is meant to be lived. Tolstoy was a Christian anarchist activist – anarchy was a living force in his life, central to his faith. He encouraged Christians to "refuse to take the oath of allegiance, to pay taxes, to take part in court proceedings, in military service and in duties on which the whole structure of the government is based" (1904: 239). Secular governments, he reminded, change with the wind, while God's law is eternal and invariable, and "obligations, which result from your belonging to the state, cannot help but be subordinated to the higher eternal duty, which results from your belonging to the infinite life of the world, or to God, and cannot contradict them" (1904: 376–377). Christianity requires disobedience to the state in preference for Christian ideals. He dialogued with soldiers on the streets of Moscow, and with police in parks, asking how they, as Christians, could submit to secular authority that contradicted core Christian teachings. He asked how they could kill other men, or arrest poor and homeless people who were stealing only what they required to live. When he saw an officer pursuing a beggar, Tolstoy asked if he had read the Gospels. "I have," the guard boldly states, to which Tolstoy inquired if he had read the portion about *feeding* the hungry. The government official looks pained, recognizing the conflict of interests between his duties to the state and his life as a Christian, but can only reply: "Have you read the Military Regulation?" (1885: 20–21).

Tolstoy notes that Jesus guides those of faith "not by external rules, but by the internal consciousness" (1904: 102). By this, a "Christian is freed from every human power" (1904: 218–219):

> For a Christian to promise that he will obey men or human laws is the same as for a laborer who has hired out to a master to promise at the same time that he will do everything which other men may command him to do. It is impossible to serve two masters. . . . A Christian frees himself from human power by recognizing over himself nothing but God's power, the law of which, revealed to him by Christ, he recognizes in himself, and to which alone he submits.

Tolstoy believed that "life in community – Christian fellowship – is based on the exercise of individual conscience" (Kinna 2005: 80). He hoped that Christian refusal to participate would bring inhumane, ungodly governments to a standstill: i.e. a peaceful revolution. Tolstoy writes that "Christianity in its true meaning destroys the state. . . . Christ was crucified for this very reason" (1904: 242). Tolstoy observed that a collapse of government is not to be feared, but celebrated, for bad people have always ruled, and so it will always be with centralized government (1904: 250):

Even though men tell you that [government] is necessary for the maintenance of the existing structure of life; that the existing order, with its wretchedness, hunger, prisons, executions, armies, wards is indispensable for society; that, if this order should be impaired, there would come worse calamities, – it is only those to whom this structure of life is advantageous that tell you this, while those – and there are ten times as may of them – who are suffering from this structure of life think and say the very opposite. You yourself know in the depth of your heart that this is not true, that the existing structure of life has outlived its time and soon must be reconstructed on new principles, and that, therefore, there is no need to maintain it, while sacrificing human sentiment.

(Tolstoy 1904: 374)

Tolstoy helped the Doukhobors, a group of Russian Christians seeking immigration so that they might follow the teachings and example of Jesus, and wishing to live in imitation of the early Christian community described in Acts. Kropotkin also aided the Doukhobors, whom he considered "natural anarchists." The Doukhobors immigrated to Canada, established a pacifist commune, rejected secular government and capitalism, and continue to practice communal living and nonviolence in Canada (Kinna 2005: 89).

Tolstoy's followers, fellow Christians, infl uenced British and Dutch anarchy (Kinna 2005: 113). Tolstoy's reasoned spiritual justification for nonresistance and pacifism affected critical religious rebels, such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Thoreau. As King once wrote, "there are two types of laws: just and unjust. . . . one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws." When questioned by other ministers, King linked civil disobedience to the Christian tradition, to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who "refused to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that higher moral law was at stake," and to early Christians who chose to die rather than submit to unjust Roman laws, choosing to "obey God rather than man" (King 1997: 279–280).

Rebellion against unjust authority is fundamental to both anarchy and Christianity. The Book of Exodus records a revolution, an escape of the oppressed from tyranny in Egypt, an escape "inspired, led, and achieved by God on behalf of the oppressed" (Our Media 2007). Rebellion was central to the prophets of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Scripture indicates that the prophets knew governing powers as most people have known them down through time, "in terms of tax and debt, malnutrition and sickness, agrarian oppression and demonic possession" (Carmody and Carmody 1995: 201). The prophets stood against those with power, and threatened the establishment (Wink 1992: 188). "Resistance to the dominant consciousness anchored in ill-gotten privilege is the essence of prophetic eccentricity" (Maguire 2000: 420). The prophet Jeremiah instructed those of faith: "Do not learn the way of the nations" (10:2), for they are lesser, false, and foolish, and God alone is "the everlasting King" (10:10).

## Historical vision

So why are core religious teachings friendly toward anarchy, while religious institutions support governments of all types?

Communities throughout history have assumed that rulers only gain and hold political power with the sanction of divine powers. In most nations, when a ruler faltered, or natural disasters descended on the land, this *ultimate* support was assumed to have been withdrawn (Van Der Leeuw 1963: 118–119). Western nations believed in "manifest destiny," that whatever came to pass (or whoever gained power) was destined to do so by God. This conception of the unfolding of history brought the support of the church to ruling authorities. Similarly, in most societies, for centuries, state and religious powers have been interlinked: rulers have protected and supported organized religion, and religious sanction has legitimized secular rule.

In contrast, emerging and peripheral religions are *not* supported by secular authorities. In fact, they are often condemned. Each great religion, at some point in its early development, has stood outside the power structure, in opposition to established rule. Therefore, religious teachings record and faithfully express this earlier, independent status. Early teachings often denounce the evils of centralized power (Niebuhr 1960: 63), and ascribe ultimate authority to something quite beyond.

Christianity arose during a time when Judaism had already made firm ties with political power and authority. Not surprisingly, Christianity only recognizes one legitimate leader: God. The teachings of Jesus reflect independence from, disinterest in, and even distaste for, state authority. During Christianity's formative years, Christians stood outside the economic and political powers of the region. As a result, core Christian teachings do not support secular rule or contemporary economic powers, and thus Christianity has produced such notable anarchists as Dorothy Day and Leo Tolstoy.

## Conclusion

As Goldman (2008) writes: "Anarchism, then, really stands for the liberation of the human mind from the dominion of religion; the liberation of the human body from the dominion of property; liberation from the shackles and restraint of government." Institutionalized religion in every nation tends to support the status quo, but many religious teachings – including those that lie at the very core of faith – support anarchy. Indeed, nearly every religion teaches that government must not – cannot – usurp the authority of spiritual teachings and/or the ultimate rulership of eternal forces (i.e. God). The world's great religions teach of sharing in community rather than dominating, hoarding, and establishing hierarchies.

Berkman noted that Jesus exemplified a nonhierarchical social structure, and stood against profi t and profiteering. Christianity provides an apt example of religious teachings that discourage submission to secular powers, hold humankind accountable to principles that supersede secular rule, and require a way of life that will ultimately lead to anarchy in both faith and practice.

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# 21 Anarchism, or the cultural logic of networking

*Jeffrey S. Juris*

Anti-corporate globalization movements, particularly in Europe and North America, have been characterized by a resurgence of anarchist ideas and practice (Chesters 2003; Epstein 2001; Farrer 2006; Graeber 2002; Juris 2004, 2008). Since the first Peoples' Global Action (PGA) inspired Global Days of Action, including the Carnival against Capitalism on June 18, 1999 and the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle that November, radical movement sectors have put into practice classic anarchist principles such as decentralized coordination, non-hierarchical organization, consensus decision-making, and direct action. This has been particularly evident in Barcelona, a city with a strong culture of opposition and a powerful anarchist legacy. Indeed, anti-corporate globalization activists in Barcelona, dubbed the "Rose of Fire" during the anarchist bombings in the 1890s (Smith 2002), often point to the city's anarchist past as a major influence. Yet many do not identify as anarchist in the strict sense. Rather, anarchism forms part of a wider movement culture shaped by the interaction between traditional patterns of opposition and an emerging cultural logic of networking.

This article explores the links between classical anarchist praxis and contemporary anti-corporate globalization activism in Barcelona. Rather than a one-to-one *identity*, I argue that anti-corporate globalization movements involve a *confluence* between anarchist principles and a wider networking logic associated with late capitalism. Given this affinity, anarchism represents one among several related positions that radicals adopt in particular local contexts.

## Anarchism and the movements against corporate globalization

Two kinds of arguments have been put forward regarding the relationship between anti-corporate globalization movements and anarchism. The strong case suggests that radical movement sectors, or the practices driving the movement as a whole, *are* anarchist. This does not mean a rigid, doctrinaire anarchism, but a flexible, post-structural version attuned to the multiple, shifting forms of power and identity in today's post-modern world (Chesters 2003; Farrer 2006; Mueller 2003; cf. May 1994). For example, Graeme Chesters (2003: 43) suggests that emergent pro‑ perties of the "alternative globalization movement" as a complex, self-organizing system are generated by the "adherence to anarchist principles of organization and

decision-making." These include: participation, antipathy to hierarchy, consensus processes, directly democratic decision-making, respect for difference, and the goal of "unity in diversity." Chesters (2003: 60) then asserts: "If there is a spider at the centre of every web the one spinning this new wave of networked resistance is resolutely and undoubtedly anarchist." I am sympathetic to Chester's argument, but he overstates the case. The principles he identifies may be characteristic of anarchism, but they are also expressions of wider social trends.

The weaker case argues for a looser affinity between anarchism and anti-corporate globalization activism, but generally fails to specify the logic of this connection. For example, Barbara Epstein (2001) suggests that anti-corporate globalization activists have an "anarchist sensibility" more akin to organizational culture than a coherent worldview. For his part, David Graeber (2002: 1) maintains that "[a]narchism is the heart of the movement, its soul; the source of most of what's new and hopeful about it." At the same time, although principles such as anti-authoritarian organization, prefigurative politics, and direct action emerge from the libertarian tradition, they do not necessarily constitute a strict anarchist ideology, as Graeber (2002: 7) points out: "The motto might be, 'If you are willing to act like an anarchist now, your long-term vision is pretty much your own business.'" In this view, anarchism constitutes a spirit of resistance, an anti-authoritarian ethic, and a set of guiding principles (cf. Goaman 2003; Grubacic 2004; Welsh and Purkis 2003).   *Why* anarchism assumes this role within contemporary movements, however, is not as readily apparent.

This article should be taken as a contribution to the weak case regarding the relationship between anarchist sensibilities and anti-corporate globalization activism, but I want to extend the argument in two ways. First, I suggest that we can best understand this affinity by considering broader social trends, including the emergence of a cultural logic of networking associated with late capitalism. Second, given this context, anarchism represents one among several related anti-authoritarian identities that radicals adopt according to local political conditions. In Barcelona, for example, radical anti-corporate globalization activists alter    -natively identify as anarchist, libertarian, autonomist, or simply anti-capitalist, and often express multiple, fluid subjectivities.

## Anarchist principles in practice

Social movements are increasingly organized around flexible, distributed network forms (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001; Castells 1997; Hardt and Negri 2004). I employ the term "cultural logic of networking" to characterize the guiding principles, shaped by the logic of informational capitalism, which are internalized by activists and generate concrete networking practices (Juris 2008). These include: (1) building horizontal ties among diverse, autonomous elements, (2) the free and open circulation of information, (3) collaboration through decentralized coordination and consensus decision-making, and (4) self-directed networking. Networking logics are an ideal type. In practice, they are unevenly distributed

and always exist in dynamic tension with competing logics, often generating a complex "cultural politics of networking" within concrete spheres.

At the same time, there is nothing *inherently* anarchist or even progressive about network forms and practices. Indeed, distributed networks have expanded more generally as a strategy for enhancing coordination, scale, and efficiency in the context of post-Fordist capital accumulation. Networks are decentralized, but they also involve varying levels of hierarchy and can be used for divergent ends, including finance, production, policing, war, and terror. Despite their structural similarities, networks differ according to their values and goals. While networks of capital are oriented toward maximizing profit and police networks are concerned with maintaining order (Fernandez 2008), activist networks employ similar tools and logics to build mass movements for social, political, and economic change. Radical movement networks further emphasize openness, horizontality, and direct democracy. Although they are not *necessarily* egalitarian, distributed networks suggest a *potential* affinity with egalitarian values. It should thus come as no surprise that radical anti-corporate globalization activists express anarchist sensibilities.

### Non-hierarchical organization

Despite widespread popular belief, anarchism does not mean disorder. On the contrary, one of the threads uniting the diverse strands of anarchism involves precisely the importance of organization, although one based on grassroots participation from below rather than centralized command from above. The anarchist rejection of the state derives from this critique of centralized power, as the Russian anarchist Voline argued in strikingly familiar network terms: "The principle of organization must not issue from a center created in advance to capture the whole and impose itself upon it but on the contrary, it must come from all sides to create nodes of coordination, natural centers to serve all these points" (quoted in Guérin 1970: 43).

Anti-corporate globalization networks are organized along similar lines. In Barcelona, digital technologies have reinforced traditional cultures of opposition involving open assemblies, grassroots participation, and mass mobilization. At the same time, such technologies have led to a growing emphasis on autonomy and decentralized coordination. For example, this networking logic was evident in the organization of the Citizens Network to Abolish the Foreign Debt (RCADE), founded to organize a Zapatista-style Consulta Social in March 2000 around whether the Spanish government should cancel the debt owed to it by developing nations. RCADE specifically involved a statewide network of local, autonomous collectives, which coordinated the effort via e-mail lists and a central website. The network exhibited an affinity between classical anarchist strategies, including decentralized coordination among small-scale affinity groups, and the networking logic of the Internet, as Joan, an RCADE activist, commented to me: "We organized ourselves as nodes, using the nomenclature of the Internet . . The nodes

were the spaces where information was produced and made public, the physical embodiment of the Internet, what we might call affinity groups today."

Several months after the Consulta, RCADE-based activists joined their counterparts from squatted social centers, Zapatista support networks, environmental and feminist groups, and anti-Maastricht collectives within the Movement for Global Resistance (MRG). Rather than top-down central command, MRG-based activists preferred loose, flexible coordination, with a minimal structure involving open assemblies, logistical commissions, and several project areas. Indeed, a networking logic was inscribed directly into MRG's organizational architecture, as its manifesto declared: "We understand MRG as a tool for collective mobilization, education, and exchange, which at the same time, respects and preserves the autonomy of participating people and groups, reinforcing all the voices taking part in the action."

Anti-corporate globalization networks such as RCADE or MRG are not anarchist in the strict ideological sense. Rather than a specific political cast, they constitute broad "convergence spaces" (Routledge 2004) organized around basic guiding principles, including decentralization, grassroots participation, autonomy, and coordination across diversity and difference. Like their counterparts in other regions, radical anti-corporate globalization activists in Catalonia also favor consensus decision-making and grassroots assemblies. At the same time, these ideals are often contradicted in practice and can generate informal hierarchies (Juris 2008).

### *Self-management and federation*

Anarchists fervently believe in local autonomy and self-management, as Colin Ward (1973: 58) explains: "The anarchist conclusion is that every kind of human activity should begin from what is local and immediate." As a result, according to Voline: "True emancipation can only be brought about by the direct action of those concerned . . . and not under the banner of any political party or ideological body. Their emancipation must be based on concrete action and 'self-administration '" (quoted in Guérin 1970: 37). In this sense, anarchist praxis means acting on behalf of one's own group or community, rather than another (Franks 2003). In contrast to representative democracy, Kropotkin (in Raymond 1999) thus promoted a mode of political organization that is closer to self-government, to government "of oneself by oneself." This does not necessarily mean that larger associations are never justified, but rather that these should always be based on local needs and autonomy.

The degree of emphasis on self-management varies among anti-corporate globalization activists. Some activists are more concerned with translocal ties and horizontal networking, while others stress local control. In Barcelona, for example, this latter position is widespread among an informal network of radical collectives, including squatters, anti-militarists, and media activists, which emphasize self-management and confrontation with the state.

At the same time, anarchists are also staunch internationalists, but they favor voluntary federations involving horizontal coordination among locally autonomous groups. Bakunin thus envisioned a future social organization "carried out from the bottom up, by the free association or federation of workers, starting with associations, then going into the communes, the regions, the nations, and, finally, culminating in a great international and universal federation."[1] Indeed, networking logics involve precisely this conception of horizontal coordination among diverse, autonomous groups. In this sense, Colin Ward (1973: 26) specifically views anarchist federations as distributed networks, explaining that communes and syndicates would "federate together not like the stones of a pyramid where the biggest burden is borne by the lowest layer, but like the links of a network, the network of autonomous groups." A truly anarchist society would thus involve a global "network of self-sufficient, self-regulating communities" (Ward 1973: 134).

Radical anti-corporate globalization activists in Barcelona share this utopian vision, while transnational anti-corporate globalization networks such as Peoples' Global Action are putting it into practice. PGA was founded in February 1998 as a tool for transnational coordination among local struggles against free trade and neoliberalism. PGA is a flexible, distributed network form, which has no members and seeks to help "the greatest number of persons and organizations to act against corporate domination through civil disobedience and people-oriented constructive actions."[2] Anyone can participate as long as they agree with the basic hallmarks, which include: a clear rejection of capitalism and all systems of domination, a confrontational attitude, a call to direct action, and an organizational philosophy based on decentralization and autonomy. Rather than a centralized coordinating committee, each continent selects rotating "conveners" who are responsible for organizing regional and global conferences, assuming concrete logistical tasks, and facilitating communication within the network, often with the help of various support groups.

Despite frequent internal conflicts and power struggles (cf. Juris 2008; Routledge 2004; Wood 2002), PGA's hallmarks reflect an affinity between anarchist principles of federation and non-hierarchical organization and emerging networking logics. However, PGA is not, strictly speaking, "anarchist" (contra Mueller 2003: 142). Indeed, the network was designed with a diffuse, flexible ideological identity, in part, to facilitate communication and coordination among groups espousing different political visions, goals, strategies, and organizational forms. While many participating groups from Europe and North America are smaller anarchist-oriented collectives, not all identify as anarchist, while the mass-based indigenous, peasant, and labor struggles from the Global South, including the formerly active Brazilian Landless Workers Movement (MST), often maintain hierarchical structures.

### Self-organization

Anarchist thought and practice are also characterized by an emphasis on self-organization and the theory of "spontaneous order," involving what Kropotkin (in

Raymond 1999: 52) referred to as "the severe effort of many converging wills." As with free and open source software (FOSS) development, cooperative forms of production involve horizontal collaboration and exchange among a multitude of autonomous participants coordinating and interacting without the need for hierarchical mediating structures or central command. As Colin Ward (1973: 5) has argued, "cybernetics, the science of control and communication systems, throws valuable light on the anarchist conception of complex, self-organizing systems."

Emerging networking logics involve precisely this conception of self-organization through decentralized coordination among autonomous elements. Similarly, Graeme Chesters (2003: 54) has employed the language of complexity, arguing that, "[w]hat the AGM (Alternative Globalization Movement) seems to demonstrate is a set of *emergent* properties that are the outcome of complex adaptive behavior occurring through participative self-organization from the bottom up." Elsewhere I note that complexity theory provides a useful metaphor for depicting abstract patterns of self-organization within contemporary movements (see also Escobar 2004), but such system-oriented language can also obscure the micro-level practices and political struggles that actually generate such patterns (Juris 2004, 2008).

This need not be the case, but to avoid this tendency I recast self-organization as part of a wider networking *ethic*, inspiring concrete networking practices within particular social, cultural, and political contexts. In this sense, expanding and diversifying networks is much more than an organizational objective; it is also a highly valued *political* goal. Indeed, the self-produced, self-developed, and self-managed network becomes a widespread cultural ideal, providing not only an effective model of political organizing, but also a model for re-organizing society as a whole. Moreover, anti-corporate globalization activists increasingly express their utopian imaginaries directly through concrete organizational and techno-logical practice. This self-organizing network ideal is reflected in the diffusion of distributed network forms within anti-corporate globalization movements as well as the development of self-directed communication and coordination tools, including electronic listservs and collaborative web-based projects.

In Barcelona, for example, RCADE-based activists self-consciously employed the idiom of computer networks to characterize their organizational architecture. In this sense, the Network was specifically composed of local, regional, and state-wide "nodes." Local nodes constituted the Network's organizational and political base, and were specifically defined as "self-defined, self-managed, and self-organized spaces." Local nodes further coordinated with their regional and statewide counterparts through periodic meetings and annual gatherings, as one early RCADE document explained:

> We are building an organizing formation that is difficult to classify. We have called it a "citizens network" formed by independent persons and collectives that adhere to the network and can take advantage of its structure. Many of these people are organized into local nodes, which determine the dynamic of collective action.

The Network was thus "self-organized," generated through the autonomous practices and collaborative interactions among participants who were themselves distributed across a network of decentralized local nodes.

### Direct action

Anti-corporate globalization activists are also committed to another traditional anarchist principle, namely "direct action" (cf. Graeber 2002; Franks 2003). In some ways direct action reflects the individualist, expressive branch of anarchism, including the nineteenth-century "propaganda by the deed" and the recent turn toward mediated, theatrical, and carnivalesque forms of protest (cf. Farrer 2006; Goaman 2003). The mass action strategy itself has practical (i.e. stop the summit) and symbolic (i.e. communicate resistance) effects. However, the focus on "prefiguring" – living your vision of an alternative world as you struggle to create it – means contemporary direct actions also express utopian values such as horizontal coordination, direct democracy, and self-organization.

Indeed, the "diversity of tactics" principle, whereby activists divide the urban "terrain of resistance" (Routledge 1994) into distinct spaces, reproduces a horizontal networking logic on the tactical plane (Juris 2008). During the September 2000 protest against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Prague, for example, color-coded zones were established for various protest tactics, ranging from non-violent civil disobedience to militant conflict. These included the use of vulnerable bodies to occupy urban space (Pink Bloc), festive dancing and drumming (Pink and Silver Bloc), physical and symbolic confrontation (Blue and Yellow Blocs), and autonomous pack maneuvers (Southern Actions). Although the action did not entirely stop the Summit, protesters successfully used a "swarming" strategy (Arquilla and Rondfeldt 2001) to block delegates inside the conference center, forcing them to cancel the proceedings a day early. Given the changing contexts and shifting police tactics, such a clear-cut victory has been difficult to reproduce, but the model continues to be employed during mass anti-corporate globalization actions, including the July 2005 protest against the G8 in Gleneagles, Scotland (cf. Farrer 2006).

## Emerging political subjectivities

The previous section explored how anarchist principles are manifested in practice within anti-corporate globalization networks in Barcelona. Rather than being anarchist per se, these networks reflect a growing confluence between classical anarchist principles and a wider networking logic characteristic of late capitalism. But, how do radical anti-corporate globalization activists in Barcelona identify and define their own political identities? To better grasp the connections between anarchism and contemporary anti-corporate globalization movements, it is important to listen to the voices of activists themselves – which I did through a series of interviews and conversations in Barcelona in the spring of 2002.

On the one hand, when I asked activists from MRG, RCADE, and allied networks about their political visions and strategies, most expressed views consistent with anarchist principles. Contrasting parliamentary and network politics, for example, Pau explained: "We are promoting decentralized participation, making each group responsible for their part so decisions are taken among many people as opposed to the old politics where a small group has all the information and decides everything." Networks are thus the most effective way "to balance freedom and coordination, autonomy with collective work, self-organization with effectiveness." This focus on autonomous networking has gone along with the diffusion of anti-party sentiment, as Marc suggested: "Political parties are filled with people who have objectives and modes of organizing radically different from ours. The division between institutional politics and social movements is becoming more and more evident." More radical activists in Barcelona increasingly view social movements as directly democratic alternatives to representative democracy.

With respect to their visions for an ideal world, many radicals expressed views similar to traditional anarchist visions of self-management and federation. For example, Nuria described a planet composed of "small, self-organized, and self-managed communities, coordinated among them on a worldwide scale." New technologies make such visions seem plausible; as Pau explained, "the Internet makes it possible to really talk about international coordination from below. It allows us to interact according to models that have always existed, but weren't realistic before." In this sense, rather than generating entirely new political and cultural models, new technologies reinforce already-existing ideals.

On the other hand, when I asked radicals how they define themselves politically, many hesitated to identify as anarchist. Some objected to the prospect of having to identify themselves at all, as Manel protested: "It's been a long time since I've been asked to do that!" Others rejected rigid labels; as Pau expressed, "I don't have an 'ism,' it's all about being open to what everyone can contribute, including those from a particular 'ism.' Above all I believe in participation .     . . and making collective decisions." Some radicals did identify as anarchist, but often in a visceral way, as Nuria explained: "I'm close to the anarchist position, particularly around self-organization. I have a lot of issues with power, obedience, and injustice, but I can't give a precise definition."

At the same time, most exhibited a significant level of ideological flexibility, combining various perspectives, including anarchism, socialism, and autonomous Marxism. Activists were particularly influenced by Barcelona's anarchist past, the Italian autonomous workers movement, and the Zapatistas. When I asked about his political identity, for example, Fernando explained that "I'm struggling to end inequality and injustice. I believe strongly in direct, self-managed action. You might call this libertarian communism, beyond the market and state." He identified with the German and Italian autonomous movements, and the writings of Antonio Negri. He was also strongly influenced by Catalan anarchism, noting that;

> during the civil war there were cultural houses,      *ateneos populars* ,  and cooperatives. We haven't come close to that, but we're saying similar things.

When I talk about autonomy, we have the example of the worker's movement here and their experiences with popular, direct, and self-managed democracy.

When I asked Marc how he identifies himself, he responded in this way:

Political labels don't mean much today; we should be defined by what we do, but for me the anarchist ideas from the beginning of the twentieth century were very important, and also the ideas of diffuse autonomy during the 1970s and autonomous movements in the 1980s. I'm also influenced by Zapatismo . . . a new way of doing politics that isn't based on ideology.

For his part, Gaizka had identified as anarchist for most of his life and was involved in the efforts to reconstruct the CNT after the transition. He soon burned out on internal politics, however, and began working with a series of small, self-managed projects and collectives, before getting involved with the Zapatistas in the mid-1990s. When I asked how he describes himself politically, he replied that:

a few years ago I said I was anarchist. Now I say I come from the libertarian or anarchist tradition, but I don't know where I'm going. Saying I'm a Zapatista makes sense to me, if not for everyone. I define myself as searching for new ways of doing politics, far from power, coming from anarchism, but I wouldn't use a particular label.

These sentiments reflect a shift toward more open, fluid political identities, combining influences from various political traditions shaped, in part, by a cultural logic of networking. If there *is* a label most radical anti-corporate globalization activists would identify with it is "anti-capitalist." As Joan suggested, "anti-capitalism was a prohibited word five or six years ago, but capitalism has become so brutal. Until recently I used to talk about neoliberalism, but today we all use anti-capitalism to characterize a diversity of positions." Sergi explicitly linked his vision of anti-capitalism to an emerging network ideal: "The revolution is also about process; the way we do things as social movements is also an alternative to capitalism, no? Horizontalism is the abstraction we want, and the tools are the assembly and the network." Indeed, what seems most important for many activists is perhaps the collective search for new political forms and identities itself. As Pablo suggested, "we're in the moment of deciding exactly what kind of political subjectivity we want to create . . . a mix of the old and the new, a diffuse, an unknown subject; it clearly doesn't have a name."

## Conclusion

Anti-corporate globalization movements exhibit many classical anarchist principles, yet an *affinity* with anarchism does not mean that such movements *are* anarchist in a strict ideological sense. Rather, as I have argued, anti-corporate globalization movements reflect a growing confluence between anarchist ideas and

practices and a wider networking logic associated with late capitalism. As we have seen, radical anti-corporate globalization networks in Catalonia are characterized by a strong commitment to non-hierarchical organization, autonomy, and self-organization, all values that are part of, but not *restricted* to the libertarian tradition.

