A CREATIVE PASSION
ANARCHISM AND CULTURE
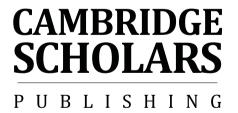
Edited by
Jeff Shantz

A Creative Passion

A Creative Passion:
Anarchism and Culture

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CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS

P U B L I S H I N G

DEDICATED TO MOLLY AND SAOIRSE SHANTZ

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FOREWORD

These are tough times, which call for tough responses. There are so many state and corporate messes made round the world by outright brutality and/or by the devastating indifference of cutting corners and costs on so-called "regulatory standards" of either "human rights" or environmental protection. In the past few weeks for instance, I've fallen into a helpless rage over the murders at the Gaza blockade of the flotilla activists by the IDF, and a spluttering inefficient anger with the continuing sense of ecological doom over the ceaseless spilling of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. The ruling Liberal party where we live is pushing through a massive highway project which is paving over historic, incredibly diverse wetlands along the Fraser River in British Colombia (a key part of their "Gateway" push to open up Pacific Rim shipping ports to dirty Alberta tar sands oil.) War and occupation by Canadian forces in Afghanistan continues apace, propped up by a racist, patriarchal culture of violence here at home which glorifies war over there supposedly in the name of Afghani women, while ignoring—or as seen in the vicious sexual assaults recently in and around Canadian military bases, even instigating—rampant domestic abuse, rape, misogyny, and other attacks on women's health and safety right here at home, papering over the sad fact of hundreds of missing and murdered women, many Indigenous sisters. Politicians and developers bury the history of residential schools while building malls and subdivisions on unceded native land. All this banality of evil, murderously dragging on, this "modern, bereft, commodified life continu[ing] unaffected" (Zerzan 2002, 136)

Poet Maya Angelou was asked by comedian Dave Chappelle about growing up in the civil rights movement and what it meant to have experienced such intense marginalization based solely on the colour of her skin and if it ever made her angry. She answered

> If you're not angry, you're either a stone or you're too sick to be angry... [But] you must not be bitter. Bitterness is like cancer—it eats upon the host. It doesn't do anything to the object of its displeasure. So you said angry, yes. You write it, you paint it, you dance it, you march it, you vote it, you do everything about it. You talk it—never stop talking it.

It's a constant struggle, that directing of anger into creativity, rather than inward disappointed bitter nihilism. Propaganda is not enough and

token resistance—like walking around in circles outside closed embassies or worse, limiting one's political involvement to dropping a vote in a ballot box once every few years—is simply useless and further depressing. Propaganda of the deed is what's needed.

The forces lined up against us are formidable and complex, and thus are required close and true analyses of our situation, paired with these deeds of creative and purposeful direct action. It is in this regard that I really want to recommend this collection of essays for your use and pleasure, because it is not only chock-a-block with such analytical angles, but also puts forward many excellent ideas and possibilities for refusal and resistance, towards carving out alternative futures. Not content with lyrical lament, these authors are constructive, abrasive, some like a sort of punk rock whetstone sharpening a prod to society, many sparks to the imagination flying off.

This book races up and down history and pre-history, grappling with the "progress" of civilization, colonialism and capitalism's vicious claws dug into our backs. It flies across wide geographical spread, from the shittiest suburban terrain, grit of cities, to the wilds of the landscapes scheduled to be dammed. By sketching out lessons in the life experiences of these many artists and thinkers, it cries out to future pirates, poets & playwrights.

This helps in the honing of our demands, specific methods to fight for the expansion of the commons, rather than its enclosure and demise. The way the ice caps are melting by now, it's pretty clear that the only way to end the class war is to win it. But how?

I have been placing my hopes on the creativity of anarchistic past, present and future generations for many years now. Since when at a formative age I read some Emma Goldman and U.K. LeGuin's *The Dispossessed*, I have both secretly and publicly hoped in the liberatory potential of directly democratic, popular assemblies. In the anarchism of autonomous, direct action to get things done, in popular education and the kids breakfast programs to go with it, by any means necessary. Instead of little pockets of freedom, that we might one day live whole lives of self-determination, without landlords, bosses or borders. Hoped that eventually through more and more consciousness of this power, it would spread like wildfire, spread enough to grow our own food, and squat the world.

But hope is a funny word, like Naomi Klein quipped at the Klimaforum in Copenhagen, it can just be an expression for a holding pattern. It was sad seeing so many people so deeply caught up in their high hopes for Obama, now obviously disappointed, but Klein also dug up a great quote from Studs Terkel: "Hope has never trickled down. It has always sprung

up." I'm with her on that it's time to "hope less, [and] demand more."

Even a more liberal journalist like Ryan Lizza recognized back in 2008, "Perhaps the greatest misconception about Barack Obama is that he is some sort of anti-establishment revolutionary. Rather, every stage of his political career has been marked by an eagerness to accommodate himself to existing institutions rather than tear them down or replace them" (quoted in Street 2009, n.p.).

So we are reminded that as we go about building alternative infrastructures and organizing the battles to win our specific demands, the state is not just withering away. Jeff Shantz writes (later in this book) that, as "the anarchist Bakunin famously proclaimed: 'The urge for destruction is a creative passion also.' So it is with [African poets] Ogun and Atunda. In both, 'the act of creation is locked in dialectical combat with the act of destruction'" (Osundare 1994, 84 as quoted by Shantz in this work). Collectively, we have a lot of work ahead, and no doubt maintaining that dialectic balance will further assist our survival.

Our fullest ingenuity and resourcefulness will also be necessary. As political prisoner Seth Hayes once said, "Only through our involvement will we become free." We must be wary of reliance on "the master's tools" like so much of the privatized internet, which can so easily be wielded against us in surveillance, exploitation and repression. Green anarchist John Zerzan argues that "[t]echnology, and it's accomplice, culture, must be met by a resolute autonomy and refusal that looks at the whole span of human presence and rejects all dimensions of captivity and destruction" (Zerzan 2002, 204).