This was further evidenced by the way radical anti-corporate globalization activists in Barcelona identify *themselves*. On the one hand, many radicals express political strategies and visions that are consistent with traditional anarchist views regarding political parties, the state, self-management, and federation. On the other hand, when it comes to political identity, many are uncomfortable with rigid categories. Indeed, most radicals in Barcelona are influenced by multiple perspectives, including anarchism, autonomous Marxism, socialism, ecology, and *Zapatismo*. This suggests the emergence of a new anti-capitalism based on an ethic of openness, fluidity, and flexibility, and is associated with "networks" as a broader political and cultural ideal.

What are the implications of all of this? Does it make any difference whether we identify radical anti-corporate globalization networks as anarchist or not? On the one hand, there is an issue of analytic precision. Unless a network identifies as anarchist, then it should not be considered anarchist in the strict sense. Moreover, claiming an *identity* rather an *affinity* may obscure larger processes at work, including the rise of a broader networking logic. At the same time, neglecting the flexibility and fluidity in the way activists identify misses a critical point regarding the nature of contemporary political subjectivity. On the other hand, this analysis also has important political implications. To the extent that networks such as RCADE, MRG, or PGA have been successful it is because they are broad spaces where activists from diverse political backgrounds converge. The attribution of a specific ideological cast would effectively exclude those who share similar values and practices but do not identify in the same terms. Indeed, what has been particularly notable about anti-corporate globalization movements in Barcelona and elsewhere has been the rise of a new anti-capitalism characterized by openness, fluidity, and flexibility, and the search for accompanying political norms, forms, and practices.

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# 22 Anarchy girl style now

## Riot Grrrl actions and practices

*Caroline K. Kaltefleiter*

> Riot Grrrl is: Because we know that life is much more than physical survival and are patently aware that the punk rock "you can do anything" idea is crucial to the coming angry grrrl revolution which seeks to save the psychic and cultural lives of girls and women everywhere, according to their own terms.
>
> (Fantastic Fanzine 1991: 44)

"Revolution Girl Style Now" is a phrase that became the rallying cry of Riot Grrrl, a pro-girl movement that came of age in the early 1990s in response to a male dominated American Punk music scene. Riot Grrrl emerged as a girl-centered scene first in Olympia, Washington, and later extended to the US capital (Kaltefleiter 1995; Schlit 2003; Monem 2007). Within a few years, these bi-coastal actions soon spread across the United States and around the world. Riot Grrrl continues to intrigue scholars and activists alike. Riot Grrrl is not merely a piece of the third wave of feminism, but rather states of anarchist action that (re)emerges today in renditions such as the LadyFest culture, Tranny Roadshow, and the Radical Crafting movement among others. Much has been written about music being the driving force of Riot Grrrl, however, the politics behind this movement often take a back seat. Missing from these discussions is a comprehensive look at the ways in which girls associated with Riot Grrrl were also engaged in local activism and anarchy.

My own work with the Riot Grrrl scene started over fifteen years ago just as the movement was getting going. I was a member of the Riot Grrrl Washington, DC, chapter and witnessed first-hand the (r)evolution of a girl-centered subculture that motivated so many girls and guys to find a voice to speak about personal tragedies, local inequalities, and national/international atrocities, calling at times for all out anarchy against a system that perpetuates divides along the lines of race, class, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

The subcultural underpinnings of Riot Grrrl soon became co-opted by mainstream society in the United States and later in countries around the world. The subsequent appropriation of Riot Grrrl culture in the mainstream press, music industry, and fashion business allowed for the commodification of Riot Grrrl as a fashion statement, an adolescent phase, and most discouraging, a dead separatist subculture. Corporate communication and media messages of girl solidarity and

girl anarchy were reconstructed as branded slogans, which served to dilute the real Riot Grrrl ethos by marketing girl-power products and all girl pop groups. Meanwhile, Grrrls/girls whose hearts and souls were in Riot Grrrl actions, artwork, music production and performance, as well as zine production, found themselves in a state of disillusionment and disassociation with this "media-constructed" portrayal/betrayal of the movement. Those who identified themselves as part of the "authentic" RG movement (myself included) initiated a media blackout. The barrage of negative press sent many Riot Grrrls underground and into hibernation, unwilling to write or reflect on a movement that meant so much to us for fear of having one's everyday life experience taken out of context and marketed back to us in a language and spirit distant from our own words and sense of being. I finished my graduate work at this time, and while the Riot Grrrl movement became the focus of my early academic writing, it too lay in a state of dormancy, out of respect for my peers and a keen reverence of the work that was accomplished in those early years creating spaces and sites of resistance for grrrls (and bois) to communicate with each other.

Over the last decade or so, I have remained quietly connected to the Riot Grrrl scene. Like many, I witnessed the media lose interest in Riot Grrrl by the late 1990s and a surge of scholarship trying to make sense of this movement that seemed like a  blip on a historical feminist life line. The purported flat-lining of the RG movement and the disavowal of the term Riot Grrrl in the United States found new life in start-up Riot Grrrl chapters in countries around the world. Just as the American media pronounced that Riot Grrrl was dead, alternative actions, made possible in part due to new technology, were taken up by girls and women in both the US and countries around the globe – and contributed to my own (re)engage-ment and (re)participation in this ever-evolving project, one that rejects assigned labels and calls for avenues of connection and empowerment. New technologies such as the zine websites, internet, social networking sites, and girl-centered zones allow for those truly committed to the Riot Grrrl ethos of anarchy to find each other and to engage in acts of peace and social justice, as if we are, once again, demonstrating on the lawn of the Washington Monument or organizing in Dupont Circle as we did all those years as part of the Riot Grrrl, DC, chapter.

My decision to break my silence on Riot Grrrl is an attempt to create a picture of authenticity about this movement that is rooted in the principles of feminist anarchism. Girls Studies scholar Mary Celeste Kearney notes that many studying Riot Grrrl have incorporated representations vis-à-vis zines, crudely produced publications, complete with spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors, along with lyrics from Riot Grrrl songs as cultural evidence. She notes,

> While this approach may be done in the spirit of academic dialogism, it does not erase the power imbalances . . . and does not make up for the fact that the picture being made of this culture will always be incomplete. Scholars' names remain tied to academic texts as signifiers of both authoritative knowledge and representational power.

(Kearney 1998: 178)

Kearney's assertions although correct on one level, merely serve to create a deeper wedge between the academic and activist community interested in the Riot Grrrl movement and certainly do not account for an academic who is also a long time Riot Grrrl participant. Academic assumptions about subcultures, such as Riot Grrrl, serve to establish an undeniable class stratification that creates boundaries that grrrl activists and Girl Studies scholars alike find difficult to cross. My work challenges such power differentials by incorporating the unedited voices and writing of Riot Grrrls to create bridges of understanding about the Riot Grrrl movement. This project relies on authentic histories and personal experiences, including my own, to contest mainstream media misrepresentations and to overthrow scholarly misinterpretations of Riot Grrrl. Here I admit my Riot Grrrl self, one that is grounded in my Riot Grrrl activism of more than a decade ago. I situate myself as activist/academic in/out of the DC Riot Grrrl scene. In doing so, my work not only acknowledges physical (re)locations of Riot Grrrl but also advances intellectual and spiritual commitments of being a Riot Grrrl through street activism, zine writing, and mediums of production.

This project (re)introduces the Riot Grrrl movement as a fl uid sphere of resistance, source of empowerment, and viable agency for social change. Focus will be given to the production of girl zines as a mechanism for communicating and deconstructing gender identities in anarcho-grrrl culture with the goal of dismantling myths associated with such a (re)evolution. Finally, the importance of zine production is examined as part of the grrrl continuum for self-expression and cultural empowerment.

## Ode to Emma: Riot Grrrl herstory and anarchy

> The stories of Emma Goldman influence so much of what I do. She was just so rad for her time. She gives me strength. I call it my "Ode to Emma."
>
> (Iris 1994)

Riot Grrrl anarchy is rooted in Punk culture and created an ethos of/for everyone without strident divides and bureaucratic hierarchies. For many young women, the Punk scene in Washington, DC, became a place of solace from area suburbs and their inherent class structures. As one girl punk notes, "For the first time I could be who I wanted to be and do what I wanted to do. Punk allowed anyone in . . . You could be a dwarf, short sighted . . . a total rebellion" (Hoare 1991: 14).

My development as a Punk came out of time spent in the art and music scene in Athens, Georgia, while attending the University of Georgia. I moved to Washington, DC, in the early 1990s, and became involved in with Peace Punks and Positive Force Punks – which included vegetarian, spiritual, politically committed pacifists inspired by the Crass Collective in Essex, England. As Lauraine LeBlanc points out, "Crass advocated vegetarianism and pacifism, abjured drink and drunks and attacked patriarchy, racism, the class system, Third World exploitation, government, the war machine, and religion, among other institutions" (LeBlanc 2006: 49). Crass inspired the Washington, DC, straight-edge Punk

movement and also served as a point of departure for the formation of the Riot Grrrl movement.

Riot Grrrl began in the summer of 1991 when a group of five young women in Washington, DC, came together in response to neighborhood gentrification, racial profiling, and abortion clinic bombings. It was early May and the neighborhood of Mount Pleasant erupted in violence, following an incident that foreshadowed the growing complexity of Washington's ethico-political scene. An African-American policewoman had allegedly shot a Latino man. According to Washington, DC, Punk historian Mark Anderson, "The officer said the man had lunged at her with a knife during an arrest for public drunkenness, but rumors had spread that the man had been shot while handcuffed" (Anderson and Jenkins 2003: 313). The shooting sparked nearly a week of intense rioting, the most intense civil unrest in the city since 1968. Mount Pleasant residents, mostly young people, took to the streets and "fought police . . . destroying more than a dozen squad cars before tear gas and a massive police mobilization contained the disturbance" (2003: 313). Members from area bands and Punk groups hit the streets, taking aim at the police . . . viewing what was happening as "The Revolution" (2003: 313). The street actions in the Mount Pleasant riots set the tone of future anarchist Punk engagement and later the work of Riot Grrrl.

Meanwhile on the national level, DC Punks became engaged in the fight for reproductive choice. In late May 1991, the United States Supreme Court upheld the Bush Administration's gag rule preventing federally funded clinics from offering abortion counseling. Local members of the Positive Force House and straight-edge Punk band Fugazi organized a number of benefit shows for the Washington Free Clinic – which was among the institutions affected by the gag rule – including one show that featured Dutch anarchist band the Ex and Canada's No Means No, who opened their set by saying, "This is a benefit that should not have to be. Health care should be free" (Anderson and Jenkins 2003: 314). Positive Force continued to organize shows in the inner city, "hoping to bring money into needy neighborhoods and break down the walls between the mostly white suburbs and the city" (2003: 314).

Some of the early Riot Grrrls, including Kathleen Hannah of Bikini Kill lived in Mount Pleasant. Others, including myself, lived in adjacent neighborhoods such as Adams Morgan and Columbia Heights. Jen Smith, one of the founding members of Riot Grrrl notes that the Mount Pleasant Riots energized her into thinking about issues of race, class and gender, outside of her neighborhood. The riots spawned a momentum that would result in a series of creative actions – from letters to the creation of a zine. For example, Smith wrote a letter to future Bratmobile bandmate, Molly Neuman, saying, this summer's going to be "girl riot" (Kaltefleiter 1995; Anderson and Jenkins 2003). Smith put a name on what many girls in the DC scene had been talking about, starting their own revolution – girl riot – against a society they felt offered neither validation nor legitimization of girls and women's experiences. Discussion of girl anarchy came to fruition when fellow Bratmobilers decided to create their own zine. According to Molly Neuman "We had thought about calling it *Girl Riot* and then we changed the name

to *Riot Grrrl* with the three 'r's,' as in growling. It was a cool play on words, also kind of an expression where your anger is validated" (Anderson and Jenkins 2003: 315).

   Riot Grrrl emerged as a grassroots scene of musical and political action. Riot Grrrl shows served as stages of empowerment that broadened transgressive arenas of music, visual art, street politics, and personal writing. These stages of empowerment went beyond a thirty or forty-five minute set of music in which girls who could barely play their instruments took the stage and screamed gutteral prose. Such actions spoke to a growing girl anarchy that rejected the United States government and its geopolitical strategies and militaristic tendencies, while confronting social issues such as heterosexism, racism, class stratification, gender discrimination, domestic violence, and inequalities in wages, housing, healthcare, and education.

## Start your own revolution: girl anger and action

The writing of the word as "grrrl" represented anger within the girls in the movement and served as a sign of social contestation of learning to behave like a girl or "throw like a girl." In the Washington, DC, Chapter, Riot Grrrls often spoke of girl (Grrrl) anger. The Riot Grrrls (re)discovered anger as an emotion appropriate for young women. To them, to get angry is to be empowered. Sharing emotions through writing, music, artwork, or spoken words allows for the interrogation of matrixes of domination in both the public and private spheres.

   Locating the essence of girlness within a feminine bodily existence plays a crucial role in understanding the meaning of Riot Grrrl. The transcendence of the lived body, what Merleau-Ponty (1962, 2002) describes is a transcendence that moves from the body in its immanence in an open and unbroken directedness upon the world in action. To elaborate, Young (1990: 148) points out, "while feminine body existence is a transcendence and openness to the world, it is an ambiguous transcendence, a transcendence that is at the same time laden with immanence."

   Rather than simply beginning in immanence, "feminine bodily existence remains in immanence, even as it moves out toward the world in motions of grasping, manipulating and so on" (Young 1990: 148). For Riot Grrrls, feminine bodily existence entails recognition of the female/male body as a site of empowerment and cultural resistance. The meaning of being a "Grrrl" revolves around the idea of using whole bodies filled with "Grrrl love" to affect motion/action. The very vocalization of the term "Riot Grrrl" invokes bodily convulsions through the pronunciation of the word "Grrrl" with an angry growling tone. The denotative sign of "girl" takes on a specific connotation. This linguistic jujitsu of "Grrrl" employs total body involvement, causing an existential melee that creates anatomical spheres of empowerment for young girls/women. Each time a girl pronounces the term "Grrrl" she is acknowledging herself as a powerful force and agent of change. Thus, the Riot Grrrls' full engagement of female bodily existence through self-naming reconfigures the idea of "throwing like a girl" to represent the embodiment of a riot: feminist social change. As one Riot Grrrl put

it, "The fact that I am alive is a riot – a fucking riot. A ha-ha riot. You can abuse me but I will still be here. I'm a Grrrl and my inner self has just been released. I'm a Riot Grrrl" (Fantastic Fanzine 1991, n. p.).

Most Riot Grrrls volunteered weekly for a variety of causes including the Food Not Bombs program, environmental action groups à la the Green Avengers and various pro-choice groups such as NARAL (National Abortion Reproductive Rights Action League). This is a part of the history of Riot Grrrl that is often eclipsed by the focus on girl music and a commodified girl culture. Many Riot Grrrls took part in weekend abortion clinic defenses. One of my early activist interventions with Riot Grrrl took place at an abortion clinic in Maryland. I documented my own experiences attending clinic defense actions regularly in my journal and later Riot Grrrl zines (Kaltefleiter 1991: n.p.):

> It is early Saturday morning. Our mission today is to help escort women seeking abortions at the clinic. As we pull up, there is a group of pro-life protesters out front. Everyone proceeds with caution as we are reminded of the recent bombings at clinics around the country. As soon as we opened the car door, I heard the pro-life group. They were reciting a Catholic rosary. One of the pro-lifers carried an enormous picture of the "Immaculate Conception." Another man dragged a wooden cross on the ground as a woman carried an oversized wooden rosary. It was quite a spectacle. As cars carrying women arriving to gain access to safe abortion procedures enter the clinic's parking lot, the pro-life group rushes the car just as the pro-choice girls form a human circle around the vehicle. The object is to get the women inside the building as fast as possible. This is easier said than done. The pro-lifers continue to rush the car. The driver of the car speeds through the back of the lot and makes a second attempt at delivering the woman to the doorstep of the clinic. The second time we are successful and the woman is quickly escorted into the building. Throughout the day, there are several risky attempts at getting women into the clinic unharmed. By the end of the day, I am both physically and mentally exhausted and as I wait to catch the Metro home.

As a professor of media and women's studies, I often make references to my own experiences while working on grassroots actions such as clinic defenses with the Riot Grrrls in the 1990s. My students often find solace in reading the work of other young women who also found, and continue to find, themselves at odds with contemporary society and thus forge creative ways of overthrowing the estab  - lishment to affect change.

## DIY culture: Riot Grrrl zines

Because every time we pick up a pen, or an instrument, or get anything done, we are creating the revolution. We ARE the revolution. Grassroots political action and independent do-it-yourself resistance provide the framework for Grrrl anarchy. Riot Grrrl's "Do it Yourself" (DIY) ethic comes from Punk culture, and can be

traced back to Punk bands who reject to sign with record labels and start their own labels, distribute their own music and organize their own live shows instead. Riot Grrrl, along with Punk, extended the DIY ethic to other cultural creations and everyday politics, "wherein participants avoid the ethico-political compromise of participation in institutions and practice they consider as exploitative doing as much as possible themselves according to an autonomous, anarchist ethos" (Nicholas 2007: 2). One Riot Grrrl elaborated on the importance of "Do-It-Yourself" actions:

> DIY is kinda like my religion. That was basically the most appealing thing about Riot Grrrl to me. All these kids were going out and taking action and putting on shows and making records and making zines and doing artwork. They were doing it all by themselves without any help from their parents or teachers or anybody. I had just never seen that before and it was just so inspiring to me . . . If I wasn't satisfied with my life, if there was something that I wanted to do, I could just go out and do it.
>
> (Xander 1993)

The DIY ethic provides the foundation for a network of information disseminated in the form of volunteerism, public demonstrations, fanzines, music, and artwork. Riot Grrrl became a self-consciously political culture and valorized the self-creation of an "anarcho punk culture." Iris, a pseudonym for an early member of Riot Grrrl DC notes,

> Zines are really important. When I first started doing a zine I didn't know what I was doing – I didn't really have a mission. I have one now. To be there for girls who aren't getting listened to and to be there for girls when they're told their experience don't matter. Fuck that noise! How we live counts!
>
> (Iris 1994)

(Re)producing zines is a subversive act, which is carried out not only in photocopying the document, but also in assembling the images and text contained within the publication. For Riot Grrrls, zines represent an alternative media form/forum that allow Grrrls/girls to produce everyday life experiences in their own words without the objectifying lens of journalism. Zines also provide an underground form of communication. As one of the early DC Riot Grrrls put it,

> Zines are such a great way to communicate with girls in other states and scenes and even other countries. It's the whole DIY ethic. Grrrls can make their own zine and Xerox it or scan it for free. That's the whole subversiveness about it.
>
> (Phoebe 1994)

Zines exist within obscure channels of communication including trading correspondence and mutual-communication between other zine writers (Chidgey

2006). These exchanges tend to be part of what some Riot Grrrls in Washington, DC, called the "pass-along-press" noting that zines are often passed around between certain Grrrls or between different Riot Grrrl chapters. The pass-along-press became a conduit for girls connecting with other girls and learning how to write about their most inner feelings and most taboo subjects such as rape, incest, and domestic violence.

## Zines as subversive chemistry

Today's Grrrl/girl zine networks, comprised of self-musing and handwritten/Xeroxed publications, offer girls an opportunity to be cultural producers rather than consumers of empty girl power signifiers and products. Employing a do-it-yourself ethic allowed these girls to become critical consumers of cultural products and to feel empowered to express their own ideas and opinions (Schlit 2003).

The free flow of expression and DIY sensibility is reified in the non-linear layout, revision marks, and grammar of contradiction in Riot Grrrl zines. Girls' deliberate anti-grammatical practices presents a recombining of social codes and acts as a form of resistance to the established culture. Black Sharpie marker pens are tools of choice in the bricolage of zine writing and production (Wrekk 2002). The pen is used to underscore words of importance and strike through original texts, while allowing the reader to see the original thought pattern and (r)evolution of one's ideas. Typing errors, and grammatical mistakes, mis-spellings, and jumble paginations are left uncorrected in the final proof. Crossing out actions, left to be deciphered by the reader, allows for interpolation and interpretation of the text. The process of writing, ripping, cutting, and pasting a zine represents a series of flashpoints wherein the producer and consumer fuses together, yielding potential to change anything and everything. The ideological framework of publication is turned on its head as yet another attempt to overthrow the social and cultural establishment. The unifying ethos, as depicted in the non-linear format of zines, is one of de-centered authority underscored by denouncing the presence of a given author and celebrating the collaborative efforts of many voices. The zine layout defies conventional magazine designs by invoking amateur techniques of clip art and collage illustrations. The Xerox copying of zines further problematizes issues of authorship through the spectacle of generation – muting the clarity of the text and image and disrupting an authorial voice.

The zine, as a cultural sphere, allows for problematizing issues of gender inequality and sexual identity and fosters public self-expression. These include descriptions of experiences of coming out as a lesbian or negotiations of becoming transgendered; the disclosure of traumas as incest or rape survivors, or as young girls/bois struggling with suicidal tendencies as well as gushy affirmations of girl-love and devotion to Punk music. Such narratives become platforms of commitment and affirmation of legitimacy within the personal and political realm.

## Disrupting gender: grrrls and bois

Riot Grrrl rhetoric includes the appropriation of common words such as girl and boy. In early 2000, Riot Grrrl zines began using the word boi as a way to not only appropriate contemporary boundaries between boys and girls, but also to create new identities for girls as bois – girl infused boyness. Riot Grrrl recognizes gender as a construct and attempts to disrupt ideologies of femininity through counter-representations as exemplified in Grrrl style, actions, music, and street art. At stake are issues of cultural justice which are themselves tied to hierarchies of race, gender, sexuality and class – of who will speak for whom and when, and under what conditions or circumstances. Riot Grrrl researchers relate the work of contemporary feminist theorists to problematize gender constructions and relations in/out of the scene.

Gender is (re)interpreted as a highly viable and historically contingent set of human practices. Gender is not a stable thing; it is certainly not a set of anatomical or biological attributes, although the relation of gender to embodiment is an interesting and controversial question among feminist theorists. Gender, in girl zines, is contested and analyzed in relation to cultural differences and everyday life experiences. Judith Butler argues that "gender" cannot be "conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex; gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established" (Butler 1990: 6). She continues her argument in her essay "Subversive bodily acts." Butler questions the notion of natural, biological or true gender identity and persuasively argues that there is no such thing as original gender identity, but rather subjectivity (Butler 1991). Similarly, those involved with Riot Grrrl and its renditions, such as LadyFest followers, call into question such divides between girls and bois and the use of categorical labels to assign one an identity.

Several Riot Grrrl zines re-chart the space between girlness and boyness through platforms of gender intersections articulated in the words, grrrls and bois. Here girls push into boy domains in intersexed identities and transgendered locutions. Both spaces of orientation are contested and reified in girl zine culture as humyn inter(sex)sections. Leslie Feinberg (1998) describes the transgendered movement as acts of transliberation, that contest traditional understandings of girlness and boyness (boiness). She notes (1998: 5):

> We are a movement of masculine females and feminine males, cross-dresser, transsexual men and women, intersexuals in the anatomical sweep between female and male, gender-blenders, many other sex and gender variant people and our significant others. All told we work to expand understandings of how many ways there are to be human.

Red Durkin produces four zines and is a member of the transgendered traveling performance artist troupe called the Tranny Roadshow. Durkin notes the significance of zines to tranny culture (in Schenwar 2006: 2):

> Zines are an almost perfect outlet for us . . . Being trans is personal. There's no instruction manual. I think the failing of any broad sweeping analysis is that it could never encompass all of us. The only way for all of us to be heard is for each of us to have our own voice, and that's what the zine world offers.

In the end, Riot Grrrl and "transgender zines create community and build diversity in ways that the Internet and the big screen can't" (Schenwar 2006: 1). Self-identification, as demonstrated in trans populations and zine culture, integrates a concept of difference to a fluid politics of identity.

## Conclusion

Riot Grrrl's creation of feminized spaces draws upon feminist theories of gender ideology, difference, identity politics, consciousness raising/grass-roots activism, and female adolescent empowerment. Notions of what constitutes or (re)constitutes identity, difference, and empowerment may be considered ideologically powerful and politically useful tools for participants in both subcultural scenes and community activism. However, the meanings of these terms often lack distinction and are seldom located as part of a contextualized framework or an ongoing activity. The division of the theoretical aspects of these terms, apart from knowing or engaging these locutions, is at the heart of critical inquiry and the focus of feminist praxis.

My own frustration with academics of grrrl culture is that they often contribute to media histrionics. Such writing is oblivious to the real time, everyday confrontations of grrrls and bois. Such analytical discourse compounds the distance between theory and practice and reifies divides between scholars and activists as an us/them dichotomy. Riot Grrrls, LadyFesters, or Trannies proclaim "they" (academics) just don't get it. As one Riot Grrrl put it, "what's the point of studying of these cultures unless there's a paradigm shift" (Chidgey 2008).

Researchers of Riot Grrrl often equate the movement with the beginnings of Third Wave Feminism. The wave metaphor attempts to describe the ebb and flow of the feminism and girl activism over the years. On the surface, Riot Grrrl, appears to conform to the wave analogy given the fact that the movement has undergone its own state of ascendence, abandonment, reorganization, resignation and subsequent (r)evolution. However, the inscription of a wave metaphor to Riot Grrrl and its zine culture falls short of unearthing internal changes and shifts in feminist meanings and constituencies (Garrison). The Riot Grrrl movement and its zine culture, contained within a third wave discourse like other waves of intent, fails to recognize differences in girl culture and ongoing initiatives that may actually be rooted in a conflation of experiences of days, months, years, or even a decade ago. Such actions disrupt gender boundaries cultivated in mainstream society, only to be unpacked in a subterranean existence between girls and boys – appropriated as grrrls and bois.

The paradigm shift of Grrrl culture is rooted in cultural anarchy wherein the notion of an analogue history that equates a narrative of beginning middle and end,

and signified by the prefix "Post" is incongruent with the ethos of the girl activism and the fluidity of zine writing. This is to suggest that to give primacy of time over space renders early experiences as outdated, overrated, replicated or retrograde. When in fact zines offer forward-looking experiences that embrace retroactivity through a pastiche of clip art/snap shots of time reorganized/disorganized to disrupt preferred meanings and interpretations of girls' and bois' lives. There is no part of Riot Grrrl or zine culture that is "advanced" in time or none that is backward. Rather we are all in this time that is both transient and universal. The stories and states of being a Riot Grrrl remain alive through what Helen Petrovsky calls a "human community or collective in the making with the transient social present where we meet in the absence of traditional definitions and historical boundary markers and work collectively through a juxtaposition of different work and eras of existence" (Petrovsky 2003: 11). In doing so, we recognize our commonalities through dis-similiarities-of-being that cannot be co-opted or commodified. To phrase an early Riot Grrrl zine, "Every girl/boy is a Riot Grrrl."

    In all, Riot Grrrl is comprised of many Grrrl/girl selves and states of being that articulate a celebration of difference and an accentuation of individuality as necessary elements for social change. The accomplishments of Riot Grrrl gave way to possibilities for women's public expression, gender identifications, and anarchist behavior. My work with Riot Grrrls allowed me to encounter young activists amazed at the fluidity of their speech via poetry slams, music shows, or zines. Such outlets allowed them to articulate feelings and experiences of life that had previously remained sealed within their minds. For some, this outward process of thinking and speaking out loud helped them come to terms with both painful and meaningful experiences in their lives. Each action and interaction with Riot Grrrls/Bois constitutes ground level anarchist practices from individual actions to integrated protests and demonstrations. Each engagement in Riot Grrrl activities is reorganized/disorganized to disrupt preferred meanings and interpretations of girls and bois. Riot Grrrls' constant reflection and reinterpretation of social, cultural, political, and economic issues through their own words is embodied in the granular lines of their zines which designate layers of existence and engagement in/out of the text. Stray ink dots on the page reify points of thought, communiqué and action. Tonal changes on the page from hot white to cool black and gradations in between mimic deviations from normalized girlness/boyness and articulate states of "being a Riot Grrrl."

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# 23  Free as a bird: natural anarchism in action

*pattrice jones*

The Chicago Anarcho-Feminists warned us back in 1971 and now it's really true: "The world obviously cannot survive many more decades of rule by gangs of armed males calling themselves governments" (Chicago Anarcho-Feminist 1971: 4). The forcible violation of ecosystems that led to and emanates from the violent partition of the earth into nations has brought us to the dangerous days of cracking ice caps and disappearing islands. Pretty soon we'll be living on what climate change scientist James Hansen calls "a different planet" (Revkin 2006). But hope, as Emily Dickenson wrote, is "the thing with feathers." Birds and other outlaws routinely disregard the authorities and boundaries established by people while working cooperatively with one another to pursue their own purposes in the context of human exploitation and expropriation. This is anarchy in its purest form. People can be natural anarchists too. Working from within an ecofeminist appreciation of the intersection of oppressions and the interconnection of all life, natural anarchists understand that true liberation resides in the restoration of healthy relationships among people and between species. Recognizing that more than a rearrangement of power relations among people will be needed to rescue ourselves and our planet from man-made catastrophe, natural anarchists see plants and nonhuman animals as allies in a shared struggle for peace and freedom for everybody.

## Ground rules

*Everything happens somewhere*. Mutual aid, state formation and disintegration, resistance and acquiescence, all of these processes occur – can only occur – in actual places, which is to say at specific points in space and time. Nothing happens nowhere.

*Where things happen matters*. Physical contexts predicate possibilities and limits. Where we are now determines where we can go.

*States are places.* Agreements among governments divide the natural world into states. Most nations continue the process of division and reification by devolving the geographic region under their control into sectors of private property owned by individuals. The division of the earth into nations and the devolution of land into private property are linked acts of violence that rend the fabric of ecosystems, hurting their human and nonhuman inhabitants.

*Borders are more than marks on maps* They are physical facts often marked by ecologically disruptive walls or fences and always policed by force. The border walls currently under construction by the USA and Israel are merely extreme versions of the chain-link fences that demarcate suburban backyards. We notice and protest the walls because they disrupt the flow of people; we are less likely to perceive the barriers that keep rabbits or dandelions from going where they want to go, although they may be just as destructive.

*States are places claimed as property*. Borders are scars on living landscapes, testifying to the violence inherent in property. Property is rooted in possession (as opposed to use or inhabitation). The only way to possess land or its inhabitants is by means of violence. Because the sleight of hand by which living beings and ecosystems are converted into abstract property is so slippery, we must not allow ourselves to be tricked into forgetting the actual barbed wire and gunfire by which ownership is obtained and maintained. Just as urgently, we must always keep our eyes on the land and animals that are disappeared into property lest we slip into abstraction ourselves. The division and subdivision of land into countries and properties reflects and reproduces traumatic estrangement from and imagined elevation over our enveloping ecosystems. In imagining themselves owners of land, animals, or other persons, people abstract themselves from the web of relationships that is the basis of all life. That foundational violation of integrity necessarily leads to other violations. The coevolution of property, patriarchy, and pastoralism from that fundamental rupture created the landscape in which practices like droit de seigneur were sure to flourish.

*Where and when cannot be separated*. No place exists outside of time. Places change over time, creating and delimiting possibilities for action. The things we do change places. We bomb islands and chop off mountain tops. We divert rivers and drench the earth with chemicals. We burn coal and start forest fires, altering land and atmosphere at the same time. Such circumstantial changes circumscribe our options. Desertification exacerbated by animal herding drove Proto-Indo-European pastoral nomads out of the Eurasian steppes, from whence they carried patriarchal ideas and practices into Europe and South Asia. Their conquest of Europe led ultimately to the deforestation of that continent, which in turn helped to drive Europeans to seek more resources in the Americas, wherein they launched a new round of landscape alteration. Disasters like hurricane Katrina foretell a future of erratic weather wreaking havoc on compromised ecosystems and exacerbating inequalities among people. At the same time, life goes on despite our depredations. Animals reclaim lands vacated by victims of human violence. So-called "superweeds" creep through fields of genetically modified crops, evolving to thwart each new herbicide in turn. Time takes its own toll on the best-laid plans of man. Sea changes devalue beach-front properties. Walls fall down.

*Anarchy exists.* Here and there, now and then, the gangs called governments are thwarted or ignored by the beings over whom they presume to rule. The border between the United States and Mexico remains porous thanks to a felicitous combination of determination and geography. Non-human animals organize themselves into communities and cooperate in complex collective activities

without (so far as we know) the need for constitutions or treaties. They know something that we, who recognize the anarchist strategy of bringing down governments by making them irrelevant as our only realistic option, need to remember.

Sometimes, the breach between what governments purport to be and the limited things their guns and money can do opens up a space for creative alternatives to blossom. Community gardens grow in forgotten vacant lots, filling the gaps left by Food Stamps with fresh produce. Here is where hope resides. Danger lives there too, as even a glancing acquaintance with the ongoing history of violence in the wake of failed states demonstrates. We're damaged animals acting out cultural practices forged by centuries of dislocation and dissociation. We barely know how to get along with each other, let alone live in harmony with other species and in balance with the biosphere, scaling our collective consumption and reproduction in accordance with reality rather than fantasy. If we want to bring our dreams of pacific anarchism to fruition, we need to study anarchy in practice. That means learning from animals and other outlaws.

## Animals and other outlaws

Governments are groups of people. The groups of people calling themselves governments claim for themselves the rights of ownership and control over the ecosystems and animals within their boundaries. While some small number of governments cede some minimal rights to some animals (for example, the right to some small portion of their original habitat to animals on the brink of extinction or the right to "humane" treatment for some but not all captive animals), no government recognizes the sovereignty of animals. The word "democracy" is derived from "demos" – the people – making it very clear that even those governments that purport to derive their power from the consent of the governed do not purport to protect the interests of animals and other nonhuman organisms living within the territories over which they claim dominion.

Legal systems are agreements among people about how to divide up power and property among themselves. Animals are, therefore, outlaws – beings outside of the protection of the law. They are natural anarchists, sentient beings who neither recognize nor accede to the rules devised by governments.

While the term "outlaw" has come to connote romanticized (and highly masculine) banditry in the popular imagination, the term originally referred to a kind of social execution in which the person so designated lost the protection of the law, thereafter having no rights others were bound to respect. That concept lives on in the Bush regime's assertion that prisoners jailed at Guantánamo Bay deserve neither the protections accorded by the Geneva Convention nor those guaranteed by the United States Constitution.

In United States history, enslaved Africans were outlaws in this sense of being beyond the protection of the law. Escaped slaves were outlaws in the additional sense of having stolen themselves from their purported owners. Writing within the branch of legal thought known as Critical Race Theory, Monica J. Evans advances "outlaw culture" as a sustaining wellspring of resistance within African-American

communities (Evans 1995). Evans traces African-American outlaw culture back to the so-called contrabands, "slaves who took it upon themselves – often with the aid of that most prominent of outlaw women, Harriet Tubman – to disrupt existing legal norms of property and to explode the boundaries of a destructive culture" (Evans 1995: 504).

This is, of course, what anarchists aim to do. Unfortunately, when they have gained political power, human outlaws have tended to stop short of abolishing property altogether, instead choosing to institute governments consistent with the cultural norms that always lead, eventually, to the subjugation of somebody. Similarly, the outlaw "thug" identity now popular within hip hop culture inter-mixes healthy disregard for police authority and norms of property with often overt misogyny and homophobia, not to mention overvaluation of symbols of affluence. This is to be expected, given that outlaw consciousness evolves in the context of complex relations with the dominant culture.

Evans expands the concept of outlaw to include not only those whose identities or activities locate them outside the law but also those "who are outsiders and whose stories lack the power to create fact" (Evans 1995: 506). The stories of such outlaws show us the dominant culture from a different standpoint. While Evans refers only to human beings such as women, youths, and people of color, it might be similarly fruitful to listen to the stories of animal outlaws with special attention to those engaged in active struggle to salvage themselves or their habitats from human hegemony. Self-selected outlaws such as active anarchists, freegans, and earth/animal liberationists also speak from vantage points that may allow them to see problems and possibilities invisible to others.

Thus, in forging anarchist strategies, we must talk with and listen to outlaws of all varieties. In the course of such communion, it may be possible to find common ground in a resistance to authority and property that does not depend on the subjugation of anybody. This could lead to a new conspiracy of thieves taking nonviolent direct action against property and the governments that protect it.

## Propaganda of the deed

Natural anarchists vote with their feet, trunks, teeth, and tendrils. Vines clamber over and pull down fences. Elephants root up plantations of genetically modified crops. Sharks bite back.

In other words, when plants and nonhuman animals don't like something, they *do something* about it. In contrast, people tend to talk. And talk. The human propensity for language – highly symbolized communication which evolved from gestures and emotions – is encoded in our brains. This both helps and hinders us. The ability to communicate over distance and time has made possible the survival and spread of our species but the highly symbolized nature of our language and thought helps to abstract us from ourselves and our environments. As philosophers have long warned, people tend to mistake words for their connotations. We see this slippage in action when activists mistake dissent for resistance. Marchers in weekend peace parades shout "Not in our name!" and feel that they have done

something when, in fact, their parade did not impede the war machine funded by the taxes they continue to pay. In contrast, Ugandan baboons protesting a dangerous highway staged their sit-in on the road itself and threw rocks and stones at passing cars (New Internationalist 2003). South African baboons protesting suburban sprawl into their habitat broke into the new houses and trashed them (Agence France-Presse 2004).

The term "propaganda of the deed" summons up images of bearded anarchists bearing bombs but ought to be rescued from that rather narrow and misguided definition. In fact, bombs and other forms of violence, besides being unethical and counterproductive,[1] perform poorly as propaganda, tending to be interpreted differently than intended and to turn people against the cause of those who wield them. In contrast, propaganda of the deed in the wider sense of the phrase – making a point by doing something – satisfies the mandate to actually *do something* while also fulfilling the human need for symbolism and the strategic imperative of communication.

It's no use bragging or complaining about our highly symbolized form of communication: that's just the kind of animal we are. As natural anarchists, our aim should be to do the things that animals like us can do, in cooperation with natural anarchists of other species. In addition to language, we've got brains that are good at calculating and opposable thumbs. Elephants can uproot plantation rubber trees more quickly than we can but we can come up with clever ways to disable bulldozers *and* figure out how to do so in a way that sends a clear message to those who would deploy them.

Propaganda of the deed is direct action that speaks. The kinds of direct action that can be deployed as anarchist propaganda include property damage; salvage (rescue of plants, animals, and places from those who would exploit them as well as creative reuse of the detritus of industrial consumer culture); radical non-cooperation; and – on the upside – creation and propagation of nongovernmental projects that do the things government purports to do (for example, keep the peace, feed the people, etc.)

All of these forms of direct action are practiced by nonhuman animals, albeit without the communicative elements that would make them true propaganda of the deed. Nonhuman animals routinely and deliberately destroy walls and other structures erected by people; "steal" themselves and other animals away from human possession; and refuse to accede to human authority, hegemony, or boundaries. Birds, insects, and other animals often do organize themselves to fulfill collective purposes by nonhierarchical and non-coercive means and thus offer models of alternatives to governments.

Reification is another unfortunate side effect of the human predilection for symbolized communication. In the process known as social construction, our shared ideas about things come to seem like reality. In their disregard for the norms imposed by such constructions, nonhuman animals demonstrate their illusory nature. For example, the hundreds of species of nonhuman animals who engage in same-sex sexual activity for purposes of pleasure (Bagemihl 1999) illustrate not only the falsity of the idea that nonhuman animals are automatons concerned only

with getting their genes into the next generation but also the oppressive notion that homosexuality is unnatural. Since homsexuality among people is not only natural but also may be deployed as a form of direct action against patriarchy, this is a valuable insight. Thus, careful attention to the actions of natural anarchists can help to free us from our own received ideas.

## Truly organic intellectuals

Like propaganda of the deed, the concept of the organic intellectual can be productively expanded within the context of natural anarchism. To Gramsci (1971), the organic intellectual grows within and helps to organize and articulate the consciousness of a social group. The organic intellectual is essentially a function of the social group, both growing out of and acting upon the group. Whether or not they have formal education, organic intellectuals learn and teach in the course of "active participation in practical life" (Gramsci 1971: 10). Within the context of class struggle, organic intellectuals articulate class perceptions and aspirations in the process of acting in the service of class interests. In his biography of civil rights and anti-poverty activist Ivory Perry, George Lipsitz notes that "organic intellectuals learn about the world by trying to change it, and they change the world by learning about it from the perspective of their social group . . . Organic intellectuals generate and circulate oppositional ideas through social action" (Lipsitz 1988: 10). From the outside in, organic intellectuals are those to whom allies ought to turn in order to learn about the aims and analyses of their social group.

Nonhuman social groups also have members who solve problems and communicate those solutions to the group. Even among plants, the function of the organic intellectual exists: plants "figure out" how to beat the herbicide and then distribute that information via the DNA in their pollen. When we consider ecosystems as webs of relationships, we can see that entities fulfilling the functions of the organic intellectual can and probably do arise in the course of ecosystemic efforts to retain balance in the face of assaults from without or within.

In the context of inter-species class conflict and the struggle to survive in reduced and polluted ecosystems, problem-solving members of nonhuman social groups express the analyses and aspirations of their groups. The baboons who break into the houses that have encroached on their habitat, not only taking food but pausing to trash furnishings and urinate on closets full of clothing are saying: "This human settlement is hurtful to us. We want it gone." When the elephant known as Nana, encircled by her protective herd, carefully undid the latches of a stockade in order to liberate antelopes who had been captured by people that day (Agence France-Presse 2003; South African Press Association 2003) she not only freed those animals but let us know that elephants care about more than their own survival.

We can and should learn from such organic intellectuals, who can alert us to opportunities for action and remind us that working with natural forces is always easier and more effective than the futile task of trying to control nature. It's

especially important for us to listen to plants, animals, and ecosystems as we seek to solve the environmental problems that our species has created. We're so out of touch with our own bodies that we don't notice when we're drinking polluted water or breathing toxic air. We've trained ourselves to tune out hunger and disregard the need for sleep. Our perception of the climate change crisis has little of the felt fear that emergency ought to generate. Until we become less abstracted, we're going to have to rely on other animals to alert us to crises and indicate where the need for action is most urgent. Animals flee inland when they sense a tsunami. It might be a good idea to follow them.

Anarchists who believe that "another world is possible" (and are working to bring that world about) have an ethical obligation to consult other species as we do so. The notion that other animals need not be consulted about decisions that affect them is rooted in and reproduces the very property relations we seek to overturn. We have to figure out ways to ensure that our plans for the world respect the interests of other animals. That means not only inviting human advocates for animals to speak on their behalf at our meetings but also "listening" closely to what organic intellectuals of other species say through their behavior.

We can learn even more, if we care to. Along with other primates, humans are naturally imitative. From infancy onward, we learn by watching and imitating others. Those others need not be human. Some of our most ingenious feats of engineering have followed from close observation of plants and animals. We learn plumbing from trees and construction techniques from termites. Why not learn resistance from elephants and organization from ants? The swarming of bees, for example, offers a lesson in complex non-hierarchical decision making (see Miller 2007 for an accessible introduction to collective decision making for insects). Multi-species aggregations at water-holes often offer lessons in peace-keeping. And, of course, as Kropotkin [2] demonstrated so many years ago, many, many species of animals offer tutelage in mutual aid both within and across species. Such lessons can help us in our efforts to devise a theory and practice of natural anarchism.

## The ABCs of natural anarchism

### *Natural anarchism is actual anarchism*

Natural anarchism is a real process rather than an abstraction. For anarchism to be real, we have to be real in both the formal and colloquial meanings of the term. We have to be who we purport to be and truly try to bring into being that which we say we seek. In so doing, we have to face facts.

The most important practical fact facing anarchists right now is the over-whelming disparity in physical power between us and the governments we oppose. The most important social fact is the willingness of those governments to use all forms of force – including conventional weapons, unconventional weapons, chemical and nuclear weapons, and unconcealed torture – against those who dare to directly oppose the propertied interests they represent. That means our only

hope of achieving actual anarchism is to put anarchism into practice by means of a decentralized strategy wherein all forms of propaganda of deed as outlined above are deployed with the aim of simultaneously interfering with the machinations of profit, undermining the credibility of government, and building the alternative social structures that will make governments irrelevant.

The most urgent natural fact facing all of us right now is the escalating climate change emergency. The ensuing food, fuel, and water crises, while perhaps offering some new opportunities for resistance, surely will exacerbate existing inequalities. Luckily, action taken now to reduce climate change also represents preparation for those crises. Today's community garden or solar-powered well, not only reduce emissions now but also reduce reliance on government into the future.

So, let's look at what anarchists in particular can do to combat climate change now with an eye on the future. Climate change is caused by emissions of carbon dioxide and methane due to direct fossil fuel usage for transportation and other purposes, manufacturing of consumer goods, and the production of meat and other animal products. That last one might be surprising to some, even though it's most important. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization recently released a report confirming that animal agriculture is a chief cause of global warming, more important than even transportation (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2006). Anarchists are already very good at getting people to ride bikes or give up empty consumerism. Now we've got to get good at getting people to eat their vegetables and give up those heart-attack hamburgers. And, of course, we ought to be vegan ourselves.

That said, let's look at specifically anarchist strategies against climate change. In brief, we ought to put pressure on polluting industries from both ends, by both reducing consumption and making production more costly and difficult. On the consumption side, anarchists can be both models and catalysts. Many of us already know how to demonstrate how much more meaningful and satisfying life can be when our minds and time are not so taken up by consumerism and TV. We can put that talent to use to encourage the radical reductions in energy and meat consumption that need to happen right now.

Anarchists can be catalysts for reduced consumption both by making reductions easier and by making consumption more costly. Anarchists can be the ones to make change easier by starting the veganic community gardens and free bicycle repair shops. We can also use our opposable thumbs and complex brains to figure out ways to make continued consumption less rewarding. Anarchistic earth liberationists already have demonstrated some of the many ways to make driving an SUV more difficult, expensive, or embarrassing.

On the side of production, the anarchist analysis of property helps us to remember that the industries responsible for climate change do what they do solely for the purpose of profit. Any endeavor that becomes unprofitable is eventually abandoned by the peripatetic profiteers who are always in search of greener fields. Anarchists can reduce profitability both by reducing demand and by using direct action to raise the costs of production. Again, our complex brains can easily

imagine many ways to toss the proverbial monkey-wrench into the gears of the industries most responsible for climate change.

In addition to actively confronting the climate change crisis, natural anarchists also need to be thinking about the ruptures that are the deep source of the current emergency, by which I mean the estrangement of people from each other and our enveloping ecosystems.

### Natural anarchism is situated anarchism

Natural anarchism is situated anarchism. Nothing happens in a vacuum. Everything has a context. Natural anarchism recognizes that fact. Because people are physical beings living in ecosystems and because states are places carved out of the biosphere, efforts by people to break the state always are actual actions occurring at particular points in space and time. The efficacy of those actions will depend in part upon whether or not they are well matched to their circumstances.

Situated anarchism is realistic anarchism. Situated anarchism looks around and says, "What do we do now?" Not in some mythical future or romanticized past but now. Situated anarchism evolves in response to changing circumstances, just like the so-called "superweeds" that survive and thrive to continually plague agribusiness.

Situated anarchism is located in the here and now. Here is our polluted planet upon which more people than ever jostle with each other for rapidly diminishing resources in the midst of ever-more erratic weather. Now is right now, not Russia in the 1850s, America in the 1920s, or Spain in the 1930s. It's a brave new world of globalized capital, transnational extraordinary renditions, and an evidently never-ending "war on terror" but also a moment at which the internet and ease of travel make it possible for Bolivian villagers protesting water privatization to make alliances with Indian farmers protesting genetic engineered seeds.

"Evolve or die." Anarchists need to read the writing on the bumper-sticker. We desperately need our own organic intellectuals to step forward with new ideas forged in the context of current struggles. Supporters of anarchism who aren't actually working to bring it about ought to devote their resources to broadcasting the voices of such organic intellectuals, whether or not they identify themselves as anarchist.[3] Similarly, those who put anarchist ideas into words ought to devote some energy to finding ways to articulate what nonhuman organic intellectuals seem to be saying.

### Natural anarchism is social anarchism

Natural anarchism is social anarchism. People are social animals living in eco-systems. Our lives depend on our relations with each other and with our environ-ments. We cannot live apart from those relationships. Liberation for everyone can come only when those relationships are healthy. I know that some anarchists, especially male anarchists of the libertarian persuasion, like to think of liberation as freedom from others. I'm here to assert, as strongly and clearly as I can, that

liberation is connection. True freedom can only be found in the context of healthy relationships with each other and our enveloping ecosystems.

## Natural anarchism is ecofeminism

Ecofeminism understands that we are not static, disconnected objects but, rather, changing systems within changing systems. The whole time you've been reading this chapter, you've been changing in interaction with your environment, inhaling and exhaling our polluted air, digesting the recent meal that used to be apart from you but is now a part of you, mixing my ideas with your own. When we understand ourselves as systems within social and environmental systems, then we understand that our organizing must be founded on solidarity not only among people but also with plants and animals and ecosystems. We realize that we need to learn not only from other people but also from plants and animals and ecosystems. They've been fighting back against capitalist exploitation too. What can we learn from a study of their strategies? Their successes and failures?

## Liberation is connection

In cultures defined by the masculine ideal of individualism, "liberation" can seem to mean not only freedom from unjust or unnatural restraints but also freedom from all restraints, including legitimate social and natural restraints on action. Obviously, women and other animals would not be well served if, in the absence of government, men felt even more free to do whatever they might like to do, regardless of its impact on the earth or other beings. That's why efforts such as the joint INCITE-Critical Resistance effort to "develop community-based responses to violence that do not rely on the criminal justice system AND which have mechanisms that ensure safety and accountability for survivors of sexual and domestic violence" (INCITE-Critical Resistance Statement 2001) are so important for the evolution of anarchist thought, whether or not such efforts are coded as anarchist.

It's a false kind of freedom that depends on the separation of the individual from the community and its enveloping ecosystem. People are social animals living within ecosystems. Healthy herds, flocks, and tribes have rules that keep individuals from hurting each other or the group. Those rules are enforced by the group and are not inherently oppressive. Similarly, ecosystems place natural restraints on behavior, the transgression of which can lead to disaster, as is happening to us right now.

Natural anarchism sees "liberation" differently. Liberation does not mean freedom from all constraint. Liberation means freedom from unjust or unnatural restraints. To achieve that, our systems of relationships – with each other, with other animals, and with the ecosystems in which we participate – must be brought back into balance. That means that, rather than "freeing" individuals from the social and environmental systems on which their lives depend, liberation is a process of restoring relationships.

Hence, while the individualistic viewpoint sees liberation as a process of separation, a more realistic, situated, and ecological viewpoint recognizes liberation as a process of connection. Thus the ultimate aim of natural anarchism is the restoration of the relationships severed by the state. In order to achieve that aim, we will need to repair the dissociation of relationships that led to the creation of the state. Thus, in natural anarchism, the ends and the means are the same.

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# Section Five

# The future

In the anarchist milieu, as with many other critical theories, a good deal of time is spent culling through the lessons of history and deconstructing the often cruel realities of the present. Moreover, energy is sometimes spent celebrating the positive potentials of the present in realms such as pedagogy and praxis. While at times it seems as if less attention is accorded to the future than to the past and the present, there is in fact a significant body of anarchist scholarship and literature extending the conversation to include a focus on the deceptively simple question: Where do we go from here? The five chapters in this ultimate section serve as a nascent "conclusion" to this volume while at the same time raising the sorts of challenges and concerns we are likely to face in seeking to manifest an anarchist vision.

Among these concerns are some of today's most pressing issues, including: food shortages, the distribution of resources, the role of technology, access to political power, the roots and sources of conflict, the origins of oppression and marginalization, and the potentially irreparable harm being done to the biosphere. Anarchism possesses the virtue of admitting inquiry into all of these domains, propounding a generalized critique of domination and hierarchy that pervades a wide range of spheres. In drawing upon the anarchistic qualities found in the past – whether in indigenous societies or revolutionary movements – and combining them with the best practices of the present, the beginnings of a "utopian" vision for a better world can slowly be mapped out. Anarchism is unique among many political philosophies in that it openly embraces its utopian aspects, reveling in its revolutionary tendencies and its romantic longings alike.

While this in itself might be an interesting and diverting exercise, it only tells half the story of anarchism's relationship to the future – or, more appropriately, to *possible futures*. Not content with "pie in the sky" tactics or simply hoping that things will change for the better, anarchism seeks to grab the reins of do-it-yourself "direct action" to stir the pot and "get the goods." Anarchism is as much a way of being in the world as it is a theoretical orientation, and this in part may explain its often contentious relationship with academia. Is it possible to be both utopian and pragmatic all at once? Can activism and academics coexist without each com - promising the integrity of the other? Anarchists often find inspiration in navigating

such contradictions, and these types of legendary "theory–praxis" dichotomies are no exception.

Weaving these diverse threads together, Uri Gordon reflects on the incipient global crises confronting humanity and the profoundly constructive steps anarchists and others are taking to transform them. Martha Ackelsberg connects the dots back to issues of identity construction and societal marginalization, arguing that we need communities of respect and diversity to attain the vision of a just world. Ruth Kinna and Alex Prichard trace the boundaries of the past and present in order to help us explore what the future might hold and how we might get there. Peter Seyferth expands upon this by bringing a rich array of anarchist utopian literature to the fore, indicating the salience of utopian visions for creating the "good" world we often dream about. Randall Amster likewise explores the anarchist strands of the utopian tradition (and vice versa) through investigations of not only literature but actual "experiments in living" as well. Taken together, these essays serve as a fitting conclusion to this volume by reminding us that the struggle is likely to be arduous, and yet there is cause for hope as well.

# 24 Dark tidings: anarchist politics in the age of collapse

*Uri Gordon*

The writing has been on the wall for decades. Only large helpings of ignorance, arrogance, and denial could conspire to portray an entirely rational prognosis as the irrational rantings of a doom-crying fringe. But now, as reality begins to slap us repeatedly in the face, pattern recognition is finally and rapidly sinking in. There is no averting our eyes any longer: industrial civilization is coming down.

Already the whirlwind surrounds us. Energy prices shoot up, reflecting the recent peak in global oil production and its inevitable decline. Hurricanes, droughts, and erratic weather become more frequent and intense, bringing home the consequences of man-made global warming. Meanwhile soil and water quality continue to deteriorate, and biodiversity is crashing, with species extinctions at 10,000 times the normal rate. The trenchant food price crisis now engulfing the world is the strongest indication yet that no return to business as usual can be expected. Rather, what we are encountering is the final confrontation between neoliberal capitalism's need for infinite growth and the finite resources of a single planet. No amount of financial speculation or hi-tech intervention will buy the system its way out of the inevitable crash. The time of the turning has come, and we are the generation with the dubious fortune to live and die in its throes.