Rather, it is more likely that history will judge us by the extent to which we can, as Nigerian environmentalist activist and poet Nnimmo Bassey cried out, "Leave the coal in the hole! Leave the oil in the soil! Leave the Tar Sands in the land!" How high can we raise up our collective humanity, defend and arm our desires?

So, please, read on, and go flip through the index (the making of which was some of the most fun I've had yet in my brief foray into indexing); make some time to follow up on some of the fascinating authors, poets, artists, musicians, pirates, actors (and their various bands and collective projects) which can be found in the many notes and references attached after each essay. May you find much fuel for your own creative passions, and may it burn long. All the while, as Zerzan said (to end his cut-up of Chomsky), "It is past time to go forward and engage the real depths of the disaster facing all of us." (Zerzan 2002, 143).

—P.J. Lilley, Surrey, BC (on Kwantlen & Semiahmoo territories)
June 14, 2010

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

JEFF SHANTZ

Anarchism—the idea that people can organize their lives on the basis of justice and equality in the absence of economic and political elites—perhaps more than any other political or philosophical movement, has formed the specter that has haunted the dreamscapes of capitalist and statist authorities. Certainly no political or social movement has enjoyed as much of a resurgence, some would say resurrection, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries as anarchism. Indeed, since the rise of the alternative globalization or global justice movements in the early 1990s, anarchism, as a self-aware political force, has become perhaps the dominant social vision and mobilizing inspiration of the global movements against neoliberal capitalism in the Global North. Waves of young activists and community organizers seeking a world free of domination, exploitation, repression and oppression have found in anarchism a vibrant and practical alternative to both the current systems of late capitalism and the erstwhile alternatives of previous generations, most notably statist communism and socialism.

Not surprisingly, corporate media and government representatives have gone out of their way to portray anarchism as a purely destructive, negative phenomenon, a force of evil, chaos and harm. Anarchism is presented as something akin to nihilism or, even more, terrorism. Mainstream accounts of anarchism focus on acts of property destruction during political protests, vandalism, supposed calls for the overthrow of society (when really it is the state and capital that are opposed), and acts of political violence attributed to anarchists, without regard for whether or not those involved are actually self-identified proponents of anarchism. Contemporary anarchists are identified as terrorists and reference is made to political assassinations carried out by anarchists during the 19th century. Waves of academic "research" have appeared suggesting that anarchism is the precursor to present-day terrorist movements and activities (see Bergesen and Han 2005; Jensen 2009).

The term anarchy itself continues to strike fear in the hearts of politicians and bosses of various stripes. Since the early days of the Industrial

Revolution, anarchy has been portrayed as a wild beast that inspires people to evil deeds and threatens the very destruction of capitalist societies. With the rise of the alternative globalization protests of the twenty-first century, startling media coverage of property damage and clashes between police and protesters during demonstrations against corporate institutions has been manipulated to suggest that the stirring anarchist movements represent the return of political monstrosity. For defenders of states and capital, anarchism is presented as the antithesis of culture and civilization. Anarchism is portrayed as the expression of the supposedly crass, base urges of the "dangerous classes," the inarticulate rage of the mob. Anarchism is said to be the creed of the assassin, the bandit and the pirate. Only bourgeois civilization and culture, with respect for laws, contracts and private property can contain the wild animal desires supposedly expressed in anarchism.

None of this is atypical of authority's response to oppositional movements and groups that seek alternatives to state capitalist domination and exploitation. Such dismissals and condemnation have been directed at anarchists and socialists during the various Red Scares, communists during McCarthyism and environmentalists under Reagan and the Bushes. Such attacks on anarchism and anarchists have been a constant and predictable part of state capitalist containment of movements that call for and seek the abolition of both.

Yet these attacks serve to erase the vital, creative heart of anarchism, presenting as a negative reaction, or mindless lashing out, what is, in fact, a rich, thoughtful and articulate constructive movement. Anarchism, while calling for the destruction of political domination (in states, governments, political parties and traditions) and economic exploitation (in private property, capitalist markets and monopoly control of productive resources), has always produced reflective, courageous, inspiring and inspired visions of social alternatives, not in a detached realm of fantasy or "art" but in the here and now of the real world. Unlike state capitalism, anarchist visions stress mutual aid, solidarity, conviviality, participatory decision-making and sharing. Distinct from other social reform visions, anarchists and anarchist perspectives do not stress the capture and use of the state, in reforms or revolutions, or the violent imposition of new social relations from above, through political or social vanguards. Instead anarchists stress voluntary participation, the creative capacities of all, and do-it-yourself (DIY) approaches to economic, social, political and cultural life. As they oppose political vanguards, so too do anarchists oppose cultural vanguards and the separation of "the artist" from society. Rather than a special figure, shrouded in creative mystery, anarchists proclaim that all are artists, all

can make art. In opposition to those who counter-pose anarchy *against* culture, in a dualism that constructs anarchism as the antithesis or, or as a threat to, culture, anarchists emphasize the creativity and innovation of experience freed from institutions of authority and domination, convention and tradition.

Movements for social change cannot provide a radical alternative by operating strictly as negativity, by asserting anti-systemic demands alone. However, as the anarchist Bakunin stated in the last century: "The passion for destruction is a creative passion, too" (1974, 204). Anarchist movements respond to the processes of social exclusion and cultural alienation currently associated with global processes of governance by challenging the global order and asserting their own autonomous identity. Attempts are made to (re)construct cultural meaning through specific patterns of experience in which participants create meaning against the logics of global intrusions that seek to render them meaningless. Anarchist movement activities are largely engaged in transforming the normative cultural and political codes of emerging global relations.