Many contributions to this volume have celebrated the flowering of anarchist activities and intellectual concerns, as anti-capitalist opposition resurges all over the planet. Yet when coming to offer an international perspective on the future of anarchist praxis, we face dark tidings. Anarchists and their allies are now required to project themselves into a future of growing instability and deterioration, and to re-imagine their tactics and strategies in view of the converging crises that will define the twenty-first century.

This chapter takes stock of the already-unfolding trajectory of global capitalism's collapse, speculates on some of its social consequences, and situates them as challenges to the future of anarchist praxis. Clearly there is no use approaching this task from a seemingly neutral point of view, one that pretends to simply anticipate trends without going into recommendation, promotion, and encouragement. Inasmuch as an attempt is being made to envision rather than merely predict, there is room for suggesting priorities that anarchists might be encouraged to endorse in the coming years.

## Collapse and recuperation

In his recent bestseller *Collapse*, Jared Diamond (2005) surveys the rise and fall of several societies as diverse and separated by time and geography as the Viking settlements of Greenland, Easter Island in the Pacific, and Mesa Verde in the American Southwest. In each case natural systems were abused and resource-use was pushed far beyond the point of sustainability. Strained to a tipping point, these societies all collapsed – and Diamond obviously believes that the same will happen to our own global civilization.

The peak in global oil production marks a clear tipping point in this context (for information and updates see www.energybulletin.net). Without cheap oil there can be no commercial aviation, no monster wheat combines, no communication satellites, and probably no skyscrapers. Apples will not be flown 5,000 miles and sold in strip-lit supermarkets, and cheap appliances and materials will not be imported from China. Modern food systems in particular are almost entirely dependent on oil, from the manufacture of fertilizers and pesticides through the powering of irrigation systems and farm machinery and on to packaging and transport. Without cheap oil, both factory farming and global trade – as well as many other systems we take for granted – will not be possible. There is no real question about the eventuality of collapse, only about its pace and consequences.

To better understand the behavior of complex systems in crisis, we can turn to Kay Summer and Harry Halpin's recent discussion of dynamic equilibrium and phase transition. Like biological organisms and the Internet, global capitalism is a regenerating complex system, maintained in a state of dynamic rather than static equilibrium. Constant inputs of materials or energy keep the system in flux, oscillating back and forth within certain parameters, like a ball rolling in a valley – also referred to as the system's "basin of attraction." However,

> [a] massive disturbance, or a tiny disturbance of just the right kind, [can] set off a positive feedback loop, to get the ball to roll right out of that valley and into another basin of attraction . . . these major changes, from one valley to another – known as phase transitions – are often preceded by periods of "critical instability", during which the system is under great strain. It can lurch widely, exhibiting seemly chaotic behavior, before settling into a new, more stable, state. These periods are known as bifurcation points, because it appears that the system could go one way or another.
>
> (Summer and Halpin 2007: 89)

The interesting times we are living in represent precisely such a period of critical instability. Factors like energy scarcity and climate change are pushing the system increasingly closer to the margins of its basin of attraction, with the resultant collapse representing a phase transition of the same order of magnitude as the ones that led from hunting and gathering to agriculture and, more recently, from agriculture to industrial capitalism.

To be sure, one can only take this way of thinking so far when coming to discuss the finer details of social and political developments and their significance for

anarchist praxis. For one thing, thinking of a system as a whole obscures its own internal contradictions and rivalries, which will influence how the phase transition plays out socially and politically in different countries. Moreover, growing energy scarcity will likely halt and eventually reverse many of the exchanges associated with economic and cultural globalization, leading to fragmentation and a hetero-geneity of post-collapse trajectories. To risk straining the metaphor, imagine that the rolling ball itself is made of liquid mercury, and at the point of bifurcation breaks up into several drops that flow into various interconnected basins of attraction.

How can these new political realities be described? Here one's vision obviously becomes murkier, but it seems natural to speak of three broad options: new social orders based on freedom and equality, modified social orders based on continued oppression and inequality, or a breakdown of social order altogether. In other words: grassroots communism, eco-authoritarianism, or civil war.

Anarchists and their allies are already deeply involved in activities that pull towards the first basin of attraction, and I will return to them later in the discussion. However, for the moment I would like to spend a little more time on the second basin of attraction. The anticipation of establishment responses to collapse is crucial if anarchists and their allies are to remain ahead of the game, rather than merely reactive, considering that hierarchical institutions are already reconditioning themselves to govern collapse.

In this context, recuperation remains a central strategy for preserving the hegemony of hierarchical social institutions. Recuperation is the process whereby capitalist society defuses material or cultural threats to itself by re-coding and absorbing them into its own logic (cf. Situationist International 1966).

Today, the environmental agenda itself is being subject to a massive campaign of this sort. On the surface, we are finally seeing environmental issues enjoying a prominent place in the mainstream discourses of Western publics. Yet increased awareness of climate change and peak oil, as well as to the excesses that have created the perpetual crisis, are accompanied by a wholesale erasure of the radical conclusions that environmental movements have attached to their warnings. Since the 1960s, environmental activists and writers have emphasized: (1) the essential contradiction between ecological stability and incessant growth, (2) the ideological connection between anthropocentric dominion over nature and the exploitative relations between genders and classes, and (3) the need for equality and decentralization as part of any genuinely sustainable society. In contrast, political and business elites have so far been rather successful in promoting a strategy that frames the issues as technical and managerial rather than social, and that promotes technological innovation and managed markets in an attempt to manufacture enough stability to keep the system running. Thus we are witnessing:

- The normalization of environmental and resource crises, whereby floods, extinctions, and shortages are packaged as an acceptable facet of contem - porary life.

- • The commodification of the atmosphere, as marketable debt mechanisms are introduced to regulate the emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases (Bachram 2004).
- The re-branding of nuclear energy as a "clean" alternative to fossil fuels, unbelievably reversing its status as a hallmark of destruction (Nuclear Energy Institute 2007), with similar efforts underway to integrate genetic engineering into "sustainable" agriculture and land management (Dewar 2007).
- The absorption of ecological consciousness into consumer culture via new organic food and clothing markets, "green" shopping malls, and the personal carbon offsetting industry (Monbiot 2007).
- A shift in international policy from the promotion of "sustainable develop-ment" to an agenda of mitigation, risk management, and damage control (Welsh and Blüdhorn 2007).

Perhaps the clearest outward indication of the elite strategy of recuperation is the transformed function of the Group of Eight (G8) summits in response to the yearly rituals of demonstration and disruption. As the writers of the Turbulence Collective (2007) observe,

> [t]he G8 reinvented itself [and it] became a media-circus that presents itself as the only forum that can deal with global concerns. In other words, as the G8 came under attack, its very purpose became the relegitimation of its global authority. And it learnt its lessons well. At Gleneagles, a big NGO operation sponsored by the UK government saw 300,000 people turn out, not to demonstrate against the G8, but to welcome and "lobby" it in favour of debt relief and aid for Africa [. . .] in Heiligendamm [. . .] the G8 had once again moved on, now seeking to draw legitimacy by seeming to respond to widespread concern about climate change.

All of these processes clearly illustrate an attempt to re-code environmental challenges as opportunities for capitalism, through the creation of new markets and instruments of global governance. Yet such an outward "greening" of capitalist accumulation will only further exacerbate inequalities, create new enclosures, and impose regimes of austerity on the poor even as business elites cash in on the benefits.

Yet capitalism can only go so far in delaying its confrontation with the objective limits to its growth. Thus the ultimate goal of these recuperative strategies is to buy time, prolonging the period of manageable crisis so as to allow hierarchical institutions to adapt away from capitalism. While dwindling energy resources will inevitably require a transition to more local and labor-intensive forms of production, this transition can also be an elite-driven process. Such a process would aim at creating post-capitalist models of alienated production that, while appropriate for a declining resource base, will continue to harness human pro - ductive power to arrangements of economic imprisonment. If successful in the long run, such a strategy may usher in new forms of feudalism in which labor

is at least partly de-commodified and replaced by serfdom – while armed elites retain privileged access to the fruits of a dwindling resource base (cf. Caffenztis 2008).

Since capitalism's strategy of recuperation can only go so far (not least so because the accumulated experience in anti-capitalist social movements allows them to see through it), its companion strategy – repression – will also remain at the center of establishment responses to collapse. It is in this context that postmodern forms of authoritarian governance continue to be refined – from electronic surveillance and genetic profiling to the growing power of private security firms and on to the planned consolidation of NATO and the European security architecture (Gipfelsoli 2008).

The continuing development of innovations in social control is taking place not only in anticipation of potential geopolitical threats – from resource wars to mass migrations of environmental refugees – but also as a bulwark against domestic dissent, as self-organized grassroots alternatives based on community and mutual aid continue to proliferate against the elite strategy of containment and managed devolution.

## Consequences for praxis

What is the significance of these developments for the future of anarchist praxis? In order to answer this question, we may classify the myriad actions and projects that anarchists undertake under three broad categories: delegitimation, direct action (both destructive and creative), and networking. While these categories are not mutually exclusive – a particular instance of anarchist praxis can fall into more than one of them – they do offer useful rubrics for organizing the discussion. In considering each category of praxis in relation to the discussion above, attention is drawn to a number of relevant priorities in each.

Delegitimation refers to anarchist interventions in public discourse, verbal or symbolic, whose message is to deny the basic legitimacy of dominant social institutions and eat away at the premises of representative politics, class society, patriarchy and so on. Unlike protests, which tend to be directed against particular sets of policies and geared to making demands on government and industry to change their behavior, messages of delegitimation are directed against the very existence of hierarchical institutions and implicitly or explicitly call for their abolition. Thus, anarchist participation in actions against the World Trade Organization or the International Monetary Fund went beyond demanding change in these institutions' policies, rather using the protests as an opportunity to delegitimate capitalism itself. Similarly, anarchist involvement against the Iraq war tended to go beyond highlighting the Bush administration's contravention of international law or its dubious justifications for invasion, focusing rather on the war's contribution to capitalist expansion, to the stifling of dissent, and to the "health of the state" more generally.

In the context of anarchist politics in the age of collapse, delegitimation will continue to be a crucial element – increasingly so as a countermeasure to capital's

efforts to absorb the converging crises of the twenty-first century. This has to do not only with the recasting of environmental challenges as market opportunities for those capable of taking advantage of them, but also – and perhaps more importantly – with their deployment as an instrument of social fear. In line with the decline of the welfare state and its functions over the past decades, governments can no longer base their legitimacy on promises of welfare, education, or health. Rather, their self-justification hinges on their promises to protect their citizens from drummed-up menaces, ranging from terrorism to juvenile delinquency. Climate, energy, and food crises can easily become a new weapon in this arsenal. As long as the alarmist talk is not backed by any form of action that would jeopardize the existing structure of wealth and power, environmental threats are a convenient way to keep the public scared and dependent on established institutions.

Against the campaign of induced collective amnesia intended to detach environmental and social chaos from the capitalist system that created them, anarchists and their allies would be drawn to put forward the clear message that the same social forces and structures responsible for this mess should not be trusted to get us out of it. Such a task will increase in difficulty the more that Western governments move in an ostensibly environmentalist and socially progressive direction, as is likely to be the case in the United States and a number of European countries in the coming years. Yet the strength of anarchist perspectives is in their ability to put forward basic critiques that unmask such developments for the time-buying strategies that they are.

In this context, the obverse possibility should also be considered – that rather than an outwardly progressive turn, the effects of collapse will in some countries encourage the rise of eco-fascism. This term refers to the already-extant efforts of parties and organizations on the far right to put an ecological veneer on their authoritarian and racist agendas (Zimmerman 1997). This includes, for example, using arguments about ecological carrying capacity to justify curbs on immigration, or the twisted incorporation of the spiritual and counter-enlightenment content of radical environmentalism into an ideology of integral nationalism (recall German National Socialism's celebration of a mystical connection between the German people and its soil). Eco-fascism is an especially dangerous enemy because it often presents itself as an enemy of multinational capitalism, though in the final analysis it is parasitical upon it (Hammerquist and Sakai 2002). Anarchists are already at the forefront of resistance to far right forces in Europe and North America, and almost alone when it comes to confronting them in the streets. No doubt this aspect of activity will remain a strong priority, now with increased dedication to pre-empting the far right's attempts to take advantage of growing instability and dissatisfaction.

This leads us directly to the central area of anarchist praxis – direct action. This term refers to action without intermediaries, whereby an individual or a group uses their own power and resources to change reality, according to their own desires. Anarchists understand direct action as a matter of taking social change into one's own hands, by intervening directly in a situation rather than appealing to an

external agent (typically a government) for its rectification. Most commonly, direct action is viewed under its preventative or destructive guise. If people object, for instance, to the clear-cutting of a forest, then taking direct action means that rather than petitioning or engaging in a legal process, they would intervene literally to prevent the clear cutting – by chaining themselves to the trees, or pouring sugar into the gas-tanks of the bulldozers, or other acts of disruption and sabotage – their goal being to directly hinder or halt the project.

In addition to environmental defense, we can expect direct action in its destructive or preventative context to become increasingly important in the area of resistance to new technologies. In his contribution to this volume, Steve Best has already examined this anti-technological dimension of contemporary anarchism. On the present reading, resistance to new technologies will become more and more significant as institutional responses to ecological crises center around the irresponsible deployment of nuclear power, biotechnologies, and geo-engineering as "fixes" for an increasingly destabilizing ecosystem. What should be emphasized in this context is that one need not adopt a comprehensive anti-civilization perspective in order to endorse such actions. In other words, you don't have to be a primitivist to be a Luddite.

In an age of declining fossil fuels and the climate changes perpetrated by their combustion, a new generation of nuclear power stations will almost certainly be pushed forward by government and industry. As mentioned above, the nuclear industry is already massively re-branding itself as a "clean" alternative to oil, coal, and gas, and governments are following suit. Yet nuclear power can only buy time for capitalism and Western over-consumption, at the price of permanent contamination. While public campaigning and legal measures may have some success in limiting the creation of new nuclear power stations, direct action will no doubt come to the fore as such measures encounter their limitations. Anarchists and their allies will very likely have to intervene to directly hinder construction, and we may well expect a new round of anti-nuclear struggles to emerge very soon as a defining feature of anarchist praxis. This issue is already being given attention at the yearly Climate Camps, first organized in Britain and already being emulated in Germany, Australia, and the United States (see www.climatecamp.org.uk).

The trenchant world food crisis will also likely result in an institutional push to expand the deployment of genetically modifi  ed food, ostensibly as a way of gaining higher yields, but at the price of ecosystem contamination and a further consolidation of corporate power and control over farmers' livelihoods. Anarchist resistance to genetically modifi ed (GM) crops already flowered in the 1990s, especially in European countries, which unlike the US were not as rapidly swept by commercial growing. In solidarity with militant campaigns against GM crops by peasant movements in Latin America and South Asia, anarchists have played a large part in both campaigning and direct action. "Crop-busting" may well return to the fore of anarchist praxis, even as they promote more sustainable alternatives.

Finally, nanotechnology – the direct manipulation of atoms and molecules – is increasingly entering the consciousness of activists as the latest front of

technological assault on society and the biosphere. Taking advantage of property changes that occur when substances are reduced to nano-scale dimensions, a host of novel products incorporating them are already on the market (ETC Group 2003). Nanotechnologies are not only an enabling technology that enhances corporate power in all sectors, but also a platform for the potential convergence of biotechnology, computing, and neuroscience, as the life/non-life barrier is broken on the atomic scale.

More immediately, initiatives enabled by nanotechnology are among those being forwarded as part of the looming menace of geoengineering – the intentional, large-scale manipulation of planetary systems to bring about environmental change, particularly to counteract the undesired side effects of other human activities (ETC Group 2007). Among the many proposals currently being discussed are "fertilizing" the oceans with iron nanoparticles to increase phytoplankton blooms that sequester $CO_2$; utilizing nanoengineered membranes to store compressed $CO_2$ in abandoned mines, active oil wells, and sub-oceanic caverns; and blasting sulfate-based aerosols into the stratosphere to deflect sunlight.

Efforts to counter these measures through international law are already taking place. The signatory governments of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), for example, were successfully lobbied in mid-2008 to unanimously agree on a wide-ranging "de-facto moratorium" on ocean fertilization activities. Yet these measures are limited in scope and enforceability – for example, one ocean fertilization company, Climos Inc. of San Francisco, appears to be moving full steam ahead in defi ance of international consensus. Hence, direct action may become the only way to prevent dangerous gambling with the stability of planetary systems, the result of the same logic that has already destabilized them to a great degree.

Besides the destructive and preventative aspects of direct action, the term may also signify a constructive and creative enterprise – the self-organized generation of alternatives to capitalism on the ground. These efforts represent utopian experiments in the making, a prefigurative politics aiming to build a new world within the shell of the old. As the writers of the Emergency Exit Collective (2008: 5–6) point out, numerous efforts of this kind are already in existence around the planet – far wider than the efforts of anarchists themselves:

> From new forms of direct democracy of indigenous communities like El Alto in Bolivia or self-managed factories in Paraguay, to township movements in South Africa, farming cooperatives in India, squatters' movements in Korea, experiments in permaculture in Europe or "Islamic economics" among the urban poor in the Middle East. We have seen the development of thousands of forms of mutual aid association [that] share a common desire to mark a practical break with capitalism, and which, most importantly, hold out the prospect of creating new forms of planetary commons.

Through the retrieval of commons, people become increasingly capable of releasing themselves from dependence on capitalism and hollowing it out from

within. In the coming years, the creation of self-managed alternatives based on commons will become ever more urgent, as communities face the consequences of declining energy resources and climate change. Indeed, such practices may be our only hope for passing through collapse in a way that will result in liberatory and life-affirming social realities, rather than in nightmares of authoritarianism or wholesale destruction.

For anarchists and their allies, it will become increasingly important to be involved in building independent, sustainable alternatives and community self-sufficiency. The growing interest among anti-capitalists in permaculture, natural building, and other aspects of practical ecology is an encouraging move in this direction (for a useful online gateway into this field, see www.permaculture activist.net). Constructive direct action in this vein is especially relevant in the advanced capitalist countries, where most anarchists are located, since these are societies where both community ties and basic skills have been thoroughly eroded. In both urban and rural projects, the combination of self-sufficiency and egalitarian social relations can amount to a powerful form of propaganda by the deed, displaying attractive models that people can implement. Such models offer not only empowerment but also steps towards food and energy security, and towards independence from an increasingly precarious wage labor market with few remaining social safety nets.

This is where the final category of anarchist praxis – networking – comes to the fore. In both their destructive and constructive direct action efforts, anarchists are acting within a much broader social field and their successes will largely depend on solidarity and cooperation with constituencies outside their own core networks. In this context, the cultural logic of networking that has become a central feature of anarchist political praxis will hopefully continue to bear fruit, as anarchists and their allies extend their ties with additional communities in struggle – from migrants and refugees to the crashing middle classes.

All this does not mean that anarchists should position themselves as a vanguard that leads the masses towards revolution, but rather that they could function as a rear guard that seeks only to encourage and protect the autonomy and grassroots orientation of emergent resistances. In the context of building a new society, this would entail subverting attempts to absorb local self-reliance into a capitalist and/or authoritarian framework and – if this is successful – defending self-managed communities as they come under various forms of marginalization and attack.

Ultimately, however, there are no guarantees. Anarchist agency will remain necessary under all conditions, even – and perhaps more so – after the collapse of global capitalism. As Noam Chomsky (1986) argues, anarchism constitutes "an unending struggle, since progress in achieving a more just society will lead to new insight and understanding of forms of oppression that may be concealed in traditional practice and consciousness." Even under the most favorable scenario, anarchists will have to respond to the re-emergence of patterns of domination within and/or among communities, even if at a certain point in time they have been consciously overcome. Eternal vigilance will remain the price of liberty.

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# 25 Personal identities and collective visions

## Reflections on identity, community, and difference

*Martha A. Ackelsberg*

*Roughly twenty-five years ago, still in the relatively early stages of the feminist movement's Second Wave, I gave a talk to a women's studies audience at Smith College entitled "Personal identities and collective visions: reflections on being a Jew and a feminist."* [1] *In it, I explored what have since come to be termed issues of diversity within the women's movement. While some of its language is dated, and the examples on which I drew occurred in what is now the quite-distant past, I resurrect it here because, alas, some of the issues remain all-too-current. In this essay, I intersperse that earlier talk (as delivered) with some contemporary reflections, as a way of exploring with the reader both the changing cultural and political landscape and some implications for anarchist theory and practice.*

In her poem "Myth," Muriel Rukeyser (1973) captured that sense of invisibility or exclusion – the unwitting exclusion by those who simply don't think about it – which so many of us have experienced as women:

> Long afterward, Oedipus, old and blinded, walked the roads.
> He smelled a familiar smell. It was the Sphinx.
> Oedipus said, "I want to ask you one question. Why didn't I recognize my
>     mother?"
> "You gave the wrong answer," said the Sphinx.
> "But that was what made everything possible," said Oedipus.
> "No," she said,
> "When I asked, what walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three
>     in the evening, you answered, Man. You didn't say anything about
>     woman."
> "When you say Man," said Oedipus, "you include women too. Everyone
>     knows that."
> She said, "That's what you think."

Feminists have taken as a basic point of departure that women are whole persons, not imperfect or incomplete reflections of men, and that the practice of our lives, the institutions in and through which we live and work, and the methods we have developed to study them must reflect and take account of that reality. Feminist scholarship has pointed out that to ignore women's experiences is not

only to lose half of reality, but also to misunderstand even the half that *has* been studied. Feminist scholars have explored the ways traditional categories of analysis ignore or distort women's experiences, and have argued that, if those experiences are to be adequately understood and reported, analyses must reflect women's own perceptions of their lives.

*More specifically, the past two decades of feminist and critical race scholarship have demonstrated that some of the basic, taken-for-granted assumptions about the structuring of social life – for example, the so-called public-private split – have blinded scholars, politicians, and activists alike to the limitations of traditional politics and workplace organizing for those on the margins. At the same time, these frameworks often resulted in ignoring the non-traditional forms that resistance struggles have taken.*[2]

My focus here is on what it would mean to take the full range of women's lives seriously. In those early, heady days of discovering that "sisterhood is powerful," it often seemed that the only significant point, for feminists, was the difference between men's lives and women's lives – as if there were such a thing as "women's lives" (or men's lives), simply understood. But if years of feminist, not to mention anarchist, activity have taught us anything, it is to be wary of such simple categorizations, to be conscious that such *assumptions* of commonality are often false. What's worse is that the presumed commonality often, in fact, *masks* relations of dominance and subordination, denying the variety of our experiences and making them invisible, even to ourselves.

*These statements about the necessity of recognizing differences* among *women now seem obvious: if the past decades have been characterized by anything, it has been a language of multiculturalism and diversity. Now, whether within the feminist movement, queer movements, disability organizing, or virtually any move ment for social change, the challenge has been to try to establish   commonality amidst assumptions of identity-based differences! But, although we may now be coming at these issues from a different angle, the question of how to find common ground amid differences, or how to recognize difference within a struggle toward a common goal, remains one of the key questions for contemporary social change activists.*

Much of what I want to say is related to a concept I called wholeness. That is a bit embarrassing to write about, since within academic institutions, at the very least, we are trained to believe that wholeness is both too "fuzzy" a concept to take seriously and, at the same time, impossible of attainment. (*Particularly in a post-Foucauldian world, we are all too aware of the partial, or fragmentary, nature of our knowledge, even of our own, complex, identities.*) In our liberal-individualist, capitalist society, we often conceptualize people as composed of separable parts: we concern ourselves with "work/life" issues, as if work and life were separate and separable. Or we talk of a distinction between "personal beliefs" and "politics;" or between politics, on the one hand, and research and teaching, on the other; or, finally, between my cultural/ethnic/religious identity and my identity "as a woman." We may even come to believe that these characterizations, these aspects of ourselves, are separable: that "who I am" really can be different from

"what I do" – or that "who I am" is *only* "what I do" (as in my work). We may also take them to be separable in another sense: for example, that I am a Jew in some contexts, a feminist in others, an anarchist in others, and a scholar in still others.

The feminist movement has, of course, challenged that separability perspective in a number of senses. The slogan "the personal is political," for example, insists that personal behaviors at the one-to-one level are related to broader social-political issues: that a man who claims to be committed to equality for women, for example, must treat the women in his life with dignity and respect. In our scholarship, we recognize, and insist, that a feminist perspective cannot be hidden away to be used only in courses focused on women, for example, but that to see the world with feminist eyes is to see the entire world differently. It must, and does, affect *everything* we do.

But there are other ways in which even feminist thought has not always challenged the "separable parts" way of thinking. [3] One aspect of holding such a perspective is the acceptance of a dichotomy between one's cultural/ethnic/religious identity and one's identity "as a woman." Thus, for example, in response to a 1983 article in *Ms.* discussing anti-Semitism in the women's movement, a group of well-known and committed feminist scholar-activists (Rosenfelt *et al.* 1983: 13) wrote:

> The desire to reclaim the positive dimensions of one's cultural heritage is understandable. When our common enemies are so powerful, however, it seems counterproductive to engage in a politics that emphasizes the national and social identities of distinct groups, which too often attack one another rather than allying to seek redress for grievance of common concern. In other words, we are distressed that within the Women's Movement, a politics of *identity* (Jewish, black, lesbian, disabled, fat, and so on) appears to be superseding a politics of issues. We urge a renewed effort to work across cultural and social lines toward a more egalitarian society for us all.

I am reminded of the dictum offered by A.D. Gordon, a nineteenth-century European Jewish intellectual, who wanted Jews to take advantage of the opportunities for education and secularization offered by emancipation, and urged his fellow educated Jews to "be a Jew in your home, but a *man* in the street." (*While it's true that attention to ethnic-cultural diversity and racial differences have become much more central to feminist theorizing and activism in the intervening years, the denial of the significance of those differences was troubling even at the time.*)

Such attempts to see ourselves, or each other, as coming in separable pieces, which can be pulled out or pushed under as the moment, situation, or context changes, deny our "wholeness" (*though now I would refer to this as the complexity of our identities*). Such denial makes it difficult, if not impossible, for us to experience that complexity even for ourselves. Such views deny the interrelationship between and among the various parts of who we are (*what we might now term the interstructuring of identity*), and the ways in which the totality of our

lives and work is affected, constructed, and reflected by and in the totality of who we are.[4]

   The process of developing an identity, however, is not an *individual* process. It is one that – as both anarchist theorists such as Kropotkin and Malatesta and feminist theorists, as well, have noted – takes place in a context. Experiencing a sense of the fullness and complexity of our identities, which is a crucial aspect of what it is to be human, is fundamentally a *social* phenomenon. At the very least, it is a process that takes place only where there are communities which can and will acknowledge, validate, and celebrate the different dimensions of who we are.

   At this point, you may well be asking: why? For, particularly in contemporary culture, the process of developing an identity would seem to be ultimately *personal* and private. Who, after all, could possibly experience – or understand – my particular identity, my sense of myself, except me? *For anarchists inspired by the collectivist-communitarian traditions of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Landauer, and Bookchin, this claim should hardly be surprising. But in the context of the prevailing liberal-individualism of the US, to argue that "individual identity" is a social product (let alone that it is socially constructed) is to grate against dominant belief systems.*

   I'd like to offer some stories to illustrate these points.

   First, it took me a surprisingly long time to recognize, myself, the inter-connections among and within important aspects of my identity.

- In 1979, I gave a talk in a colloquium series entitled "Thinking About Women," at Smith College where I teach. I said then that I had originally seen my research interests in anarchism – in the struggles of people to imagine, and then to create, egalitarian, non-authoritarian, societies – as completely separate from my personal and political commitments to feminism. For years, it had been a source of some confusion and pain to me that my feminist concerns seemed to be so separate from my scholarly and political ones, despite my feminist belief that it was important to mesh them. It might seem peculiar that I did not make the connection – one that now seems so patently obvious – but I didn't. It took a conversation in the kitchen of an old friend for me to have the revelation: the concerns I was acting on in both arenas were the same, stimulated by the same issues. I began to see how my understanding of, and concern with, anarchism could be enhanced by trying to see the *practice* of much of the feminist movement as developing the kinds of approaches that anarchist change entails. I began to see anarchism as pro - viding an important framework within which to understand feminism, and feminism as an essential component of anarchism.[5] That was an early step to a kind of "defragmentation," and it felt very exciting.
- But there were other aspects of myself that seemed untouched by that move toward integration. For years, although I had been very active in the Jewish community, and in the Jewish feminist movement, in trying to get Jews and Jewish practices to change to accommodate feminism, there was still a sense in which my Jewish and my feminist worlds did not come together. My Jewish

community was centered in New York and, although my friends there knew me as a feminist, they did not know about, or share, the totality of feminist (*and lesbian*) commitments I shared with friends in Northampton, Massachusetts where I lived. And although my friends in Northampton knew I was a Jew, when it came time for me to celebrate holidays, I went to New York. The two worlds were separate, and I rarely even tried to pull them together. In fact, I often felt that I *had* to keep them separate, that the only way to hold on to my sense of who I was was *not* to present all of it to either group – for fear that, somehow, I would be seen as separating myself off from it. [*Or, as I would put it now: for fear that each group would reject me if they knew who I "really" was – the Jewish community because of homophobia, and the feminist/lesbian community because I was "too Jewish."*]

- My being a political scientist seemed disengaged from all of this. While I did a good deal of speaking within the Jewish community, I did so, for the most part, simply as "a Jewish feminist." I almost never thought it worth mentioning to my academic colleagues, since it didn't seem to have anything to do with either urban politics or Spanish anarchism (the foci of my teaching and research).

- Over time, that separation began slowly to break down. Still, although I did not necessarily feel as though I was a different person in each of these contexts, the pieces did not seem to fit together in any coherent way. Then, a number of things happened to change my thinking more dramatically.

    - *I mentioned, above, that I feared revealing to my Jewish community that I was a lesbian. [Indeed, despite the fact that the talk on which this essay was based was about "wholeness," I did not feel comfortable revealing it in that context, either.] But at a certain point, it became virtually impossible for me to hide such an important dimension of my life, and I told a friend from that Jewish community who responded, "more people know than you think." That moment began my process of "coming out" in the Jewish communities of which I was a part. And I realized, as I put it to myself then, that I had been feeling as though I were walking around with a big garbage bag on my back, fearful of what would happen if folks knew what was in it; but that, in fact, it had been clear plastic all along!*

- While in Spain to research the anarchist movement in the Civil War era, I realized just what this work meant to me. As I wrote in my journal at the time: "It's not just an academic exercise; it was real-life experience for the people I've interviewed, and the consequences and ramifications of those experiences are daily issues both for my friends here and for me." It was an acknowledgment on my part of what now seems so obvious: that my work on anarchism is not simply what I do; it is a large part of what I believe, of who I am.

- Shortly after I returned from that trip to Spain (in the spring of 1982), I was invited to a conference of New Jewish Agenda, an organization that was attempting to articulate a progressive, left politics within the Jewish community, and to provide a Jewish presence within the left-political community.

I was invited to go as a political scientist. It was a remarkable experience. There I was, talking about my visions for the future, which drew on an analysis I had recently done of the effects of the Reagan budget cuts on women and people of color, and speaking on another paper I had written on alternatives to traditional nuclear families. Both of these had been much influenced by my experiences in the women's movement and by conversations with feminist friends, Jewish and otherwise. And all of it was deeply informed by my incorporation of anarchist images of the way society should be. I cannot quite describe what it was like, but it turned out to be a tremendously important event. As I was driving back from a retreat center outside of Philadelphia to New York City, I was listening to a tape of a Meg Christian album, and heard the song, "I was walking around in little pieces, and I never even knew that the way back home to me was the road I took to you." My hearing of it may well have been different from her intention in writing it; but I certainly   *heard* the song differently that night than I ever had before. There wasn't a particular "you." Rather, I was realizing that I had experienced a community of people who drew on, and made a place for me to experience, much more of who I was. For days afterward, I didn't quite know what hit me. I found it difficult to talk, even to my closest friends. Eventually, I realized it had something to do with the coming together of those pieces of myself, and how important it felt.[6]

*I must acknowledge that this talk of "wholeness," and of "integration of disparate parts," feels uncomfortable now, in a different way than it did then. In the early 1980s, it was not "done" in the academy to talk of wholeness or "spirituality," the latter concept not having been even in common parlance at the time. Now, I find this language somewhat embarrassing, both because of its association with a sort of "new age" mentality, which I do not want to claim, and also because post-structuralist, feminist and critical studies scholars have made us all leery of the goal of wholeness or transparency. Nevertheless, with all these caveats, I want to acknowledge the significance of the changes I have described for my own life and thinking.*

So, to continue: In preparing this talk, I spoke with some Jewish feminist friends of mine. They said, "oh, yes, it *is* hard to be a Jew and a feminist at the same time . . . you're always having to make choices that other people don't have to make." The next two stories are about such choices.[7]

*While my fears about being marginalized within the Jewish community if I revealed my lesbian identity did not come to pass, nevertheless, there were other issues*. It has not always been easy to get people to recognize or accept the significance of the bonds between women that feminism entails; oftentimes, people will be unwilling to confront the challenge for change that feminism requires.

- For example, in the early 1980s, I spoke to a group of young Jews (male and female) on a major university campus on the topic, "New Directions for Jewish Women and Jewish Families." In response to that talk, one young man asked me, "How do you Jewish feminists define yourselves, as feminist first, or as Jews?" Now, of course, that question was not unique to him: it is one

which Jewish feminists – and feminists from other ethnic-cultural communities – meet repeatedly.[8] What is important about the question, however, is that the questioner chose to see the situation as one of choosing between identities. But, after all, it is not a result of *my choice* that my being a woman limits my access to traditional (male) roles within the Jewish community; rather, it is the traditional community's decision to see me first as a woman, and therefore as "other," and not "equal."[9]

- *And the issues are hardly settled. In the years since, I have had repeated conversations – both within "liberal Jewish" and within Jewish feminist settings – with those who argue that, since full equality for women is now effectively acknowledged as a goal (even if not always achieved) within progressive Jewish communities, it is no longer necessary to insist upon its actualization in Jewish contexts. Thus, both at a Jewish feminist conference roughly ten years ago, and in preparation for a week of study in community in the summer of 2008, participants and planners have argued that full equality for women is but* one *value or goal, potentially in competition with another goal of pluralistic inclusion (meaning inclusion of those who do* not *accept the equality of women). It is difficult both to understand how quickly the significance of those early struggles has been lost and to articulate to those who did not live through them why such counterposing of identities is undermining of those gains.*[10]

But, it is not only the Jewish community that has told Jewish women they must choose between identities. Feminists have also done so, and not only to Jewish women! In fact, it has been interesting for me to realize that, while I spent much of my early adult life trying to get Jewish communities to take my concerns as a *feminist* seriously, it was not until sometime later that it ever occurred to me to make a parallel demand of feminist friends, networks, or communities.

So, the third story. Some years ago, I was invited to a "feminist seder" in a nearby community. The seder, of course, is a ritual meal eaten on the holiday of Passover, which celebrates the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. It is one of the most popular, and most generally observed, holidays of the Jewish calendar. The meal – the goods eaten and the procedures followed – is laden with generations of tradition and meaning. I went to this seder with interest and a certain amount of anxiety, not knowing just what to expect. But one thing I had *not* expected was that, as one who keeps kosher (observes Jewish dietary laws), I could eat almost nothing at this ritual meal, because no one had thought about having the food or utensils kosher for Passover! So there I was, in a situation where people were trying to learn from my traditions, trying to reach out and be "multicultural," feeling totally alienated. And I did not say anything about it to anyone there (except the person sitting next to me who wondered why I wasn't eating), for fear that, if I did so, I would have been undermining the "feminist unity" of the gathering. But, of course, that unity had already *been* undermined, precisely by *not* paying attention either to the diversity of the people there, or to the religious/cultural context within which that "lovely ritual meal" had meaning.

*This story, too, feels dated now. Not dated in the sense that it could no longer happen: I'm sure it would and still does. But dated in the sense that, by now, there has been a good bit of conversation, both within feminist communities and within larger progressive arenas, about the dangers of "appropriation" – the borrowing of rituals, practices, music, performances, etc., from a particular culture without sufficient attention to the context from which they come. In our rush to overcome cultural blindnesses, and white Anglo-Saxon Christian hegemony, we too frequently attempt to take on aspects of others' cultures in unreflective or demeaning ways. The business of learning from one another is not simple. It requires us to recognize relations of domination and subordination, of differential relationships to power, that we all too often prefer to ignore. In so doing, however, we may undermine the possibility of achieving the broader and deeper goals for which we strive (for a powerful set of reflections on this theme, see Eugene* et al. *1992).*

Finally, even though anarchist principles provide strong support for attending to the complexity of identities and to the multi-dimensionality of our lives, anarchists, too, have forced women to choose.

In the late 1970s, I attended the first "Jornadas Libertarias," an international gathering of anarchists, in Barcelona – one of the first large-scale gatherings of anarchists in post-Franco Spain. At a session on the topic "The Problematic of Women," women representing Mujeres Libres[11] were strongly criticized by others, both male and female, for interjecting a note of "divisiveness" within the movement.[12] These critics insisted that the subordination of women did not require special attention, as anarchism was opposed to *all* forms of domination, including the domination of women by men. The resulting conversation was intense, and included testimony by a number of young women concerning sexual harassment they had experienced at the hands of anarchist men during those very Jornadas. It was ended only by the strong statement of an old-time male anarchist militant that such behavior had no place in an anarchist movement, and that women should take whatever action was necessary to protect themselves.

This debate within the anarchist movement was hardly new: I was struck, in fact, by the parallels with debates that had taken place during the heyday of the original Mujeres Libres. What was particularly disturbing, however, is that women were, once again, being asked to choose between identities, even within a movement that specifically opposed single-factor analyses of oppression, and insisted that struggles for liberation must begin with the particularities, and concrete realities, of people's daily lives. *As I have spoken about anarchism and Mujeres Libres in the years since – both in Spain and around the US – I have received similar comments and heard parallel stories. Even though anarchists are particularly critical of monolithic theories that reduce all relations of domination and subordination to one "basic" oppression (be it based on class, or race, or gender), they, too, may cry "divisiveness" when called to live up to their principles.*

What am I trying to say with these stories?

For one thing, neither people nor cultures come in separable parts. If the Jewish community is to accept me as a woman and a feminist, it must recognize and

welcome the ways in which my feminist commitments root me in other communities and call on me to challenge patriarchal, inegalitarian traditions within Judaism. Further, it must recognize that I do so *not* as an "other" from outside the community, but as one who is demanding, from *within*, that the community be a community of *all* its members. Similarly, if the feminist community is to accept me as a feminist who is a Jew, it must recognize and welcome the ways in which my Jewish identity and commitments root me in Jewish communities, and tie me to other people who may not be women – who may not even be feminists.[13] I am, I encompass, all of those aspects. And, increasingly, I want that complexity acknowledged in each of those contexts.

Second, as anarchists have realized, even if they have not always articulated it in this way, and even if anarchist movements have not always lived up to their stated beliefs, no community can demand an exclusive commitment from its members.[14] The process of coming to a sense of one's identity and integrity is both personal and potentially multi-communal. I have been most able to experience the fullness of who I am not when I have thought of myself as having multiple, separable selves, but when the communities in which I have moved have welcomed that complexity, in whatever ways it gets expressed.

Thus, although we may be led to believe that the process of coming to a sense of ourselves is an *individual*, individualistic, and private one, the reality is more that which communalist anarchists have advocated for the last century and more: that people achieve their full personhood only in the context of community(ies).

What we need, then, are communities of people to value, validate, and encourage who we are. Too often we may feel that we have to withhold parts of ourselves, in order not to upset others, or not to seem to challenge what appears to be a monolithic unity.[15] In fact, the society I think we must strive for is one that would not attempt to maintain a false sense of unity which comes from the denial of difference. It is one that would encourage and support us in such sharing – not a sharing of one aspect of our identity in one place, and another in a different place, but a structure which would provide a welcome for us in our complexity, so that the communities in which we live and work could, in turn, be nourished and challenged by that diversity.

Paula Hyman, a Jewish feminist historian, once remarked (cited in Pogrebin 1982) that "women and Jews are both hated because each demands the right to be both equal and distinctive . . . we make the 'superior' group angry because we want to maintain our uniqueness without being penalized for it." Cherrie Moraga, Latina feminist, referring to diversity within the women's movement, has said (cited in Beck 1981: xxi; see also Lugones and Spelman 1983; Lugones 1987; and especially Reagon 1983), "we don't have to be the same to have a movement, but we *do* have to be accountable for our ignorance. In the end, finally, we must refuse to give up on each other."

We don't really have any clear models for what a society that would truly incorporate diversity would look like. *And, unfortunately, this claim is still true twenty-five years later. Most societies we know have not even claimed to try.* The US used to present itself as a pluralist melting pot, but the reality has always been

much more like an ironing board – with everyone pressed to fit some all-American (read: white, male, Anglo Saxon, Protestant, relatively wealthy, able-bodied) mode. *Most recently, the heightened fears over "Islamic terrorism" and illegal immigration have led to even greater xenophobia*,[16] *despite the fact that the country is rapidly becoming "majority minority."* I think this challenge of finding commonality while acknowledging diversity is one thing that really attracts me to the anarchists: they may not have worked out a solution, but at least they understood the problem. They tried to imagine a society which values both community *and* diversity, connectedness as well as distinctiveness and difference.

　　It may be that we can have no one collective vision, that we are too diverse and multi-faceted. For each of us to experience the *complex reality of our personhoods*, we may need a variety of different sorts of communities, which people could move in and through, but not one of which would claim to be "home" for all (or even most). Until we get to such a place, *Moraga's challenge still offers an important frame*: to strive to come to the fullest possible sense of who we are, and not to give up on each other.

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# 26  Anarchism

## Past, present, and utopia

*Ruth Kinna and Alex Prichard*

"No philosophical proposition," Engels argued in 1886, "has earned more grati-
tude from narrow-minded governments and wrath from equally narrow-minded
liberals than Hegel's famous statement: 'All that is real is rational; and all that is
rational is real'" (Engels 2008). If what existed was rational, then the despotism,
police government, and Star Chamber proceedings of the Prussian state were all
legitimate and had a right to exist. But this, Engels tells us, was not Hegel's view.
On the contrary, what was in the process of becoming real – even if it contradicted
existing reality – was rational. In other words, Hegelianism was about process not
system. As Engels (2008) put it:

> All that is real in the sphere of human history, becomes irrational in the pro-
> cess of time, is therefore irrational by its very destination, is tainted before-
> hand with irrationality, and everything which is rational in the minds of men
> is destined to become real, however much it may contradict existing apparent
> reality.

In the light of the anarchists' much vaunted hostility to Marxism, Engels's
views of German philosophy might seem an odd starting point for a discussion of
anarchism's potential future(s). Yet if for "rational" we substitute "radical," the
contrast between the two positions is illuminating. All that is real is radical, all that
is radical is real. The first, which we dub the *presentist* view, is one that has
increasingly come to dominate anarchist thought. The second, which points to the
necessity of properly understanding the *past*, is one that we seek to resurrect, albeit
on different philosophical grounds than those that Engels proposed.

Our argument is quite simple. Anarchists have, in the post-World War II period,
become very wary of their past both because they have tended to assess theory
through the experience of the European movement and because they have accepted
critiques of anarchism that are simply inaccurate. Today, when so many important
contemporary anarchist theorists reject anarchism's past in order to assert the
novel value of anarchism's present, anarchism's future becomes stunted. Anarchist
praxis suffers, too, because in seeking to junk past anarchist *thought*, anarchists
also jettison the *analysis of history* through which the construction of the present
might be understood and from which the impulse to re-construct possible futures

springs. The result of presentism is an endless celebration of a few de-historicized and de-contextualized principles which, easily identified in a range of disparate practices – and equally easily ignored by everyone else – provide solace about anarchism's revolutionary potential and our ability to bring about change through individual choices and behaviors.

This essay is a plea for a return to anarchism's past derived from a survey of post-war anarchist theory. In the following section we will examine some of the ghosts of anarchism's past and attempt to explain the relationship between these phantoms and the tendency toward *presentism*. In the second section we offer a corrective to this past with a view, in the final section, to speculate on two possible sets of anarchist futures: one which neglects the past and the other which embraces it and seeks to develop its insights.

## The ghosts of anarchism's past

The end of the Spanish civil war is usually taken as the marker of anarchism's death. This marker, or the idea which it embodies, is important for two reasons. First, because it ties anarchist thought to a particular period of European history (roughly between 1871–1939) and second, because in establishing this tie, it draws anarchist thought (so called "classical" anarchism) with a particular set of behaviors or organizational forms.[1] However these forms are defined, the appropriateness of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anarchist strategies and practices have loomed large in post-war debates about anarchist theory. For George Woodcock (1992: Ch. 6), the issue was one of violent revolution versus non-violent direct action; Colin Ward (1982: 4–5) made a similar distinction between cataclysmic and incremental action. Importantly, Kropotkin's thought – particularly the theory of mutual aid – served as a model for both. And Bakuninism was identified as the epitome of all that was wrong with anarchist thought, a sentiment that was particularly true in Woodcock's work. Thus, in seeking to renew anarchism in the late 1960s and beyond, the aim was to resurrect a version of anarchist theory that was interpreted through the lens of acceptable or appropriate practice.

The tendency to think of anarchist theory in terms of historical practice has continued to flourish and, as it has become more habitual, analyses of the theory that is supposed to have supported these practices have become increasingly distorted. For example, it is now possible to talk about "class-struggle" anarchism as an identifiable position which, leaning on Marxism, prioritizes liberation from class domination as the principal goal of revolution and focuses attention on the urban, industrialized workers as the oppressed class. Today, anarchists of this stripe share twenty-first-century anarchist concerns with religion, ethnicity, sex and sexuality, art, and the environment, but when it is applied as a descriptive category to historical movements, class-struggle anarchism has a limited scope. In the Spanish context, the identification of class struggle anarchism elevates Barcelona to the movement's geographical and emotional center, as if anarchism never extended to rural areas and as if anarchists showed no interest in questions

of religion or land. Having once been dismissed as petty bourgeois and paysan by Marxist critics, nineteenth-century anarchists emerge as fully fledged proletarians differing from Marx – as Leninists always argued – only on questions of means and not ends. As Benjamin Franks (2008) writes:

> From Michael Bakunin's involvement in the First International in the late-1860s, through Rudolf Rocker's efforts to organise immigrant workers in East London into revolutionary unions at the turn of the twentieth century, to the revolutionary anti-State syndicalists of the current era, anarchism has been a part of workers' movements. As such, anarchism has developed critiques of capitalism that support class analyses. Rocker's book *Anarcho-syndicalism*, for instance, demonstrates a commitment to the primacy of the industrial worker, the product of the new technology of capitalism, as the agent capable of bringing about libertarian social change.[2]

Like Franks, critics of class-struggle anarchism also associate nineteenth-century anarchist thought with particular organizational forms and practices, but they lash onto them an undesirable set of philosophical commitments and positions. In postanarchist writing, the priority that nineteenth-century anarchists are assumed to have attached to the workers' struggle against capitalism is variously taken to imply a subscription to a teleological view of history, an outmoded idea of "revolution" as "cataclysmic event" and a conception of utopia as a definable post-revolutionary condition in which the naturally co-operative propensities of human beings will be regained and allowed full expression (see, for example, Call 2002; May 1994; Newman 2001). In this view, nineteenth-century anarchism is characterized by a naive faith that the state (power and authority) can be eradicated (as Woodcock would have it, through a cataclysmic revolutionary event), and a ridiculous optimism in human nature, expressed in an idea that individuals can and should submerge their differences for the sake of living a conflict-free life. Popular anarchist literature suggests that a significant number of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century activists believed something like this, if only subliminally; nevertheless, as a description of "classical" anarchist theory, it is deeply flawed.

One of the concerns informing these readings of the past seems to be a nagging worry about anarchism's "failure." If the standard anarchist historiography is to be believed, anarchism not only failed – in the sense that anarchy was nowhere realized – but more importantly, its failure can be understood as a function of the anarchists' ambitions rather than the social context in which they operated. A different reading of anarchism's history – one not based on the evaluation of failure or success – might be that in the repression of the Paris commune, the collapse of the First International, and the brutal crushing of the Spanish revolution, Europeans witnessed the consolidation of the nation-state which – fueled by capital, industrialization, and war economy, and driven by the forces of autocracy, totalitarianism, and finally fascism – was simply too strong to resist. The "failure" of anarchism was not that it was unable to motivate people

sufficiently, or that anarchists failed to find a solution to the problem of revolutionary dictatorship, and still less that they could not adequately account for the nature of social reality. Quite the contrary: anarchists were some of the lone voices who understood this only too well. And to argue that the "failure" might be attributed to or explained by anarchism's internal flaws points to a view of history which assumes that the future can reveal something about the veracity of ideas held in the past.

The rejection of historically contingent forms and behaviors – and the theories believed to support them – seems to be based on precisely such an assessment. Indeed, the tendency to suppose that it is possible both to diagnose the causes of anarchism's failure and to throw out as outmoded past theory and practice has been exacerbated by the tendency to treat the rise of the New Left and the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s as the dawning of a new age. Notwithstanding the interest anarchists took in a variety of early twentieth-century avant-garde movements and in promoting anti-state feminism and ecological thinking, the growth in the 1960s of the green movement, second-wave feminism, black power, counter-cultural protest, and anti-colonialism has suggested a rupture with the past and the need for a new theoretical approach (see Purkis and Bowen 1997). What remains of anarchism is largely a set of themes, to wit: spontaneity, self-government, non-hierarchical organization, networking, affinity groups, DIY ("do-it-yourself"), the TAZ ("temporary autonomous zone"), "poetic terrorism," rhizomatic action, and carnival (see Epstein 2008). Accordingly, the future of anarchism is said to lie in a range of actions which exhibit one or more of these themes: anti-road campaigns, alter-globalization, summit protests, and Zapatismo are all examples. None of these actions or movements is necessarily   *anarchist*, and to think in these terms, we are told, is to miss the point. What's important about them is that they conform to a set of practices which are   *anarchistic* (see Graeber 2002). This conclusion marks the final turn of anarchist thought. Whereas nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century anarchists cast about for means of change to realize a set of principles and ideas, derived from a critical analysis of capitalism and the state, twenty-first-century anarchists look for and find evidence of the theoretical break with the past in a range of alternative practices and experiments. In other words, what is real is radical.

## The past and anarchist theory

To make what is radical real, in the way we suggest, is first to acknowledge the enduringly radical nature of the past and second, to identify an analysis of the present that, informed by that awareness of the past, can help move us forward *strategically*. In this section, we suggest that Proudhon – often cast aside as a redundant classical thinker or, by those who read him, a misogynist and anti-Semite – can help us think more constructively about our future than contemporary theorists would have us believe.[3] We begin with a short exegesis of his work before moving on to discuss its relationship to the question of anarchist futures.

In *What is Property?* , written in 1840, Proudhon (1994: part 5) argues for a sociological approach to understanding social order. This approach asks that we acknowledge that the individual is cast within a dense set of natural relations: both with other people and nature itself. In this, human beings are like other animals. What marks us out from other species is an ability to think through and then act on the dictates of conscience and reason. Is this the foundation for a positivist epistemology and totalizing universalism? No. From this starting point, Proudhon proceeds to discuss in all his major works how our conscience and our ideas of rationality are structured, shaped, and directed by society and, in addition, by something inherently human that underpins it – what he calls our conscience. Man (and he *was* a sexist) is subject to passions. Rather than being perfectible or naturally good, people (to correct Proudhon) are prone to conflict, greed, and a range of typically human flaws.

Knowing this is important, Proudhon (1998: 40) argues, because if our flaws are human, then so too are our angelic qualities:

> The same [human] conscience that produces religion and justice also produces war; the same fervour, the same spontaneity of enthusiasm that animates the profits and the jurists sweeps along the heroes: it is this which constitutes the divine character of war.

Science – understood by Proudhon as a philosophically realist alternative to religion and rationalist philosophy (specifically Kantianism) – enables us to pierce or understand man's "divinity." And armed with this knowledge, we are not only better able to understand the actual, historical, and social roots of violent conflict (as opposed to human nature or whatever else), but also to shape better our strategies for avoiding it in the future without compromising the "spontaneity of enthusiasm" that underpins all inter-action. The answer, if such a thing is possible, is in the order of anarchy.

Proudhon was clear that human nature changes, but when it does it changes into something equally discernable as "human" in its underlying qualities. Moreover, since this change occurs to individuals in societies, societies then also change; thus (1982: 119):

> The most important task for the philosopher of history, is to discern why the people become attached to certain ideas as opposed to others; how they generalize them, develop them in their own way, turn them into institutions and customs, which they follow out of tradition, until they fall into the hands of legislators and judges, who, in their turn, transform them into articles of law and rules for the tribunals.

How is it, he asks, that we cling to ideas and use them to justify systems of right and law, designed to maintain and regulate or impose a fixed order? What institutions and power balances sustain these systems of right? For our purposes, the answers Proudhon gave to these questions are not important. What is important

is his suggestion that we can only find the answers if we look at the questions *historically*. This will lead us to examine how and why people hold beliefs in time. Proudhon's historical focus thus shifts the analysis away from ideas of an inherent or immutable nature.

His approach was of course political. Proudhon believed that historical analysis would help uncover systems of power and domination precisely because it de-naturalized them. Of course, given their embeddedness in broader social relations it was always possible that individuals would be unable to discern these systems in any particular time-period; indeed, Proudhon failed to see his own sexism or recognize nineteenth-century patriarchy, arguing that both were idiosyncratically natural. Yet, where retrospect played a part in the process of recognition, his approach prompted him to respect the  *historical nature of social customs* , the importance of enduring communal practices, and their social function over time. This respect made him an unequivocal opponent of the type of bourgeois revolutionism espoused in France in the eighteenth century, dominating the socialist tradition thereafter, which had at its heart the conceit that the workers would sweep away the unenlightened provincialism of the sort that Proudhon cherished and which modernity has done so much to destroy.

Proudhon's analysis also made him suspicious of abstraction as a route to the destruction of autonomous social change through ossification into social classes. Not least because classes did not exist in France in the way Marx understood them, Proudhon (1982: 115) saw social relations as complementary and interdependent. If history was any guide, the triumph of the working class over all others, and in league with the state, would mean:

> [t]he in-division of power; an all-absorbing centralisation; the systematic destruction of all reputedly divisive individual personality, including the corporative and local; an inquisitorial police; the abolition or at least the restriction of the family through the abolition of hereditary; universal suffrage organised in such a way as to serve as a perpetual mandate for this anonymous tyranny, weighted by a preponderance of the mediocre subjects, or even idiots, now always in the majority over more capable citizens and independent characters, who would be declared suspects and naturally, therefore, few in number.