Anarchists confront and contest not only exploitative material relations and authoritarian state practices but have developed sustained, holistic opposition to cultural production within capitalist societies. Locating hierarchy, authority, oppression and repression not solely in economic or political institutions, anarchists have launched devastating criticisms of a range of civilizing practices within capitalist modernity and post-modernity. Key among the disastrous characteristics of capitalist civilization are ecological destruction, at local to biospheric levels, the mechanization of social life, alienation, the pacifying effects of consumerism and the anonymity of social life in mass societies.

Numerous commentators (Klein 2002; Heller 2005) have expressed concerns about the seeming lack of cultural developments within the contemporary alternative globalization or global justice movements, particularly in the Global North. While the social upheavals and communist mobilizations of the 1930s were associated with various cultural developments, such as socialist realist art, folk and jazz music and proletarian fiction and the New Left of the 1960s and 1970s was accompanied by the counter-culture, and experiments in art, music, the underground press and literature, the alternative globalization movement has seemingly lacked any unique associated cultural manifestation. Yet other commentators have noted that anarchism has provided something of a cultural force within alternative globalization movements, particularly within North America and some parts of Europe. Part of the character of the alternative globalization movements, and part of their anarchic

structure, is that there is no cultural (or political or economic) center.

Anarchy

The word "anarchy" comes from the ancient Greek word *anarchos* and means "without a ruler." While rulers, quite expectedly, claim that the end of rule will inevitably lead to a descent into chaos and turmoil, anarchists maintain that rule is unnecessary for the preservation of order. Rather than a descent into Hobbes' war of all against all, a society without government suggests to anarchists the very possibility for creative and peaceful human relations. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the first to identify positively his theory as anarchist, neatly summed up the anarchist position in his famous slogan: "Anarchy is Order."

For anarchists, the regulatory and supervisory mechanisms of the state are especially suited to producing docile and dependent subjects. Through institutions like courts and prisons, but also social work, authorities extend the practices of ruling from control over bodies to influence over minds. Moral regulation provides a subtle means for nurturing repression and conformity. It results, in relations of dependence rather than self-determination as the external practices of the state increasingly come to be viewed as the only legitimate mechanisms for solving disputes or addressing social needs. For anarchists the "rule of law" administered through the institutions of the state is not the guarantor of freedom, but, rather, freedom's enemy, closing off alternative avenues for human interaction, creativity and community while corralling more and more people within its own bounds.

What characterizes anarchism is its holistic critique of, and opposition to, institutions and practices of hierarchy, domination and authoritarianism. While other movements emphasize, prioritize or privilege economy, politics or culture, anarchists have always identified the broader, interconnected systems and practices articulating these diverse spheres. Anarchists often identify capitalist civilization itself (the surround of capitalist economics, statist politics, imperial territoriality and cultural and social domination) as integrated systems of power, control and regulation to be challenged, dismantled and replaced. It is not enough to dismantle economic relations, for example, if institutions of cultural domination or destruction of wilderness remain as grounding principles and practices of social life.

Since the earliest days of industrial capitalism, the morality of the ruling classes, what is often called bourgeois morality, has suggested that only civilization (or liberal democracy), the civilizing practices of

bourgeois society and culture, with the rule of (capitalist) law and (state) order, can tame the urges and desires of the dispossessed, working class and poor, which if left unchecked would bring about the destruction of bourgeois liberal democracies and free markets. For anarchists, capitalist civilization, rather than the securer of freedom, has become freedom's enemy, contributing to relations of tyranny and despotism, economic exploitation and the taming of resistance to exploitation and perhaps fatally the destruction of vast ecosystems and the biosphere on which all life depends.

A key document in developing the radical critique of capitalist civilization within anarchism is *The Ego and Its Own: The Case of the Individual Against Authority* (1844) by Max Stirner (Johan Caspar Schmidt, 1806-1856), a colleague and critic of Karl Marx. Stirner, whose *non de plume* means "Max the Highbrow," studied under G.W.F. Hegel at Berlin University, becoming one of *Die Freien*, "The Free Ones," the so-called "Young Hegelians" who sought to make Hegel's philosophical works suitable for the real world of politics. In his polemical attack on all institutions of authority Stirner rejected domination not only by states and capital, but also the domination of the mind by ideas, including ideas of socialism and justice within supposed liberation movements. So seriously did Marx view Stirner's philosophy of radical individual liberty, that he spent a full two-thirds of his bulky text, *The German Ideology*, on a condemnation of Stirner. For Stirner, as for many anarchists, the unique must struggle against capture by the fixed idea. Bourgeois morality, and the stifling centralism of majoritarian democracy represent the impositions of the fixed idea.

For contemporary anarchists, the critique of bourgeois civilization, culture and morality has taken on central significance, becoming even a factor of survival in the current period. Fully urbanized landscapes, concrete and steel with no green life remaining, technology becoming out of control as a result of unchecked progress, alienation of people from each other (and other living things), total control of human societies by authoritarian governments—science fiction authors have long envisioned this dystopian future. In opposition to this long feared future, now realized, the anarcho-primitivist critique has risen. The work of John Zerzan exemplifies this kind of thought—an understanding of civilization itself as the cause of oppression, the cause of the ills of modernity, based on interdisciplinary studies and research, drawing especially from anthropology. The anarcho-primitivist critique allows for the creation of an indictment against civilization itself as the root of the problems that inevitably create such worlds; this critique deconstructs all that civilization

encompasses, beginning with its very origins in domestication and agriculture. Writers and theorists such as Zerzan do not simply attribute blame to some singular "evil," such as government or technology or religion, but instead show these oppressive systems and structures as an inherent part of civilization, going well beyond the social critique of any science fiction narrative.