This was the thinking behind Proudhon's rejection of Louis Blanc's bourgeois state communism. Difference and diversity are at the heart of his plea for common sense. The opening epigram to his prize-winning work on Swiss taxation systems (1861: i, 5), more elevating than the title of the work suggested, was: "Reform forever. Utopias never." Precisely because of his views on history and society, Proudhon rejected the idea that social reform could somehow take place *outside* society or *replace it* . He rejected, therefore, the communalist experiments of the Fourierists – protean examples of the Kibbutz movement – the Icarian communities launched by Étienne Cabet in America and, finally, Saint-Simonian scientific pantheism, the progenitor of Scientology.

Abandoning all of this, Proudhon instead advocated self-government (and he used the English phrase too – perhaps the only English he knew). In keeping with what he suggested about the place of individuals in social relations, he also argued that self-government was only possible in groups and thus that groups had to persist for individuals to be able to realize their ambitions within them. For him, social groups are the *sine qua non* for realizing individuality, a strange but inevitable paradox given our social natures and the restrictions society places upon us. Yet while groups – no less than the individuals who create them – ought to be cherished and protected, no single group (for example, the state) could make a legitimate claim for our special allegiance; nor ought we to countenance the expropriation of collective products to private hands, and the amassing of power there, as liberal political economy demanded. Proudhon's vision was politically pluralist and socially egalitarian. Above all, it was based on an idea of bounded mutability, of hybridization as well as individual and social spontaneity.

To conclude: Proudhon was as intolerant as an anarchist can be of appeals to the transcendent nature of any group and/or its supposed right to exist; yet he believed that all individuals and groups had the right to self-affirmation and he understood justice to consist of a reciprocal duty to respect this right. This was the basis of his theory of mutualism. However, recognizing the right of self-affirmation did not abrogate the right to question those who asserted their naturalness, nor did it require that we abstain from unpacking and examining the historical origins of groups or bodies – like the state and capital (capitalism as Marx understood it barely existed in France at Proudhon's time) – which claimed particular duties of obedience. The opposite was true. History and sociology were central to the mutualist project – not rationalist deontological idealism, nor the materialist consequentialism of the type common at this time.[4]

## Presentism and anarchist futures

So far, we have argued that the tendency of post-war anarchist theory has been to interpret past anarchist thought through the assessment of organizational practices, measured against an understanding of anarchism's historic failure. Second, we have suggested, through a review of Proudhon's thought, that anarchist theory should be informed by a historical and sociological analysis of mutability. Our suggestion is that anarchist theory is largely trapped in teleological thinking leading to presentism.

Presentism can take different forms. Proudhon's main concern was with the Kantian variety. This type is rationalist and takes the logical deducibility of ideas as the touchstone for rightness. In other words, logic makes right – not society, might, or anything else. This way of thinking has clear theological roots, manifest in the idea that if you have the solution worked out in your head and you act according to your precepts/dogmas/orders, then things will be okay. The second brand of presentism denies the possibility of deduction or induction, and throws out notions of rightness. Rather than seeking to analyze the historical and socio - logical context in which anarchists operate, this type of anarchist theory turns in

on itself, characteristically focusing on the psychological effects of domination and complex manifestations of power. Yet both forms point to a view that we can move forward without looking up, around, or back at anything, as if ideas are not shaped by society, that society does not have historical and thus changed impacts on our conscience and ideas about reason. This kind of approach might work for gardeners, but not for anarchists. When we plant daffodils, for example, we pretty much know what we're going to get – or the range of possibilities, at least – before the bulb blooms. The same does not apply to ideas. The fit between ideas and reality is always mediated by countless other things, and so we can never assume, as Kant did, that ideas are pure enough to guide us in the transcendental way. Yet nor can we assume – in rejecting Kant – that stepping outside of the door in the morning with the right attitude, crib notes from the latest theorist, or news bulletin about the world, is tantamount to resistance.

If this is hyperbole, the point we are trying to make needs stating clearly. Modern anarchism, particularly in its postmodern form, reads into the past ideas that are derived from present concerns, filtering them through two overlaid critiques of so-called classical anarchism that in the vast majority of cases simply do not apply. The first is conception of failure, drawn from internal or external critiques of the movement and supported by evidence which suggests its decline as a function of anarchism's internal veracity. The second is the result of a selective and de-contextualized reading of past thinkers which has led many to the conclusion that contemporary anarchist theory supersedes past thinking and is a better guide to action. This fails because the readings provided veer so sharply from the historical record and the simple techniques of contextualized reading.

Both versions of presentism are teleological; the first is a version of Whig history – the view that suggests that existence is evidence of success rather than of accident, design, and/or force. Neither can hold unless anarchists are to abandon everything anarchism in the past stood for – namely anarchy. Anarchy is not only a theory of behavior, or order, but also a philosophy of society's underlying nature. The point of historical analysis is to find the principles and practices which constituted order in time and the processes of power and oppression they come to sustain.

It is thus something of a splendid but necessary irony that historians of ideas should speculate on the future of a movement. We argue that a return to the theoretical and historical insights offered by the early anarchists is vital to any anarchist future. Not simply because of the material we are likely to find, but also because it opens up our historical awareness, allows us to develop a closer relationship with our ideological past, and helps us to think through the origins of the present in subtle ways. As a result it arms us with the only tool we have to fashion any future: namely, the past. Misunderstandings about the nature of the past will mean either that our principled stands leave us without tools to strategize or, in unclipping history from strategy, that we lurch directionless and haphazardly into the future armed with nothing more than motifs and attitudes – neither of which have ever won anyone anything.

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## Utopia

We opened this discussion with Engels's reflections on Hegel. It should be clear that the kind of future we're interested in is not speculative, as Hegel's was. It should also be clear that it is not architectural, either. Proudhon refused the utopian blueprinting of his contemporaries (and because of Marxism's speculative nature, he identified Marx as a utopian, too), and it would certainly be a mistake to pretend that we can define an ideal order and find the key to its eternal regulation. The future will be a natural outgrowth of the present, and Proudhon suggests that we can only see as far as the horizon of the present will allow – yet we must understand how we arrived here before we can understand the limits of social change and the possibilities hiding elsewhere.

In thinking about the past, we are also reminded of the ways in which anarchists reflected upon the reality of their social existence and how they attempted to articulate the ways in which this reality *should* be changed. We can compare historical periods and think through strategies for change in more detail. This kind of utopianism involves making judgments about actions, moral as well as strategic, and it raises hard questions about mediating disputes and working within the parameters of a set of institutions we often find abhorrent. But a turn to the past also helps us face up squarely to the possibility that what otherwise exists might not, in the end, be very radical at all.

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# 27  Anarchism and utopia

*Peter Seyferth*

Anarchism is an action-oriented ideology directed against all forms of domination. It is also the "most utopian of ideologies" (Williams 2007: 310), but does anarchism need literary utopias, fictional depictions of what anarchy would be like? First, in this chapter, a basic usefulness of knowing your goal is claimed. Then, utopia is defined as exactly this "knowing," even if it is actually more of a "desiring." The limitations of utopianism and especially literary utopias are considered, and the literary loopholes discovered by utopian authors since the 1970s are addressed, concluding that utopias can be part of an anarchist transition culture – maybe even a kind of subversive gateway drug. After a brief historical overview, this chapter closes with the introduction (i.e. reading recommendation) of four anarchist utopias.

## "Smash the state" is not enough

Anarchism is usually defined negatively: it is a non-archism, an anti-archism. Anarchists are against authority, against hierarchy, against domination. They are the enemies of the state. Bakunin in particular, one of the pillars of anarchism, is known for his violent anti-statism (1964: 299):

> Abolition of the State and the Church should be the first and indispensable condition of the real enfranchisement of society. It will be only after this that society can and should begin its own reorganization; that, however, should take place not from the top down, not according to an ideal plan mapped by a few sages or savants.

According to Bakunin, *tabula rasa*, the complete destruction of all authorities is the prerequisite to build a free society. But wouldn't that lead to chaos, insecurity, and, ultimately, the rise of warlords? Bakunin calms these fears down (1964: 407): "Do not fear that the peasants, once they are not restrained by public authority and respect for criminal and civil law, will cut one another's throats." To be sure, he admits that maybe at first there will be a few murders, but soon the peasants will make mutual arrangements for their daily lives (1964: 407):

And do not fear that if these arrangements are concluded apart from the tutelage of any official authority and brought about by the force of circumstances, the stronger and wealthier peasants will exercise a predominant influence. Once the wealth of the rich people is not guaranteed by laws, it ceases to be a power.

That sounds good, and it gets even better (1964: 273):

When the States have disappeared, a living, fertile, beneficent unity of regions as well as of nations – first the international unity of the civilized world and then the unity of all of the peoples of the earth, by way of a free federation and organization from below upward – will unfold itself in all its majesty, not divine but human.

This is the Pollyannaish anarchist's dream: just smash the state and everything will be fine. Unfortunately, there is strong evidence against this simplistic revolutionary theory. We notice so-called failed states like Somalia, Congo, and Liberia (to name just a few), which surely are not like what anarchists want to accomplish.[1] In these countries we can observe crime and conflicts that create "huge population shifts and refugee crises, long-term food shortages, failing economies, and the death of large numbers of civilians from disease, starvation and direct conflict" (Carment 2003: 409). Failed states are also dangerous for their neighbors and international relations in general (Eizenstat *et al.* 2005: 134–135). They are examples of the "bad anarchy" so many people fear.[2]

A state has several functions. Literature on failed states places emphasis on security (protection against internal and external threats, monopoly of the use of force, territorial sovereignty), basic services (education, health, welfare, infrastructure), and the protection of essential civil freedoms (rule of law, participation) (see Eizenstat *et al.* 2005: 136; Carment 2003: 422). Other functions of the state are less benevolent, like oppression and exploitation. Obviously, Bakunin and other anarchists want to get rid of the bad aspects of the state, but not necessarily qualities such as security, health, or freedom.

"If a government cannot ensure security, rebellious armed groups or criminal nonstate actors may use violence to exploit this 'security gap' – as in Haiti, Nepal, and Somalia" (Eizenstat *et al.* 2005: 136). Security is necessary, but anarchists do not think that government is the right tool to provide it; the same goes for the other state functions.[3] What anarchists need, therefore, is to build non-hierarchical solutions for the former state functions. They cannot hope that destroying state authority alone is enough. To get rid of the state without having something to supplant it seems to tend to create a Hobbesian state of nature. This "something" has to be at least an idea of how to provide all those goods the state purports to give us now.

But let's not be unfair to Bakunin. He concedes (1964: 381) that

no one can aim at destruction without having at least a remote conception, whether true or false, of the new order which should succeed the one now

existing; the more vividly that future is visualized, the more powerful is the force of destruction.

This conception is of course *utopia*. Bakunin is too fixated on destruction to deliver detailed (and consistent) depictions of an anarchist society (Pyziur 1955: 113–114); other anarchists offer more, for example Kropotkin in his *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1898) (see Kinna 2005: 98–99). Before we turn to more recent anarchist utopias, a few basic things about utopia in general have to be said.

## The (non-)place of utopia in anarchism

As utopian scholar Lyman Tower Sargent (2007: 303) has said, "it is easier to get somewhere if you know where you want to go." Anarchists want to go to "good anarchy" and would therefore benefit from some knowledge about what this desired anarchy would be like. As long as there are no actual anarchist countries to look at and learn from,[4] they are restricted to producing and discussing thought-experiments, theories, and depictions of working anarchy in addition to building small-scale anarchist communities and affinity groups to test their assumptions of how it is possible to live and act together freely, and of how to make decisions and solve conflicts without (even informal) hierarchies. In short: anarchists need utopias.

   In its widest defi nition, utopia is "the desire for a better way of being" in conjunction with discontent with the present (Levitas 1990: 198). This definition contains all kinds of hopes for the "Not Yet" (Bloch 1959), literary descriptions, golden-age myths, normative political theories, intentional communities, and whatever is an expression of desire. For Saage (1994: 4) utopias are "pictures of polities that are either desired or dreaded," and for Sargent (1994: 3) they are "the dreams and nightmares that concern the ways in which groups of people arrange their lives." Utopias do not have to be anarchistic – religious fundamentalists and right-wing extremists have their desires and dreams about society, too. Utopias do not have to be fictional narratives, either – in particular, anarchists are adherents of direct action and hence often prefer "a 'prefigurative politics' committed to define and realize anarchist social relations within the existing society" (Gordon 2007: 40). This includes, on the one hand, the form of any revolutionary organ - ization that foreshadows the form of post-revolutionary society (as Bakunin demanded, see Shantz 2008: 24), and, on the other hand, utopian experiments in anarchistic intentional communities (regarding decision making, see Sargisson 2004; regarding maintaining order, see Amster 2003). "Non-hierarchical, anarchic modes of interaction are no longer seen as features on which to model a future society, but rather as an ever-present potential of social interaction here and now – a 'revolution in everyday life' " (Gordon 2007: 36).[5] Anarchists dismiss blueprints, and thus the focus here is on fictional anarchist utopias – i.e. literary visions of anarchistic societies. Can mere written words be relevant and effective for social transformation?

   Lucy Sargisson (2007: 36) notes that the utopian offerings of radical alternatives provoke further thought, debate, and experimentation, arguing that "utopias are

subversive and estranged. These qualities permit them to perform the political functions long-privileged by feminists: consciousness raising and critique." Reading these escapist texts can simulate the feeling of what it might be like to live in an alternative society for some time. Tom Moylan (2000: xvii) even ("lightly but seriously") warns students in his utopian science fiction classes that "this degree of involved reading can be dangerous to their social and political health, for it can 'damage' their minds by allowing them to think about the world in ways not sanctioned by hegemonic institutions and ideologies." This is especially interesting for curious non-anarchists reading anarchist utopias – and if you are already an anarchist, your critique of hierarchism and the state can gain new aspects and depth through this reading. But we shouldn't overstate the impact fictional utopias have on the real world. It may be true that utopias "can inspire or catalyze change," as Sargisson concludes, by "showcasing new ways of being" (2007: 39), but showcases first have to attract attention before they can fulfill their function. In our time of internet, TV, radio, and movies, it is quite difficult for books to have a mass impact on people.[6] Kenneth Roemer (2007: 148) states that

> there has been a decline in the power of books to transform lives. There are no reform clubs or political parties inspired by Le Guin, Marge Piercy, Samuel R. Delany, Octavia E. Butler, or Kim Stanley Robinson; and the reviews and essays written about their utopias lack the sense of dire warnings or ecstatic hopes about the impact of reading utopias that characterized the reviews of late-nineteenth-century American utopias.

The decline of the power of utopian books depends not only on the book form, but also on the utopian content per se. In the twentieth century, several attempts at putting utopian ideals into practice led to horrible results, like Nazism and Soviet Communism. Additionally, a new type of negative utopia emerged out of satire and the utopian tradition: the *dystopia* (for example, Zamyatin's *We*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, or Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*). Dystopias show the dangers of utopia, especially its possible connection to totalitarianism, which fostered an anti-utopian attitude in the popular mind (Roemer 2007: 148). But the harshest critics of utopia have always been the authors of utopias themselves (Seeber 2003: 21) – which means that you do not have to become fully anti-utopian if you recognized the flaws of previous utopias. On the contrary, "not believing in the possibility of betterment, however flawed, condemns us to live in someone else's vision of a better life, perhaps one forced on us," as Sargent (2003: 230) concludes.

Utopianism is eager to learn from its own faults. Saage identifies particularly a libertarian and anarchist lineage of utopias as a corrective for the classical utopian tradition (1997: 162). In their works, utopians not only criticize their contemporary society, but the (not seldom authoritarian, perfectionist, and rigid) utopian tradi-tion, too. In this manner, not only the well-known dystopias emerged, but, follow-ing and answering them, the open-ended or critical utopias in the 1970s (Somay 1984; Moylan 1986) and the critical dystopias in the 1980s and 1990s (Moylan

2000).[7] Critical utopias are positive depictions of polities that are neither static nor perfect: they are rather flawed and ambiguous, and they do not smack of the mandatory happiness of the citizenry that so often makes classical authoritarian utopias appear totalitarian. Exemplary critical utopias are Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Samuel R. Delany's *Trouble on Triton*, and Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*. Critical dystopias are depictions of horrendous polities as in the classical dystopias, but they leave some hope for the oppressed and exploited: resistance or enclaves for subjugated individuals make new utopian aspirations possible. Exemplary critical dystopias are Kim Stanley Robinson's *Gold Coast*, Octavia E. Butler's *The Parable of the Sower*, and Marge Piercy's *He, She and It*.

The critical utopias and dystopias seem to follow Bakunin's advice (1964: 299) that the reorganization of society should take place "not according to an ideal plan mapped by a few sages or savants." They are not meant as blueprints to be implemented by social engineers. They are open to change (to the better or the worse) and therefore are far from an ideal plan. And they are not mapped by their authors alone. This is crucial, since in traditional utopias the author is the highest authority, regardless of anarchistic embroideries. The citizens of utopia live and act just as the author wants them to, and if he/she says so, they are happy with their blissful society, end of story! Not so in critical utopias: they need the imaginative collaboration of an engaged reader, because not everything in the alternative society is described (or, more to the point *pre*scribed). They may use, for example, non-linearity and/or a multiplicity of voices as narrative instruments to open themselves to the readers, with Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* being the best example of this (Jose 1991: 190; Seyferth 2008: 276–282; see also Roemer 2003: 50–60). But can such postmodern (and sometimes quite messy) narrations be the first step for widespread social transformation? Not in a straightforward way, suspects Roemer (2007: 149):

> Considering all the forces undermining belief in our ability to imagine Utopia as a "perfect" world, it is not surprising that the literary utopias most often admired by critics and scholars are complex and ambiguous. In other words, they are the types of books unlikely to spawn large-scale activist groups.

It sounds like a serious dilemma: literary utopias seem to either domineer over or discourage readers. If the function of utopia was to be a construction plan that has to be followed strictly, utopia would fail for anarchists because it would then lack the openness that is constitutive of anarchism. If the function of utopia was to draw the masses to revolutionary action, utopia would fail for anarchists, too, because utopias open-ended enough for anarchism are not compatible enough with mainstream, best-selling literature.[8] But maybe these aren't the main functions for anarchist utopias.

Anarchists need not worry about their utopias being too complex and their reading too cumbersome. They already made their choice for a lively interplay of many different individuals and groups, performing themselves the tasks usually

found in the hands of authorities. Present-day anarchism is a multitude of voices, movements, and actions, many of them not even calling themselves "anarchist": "Anarchism today is theoretically diverse, philosophically fragmented, and practically divided," as Williams (2007: 311) observes, but "the typical theorist sees in today's anarchism a worthy diversity and pluralism, rather than a destructive factionalism" (2007: 307). And Gordon (2007: 32–35) contends that "[t]here is also a reluctance to use the label 'anarchist' on the part of many groups whose political culture and discourse obviously merit the designation." Those groups exist, regardless of the supposed lack of effect of suitable utopias – and regardless of the arduousness of acting out anarchist principles like DIY ("do it yourself") or decision making by consensus. If you are too lazy to make decisions and come to terms with others' interests on your own, you may find that governments are quite labor-saving for feeble subjects like yourself. [9] But if you are keen to take your life in your own hands, even if that means attending tedious plenums, getting electricity cut off (because you live in a squat), or regularly being harassed by police officers – in other words: if you are an anarchist – you may very well also have the energy and patience to read even the least easy-to-read utopias. Compared to what anarchist activists often have to endure, reading postmodern critical utopias appears to be rather comfortable.

So then, what is the place of utopia in anarchism? The multi-faceted phenomenon of anarchism builds a "transfer culture," which Shantz (2008: 26) defines as "that agglomeration of ideas and practices that guides people in making the trip from the society here to the society there in the future." Utopias are part of this transfer culture, as are demonstrations, punk songs, squats, or wildcat strikes (to name just a few examples). For many, utopias only preach to the already converted, but something has to have converted them in the first place. That is where the academy comes into play: openly agitating anarchism is seldom possible in state-run or profit-oriented universities, neither for students nor for teachers. But to deal with certain aspects of certain cultures, and especially to read books, is relatively unproblematic – precisely because that is so apparently harmless. It can be concluded that engaged reading of utopias can change the reader's mind, albeit not as inevitably and extensively as some may wish. Additionally, a few changed minds are surely not enough to make the world a better place – action has to follow to put anarchy into practice, in the academy and elsewhere.

## A couple of beautiful examples

The first accounts of what might be called fictional anarchist commonwealths are the myths of the Golden Age, known since Virgil. Especially in the writings of Zenon and Iambulos one can find "anarchistic tendencies" (Saage 2001: 34–37): state institutions are deemed not necessary because nature guides the acts of men;[10] work is considered not an imperative but a virtue (therefore slavery is abolished), and a bawdy hedonism is made possible. In the Early Modern Times, the travelogues of the discoverers resembled much the descriptions of the Golden Age and inspired many authors: strange people with strange customs become the

noble savages in Montaigne's essays *Of Cannibals* (1580) and *Of Coaches* (1588; see Saage 2001: 216–219) and in Bougainville's *Voyage autour du monde* (1771). Following Saage (2001: 45), the first full-fledged anarchist utopias[11] are de Foigny's *La Terre Australe connue* (1676; see Saage 2002a: 35–51), Lahontan's *Dialogues de Monsieur le Baron des Lahontan et d'un Sauvage dans l'Amerique* (1703; see Saage 2002a: 95–114), Morelly's *La Basiliade* (1753; see Saage 2002a: 131–152), and Diderot's *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* (1772; see Saage 2002a: 153–75; the *Supplément* is the culmination and the end of the anarchistic utopian tradition of the noble savage, see Saage 2006: 137). In these Early Modern utopias, the antique patterns of nature and hedonism recur (Saage 2001: 42–48).

In the nineteenth century, another spirit prevailed: the transformation of society seemed actually possible, which is reflected in the rise of anarchism as a revolutionary movement. The most famous depiction of a non-hierarchical socialist polity is Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890; see Saage 2002b: 157–181), but there are some less well-known anarchist utopias, too. Saage (2002b: 329–343) enumerates Déjacques's *L'Humanisphère, Utopie anarchique* (1858–59), Rossi's *Une commune socialiste* (1878) and *Le Paranà au 20° siecle* (1894), and Mackay's *Die Anarchisten* (1891), most of which are inspired by Charles Fourier. The first half of the twentieth century sees the rise of the dystopias, constituting a literary counter-movement against authoritarian, anti-individualist utopias, which Saage construes as a "hegemony of anarchist scenarios" (2006: 60). For the second half of the twentieth century, four examples are particularly interesting.

In 1951, Eric Frank Russell published a humorous short-story called ". . . And Then There Were None," which became the third section of his 1962 published novel *The Great Explosion*. In it, a libertarian society is depicted in a traditional utopian manner: terrestrial soldiers visit the anarchist planet of the "Gands" (a salute to Gandhi) to reintegrate this renegade human colony in a new interstellar empire, but discover (for them) very unusual social and economic arrangements. The Gands's society is extremely individualistic and economically based on a credit system that recalls today's local exchange trading systems. It is more a variation of barter than of anarcho-communism. The Gands are very insubordinate and do not follow orders; to the demands of earth's military they react with expressions of steadfast unwillingness ("Myob"[12] and "I won't!" are their mottos) and civil disobedience (a behavior very attractive for the soldiers, making more and more of them defect), until the authorities have to give up and leave the planet.

The utopian travelogue is turned upside down in Ursula K. Le Guin's 1974 novel *The Dispossessed*: here Shevek, a citizen of the anarchist planet Anarres, visits a capitalist-dystopia state, which shows very unusual characteristics to him, like the repellent rituals of bankers. In alternating chapters, both societies are depicted. Anarres has a communist economy and is organized in syndicates. This society clearly resembles ideas from Peter Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* and *Fields, Factories and Workshops* and Paul Goodman's *Communitas*. In its tone, *The Dispossessed* is much more austere than *The Great Explosion*; Le Guin's view of the anarchist society appears to be realistic, not satirical, since shortcomings are not left out. On Anarres, people live with all their human failures. Their attempt

to organize society without hierarchies or coercion does not work as well as desired (for example, a bureaucracy emerges). Adequately, this novel bears the subtitle *An Ambiguous Utopia.* It is one of the best-known critical utopias and has evoked reams of secondary literature in many disciplines (see Davis and Stillman 2005; Seyferth 2008: 130–150).

Not really satisfied with her much-lauded *The Dispossessed*, Le Guin wrote another utopia that was published in 1985, called *Always Coming Home*. This work is a critical utopia as well, with an unrivaled open-endedness and post-modern multiplicity of voices. The book is a medley of narrations, poems, songs, recipes, myths, plays, and drawings with no obvious order. The pictured society is strongly reminiscent of indigenous lifestyles with their totems, kinships, rituals, and their close affinity to nature. Hunting, gathering, and gardening are the main food sources. But this primitivistic dream-land has serious problems, too: it suffers from the remains of our environmental pollution and is endangered by fascist warmongers nearby. Inspired by Taoism, ethnological theories, and Murray Bookchin's *The Ecology of Freedom*, Le Guin created a utopian masterpiece that is far more demanding and sophisticated than *The Dispossessed* (Seyferth 2008: 276–326).

Our last example is P.M.'s *bolo'bolo*, first published in Switzerland in 1983 and since then translated into many languages. *bolo'bolo* is not a novel but rather a dictionary. It introduces terms that explain what a new world-wide political order might look like. The most important term is *ibu*, a quite solipsistic concept of the ego, around which everything else is constructed. About 500 *ibus* make a *bolo* (intentional community), characterized by *nima* (lifestyle), *sila* (hospitality), *kodu* (agrarian self-sufficiency) and many more. All *bolos* form *bolo'bolo*, the network of economic and cultural intercommunion. Gift-exchange and barter are the main trade principles, but markets are possible, too. P.M. makes almost no specifications of how *ibus* or *bolos* arrange their affairs; this little book is rather a skeleton of a (fallible and open-ended) blueprint than a traditional or critical utopia. It wants to be put into practice (it even includes a schedule for the actions that have to take place to make world-revolution happen!), but leaves room for a wide variety of interpretations about details – excluding capitalism and the state, which are seen as no longer possible.

This list of four examples is of course not even remotely complete. Everyone who dreams of "good anarchy" creates a new anarchist utopia in their mind. Some people share their dreams by writing them down in books, while others share their dreams by acting them out. Engagement with both kinds of anarchist desires is worthwhile and very inspiring.

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# 28 Anarchy, utopia, and the state of things to come

*Randall Amster*

Anarchism as a theoretical or praxis-oriented approach to social issues often suffers two major, and at times oppositional, critiques. On the one hand, it is said that anarchism is too idealistic, that it presumes a goodness of human nature that is not empirically tenable in light of human history and current events. On the other hand, it is also argued that anarchism is too grounded in a lifestyle-oriented ethic that is neither positive nor productive. In each case, anarchism is depicted as lacking a necessary component for positive change, and yet we might develop a working vision of anarchism that is at once both utopian and pragmatic by focusing on the inherent connections between vision and action. By looking at various anarchistic examples of utopianism in practice, we can see how this holds great promise for communities and movements by locating their actions historically while at the same time casting their nets of visionary thought into the future. In this sense, anarchism has much to offer utopianism, and utopianism is sorely needed in the contemporary philosophy and practice of anarchism.