Cultures of Resistance

Previous social movements, particularly communism and socialism, were marked by related developments in culture and art that inspired, animated and reinforced those movements. Too often these developments were driven by the ideological needs of political parties and governments that mobilized and gained power during intense periods of revolution and war. Such movements in culture and art were often overtaken or used by the political masters, their vitality reigned in and put in the service of state reconstruction and nationalist mythologizing. Such was the case in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba and Mozambique. Contemporary socialist commentators, such as Boris Groys, even eliminate anarchism from discussions of contemporary politics and culture. For Groys (2010), today's political and aesthetic strategies are limited to notions of unified Europe, political Islam and mass culture, and these, in his view, have some communist heritage.

The lack of engaged analysis of contemporary anarchist politics has meant that the practices and intentions of this major, and growing, contemporary movement remain obscured. Lost in sensationalist accounts are the creative and constructive practices undertaken daily by anarchist activists and artists seeking a world free from violence, domination, repression and exploitation.

Through the deployment of dramatic symbolic practices, including developments in art, literature and performance, anarchists attempt to disrupt the efforts to circumscribe their activities and limit their critique of capitalist social relations. It is suggested that the concept *Bund*, expressing an intense form of solidarity which is highly unstable and which requires ongoing maintenance through symbolic interaction, better expresses the character of these forms of sociation than does community or movement. Expressive practices, often drawing upon punk styles, are crucial to holding these anarchist groups together. Cultural and artistic expression creates lifestyle solidarity among anarchists. Cultural experimentation and exchange are central features of anarchist gatherings such as the Active Resistance conferences and numerous anarchist bookfairs in Montreal.

Collectively produced and shared cultural practices represent attempts to break from the corporate re/production of culture and art, both aesthetically and materially, in terms of both consumption and exchange. Such symbolic elements are especially important for solidarity given the fragile character of sociation marking anarchist subcultures. At the same time many anarchist feminists, including working class women and women of color have challenged the predominance of punk-inspired clothing as representative of an exclusionary and even insular subculture. They have focused instead on the inclusive aspects of anarchism.

Such groupings have long offered highly original, creative resistance to corporatist articulations. Such creativity, largely ignored as modes or sites of consumption by sociologists, is expressed in Autonomous Zones (community centers based on anarchist principles, "rags" and "zines", self-publishing efforts) and varieties of do-it-yourself experimentalism in performance and art. The conservator lifestyles of these marginalized and precarious workers are built around practices of mutual aid, re-using and minimal purchase.

Much of cultural production within capitalist economies takes place within, and is dominated by, multinational, billion dollar corporate conglomerates that, in the pursuit of profit rather than human need, erase local cultures and impose a massifying culture that is not based in or responsive to the needs of real specific communities. More than this, individuals have little say or involvement in producing the cultural products, the commodities, that they consume. Capitalist civilization is based on the separation of people and their communities from means of subsistence and the capacities to care for themselves according to their own interests. Within capitalist economies the commons are rendered as private property, as people are made dependent, individually as well as collectively, upon commodity markets owned and controlled by the states and capital. This dependence provides the basis for exploitation and oppression along various lines of separation.

Beyond aesthetic issues much of anarchist concern with cultural practices represents attempts to produce and share beyond capitalist circuits of production and exchange. Culture, and its production and distribution, becomes an aspect of what some call "self-valorization," production for personal and community use, rather than profit. Shared as gifts rather than objects of commodity exchange.

Not surprisingly, and not without strategic significance, contemporary anarchism has turned to self-production, both collective and personal, in an effort to develop their own means of production and subsistence. This self-production extends beyond the meeting of base needs to create art and

culture. In order to bring their ideas to life, anarchist feminists create working examples. These experiments in social practice, popularly referred to as DIY (do-it-yourself), are the means by which contemporary anarchist feminists withdraw their consent from authoritarian structures and begin contracting other relationships. DIY releases counterforces, based upon notions of autonomy and self-organization as motivating principles, against the normative political and cultural discourses of neoliberalism. Anarchists create "autonomous zones" in which they can develop the experiences and resources needed to sustain communities that resist neoliberal capital.

Recognizing the limits of mainstream cultural channels from which they are, in any event, largely excluded, activists turned to symbolic politics, sensational activism and extreme forms of rhetoric. These actions can be understood as counter-articulations, largely through desecration and recontextualization within a context in which activists have little material strength. Consumer culture is also disrupted or subverted in a number of ways: exposing commodity fetishism, resisting capitalist development, do-it-yourself production and exchange outside of capitalist markets. As several of the authors show, there is a contradiction or turmoil in many subcultural anarchist projects and perspectives. This reflects, in part, the difficulties facing those who grapple with the practicality of maintaining anarchist lifestyles as part of "scenes" that are detached from community-based struggles of the working class and oppressed. This collection illustrates the possibilities and problems facing attempts to build DIY community-based artistic and political movements. The collection also engages theoretical developments around emerging anarchist practices.

Creative Passions

In his contribution, Roger Farr outlines the early dismantling of bourgeois civilization and art in the works of Dada poet Hugo Ball, using Ball's diary *Flight Out of Time* to recompose the Dada innovator's fragmentary writing on anarchism. This recomposition serves two purposes for Farr: first, to establish the nature and extent of Dada's entanglement with the European anarchist movement; and second, to demonstrate how Ball's attempts to articulate linkages between social and discursive orders led him to anticipate developments in poststructuralist theory. Having examined Ball's anarchic attack on bourgeois culture, Farr concludes with an assessment of Ball's work in relation to contemporary anarchist praxis.