At the outset, it is necessary to define the parameters of the inquiry, beginning with what is often considered the central tension in perhaps all social theory, namely that between the *individual* and the *community*. This apparent dichotomy is important not only in theoretical terms (Condit 1987), but also bears directly on how members of a given community will interact with each other (Taylor 1982, 1987), as well as how the community as a whole interacts with the larger environment (Bookchin 1991; cf. Moos and Brownstein 1977). Accordingly, a central aim of anarchism has been to elucidate an integrated (yet non-prescriptive) theory of self, society, and nature, in particular through the promotion of non-hierarchical social and ecological forms (Pepper 1993: 152–203). While not always explicit in anarchist analyses, the ecological aspect is predominant in many utopian visions and, as we will see, is vital to any complete social theory.

Anthropological and ethnographic studies of various anarchist communities and their socio-ecological dynamics are illustrative, as are certain utopian tracts with demonstrably anarchistic impulses. Indeed, the co-existence of both *anthropological* and *utopian* strands in studies of anarchist communities and social experiments indicates the presence of a perspective akin to what John Zerzan (1994) has called "*future primitive*" – that is, the recognition that anarchy is both very old (time-tested and dated to antiquity) and at the same time radically new and forward-looking. In these times of wholesale environmental degradation, the

technological eclipse of natural morality, and a looming global apocalypse that has lodged itself in the popular consciousness, it appears that present-day society is not sustainable and is nearing its structural and historical limits. Where we go from here is an open question, and the search for an "anarchist utopia" represents at least one kind of plausible future – one informed by its time-tested past.

An analysis of the workability and/or desirability of *anarchy* as a principle of social "order" is informed by studies of certain communities and cultures that have manifested anarchist tendencies, including: the absence of coercive authority and codified law, a penchant for processes that are participatory and spontaneous, and an inherent impetus among community members to associate voluntarily and cooperatively. We can divide such studies into three broad categories, encompassing: (1) *indigenous* cultures (sometimes termed "organic" or "primitive") (for example, Barclay 1990; Clastres 1994; Ward 1973; Morris 1998); (2) *alternative* subcultures arising within the framework of the dominant society, such as communes and intentional communities (for example, Kanter 1972; Veysey 1974), activist "organizations" including Food Not Bombs (for example, Butler and McHenry 2000), and the unique case of the nomadic "Rainbow Family of Living Light" (see Niman 1997); and (3)*utopian* visions of worlds that have not yet come to pass (for example, P.M. 1995; Le Guin 1974; Morris 1995; Hogan 1982; Starhawk 1994; Piercy 1976; Huxley 1962). This *indigenous-alternative-utopian* perspective captures the essence of anarchism by indicating its*past-present-future* quality, and provides a basis for exploring the socio-structural dynamics of communities existing beyond the strictures of the state.

Inquiries of this ilk will inevitably raise certain questions as to the practical efficacy of creating and maintaining anarchist communities. Karl Marx, to take a pessimistic exemplar, was specifi cally derisive in his own time toward those termed "utopian socialists" – disciples of Fourier or Owen who are sometimes taken to have argued "that the road from capitalism to socialism lay in creating model communities, isolated from the mainstream of industrial society" (see Inverarity *et al.* 1983: 92, n.8). Marx admonished that these purported utopian socialists were ignoring the implicit materialist process contemplated by his "base-superstructure" model: "The state of productive forces at any given moment in history sets limits on the range of political action that will be viable" (id. at 60). Since he even went so far as to term certain utopian initiatives "obsolete verbal rubbish" and "ideological nonsense" (id. at 93, n.9), it isn't hard to guess what Marx would say about the utopian aspects of anarchism.

Of course, it isn't only the impracticality or improbability of achieving utopia that has brought forth criticism, but its potential "realizability" (Mannheim 1936; Moos and Brownstein 1977) and its "essentialist" aspects as well (cf. McKenna 2001). Anti-utopian arguments often construct utopian enterprises as rigid, static, totalizing, and authoritarian, citing such tendencies in both the US and former USSR as examples of this "dark side" of utopia. As one writer opines:

> Both Marxism and anarchism reject the idea of utopia for reasons discussed above: it could become a template imposed by present on future generations.

It could restrict their freedom by creating a prescribed blueprint for living, and therefore become a basis for totalitarianism. It is also a recipe for political naivete in the present.

(Pepper 1993: 176)

But these suppositions overlook the crucial points that utopia – particularly of the anarchist variety – is a dynamic *process* and not a static *place* (Harvey 1996; McKenna 2001); that attaining a harmonious exchange with nature and an open, participatory process among community members are central features of these endeavors (Niman 1997; Kropotkin 1993); that resistance to dominant cultures of repression and authoritarianism is a common impetus for anarcho-utopian undertakings (for example, Kanter 1972; P.M. 1995); and that communities embodying these principles are properly viewed as ongoing experiments and not finished products (Veysey 1974).

In a strong sense then, utopia may (as one aspect of its etymology suggests) literally be "no place," but instead might be understood as a condition of permanent revolution, a continuing rebellion against our own tendencies toward entrenchment and domination (cf. Barclay 1990: 150), "perpetually exploring new ways to perfect an imperfect reality" (Niman 1997: 203). Still, as Mack Reynolds (1977: 82) cautions in his futuristic *After Utopia*: "There is no such thing as Utopia. . . . It is something man strives for, runs after, but he never gets it in his grasp. As soon as he reaches one milepost, there's another." Erin McKenna (2001: 49) echoes these sentiments, observing that anarchist utopias are not intended as "end-state" models seeking "final, perfect" outcomes.

In addition to the structural factors that might enable or constrain the existence of anarchist communities, there is the matter of outside encroachment (Barclay 1990: 114):

Intentional communities are in no sense sovereign entities, but quite the contrary, they are communities within and upon the land of sovereign states. They are attempts to initiate anarchic communities "within the shell of the old." Thus, for example, the several anarchist communes established in the United States all have had to conform in some fashion to [the] law and in many cases have been forced to close down largely because they have not so conformed. Any anarchy in such communities becomes highly circumscribed and is applicable to the internal affairs of the group itself, where even the long arm of the law may sometimes reach. Any such commune finds itself an integral part of the political and economic system of the state whether it wants to be or not. Further, individual members themselves have been reared in the cultural traditions and values of that state and have only the greatest difficulty divesting themselves of their deleterious effects. Nor can the commune easily shield the young or any others from the formidable "attractions" of the outside. . . . [F]rom the start, any such project as an anarchist intentional community has an overwhelming chance of failure because of the odds against it which emanate from the external world.

All of which qualifies the search for *anarchist community* as "utopian."

The task, then, is to explore the pragmatic parameters and structural feasibility of realizing this vision of anarchist communities, both as theoretical models for discerning patterns of justice-in-practice and as open-ended experiments in socio-ecology that have implications for harmonizing the past, revolutionizing the present, and visualizing the future. Human communities are complex, fragile yet long-lasting, and fundamentally necessary for survival. Despite at times being co-opted by forces of totalization, enforcement, and regimentation (see Zerzan 1994: 157), notions of "community" are as old as life itself and comprise the foundation as well as the horizon of human sociality, bringing to bear revelations on concepts such as individual autonomy, social cohesion, and natural interconnection. As the *Rainbow Guide* (1995) heralds:

> There is no authoritarian hierarchy here. We have a **tribal anarchy** where we take care of each other, because we recognize that we are All One. The Gathering works because each of us takes the responsibility for doing what needs to be done, and for teaching others. Part of that responsibility is a pledge we keep to each other: *We pledge* to walk lightly on the earth; *We pledge* to respect and care for each other and all living things; *We pledge* to drop all violence as we deal with each other; *We pledge* to deal with each other up front and with open hearts.

Following these sentiments, an appropriate place to initiate an analysis of *anarchy* and *ecology* is with the "state of nature," a metaphorical construct employed most prominently in the "social contract" theories of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and others. In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Robert Nozick (1974: 3–25) ostensibly builds upward from the (stateless) Lockean state of nature, through the "ultraminimal" state (protection only for those who pay for it), and finally settles when he reaches the "minimal" state, paralleling the models of the early social contractarians who began from a primitive state of nature and seemed to build upward in deriving the modern state. However, the social contract theorists were not aiming to show how the state naturally would grow from a condition of primitive statelessness, but were instead attempting a revisionist justification of an already-existing social state. In this sense, the true socio-structural roots of the social contract were: (1) a preconception of the subject as atomistic and rationally self-interested, and (2) the existence of a burgeoning strong state whose aim was to galvanize these atomistic agents under the umbrella of a growing free market economy.

Nozick thus professes to be working from the "bottom up" in constructing his minimal state, when in fact just the opposite is true – with the net effect being that Nozick appears to be an apologist for the neo-conservative *laissez-faire* state. Indeed, as Condit (1987: 159–163) asserts:

> What he [Nozick] is specifically trying to do is to provide reasons for the existing distribution of property and economic capabilities. . . . In the end,

Nozick is speaking only for those persons who already have effective domains of property, and dressing up their ideological interest as philosophical reasoning.

In contrast with Nozick, who begins with Locke's vision, some anarchist theorists take Rousseau's formulation as their point of departure (for example, Condit 1987). But even this turn is problematic since Rousseau, like Hobbes and Locke before him, was ultimately inclined to justify the modern state and to revise history accordingly. Thus, to the extent that a "state of nature" construction is useful at all, it is not to justify preconceived notions of agency and society, but rather to illustrate concretely the naturalistic roots of any conception of materiality. The emphasis, then, is not on the "state" but on "nature," and from this perhaps we can move toward a holistic vision of *anarchist community*.

In the *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau (1973) develops a whimsical picture of the state of nature, a time and place where life was simple, regular, and good. What was lacking, however, and what ultimately forced humanity out of this Eden and into the chains of the State, was imagination, philosophy, and recognition; the simple physicality of life in the state of nature was not sufficient to sate the intellectual and emotional urges of even its savage inhabitants. We humans thus departed this primeval state, giving up our natural liberty and the right to anything that tempted us, in favor of a social state that granted us "civil liberty and the legal right of property" in what we possess. The picture Rousseau has drawn portrays early humans as distinct from their environment, as atomistic and non-communal, and as intellectually deficient. Among many indigenous or primitive cultures, however, we observe just the opposite: nature is sacred, community essential, and philosophy integral. Much as Locke before him, Rousseau still sees nature and its early inhabitants through a colonialist's eyes. The mistake lies in how he conceives humans vis-à-vis nature: an atomistic agent will be at odds with the environment, much as a self-interested subject will adopt an anthropocentric worldview.

The Lockean formulation adopted by Nozick is even more troubling. Nature is seen as something to be appropriated, enclosed, and possessed (indeed, Locke transforms Hobbes's "war of each against all" into a "war of all against nature"). Nozick's entitlement theory (1974: 150–182) rests on the supposition that if all possessions are justly held (meaning that they were justly acquired and transferred over the course of their history), then an existing distribution of holdings is just. A substantial flaw, as Alasdair MacIntyre (1981: 234) observes, is that this means that

there are in fact very few, and in some large areas of the world *no* legitimate entitlements. The property-owners of the modern world are not the legitimate heirs of Lockean individuals who performed quasi-Lockean .    . . acts of original acquisition; they are the inheritors of those who, for example, stole, and used violence to steal the common lands of England from the common people, vast tracts of North America from the American Indian, much of Ireland from the Irish, and Prussia from the original non-German Prussians.

Unhappily realized then are the logical consequences – theft, war, even genocide – of viewing the earth as something to be acquired and possessed, rather than revered and celebrated.

And so we arrive at Proudhon's famous axiom that "property is theft." Proudhon did not intend by this that all property is theft, but only that which derives from unearned ownership (Crowder 1991: 85). We can extend this argument to form a broader maxim: "All *non-normative* property is theft." One possible point of departure in exploring this notion is the concept of *usufruct*, which the early anarchist theorist Godwin utilized in asserting that individuals are entitled only to stewardship over goods, and are under strict obligations to use such goods in furtherance of the general happiness (Crowder 1991: 86). Similarly, Proudhon envisioned a "usufructuary" as opposed to an owner, who was to be "responsible for the thing entrusted to him; he *must* use it in conformity with general utility, with a view to its preservation and development" (Crowder 1991: 86–87). Taken further, usufruct logically permuted means that we have moral obligations in all material things. In this sense, the things that I possess must be used with the well-being of the community in mind, and the things that no one possesses are to be maintained for the use and enjoyment of all, as Bookchin (1991: 50) suggests: "The collective claim is implicit in the primacy of usufruct over proprietorship. Hence, even the work performed in one's own dwelling has an underlying collective dimension in the potential availability of its products to the entire community." As Rousseau (1973: 84) indicates, the earth does not belong to us, but rather we to it; to misuse or destroy any part of it is to injure ourselves.

Usufruct, then, can be seen as a "norm of rules for the social utilization of material reality transcending a narrow, unspecified right of power over things" (Condit 1987: 103). This is a feature of life often explored in utopian visions, centered upon the abolition of private property and distinguishing property from possession. As Bookchin (1991: 54) further opines, "Even 'things' *as such* . . . stand at odds with organic society's practice of usufruct" (see also Reynolds 1977: 130). In this regard, we come to recognize *property* as the original source of inequality, promoting power in the form of dominion over *things* – namely the things of nature, and with nature including ourselves (Kropotkin 1972, 1993) – as the early Rousseau (1973: 84) asserted in the *Discourse on Inequality*:

> The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying "This is mine," and found some people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: "Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody."

In rejecting this original hierarchy, a space is created for conceiving an egalitarian integration of self, society, and nature. To sustain this vision requires no less than

individual conscience, mutual aid, and a notion of property that contemplates possession of nothing except everything. An anarchist social "order" has the potential to enable this expansive usufruct while preserving the integrity of the individual.

Still, the question is often posed: How can a society achieve the production, distribution, and maintenance of public goods absent a central authority? (see Harriott 1993: 325). In other words: How can free individuals be encouraged to work and provide for the "public utility" without coercion, either negative (punishment) or positive (personal gain)? The problem with such queries is that they are inverted; the real question is how a society premised on coercion and central authority can ever produce, distribute, and maintain free individuals. This is perhaps the core tension in the Hobbesian worldview that still is manifest today, namely that people can be *forced* to be *free*. Indeed, present-day concerns such as the "Bush Doctrine" (i.e. spreading "democracy" through military intervention) and the "prison-industrial complex" (i.e. taking away "liberty" purportedly in the name of "justice") expose the deep-seated flaws in this logic.

Another skeptical query concerns the "free-rider" problem: How can a stateless society prevent those who do not share in the work from sharing the public goods produced by such work? Again, the question is misplaced; instead, we might inquire how any society can justify barring certain individuals from having access to the enjoyment of *public* goods (see Harriott 1993: 330). In the anarchist community, all goods are in a sense public, as a consequence of abolishing the kind of private property that has come to typify liberal-capitalist societies. The question turns, then, on how we define *property* in anarchist theory and practice, and on how we view the individual's rights and responsibilities in the production and maintenance of public goods and shared resources (cf. Waldron 1991). How we get from here (i.e. coercion and privatization) to there (i.e. voluntary association and public usufruct) remains an open question, one that is crucially important and potentially illuminated by case studies and grounded inquiries.

In this regard, many theorists have analyzed the related phenomena of co-operation, collective action, and management of "the commons." An important work on these subjects is Elinor Ostrom's *Governing the Commons* (1990). Ostrom begins with a discussion of the three primary models of joint management of common resources: (1) "the tragedy of the commons," in which the fact of common ownership leads to neglect and misuse of the common resource; (2) the "Prisoners' Dilemma," in which each player's dominant strategy is to defect (i.e. exploit the other); and (3) the logic of "collective action," in which it has often been asserted that "whenever one person cannot be excluded from the benefits that others provide, each person is motivated not to contribute to the joint effort, but to *free-ride* on the efforts of others" (1990: 2–7). Through case studies of numerous common-pool resources (CPRs) worldwide (including riparian rights in Spain, Alpine grazing in Switzerland, and old-growth Japanese forests), Ostrom argues that the three dominant models (which view human agents as atomistic egoists needing *Leviathan*-type coercion in order to cooperate) are overly rigid and make a number of limiting assumptions about information, monitoring capabilities,

sanctioning reliability, and costs of administration (1990: 10). Ostrom demonstrates that oftentimes people sharing CPRs have found wholly *internal* solutions to the problems of collective action, based on communication, trust, and the sense of a common future (1990: 21).

This in-depth study and resulting praxis-theory further enhances the prospect of establishing and maintaining an anarchist community. The rejection of private property in favor of an expansive "usufruct" is not unlike depicting the entire earth – indeed, all of material existence itself – as one great "commons." While Ostrom's analysis focuses on small-scale CPRs, it demonstrates the possibility of envisioning collective action without institutional coercion or authority. Indeed, as Ostrom notes, once "external" officials get involved, individual abilities to be self-monitoring are abdicated, reciprocity and trust are diminished, the sense of mutuality and a common future is undermined, and rewards are skewed to the benefit of the external officials (1990: 213). These same arguments – abdication, diminished trust, reduced mutualism, and institutional bias – are often mentioned as anarchist objections to central authority and the state apparatus (for example, Taylor 1987: 168–169). What Ostrom's research implies is that a sufficiently motivated and conducively situated group of individuals can overcome these pitfalls and realize the anarcho-utopian vision of diffuse power, decentralized authority, expansive usufruct in materiality, and the maximization of inherent cooperative tendencies.

All of these themes are highlighted in the body of literature describing the relationship of anarchist societies to the land. These studies fundamentally demonstrate that communities constructed upon beliefs such as participatory self-management, pervasive social welfare, critical pedagogies, individual autonomy, and voluntary mutual aid, invariably maintain a particular relationship to the earth itself. Specifically, it becomes evident that such communities are often defined by their rejection of private property, and that the social practices inhering there are enabled by the simple fact that materiality is shared by all and owned by none. The abolition of the "original hierarchy" of private property thus may well be the hallmark of anarchist communities and utopian visions alike, comprising the linchpin of egalitarian and non-coercive social practices.

Accordingly, a primary component of any anarcho-utopian community will be its material or economic life, which cannot be separated from its political and social aspects (Clastres 1994; Taylor 1982; cf. Mander 1991: 297). In many such settings there exists an emphasis on cooperation, mutualism, and reciprocity, and to that end the dominant forms of exchange among community members have often been *barter* (for example, Mbah and Igariwey 1997: 29 on traditional African cultures), *gifting* or *sharing* (for example, Ingold *et al.* 1988: 281 on hunter-gatherers; and Rogers 1994: 45 on organic societies), and *hospice* (for example, P.M. 1995: 84; Zerzan 1994: 44) (see generally Mauss 1966). Significantly, there is a dearth of examples in the literature indicating the dominant presence of capitalist (i.e. profit, exploitation, and obsessive growth) economics in anarchist settings. Rather, such communities are distinguished by their maintenance of an economic safety net in which members have ready access to essentials such as sustenance and shelter (see

Ward 1973; Mbah and Igariwey 1997; Bookchin 1991; and Zerzan 1994: 17–30, who observes that "food sharing has for some time been considered an integral part of earliest human society," indicating "the benefits of being part of a society where everything is shared").

This last point in particular forms the basis for Food Not Bombs, which, as described in Wikipedia, is a leaderless international movement that "works to call attention to poverty and homelessness in society by sharing food in public places and facilitating gatherings of poor, homeless, and other disenfranchised people." Anarchistic in its structure and operation, Food Not Bombs manifests the spirit of "usufruct" and provides a "safety net" for people often left out by mainstream society. It also possesses a utopian element in its vision of an egalitarian, leaderless "new society" in which people organize spontaneously and in a self-sufficient manner (Butler and McHenry 2000). The Rainbow Family similarly touts the presence of all of these practices, reflected in its "all ways free" open admission policy, communal kitchens, and "barter circle" (Niman 1997). Much of this is reminiscent of literary anarcho-utopian visions that attempt to work out the full import of future worlds premised upon inclusive and non-hierarchical social processes, including new visions of economics, gender relations, education, and self-governance (for example, Le Guin 1974; Morris 1995; Hogan 1982; Starhawk 1994; Piercy 1976).

As a corollary to the prevalence of exchange practices such as barter and hospice, there is a pervasive "subsistence perspective" (see von Werlhof 1997; Mies 1993) to be found across a wide spectrum of anarchist settings. For example, upon observing that "primitive societies are societies that refuse economy," Clastres (1994: 111) divines the prevalence among indigenous nations of an "anti-surplus principle" that all too often is framed negatively in terms of poverty or hardship without grasping its fundamental inter-connection to the entire social structure of the nation-tribe. Mander (1991: 250–252) likewise notes this propensity toward "the choice of subsistence" and – citing Sahlins's famous insight that such cultures are the "original affluent societies" due to their abundance of leisure time and diversity of diversions – goes on to consider the positive aspects of this "refusal of economy," which include: an optimistic attitude toward nature and its impulse to provide food in abundance (rendering superfluous the need to stockpile); the persistence of a nomadic identity and the desire to "travel light;" a reduced impact upon the environment arising out of an inherent respect for and symbiosis with the earth; community sharing of resources; and the prevention of social hierarchies and economic inequalities (see Clastres 1994: 105–112; Mies 1993: 319–322; Zerzan 1994: 28–35). As John Clark (1998: 18) has said of similar *renunciate* implications in Taoism:

> The life of "simplicity" is [not] the impoverished life of one who seeks escape from the corrupt world and its temptations. Rather it is something much more affirmative: it is the consummate existence of one who has rejected whatever would stunt or distort growth and personal fulfillment. Simplicity is not, however, a quality with implications for personal life alone. It refers also to

social institutions which will promote rather than hinder self-realization. A society based on social status, or one glorifying the pursuit of material wealth and permitting economic domination, is inevitably destructive, producing conflict, disorder, envy, and crime.

Myriad *indigenous* cultures, *alternative* communities, and *utopian* experiments have long perceived this intimate connection between material subsistence and social existence. As Maria Mies (1993: 322) observes:

> Wherever women and men have envisaged a society in which all – women and men, old and young, all races and cultures – could share the "good life," where social justice, equality, human dignity, beauty and joy in life were not just utopian dreams never to be realized (except for a small elite or postponed to an after-life), there has been close to what we call a subsistence perspective.

This is not a call for austerity or impoverishment. Indeed, as the futuristic anarcho-utopian longings of writers such as William Morris (1995), Marge Piercy (1976), Starhawk (1994), and Ursula Le Guin (1974) demonstrate, the central function of such experiments is to achieve a balanced relationship with the environment that simultaneously reflects and enables harmonious relations among community members themselves. Treading lightly on the earth, sharing resources, and embracing a sense of *abundance* rather than one of scarcity (illustrated quite effectively in James Hogan's 1982 novel *Voyage from Yesteryear*) are all important components of a non-hierarchical socio-ecological outlook and the spirit of anarchy that it engenders. Deeply rooted in the past, still widely practiced in the present, and looking ahead toward a positive future, anarchism and utopianism have much to offer one another and the wider world, suggesting avenues of both vision and action for turning ideals into realities – and vice versa.

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# Notes

**Chapter 2: Anarchism, postmodernity, and poststructuralism**

1 It is important to note that the term "poststructuralism" has never been more precise than sketched here. It has never been anything but a term of convenience that amalgamates a number of individual writers who, without doubt, have worked along common themes and with shared ambitions, but who never set out to form a "movement," let alone one called "poststructuralism."

2 Newman's position here is not entirely clear, however. Within the pages of the same book he also speaks of the "fundamental differences" between anarchism and poststructuralism, and of "a bringing together" of the two (Newman 2001: 6f).

3 In fact, a curious misunderstanding surrounds the origins of the term. These are repeatedly traced back to a Hakim Bey essay from the 1980s, entitled "Post-Anarchism Anarchy" (later included in *T.A.Z.: the temporary autonomous zone*, 1991). However, what Bey was trying to suggest with the title was to leave all "-isms" behind and merely embrace "anarchy" instead. This is a concept propagated in recent years by groups such as CrimethInc (2002) or the Green Anarchy Collective (2004) alike, and a concept that might be "postmodern" (even though our friends in Oregon might scowl at being associated with the term), but none that would in any way endorse a "postanarch *ism*" – in fact, quite the contrary.

4 Unfortunately, Koch has not expanded much on the relations between poststructuralism and anarchism in his later work. However, as recent publications show, he maintains both that "poststructuralism possesses an ethical principle that follows from its epistemological claims" (Koch 2007: ix) and that "leftist politics must have an anarchistic component" (2007: 106).

5 This indeed concerns biographical dimensions as well. It has always been one of the most disturbing effects of the "postmodern/poststructuralist" hodgepodge to allow the advertising of, say, "postmodern shopping malls" to cast a shadow over the activism of the poststructuralist thinkers, often leaving people with the belief that they had no politics. The opposite is true: every single one of the aforementioned theorists was politically engaged, and some – especially Deleuze and Guattari, but also Foucault – in very radical ways; ways much more radical, in fact, than those of many critics who depict them as supposed saboteurs of revolutionary political action. A critique of certain theories is one thing, but a blatant disregard for comrades' contributions to the struggle is another.

6 Unfortunately, this notion has all too often been abused as a means to whitewash alienated theory as "per se political." If there is no immediate connection to concrete struggles, theory remains as politically useless or harmful as alienated theory has always been. Overcoming the boundaries between theory and praxis is not about calling your theory political – it is about *making* it political.

## Chapter 3: Two undecidable questions for thinking in which anything goes

1 A first version of this essay was extemporaneously created on September 25, 2004 at the Renewing the Anarchist Tradition Conference in Plainfield, Vermont. I would like to thank Lex Bhagat for comments on an early draft.
2 I owe the sense of this "already exists" to the witty and accurate opening pages of David Graeber's *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*.
3 Huizinga (1950: 203) writes: "Wherever there is a catch-word ending in  *-ism* we are hot on the tracks of a play-community."
4 Though I can, sadly, easily imagine someone declaring themselves anarchist in bad faith, due to the coercive micro-politics of certain intimate relationships or social groups.
5 "There is a subterranean movement in history which conflicts with all forms of authority. This movement has entered into our time under the name of 'anarchism,' although it has never been encompassed by a single ideology or body of sacred texts. Anarchism is a libidinal movement of humanity against coercion in any form, reaching back into time to the very emergence of propertied society, class rule, and the state" (Bookchin 2004: 136).
6 An entire parody-seriousness continuum is apparent in the ambiguous usage of the phrase by the author and readers of *T.A.Z.*
7 Indeed, here I might have appealed to any number of scientific accounts of chaotic processes in nature. But I prefer not to. It's not that they are not interesting. It's that I prefer what I know better: the vertiginous process of the appeal to experience.
8 See Deleuze and Guattari (1983) and Lyotard (1993).
9 See "The Group and the Person" and "Causality, Subjectivity, and History" in Guattari (1984).
10 Deleuze and Guattari (1983) said repeatedly that, if something as outlandish as schizoanalysis was possible, it was because it already existed here and there.
11 As Lyotard (1993: 42) observes: "Not good and bad intensities, then, but intensity or its decompression."
12 Again, Lyotard (1993: 42): "but then one in which we would be the artists and not the propagators, the adventurers and not the theoreticians, the hypothesizers and not the censors."
13 Well into the composition of this essay, I found what seems to me to be a similar idea in Landauer's 2007 essay, "Anarchic thoughts on anarchism."
14 Including, of course, "anarchist," which for me occupies an ambiguous space between "anarchism" and "anarchy." One might compare this to the notorious Situationist claim that there was no "Situationism."
15 Consider, by comparison, that Euromodern philosophy, dominated by ideas of spaceless time, has made but one contribution to thinking about territoriality: the concept of "nation-state"!
16 The phrase is Walter Mignolo's (2000); he calls the thinking of dwellers between territories "border gnosis."
17 See Frye (1983) for a compelling claim for multiple realities made from a radical feminist perspective.