Science fiction authors have long portrayed dystopian futures that

resonate with the fears and concerns of anarcho-primitivists who see bourgeois civilization expanding ecological destruction (to biospheric, even universal levels), human misery and suffering, poverty and despair within authoritarian and increasingly tyrannical social arrangements. No longer are the imagined futures of these science fiction narratives far-distant repercussions of modernity; rather, industrial civilization seems to ever-increasingly resemble these narratives. The world is certainly facing ecological disaster; with ancient forests rapidly disappearing, dead zones developing in the ocean, and global warming threatening to melt the icecaps, this is undeniable. This is an observable problem, made obvious by looking out the window or picking up a newspaper; much more subtle and more difficult to identify are the psychological effects of living in such a world. For Max Lieberman, science fiction classics such as George Orwell's *1984* and Philip K. Dick's *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* present images of a future inalterably changed by the actions of humankind—what becomes the "world," as humans in these narratives have created it, is ugly and strange, devoid of other forms of life, lacking meaningful interactions between humans. Both *1984* and *Flow My Tears* examine questions of identity, questions of mental illness—paranoia and fear are rampant, substance abuse is common. Orwell and Dick's novels present characters that are psychologically damaged by their human-created environment. By using the narratives of science fiction and examining current events and thought in fields such as transhumanism, extropianism, biotechnology, psychology, and medicine, Lieberman illustrates bases in the real world for the possibility of the futures authors such as Orwell and Dick imagine. Through a critique of civilization, anarcho-primitivists also examine the psychological effects of humankind's removal from wilderness—the alienation, despair, and other psychological maladies found in the characters of Orwell and Dick's novels are present today. Lieberman's work shows that the anarcho-primitivist critique presents a compelling argument that these problems grow and become intensified with the progress of civilization, that the worlds imagined in *1984* and *Flow My Tears* are possibly the end result of the civilizing process.

Liam Nesson's chapter shows that radical eco-anarchists like Edward Abbey actually develop complex, even contradictory, approaches to ecological destruction and industrial capitalist civilization. Edward Abbey's approach to environmental defense differs significantly from Wallace Stegner's passionate, though moderate, appeal. Stegner adopts a bureaucratic approach to solving conflicts between environmentalists, policy makers, and industrialists. He urges people to consider many

perspectives on the utilitarian issues related to resource use and wilderness preservation. Alternatively, Abbey urges for wilderness preservation without compromise. The two authors' ideological and philosophical approaches to conservationism are apparent in their fiction and nonfiction. Nesson analyzes the differences between these approaches and assesses their effectiveness in reaching achievable goals. While Nesson argues for Stegner's more moderate and compromising move toward change, based on achievable reforms, his study, nevertheless, emphasizes the importance of each author's polemics with a specific investigation of Abbey's commitment to anarchist philosophies. Drawing inspiration from philosophers he interpreted as anarchistic, including Chuang Tzu, Plato, and Thoreau, Abbey glorified risk taking as means to resist authoritarian institutions. Abbey's work presents anarchist perspectives (particularly those of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Mikhail Bakunin) as providing inspiration for movements seeking to disenfranchise those who control the functions of nation states. Tempered by the controlling maxim that people should value all sentient life, Abbey encourages, often with humor, aggressive action to promote positive change—through the limitation of industrial intrusion on wilderness lands. He critiqued the interconnected corporate and military-industrial influence on American lives and government. In response to destructive development of wilderness areas for recreation and resource use, and in objection to exaggerated control of citizens' lives, Abbey's diverse writing projects scrutinized and challenged the techno-industrial greed and cultures of power underpinning modern civilization.

Concern with local knowledge in struggles against global institutions of capital animates the works of Wole Soyinka. While the influence of anti-colonial theorists and activists, including Franz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, and Julius Nyerere, on his work is well known, it is also the case that Soyinka has been inspired by the works of a range of anarchist and libertarian thinkers, such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Leo Tolstoy, and Albert Camus. In addition to these influences Soyinka's philosophical grounding draws richly from Yoruban culture and mythology. From the perspective of this complex intersection of Yoruban and Western understandings of African mythology, Soyinka locates an anarchist presence. His sharp analysis of postcolonial power dynamics and call for an "organic revolution" based in Yoruban cultural concerns has marked his work as incisive, unique, and challenging.

Focusing on cultural expressions of indigenous societies, Soyinka foregrounds the anarchic, communal nature of ritual dramas. He does so in both his literary works and his political commentaries. Soyinka's

endogenous anarchism offers a critique of politics and post-colonial revolutions, with reference to symbolic practices that preceded and survived, in varying forms, European colonialist impositions, and continue to sustain resistance to neocolonialism, in part through the deployment of myths and rituals.

In North America and Europe there is little question that the dominant influence on contemporary anarchist cultural production and distribution has been punk. Indeed there has been a mutual resonance between anarchism and punk, with each movement interacting with and contributing to the development of the other, since the beginning of first wave punk in the 1970s. Even more, punk has intersected with the other predominant cultural expression of contemporary anarchism, primitivism. In his chapter, Mark Wetherington examines the influences, interpretations and criticisms of anarchist and primitivist ideology within the punk movement. Although the Sex Pistols and their single "Anarchy in the UK" introduced many in mainstream society to punk, and in the perception of many linked anarchy and the punk movement, in the decades since the late 1970s the majority of punk music has lacked a coherent philosophy, with many arguing that one never existed. Focusing on the musical legacy of the San Francisco Bay area punk rock band Fifteen, Wetherington discusses how lyricist Jeff Ott succeeded at incorporating nearly a century of anarchist literature and primitivist concepts into many of the band's songs; ultimately creating powerful, simple, and humble prose that stands both within and without the punk subculture as presenting some of the most compelling arguments for viewing modern, organized society in a radically different way. Rather than merely condensing the works of Jensen, Zerzan, Abbey, Camatte, and earlier anarchist literary figures, Ott's works re-interpret their views, placing them in a personal context. Despite some overlapping ideology with the radical punk literary and social organization CrimethInc., Wetherington argues that Fifteen presented a more ethical and responsible approach to life and politics in society. Whereas CrimethInc. encourages people to be parasitic as a means of hastening economic and political changes, Ott stresses self-sufficiency and respect for nature and others as alternatives that would eliminate the need for government. In conclusion, Wetherington's chapter describes anarchism within the punk movement as being unique from traditional expressions of anarchism in literature as well as being a distinct, but often disjointed, part of that subculture.

Bryan L. Jones focuses on anarcho-punk challenges to capitalist control of cultural production. He suggests, for example, that anarcho-punk artists have consistently supported the downloading of MP3 music

files from free file-sharing websites even as the big five record companies
work to make sharing a crime. One way the big five music companies
legitimize their narrative is by framing the argument over copyright in a
way that allows them to appear to help music artists, but a closer look
shows that these companies do not have the artist's interest at heart. In
fact, their understanding of copyright law only supports their ability to act
as manufacturers of culture. Jones' analysis points out how the big five's
framing of the argument rests on specific constructions of law in capitalist
society. Specifically they assert that it is those who own the means of
production that should benefit from the sale of a product and not the
creators. By advocating online piracy, anarcho-punks have redefined the
commodity and attempted to open opportunities for people to engage
culture free from the grip of what Theodor Adorno has called the Culture
Industry. In a sense, these punks have decommodified their work in a way
that supports the radical message of their art and renders apparent the
antagonisms in capitalistic society. In other words, piracy is consistent
with anarchist conceptions of culture because it allows for the creation of
culture from the bottom up.

For Jessica Williams, punk and anarchy are both ways of expressing
one's free will and individuality, and of not giving in to the demands of the
"system." In her autoethnographic reflection on her own punk anarchist
experiences, Williams examines what she sees as reflections of her own
personal development and that of characters in *SLC Punk*, a punk rock
film written and directed by James Merendino. She outlines connections
between anarchy and punk rock culture, and how, both separately and
jointly, they influence individuals who have a penchant for violence, and a
desire for acceptance into a clearly defined cultural subgroup. Williams
argues that for many young people who identify with punk culture,
lifestyles of sex, violence, and anarchy change as punk youths grow into
adulthood. She sees an exemplary example in Steve-O, the rebellious,
blue-haired hero of the film *SLC Punk* (1998) who allies himself with the
punk rock scene and the anarchist ideals that come with it, and defines
himself by the music and style of this subculture. His dramatic conflict is
his struggle with the question: How do you give up without giving in? Or,
in other words, how do you "grow up without selling out?"

One of the key issues is Steve-O's connection to a similarly minded
subculture which revolves around music. Steve-O finds it is easier to move
away from his "scene" and to grow up; it is part of the arc of participation
in various subcultures, such as the hippie culture of the sixties. For
Williams, as rebellious youth grow out of the punk rock lifestyle, so do
they grow out of an idealized version of anarchy, even if they don't stop

listening to the music that fueled that rebellion in the first place. Williams explores, through a meditation on her own experiences, how punk rock and anarchy have influenced each another in the fictional realm.

Anarchists have long stressed performance and drama as means for sharing ideas and disseminating anarchist perspectives. Drama has also been deployed as a means to experiment with collective processes and social interaction. Anarchist organizer Emma Goldman gave great attention to drama as a vehicle for spreading revolutionary ideas in a popular way. The intersection of anarchism, performance and drama is shown powerfully in the works of Eugene O'Neill. Indeed anarchism represents the main overtly referenced ideological influence on O'Neill's perspective. More recently, the Living Theatre and the Trumbull Theater complex have used performance effectively to engage people and encourage critical debate and discussion more broadly. The final chapter provides an overview of anarchism, drama, and performance.

There is currently little work available that examines anarchy, literature, and culture within the context of contemporary anarchist movements. The present collection addresses the substantial gap in understanding overlooked connections between anarchist perspectives and cultural expressions, and in political theory and theories of contemporary cultural movements. It is hoped that this collection will prove of great interest for students of literature, politics, sociology, communication and cultural studies. As importantly, it is hoped that the collection will find an audience among activists and members of community movements for whom anarchism represents a vital, living movement of the present and future.

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CHAPTER ONE

POETIC LICENSE:
HUGO BALL, THE ANARCHIST
AVANT-GARDE, AND US[1]

ROGER FARR

> I have examined myself carefully. I could never bid chaos welcome, throw bombs, blow up bridges, and do away with ideas. I am not an anarchist. (Ball 1974, 19)

Despite this apparent disavowal of anarchism, Hugo Ball occupies a pivotal, if somewhat conflicted, position in the history of twentieth-century anarchist thought. As a founding figure of Dada, one of the most notoriously iconoclastic movements of the Modernist avant-garde, Ball was a pioneer of performance art, sound poetry, concrete poetry and automatic writing. In his role as a scholar and intellectual, Ball was the author of several books and dozens of essays, dealing with contemporary issues in politics, cultural history, aesthetics and philosophy. As an activist, he was the driving force behind the establishment of the Cabaret Voltaire (Lenin's infamous rowdy neighbor in Zurich), which, like New York's celebrated Ferrer Center, has been described as 'an educational institution with anarcho-cultural aims' (Weir 1997, 233). He was also a contributing editor to some of the most important radical journals of his time, publishing his poetry and critical works alongside well-known anarchists Erich Müsham, Otto Gross, Gustav Landauer and Fritz Brupacher. And yet, despite these credentials, the contours of his work remain almost universally ignored in surveys of anarchism.