## Chapter 4: The problem with infoshops and insurrection: US anarchism, movement building, and the racial order

1 The critique of hierarchy and "all forms of oppression" is so pervasive in North American anarchist thought that a supporting quote here hardly seems adequate. These two examples are representative: (1) "We actively struggle against all forms of oppression and domination, including patriarchy, racism, anthropocentrism and heterosexism. We recognize and actively work against these systems of oppression that

co-exist with capitalism, as well as against the ecocide of the planet" ("Principles of the Anti-Capitalist Network of Montreal" (2007), http://montreal resist.ca/en/principles). (2) "We stand against all forms of oppression: imperialism, capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, fascism, heterosexism/homophobia/transphobia and the domination of human over human and human over all living things including mother earth" (Revolutionary Autonomous Communities (Los Angeles) Mission Statement (2007), http://www mediaisland.org/en/los-angeles-revolutionary-autonomous-communities-rac-mission-statement). This critique of hierarchy and its tendency to create a "laundry list" of oppressions is also evident in the definitions of anarchism provided in numerous Anarchist FAQ sites. For examples, see "An Anarchist FAQ Page, version 12.2," http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1931/; "Anarchist Communism: An Introduction," http://libcom.org/thought/anarchist-communism-an-introduction; "Anarchist FAQ," http://www.infoshop.org/faq/secA1.html; and "Anarchy" at the Green Anarchist Info Shop, http://www.greenanarchy.info/anarchy.php.

2 For many anarchists today it is heretical to suggest that Marx and Engels had anything worthwhile to say, but this was not always the case. Indeed, Bakunin translated the *Manifesto* into Russian and worked on a translation of *Capital*. For more on the complicated relationship between anarchism and Marx see Thomas 1980.

3 For examples of insurrectionary anarchism, see the magazines *Willful Disobedience* (http://www.omnipresence mahost.org/vbp htm) and *Killing King Abacus* (http://www. geocities.com/kk_abacus/index html).

4 Lest I be misunderstood, by "leader" I do not mean one who commands others and compels their obedience, but one who helps guide and direct a movement through the many challenges it faces. Again, the Black freedom movements provide useful examples of such leaders, including Ella Baker, James Forman, and Robert Moses (see Ransby 2003 and Forman 1985). For a useful critique of knee-jerk rejections of leadership (which actually reproduces unacknowledged and undemocratic leadership), see Freeman n.d.

5 Lucy Parsons and the Black Panthers tend to be the main links between Black struggles and American anarchists' historical sense. Parsons, a militant anarchist organizer in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and possibly a former slave, is a problematic connection to the Black tradition because although she fought lynching and racial discrimination, she was not part of the Black community and often denied her Black identity. (She was married to a white man, Albert Parsons, so this denial may in part have been to evade anti-miscegenation laws. This interpretation is based on Lowndes 1995 and Roediger 1986 as well as personal correspondence with Lowndes.) Many anarchists fetishize the Panthers because they seem to fi t both the infoshops and insurrections model (i.e. men and women with guns serving breakfast to Black children), but this position tends to idealize the Panthers rather than critically evaluate and integrate their experience into the anarchist tradition.

6 The Black anarchist tendency emerged in the 1990s. (Kuwasi Balagoon, among the first of the contemporary Black anarchists, became an anarchist in the 1980s.) Many of them came to anarchism from their experiences with the Panthers and/or the Black Liberation Army and the critique they developed from these experiences. Some of the key texts of this tendency include Ashanti Alston, "Black anarchism," Anarchist Panther website 2003, http://www.anarchistpanther net/node/17; Kuwasi Balagoon, "Anarchy can't fight alone," available at http://www kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/profiles/anarchy. html; and Lorenzo Komboa Ervin, *Anarchism and the Black Revolution*, available at http://lemming mahost.org/abr/. For information on Love and Rage, *Race Traitor*, Anarchist People of Color, and Bring the Ruckus, see http://www.loveandrage. org, http://www.racetraitor.org, http://illvox.org, and http://www.bringtheruckus.org, respectively. Black Autonomy was a newspaper and organization but never had a website.

## Chapter 5: Addressing violence against women: alternatives to state-based law and punishment

1  This summary represents only a small portion of the literature on restorative justice. For a helpful guide to basic restorative justice philosophy and practices, see Howard Zehr's *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (2002).
2  For a sampling of commentary on the topic, see Busch 2002, Cheon and Regehr 2006, Coker 1999, Hudson 1998, Presser and Gaarder 2000, and Stubbs 2002.
3  Circles should be gender balanced, and include community members who share the offender's racial/ethnic and class background. It is also helpful to have circle members who are in recovery from drug or alcohol addiction.
4  Sentences can vary widely from case to case. Examples include: completing a batterer intervention program, attending AA meetings, meeting financial responsibilities to one's children, and service to the community.
5  The kind of power Ackelsberg refers to is *not* power in the sense of domination, but rather, a "power-from-within."

## Chapter 6: The flow of experiencing in anarchic economies

1  On the important distinction to be made between place and space, based on the central importance of bodiliness, see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, New York: Routledge, 2002; David Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, New York, Vintage, 1997; and Kent Bloomer and Charles Moore, *Body, Memory, and Architecture*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977.
2  From the Greek, *tekton*, builder, originally from the Indo-European root, *teks*, a word associated with weaving. The etymological connections between building (archi*tect*ure), fabrics (*text*iles), tools (*tech*nology), books (*text*s), and constitutive structures (con*text*, *text*ure) constitute one of the best-attested and most significant word families in the Indo-European language. That so many words still in use today emerge from a common root should tell us something about the integral nature of existence, realized long ago.
3  My theory of anarchist theorizing owes much to Paul Feyerabend's notion of epistemological anarchism, which he sees as an antidote to science's tendency to cling to prior principles of investigation and of what qualifies as knowledge. Like Heidegger, Feyerabend advances thinking over knowledge. Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*, New York: Verso, 1978.
4  Martin Heidegger and Gilles Deleuze properly see a non-causal co-presence of matter and ideas, action, and theory. See Reiner Schurmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: from principles to anarchy*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, vol. 2, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
5  In a gift economy, by contrast, the movement of one element meets no corresponding opposite movement.
6  A betrayal of the history of Kant's notion of dignity – a universal respect for persons based on common humanity.
7  As Roger Ames and David Hall say, "The greatest obstacle to optimizing relationships [which in turn optimize experience] is coercion." Roger Ames and David Hall, *Dao De Jing: making this life significant*, New York: Ballantine, 2003, p. 88.
8  Alperovitz's ideas reflect the changes in most fields of knowledge concerning the origins of order. Once divine figures have leaked out of the picture morally, they also disappear from explanations of our material universe. In neurobiology, for instance, consciousness is an order that has been successfully explained as the emergent product of bottom-up, self-organizing processes. See Francisco Varela, *Ethical Know-How: action, wisdom, cognition*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999. Economically, Alperovitz follows a proto-complex dynamic systems line on social and exchange action order.

9 Alperovitz 1973: 81, and 1990: 15. Among the more enduring examples, he cites the community development corporation (CDC), which continues to this day to resist the greedy grasp of private interests within poor or developing neighborhoods. We might also point out the community land trusts (CLTs) that have provided stable bases for community life, the variety of cooperative-style economic experiments in Ithaca, New York (alternative currency, health cooperative), food co-op associations, co-housing communities, and so on.

10 Schweickart has also engaged with Parecon in some debates available at www. SolidarityEconomy net, September 28, 2006.

11 Notice here the likelihood of a corruption of that process, known today as pork-barrel spending (Schweickart 1992: 25).

12 Though I am not a netizen myself, I do accept that online interaction is face-to-face interaction (immediate) of another order, and can be deployed for direct action and fuller democracy.

13 This answers the Goodmans' challenge to provide workers with full knowledge of the productive processes in which they play a role. See Percival and Paul Goodman, *Communitas*, New York: Vintage Books, 1960, pp. 155–158.

### Chapter 9: Being there: thoughts on anarchism and participatory observation

1 Small sections of this chapter appeared previously in *Policing Dissent: social control and the anti-globalization movement*, a book published by Rutgers University Press.

### Chapter 10: Anarchism, academia, and the avant-garde

1 Significantly, those Marxist tendencies that are not named after individuals, like Autonomism or Council Communism, are themselves the closest to anarchism.

2 One might note that even Mikhail Bakunin, for all his endless battles with Marx over practical questions, also personally translated Marx's *Capital* into Russian. I also should point out that I am aware of being a bit hypocritical here by indulging in some of the same sort of sectarian reasoning I'm otherwise critiquing: there are schools of Marxism which are far more open-minded and tolerant and democratically organized, and there are anarchist groups that are insanely sectarian. Bakunin himself was hardly a model for democracy by any standards. My only excuse for the simplification is that, since I am arguably a Marxist theorist myself, I am basically making fun of myself as much as anyone else here.

3 In fact, a Medieval historian tells me that at least in many parts of Europe, Medieval universities were actually more democratic than they are now, since students often elected the professors.

4 Saint-Simon was also perhaps the first to conceive the notion of the withering away of the state: once it had become clear that the authorities were operating for the good of the public, one would no more need force to compel the public to heed their advice than one needed it to compel patients to take the advice of their doctors. Government would pass away into at most some minor police functions.

5 Note however that these groups always defined themselves, like anarchists, by a certain form of practice rather than after some heroic founder. Presumably this was in part because any artist who admitted to being simply the follower of another artist would abandon any hope of being seen as a significant historical figure just by doing so.

6 Take for example Todorov's famous essay on Cortez, who, he argues, was an amateur ethnographer who sought to understand the Aztecs in order to conquer them. It is rarely noted that Cortez tried to understand the Aztecs precisely as long as their army outnumbered his something like 100 to 1; the moment he defeated them, his ethnographic curiosity appears to have vanished.

7 Of course the idea of self-criticism took on a very different, and more ominous, tone within Marxist politics.

## Chapter 12: Anarchic Epimetheanism: the pedagogy of Ivan Illich

1 I have previously written of Freire and Illich as a kind of historical "Janus figure" of collaborative pedagogies (see Kahn and Kellner 2007).
2 By "Freirian critical pedagogy" I mean both the critical pedagogy developed by Freire himself and its first-order reinvention by a wide-range of primarily North American critical pedagogy theorists. Critical pedagogues like Peter McLaren have identified interest in Mexican anarchism such as developed classically by Ricardo Flores Magon or more recently by the EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista Army of National Liberation)), as well as in the work of Emma Goldman (McLaren 1999, 2000). Others such as Curry Malott and Mark Pruyn (2006) have sought to unite versions of Marxism and anarchism, primarily through the promotion of the pedagogical potential of subversive punk culture, and DeLeon (2006) has theorized anarchism as a strategic contribution to the present organization of critical pedagogy as a movement. Still, it is important to note that critical pedagogy's main theoretical inheritance has not been anarchism but rather Frankfurt School critical theory, Marxism and neo-Marxism, liberal and critical multiculturalism, and second and third-wave feminism amongst other influences. Illich is himself listed as an influence in the "Introduction" to *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (Darder *et al.* 2008).
3 For good biographical accounts of Illich see the "Introduction" in Cayley (1992, 2005) and various refl ective essays in Hoinacki and Mitchum (2002). In 1969, Illich voluntarily resigned his priesthood in response to the Vatican bureaucracy branding him "politically immoral."
4 It should be pointed out that both Illich and Freire espoused forms of liberation theology, but Illich's Christian anarchism more closely resembled that of Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker Movement that was based in attempts to ground apostolic kindness, while Freire's ecumenism-from-below was more congruent with the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez (1971).
5 Drawing in part upon funds from the Catholic Church, in 1961 Illich established cross-cultural and language immersion centers in Cuernavaca, Mexico and Petropolis, Brazil. These ultimately took the name of Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC). Ostensibly, CIDOC's primary mission was to prepare Catholic missionaries for work in Latin America but it quickly turned into an anarchist educational institution that functioned with an Epimethean ethos.
6 Illich loved bicycles as convivial tools appropriate for transportation needs. Anarchist projects like community bike programs (http://www.infoshop.org/wiki/White_bicycles) represent, then, something like an Epimethean political and cultural alter - native to mass transit systems. Similarly, Illich would have championed much of the DIY (Do-It-Yourself) movement in response to the hegemony of commodity culture.
7 Illich noted that the closest relationship to the Jewish/Samaritan relationship today would be the bitter enmity between opposed Israelis and Palestinians (Cayley 2005).

## Chapter 13: Thoughts on anarchist pedagogy and epistemology

1 In Mandarin, "Gong Fu" refers to the mastery of practice – any practice, in an artful, skillful, and mindful manner. Especially in the modern era, this term has taken on a stronger connection to the martial arts. "Wushu" in Mandarin also means martial art or movement and, in some contexts, dance. It is important to note here that in China, as in Japan and much of Southeast Asia, the martial arts have always been more than physical activity – but an expression of intellect, skill, physical awareness, personality, "spirituality," and, ironically to some, compassion for living things.

**Chapter 14: Accessible artifact for community discussion about anarchy and education**

1  She also clearly writes about the valuable contribution that community organizing has had in her work, writing about the distinction between academic credentials and lived experience toward the end of her essay she extols (1997: 4):

> Frankly, academia has been largely irrelevant to my political work; if anything, my political work has contributed to my general understanding of the world and, therefore, to my academic work, but especially to my ability to survive academia. Everything I have learned politically, from logistics to theory, I have learned from people outside of the academy (I even went to Brooklyn College after all of the Marxists had been fired during the McCarthy Era) and many of them have never stepped foot inside the university or barely made it through. Yet, they are the smartest, most thoughtful well-read and creative thinking people I have ever met. Most don't even know that queer theory exists. It hasn't stopped them from creating change. They have been inspiring and without them as a community I would not have developed politically or intellectually.

**Chapter 16: Infrapolitics and the nomadic educational machine**

1  The author would like to thank the many friends and comrades with whom years of discussion provided the basis for this essay. Special thanks to those who provided comments on this piece including David Harvie, Stefano Harney, Dave Eden, Scott Cheshier, and the excellent editors of this volume.
2  For the purposes of this essay I'm limiting my comments to the relation between the nomadic educational machine and the university, or higher education more generally. Arguably there are different dynamics to consider within other educational spaces.
3  There is a good deal of resonance between the concept of being in but not of a space and the framing within Open Marxism of the position of being both within and against capital or the state. The moment of suspension created between existing within but not of is precisely an exteriority that is not exterior, a fold of the interior that creates the outside within.
4  The Institute for Social Ecology's campus in Vermont, which operated as a haven for radical thought and played a very important role in the radical left in the US, is perhaps the most striking of recent examples. The New College in San Francisco seems to be suffering a similar fate, albeit for a larger set of reasons and dynamics.
5  This need not always be the case. For examples of people who have not fallen into this trap see the work of Peter Marshall, Jason Adams, Harold Barclay, and others who have not fallen prey to such a tendency. Even Kropotkin did not base his history of anarchist thought around the use of the word, but rather on what he identified as the "libertarian tendency" which he traced all the way back to Lao-tzu.
6  In particular see the work of people such as Jamie Heckert, Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin, Ashanti Alston, Mohamed Jean Veneuse, Richard Day, Sandra Jeppesen, the Leeds May Day Group, El Kilombo Intergaláctico, Peter Lamborn Wilson, Alan Antliff, Daniel Colson, Saul Newman, Marta Kolarova, and Arif Dirlik as well as publications such as *Siyahi* and *Affinities*.
7  See the *transversal* issue on militant research (http://transform.eipcp net/transversal) and Generation On-Line (www.generation-online.org).

**Chapter 17: Anarchism, education, and the road to peace**

1  All of the quotations from Kropotkin in this essay are taken from these famous and foundational anarchist texts, of which many reprinted versions presently exist. The

sources of the other quotations in this essay are duly noted in the text, and more details about all of them are easily located via various online resources.

## Chapter 18: As beautiful as a brick through a bank window: anarchism, the academy, and resisting domestication

1 Thanks to Abbey Willis and David Rozza for a productive brainstorming session for this piece, Davita Silfen Glasberg, William T. Armaline, Steve Ostertag, Randall Amster, and Lee Pryor for friendly reads, and Abraham DeLeon, Steven Best, and Richard Kahn for discussing this topic, albeit briefly, with me on the internet.

## Chapter 19: Rethinking revolution: total liberation, alliance politics, and a prolegomena to resistance movements in the twenty-first century

1 An early version of this essay first appeared in Best (2006). For more detailed views on total liberation and alliance politics, I refer readers to my essay, Best (2007). These views are also amply expressed in the two critical anthologies I put together with Anthony J. Nocella, II (see Best and Nocella II 2004 and 2006).
2 The term "Left" is certainly vague and the typical political mapping of "Leftist" and "Rightist" interests has been called into question as a useful heuristic device. That debate aside, I will use the term "Left" to describe those people and groups defending human rights and social justice in some ways, often anti-capitalist and revolutionary but typically opposed to corporate exploitation in all forms, such that the term includes Marxists, socialists, anarchists, and those promoting rights and equality for women, people of color, gays and lesbians, and other disenfranchised and exploited social groups.
3 For a historical and critical analysis of the Animal Liberation Front, see Best and Nocella (2004).
4 The body of literature comprising the field of cognitive ethology is incredibly rich and vast. See, for example, Donald R. Griffin (1992), a pioneer of the scientific study of animal life and intelligence. For more contemporary approaches, see the excellent work of Marc Bekoff (2003).
5 On the "animal question" as central to the "nature question" and social change in general, see Mason (2005).
6 All quotes from Takis Fotopoulos are cited with permission from personal correspondence with the author in December 2005.
7 For an analysis of new alliance politics movements including animal liberation, see my article, "Common natures, shared fates: toward an interspecies alliance politics," at http://www.drstevebest.org/papers/vegenvani/commonnatures.php.
8 For an analysis of the affinities between animal and human liberation, see Benton (1993).

## Chapter 21: Anarchism, or the cultural logic of networking

1 Spunk Library. Online. Available www.spunk.org/library/intro/faq/sp001547/secA5.html (accessed December 17, 2007).
2 Online. Available www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/cocha/principles.htm (accessed December 17, 2007).

## Chapter 23: Free as a bird: natural anarchism in action

1 However carefully deployed, bombs and other incendiary devices always carry the risk of injuring human or nonhuman animals. For more on that question, see my 2004 essay "Mothers with monkeywrenches." I define violence contextually as injurious and unjust

use of force. As such violence is always unethical. Since violence is at the root of the problems we seek to solve, its use to solve those problems is certain to be ultimately counterproductive. In the current context of disproportionate access to force by governments, anarchist violence would be particularly silly. The distinction between force and violence can only be determined in context. Property is violence and thus property damage is not violence. See my 2006 chapter "Stomping with the elephants" for more careful argument concerning property and the distinction between violence and legitimate use of force.

2  Peter Kropotkin was a renowned geographer and naturalist in addition to being a prominent anarchist. His book *Mutual Aid: a factor of evolution* is badly outdated in its treatment of non-European culture and history but its sections concerning demonstrated instances of mutual aid among nonhuman animals remain valid and relevant.

3  For example, the recent collaboration of INCITE Women of Color Against Violence and Critical Resistance to work toward solutions to domestic violence that do not involve state-sponsored policing is an anarchistic project in that it seeks to replace failed statist solutions to an urgent problem with collective community action. The ideas of the participants in such projects may be more relevant to the evolution of anarchism than those of non-activists who have studied but never enacted resistance to or substitution for government.

### Chapter 25: personal identities and collective visions: reflections on identity, community, and difference

1  The talk was part of a series entitled "Women: image and identity," sponsored by the Smith College Project on Women and Social Change. I am grateful to Johnella Butler, Marilyn Schuster, Elizabeth V. Spelman and Susan Van Dyne for providing me the opportunity to participate. In addition, Barbara Johnson, Peggy Kornegger, Judith Plaskow, Drorah Setel, and Lynn Wilson helped me to think through many of these ideas. A revised version of the talk was published (in Yiddish) in *Problemen* in May, 1984 (No. 133), pp. 15–17. I am particularly grateful to the late Ahrne Thorne, then-editor of the journal, for recognizing in it anarchist content and perspectives before I did so myself.

2  I have explored some of these issues in previous works (Acklesberg 1984a, 1988, 2001, 2003a). See also Piven (2006).

3  Elizabeth Spelman would come to term this approach the "tootsie roll theory of identity" (see Spelman 1988).

4  The literature on this point now is immense (for some interesting explorations in a variety of arenas see Kennedy and Davis 1993; Lehring 2003; Collins 1991).

5  Somehow, I was not yet aware of Peggy Kornegger's (1975) work.

6  Audre Lorde (1982: 190), in her biomythography quotes from a letter from a friend describing what seemed to be a similar experience: "I feel a new kind of sickness now, which I know is the fever of wanting to be whole."

7  I am indebted to Judith Plaskow and T. Drorah Setel for the many conversations out of which a number of these ideas grew.

8  See, for some recent examples, Cole and Sheftall (2003), Collins (1991, 1998) and Crenshaw (1997). Ironically, just as I was writing this section, Jewish feminist theologian Judith Plaskow received an e-mail from a rabbi wishing to interview her, indicating that he wanted to ask why she did not recognize that her efforts to make Judaism more open to women were closing it to men!

9  The literature on this topic is, by now, voluminous. For some early treatments see Berman (1973), Hyman (1976), and Neusner (1980). For a full exploration of the "otherness" of women within traditional Judaism, and the articulation of a feminist alternative, see Plaskow (1990).

10  I think we "older generation" feminists feel a similar disconnection when younger women who define themselves as feminists nevertheless fail to understand our concerns about the whittling away of abortion rights, or of rights to equal treatment at the workplace. I have addressed these issues before (Ackelsberg 2003b).

11  A group of contemporary anarcha-feminist women who modeled themselves, to some extent, on an organization of the same name that was active during the period of the Spanish Civil War. For further information about the original Mujeres Libres see, for example, Lisa Berger and Carol Mazer, *De Toda la Vida* (videocassette) 1986 and Ackelsberg (2005).

12  The claim that those who raise questions about the functioning of ongoing institutions are being "divisive" is a typical mode of dismissing such questions.

13  Womanists, black feminists, Latina feminists, and others have been making similar and parallel claims vis-à-vis feminist and other social change movements. And most of these movements have yet to fully figure out exactly how to respond effectively to those demands.

14  Here is another point where my scholarly concerns have come together with these seemingly more personal ones. I have explored this issue before (see Ackelsberg 1984b and 2005 – especially Ch. 6 and "Conclusion").

15  Recent work by Patricia Williams and Lani Guinier, among others, have addressed this issue in the context of a discussion of "race" in the United States. Both have noted that, in all-too-many contexts, those who call attention to racist comments or behaviors are targeted as trouble-makers, and find the conversation turned away from the original affront, and reframed as an issue of "civil discourse." See, for example, Williams (1991) and Guinier and Torres (2002: especially Ch. 2).

16  One of the more egregious examples of this, from within the academic community, is Huntington (2004).

## Chapter 26: Anarchism: past, present, and utopia

1  Syndicalism and individualism feature most prominently in the explanatory literature of anarchism's failure, and the history of the movement is now sometimes written as a confrontation between these two tendencies. See, for example, Skirda (2002); Bookchin (2008); and, for a rather different view of the confrontation, Bookchin (1995).

2  Franks (2006) provides an abstract four-point definition of class-struggle anarchism but this conception is nevertheless drawn from the notion that nineteenth-century anarchist theory was narrowly concerned with an idea of collective, industrial struggle.

3  One of the most recent examples of this attitude is N.J. Jun (2007: 132), who argues that Deleuzian anarchism *is* anarchism despite not being "the utopian anarchism of the nineteenth century . . . but the provisional and preconditional anarchism which is, and will continue to be, the foundation of postmodern politics."

4  A good analysis of Proudhon's theory of history can be found in Noland (1968). The location of this piece in a volume edited by Hayden White, the arch-postmodern historian, is somewhat ironic.

## Chapter 27: Anarchism and utopia

1  None of the states usually called "failed," "failing," or "collapsed" in governance studies result from anarchist uprisings, but revolutions are one kind of cause for failure. Carment refers to "four kinds of state failure: (1) revolutionary wars, (2) ethnic wars, (3) mass killings, and (4) adverse or disruptive regime change" (2003: 422). Bakunin had a revolutionary war in mind, and in spite of his different historical situation a comparison is possible: most modern failed states suffer from a bloody history of imperialist colonialism, whilst Bakunin's peasants suffered from a bloody history of czarist feudalism. Both situations seem to be capable of being turned to violent chaos

by very similar means; just think of the brutalities during the Russian Civil War (1917–21), where you have a failed monarchy, a disruptive regime change, and even fighting anarchists (in the Black Guards and in Makhno's army) (see Palij 1976).

2  It should be noted that following Chomsky (2006) even the most powerful state (USA) shows characteristics usually attributed to failed states. It seems that the evils of "bad anarchy" are not so much the result of states failing or not, but of domination carried out.

3  Most anarchists will regard the monopoly on the use of force and the rule of law as not necessary, and all anarchists must (per definition) regard oppression and exploitation as not necessary.

4  One might object that it is an ethnocentric prejudice to assume that there are no societies organized in an anarchistic manner – haven't there been enough indigenous tribes and nations that knew no state power? That may very well be the case (see, for example, the writings of Harold B. Barclay, Pierre Clastres, or John Zerzan), and those stateless societies can serve as useful inspirations for anarchist struggles and alternatives. But unfortunately, these societies seem to be in fallback or on the edge of obliteration, if not already extinct. (One exception might be the Zapatistas in Oaxaca.) And you cannot just join them in large numbers – what you can do is read about their cultures and politics, and that is not so much different from reading utopias. Readers of utopias seem to be special cases of armchair anthropologists.

5  What would that be? Leonard Williams lists "everything from do-it-yourself media to neighborhood organizing, from promoting alternative energy to providing free food to the poor and homeless" (2007: 308).

6  Of course there are famous exceptions like the Bible, the Koran, and certain self-help books (Roemer 2007: 147). Interestingly, there seem to be only negative utopias – dystopias – in blockbuster movies. Maybe Chloé Zirnstein is right and positive utopias are too boring to be suited for blockbuster movies: the more surveillance they depict and hence the more dystopian they are, the more thrilling the sci-fi movie plot becomes (2006: 79–81). I hope she is wrong, and look forward to exciting (but not yet projected) film adaptations of *The Great Explosion* and *The Dispossessed*.

7  Darko Suvin calls the last two Fallible Eutopia and Fallible Dystopia respectively (2003: 195–196).

8  This applies first and foremost to the critical utopias. Their successors, the critical dystopias, are more easily accessible, as Moylan finds (2000: 199).

9  Governments can be labor-saving in regard to making decisions for your life, but they are usually very opposed to the anarchist goal of "abolition of work," which would be an abolition of their profits, really.

10  Neither Zenon nor Iambulos are anarchists in a present-day meaning of the word. For them a stateless society does not mean equality of all human beings; rather it is suitable for some men, but women and children have no say in political matters.

11  Prior to these is Rabelais's *Abbey of Thélème* (a part of his humorous *Gargantua et Pantagruel*, 1532), but it is not considered a full-fledged utopia (Saage 2001: 212–216).

12  "Myob" is the acronym for "Mind Your Own Business!"

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