This lack of attention may be a consequence of the contradictory dimensions of Ball's thought: on the one hand, that of the young, anarcho-Dada poet, and on the other, that of the older, jaded reactionary. Indeed, it is not uncommon for studies of Ball's life and work to track a political narrative which begins with his early interest in Nietzsche and Stirner,

peaks with his involvement with the German and Swiss anarchist movements between 1915–1919, and concludes with mental illness, poverty, and religious conservatism (the last stage being a cruelly ironic fulfillment, one critic has observed, of Dada's anti-Art stance) (Weir 1997, 236). Curiously, with the notable exception of Philip Mann's *Hugo Ball: An Intellectual Biography* (1987), which dedicates an entire chapter to Ball's politics, Erdmute White's indispensable *Magic Bishop: Hugo Ball, Dada Poet* (1998) and David Weir's brief but astute discussion in *Anarchy and Culture: The Aesthetic Politics of Modernism* (1997), many of these studies adopt an apologetic tone when they turn to the questions of how anarchism inflected his work. For instance, in his forward to Ball's diary *Flight Out of Time* the respected Dada scholar John Elderfield acknowledges only a "general connection" (Ball 1974, xxxvii) between Zurich Dada and the anarchist movement, despite the clear evidence of direct connections in Ball's diary; in fact, Ball elsewhere had claimed that "anarchy in thought, art and politics" was the book's "main subject" (Quoted in White 1998, 181). In his overview of Ball's career, Elderfield writes that, despite its many flaws and contradictions, the one "positive aspect" of Ball's later work (which is marked by a rejection of radicalism in any form, political and aesthetic) is its "recognition that anarchy itself cannot be a goal—a necessary rebellion, perhaps, but no final solution" (Ball 1974, 39). Why this should be viewed as a "positive" development is not explained. Similarly, Gerhardt Steinke, in his otherwise informative *Life and Work of Hugo Ball* (1967), writes that while Ball's radical poetics "served to open up the path to the practice of anarchism, it also brought about a break with true reality, a spiritual derailment which meant living in a world that more closely corresponded to a dream reality" (Steinke 1967, 54). This unqualified and rather clichéd dismissal of anarchism as a kind of naïve "utopian socialism" leads Steinke to conclude that "[i]n the last analysis, Ball's vehement striving as a Dadaist was merely a secret subterfuge by which he meant to assert his own ego and to reinstate his own self" (Steinke 1967, 178). Yet Ball's demand was precisely the opposite: artists, he declared, must "Discard the Ego like a coat full of holes" (Ball 1974, 29), and further, sounding rather like an early Adorno,[2] poets must "give up [their] lyrical feelings," because "it is tactless to flaunt feelings at such a time" (1982, 27). To be fair to Steinke, Ball's diary entries on the ego and subjectivity are inconsistent, to say the least; nevertheless the inference of Steinke's and others' analyses is that Ball became more mature—more politically "balanced"—in his later years, when he withdrew from radical politics and art to embrace reformism and theology. At any rate, putting aside for the moment the question of political affiliations, the

fact remains that today Ball is not remembered for this later, more "realistic" work, but rather for his early work in Zurich, work that was almost obsessively preoccupied with the problem of realizing anarchist theory in a cultural practice. This work and this context, then, must come to the foreground in critical assessments of Ball's influence. To proceed otherwise is to contribute to what many critics see as a kind of "black-out" of anarchist contributions (and more interestingly, *alternatives*) to twentieth-century cultural politics.[3]

So, while keeping in mind that his thinking can be frustratingly contradictory,[4] in this chapter I want to recompose Ball's fragmentary thoughts on anarchism in order first, to establish the nature and extent of Dada's entanglement with the European anarchist movement and second, to demonstrate how Ball's attempts to articulate structural homologies[5] between two orders of representational fields (the socio-political and the linguistic) led him to anticipate developments in post-structuralist theory, which in turn has a bearing on contemporary anarchist praxis. In order to establish the third term, or "missing link" between these two fields—what might be called Ball's *anarcho-poiesis*, or "anarchist poetics"—my reading of his diary will take its methodological cues from the dissonant form of the work itself; for, as Ball writes, "thinking can also be an art, subject to the laws of art—provided that one directs one's attention…to fixing limits; to giving space and substance only to certain observations and avoiding others" (quoted in White 1998, 187).

"Let Us Rewrite Life Everyday"

Ball's unsubmitted dissertation on Nietzsche, written at the University of Munich in 1910, served as an introduction both to the collectivist anarchism of Kropotkin and Bakunin, and the individualist tendencies developed by Stirner. Although little is known about the details of the dissertation, what does seem clear is that Ball was deeply influenced by Nietzsche's rejection of abstraction and instrumental reason, a negation that Ball extended to an analysis of the state form:

> There is an unpleasant relationship between politics and rationalism. Perhaps the State is the mainstay of reason, and vice versa. All political reasoning, as far as it aims at norm and reform, is utilitarian. [But] the state is only a commodity … Nietzsche assails the church and left the state alone. That was a big mistake. (Ball 1974, 12; 21)

Unlike most anarchists of his day, and perhaps many today as well, Ball regarded the state more as an *effect* than a cause: it was "only a

commodity"—a reified image of abstract reason and the market, propped up by bankrupt metaphysical theories, which Ball described as being merely "the arithmetic feats of their inventors"(Ball 1974, 12). This view of the state as an edifice supported by an elaborate but flimsy philosophical scaffolding prompted Ball to turn his attention to other, even more insidious locations of power, and it is in this move that his work resonates with certain strains of contemporary anarchist theory.

In *The Political Philosophy of Post-Structuralist Anarchism,* for example, Todd May argues that while anarchist theory seems at times to conceptualize power as "bad" and freedom as "good"—a model that would link anarchist philosophy to liberal utilitarianism, which, as Saul Newman (2004 107–126) points out, is precisely how Nietzsche viewed it—one can also detect a "tactical," as opposed to "strategic" approach to political *struggle*. Whereas a strategic approach, May (1994, 10) argues, "involves a unitary analysis that aims towards a single goal," a tactical approach grows from the recognition that power is exercised at all levels of society, dispersed both horizontally and vertically, and therefore cannot be reduced to one particular site or goal: "[a]narchist political intervention" May writes, "issues from a recognition of the network character of relationships of power and of the variety of intertwined but irreducible oppressions that devolve upon those relationships" (1994, 154). Similarly, for Ball, the anarchist critique of power should not *only* be directed at the state, which was for him largely an exterior form, a secondary order of representation predicated on a deeper alienation which lay in the teleology of political reason and discourse itself; thus, Ball argued that anarchists must also attend to the operations of "purposive-rationality," the *discursive* mode that sustains the political philosophies used to legitimize the state and the current social contract in popular opinion. This focus on reason and discourse led Ball to conclude that "[a] revolt in materialistic philosophy is more necessary than a revolt of the masses" (Ball 1974, 13). Here Ball moved far too hastily, and seems to have chosen to ignore at least half of his favored anarchist's view of the state: for in an 1869 letter, Ball certainly would have been familiar with, Bakunin had defined the State as "an abstraction which destroys living society [and] consumes the life of the people" (2005, 87). He also stresses, however, that "for an abstraction to be born, develop, and continue to exist in the real world, there must be a real collective body interested in its existence." This "body," for Bakunin, is "the governing and property-owning class"— hardly an abstraction (2005, 87). Nevertheless, for Ball, the discourse of politics itself also had to become the terrain of a metonymic struggle for autonomy: "Adopt symmetries and rhythms instead of principles," he

declared, "[o]ppose world systems and acts of state by transforming them into a phrase…Let us rewrite life everyday" (Ball 1974, 56). In this struggle over the discursive composition of everyday life, the iron law of textual (and, to read paradigmatically, *social*) cohesion, which is dependent upon the "subordination" of clauses to "main points," of prepositions and conjunctions to nouns and verbs, etc., must be broken through a radical experimentation with the language of critique. Spontaneously constructed durations of sound and indeterminate syntax would disrupt the official languages of communication, which had become saturated with capitalist ideology: "The word has become a commodity," he wrote on June 16th, 1915, "We must give up writing second-hand: that is, accepting words (to say nothing of sentences) that are not newly invented for our own use" (1974, 26; 71).

"The Individual Vocables and Sounds Regain Their Autonomy"

Ball's turn to language as a site of struggle for liberation, while certainly indebted to his reading of Nietzsche, was also informed by his contact with the work of the German anarchist Gustav Landauer, whom he had met in 1915:

> Meeting with Gustav Landauer. An elderly, emaciated man with a floppy hat and a sparse beard. He has an air of pastoral gentleness about him. The next-to-last generation. Socialist theories as a refuge for noble minds. An antiquated impression… [there] are only three anarchists in Germany and he is one of them. (Ball, 1974: 15)[6]

By this time, Landauer had already published "Destroying the State by Creating Socialism" in *Der Socializt* (1910), an important work of anarchist theory which is known today mostly because of its treatment in Martin Buber's *Paths In Utopia* (Graham 2005, 164). In this remarkably prophetic tract Landauer declares that radicals should "under no circumstances have anything to do with politics," which he defines as "the rule of the privileged with the help of fictions" (Graham 2005, 164).[7] In place of such "politics," Landauer calls for a "direct affinity of real interests," and a radical defection from any dependence on, or expectations of, the state. For although it presents itself as a "thing," for Landauer—and for Ball—the state was more effectively *resisted* when it was understood as "a relationship between human beings, a way by which people relate to one another" (Graham 2005, 165). Anarchists can destroy this thing-that-is-not-a-thing, Landauer argues, by "entering into new relationships, by

behaving differently, [because] we are the state—and are it as long as we are not otherwise, as long as we have not created the institutions that constitute a genuine community and society of human beings."

Although Landauer's work has remained somewhat obscure for many years, there are signs that it is becoming relevant again within contemporary anarchist theory. For instance, in *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*, Richard Day argues that Landauer's work warrants closer attention today for its "deep break [with] the logic of hegemony," a logic which can only conceptualize social transformation within an either/or binary schema: either state seizure (orthodox Marxism) or state reform (liberalism). By "analyzing the state as a set of relationships," Day explains, Landauer anticipates the post-structuralist recognition that "we all govern each other via a complex web of capillary relations of power" (Day 2005, 125). For Landauer, and for Ball, this meant that "no language [could] be loud and decisive enough for the uplifting of our compatriots, so that they may be incited out of their engrained daily drudgery. A renewed social form must be spurred on…energetic action, designed to break barriers…*that* is propaganda of the deed" (Landauer n.d., 17). Thus, contrary to accounts of the avant-garde as an entirely negative and nihilistic tendency, it is quite clear that Ball's early work was motivated by a sympathetic reading of anarchist theory in which he stressed the *creative* agency referred to in Bakunin's famous formulation, "the urge to destroy is also a creative urge."

In fact, as early as 1914, Ball had launched a major study of Bakunin's *oeuvre*—known today as the *Bakunin-Brevier*—and this work occupied him continuously during his participation in the early Dada activities at the Cabaret Voltaire. The first reference to this study appears in November, 1914. An entry recorded shortly after, on the fourth of December, refers specifically to Max Nettlau's biography of Bakunin[8] which Ball later obtained in a four-volume, handwritten edition, with a forward by Landauer, from the Swiss anarchist Fritz Brupbacher,[9] along with a complete edition of Bakunin's writings (Ball 1974). Ball continued to work steadily on his Bakunin book, and on the 28th of November, 1916, he approached the publisher Rene Schickele, and asked: "if you publish Bakunin, may I do it? I have been working on him for years" (Ball 1974, 93). Schickele apparently agreed, but backed out only a year later. In place of the Bakunin study, Schickele advised Ball to write "a book on the 'German Intellectuals'" (Ball 1974, 143) which was eventually published as *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz* (1919)10 and which is said to have significantly influenced Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch, whom Ball introduced to one another in 1917 (White 1998, 14).

While the Bakunin study occupied Ball's attention throughout his early years and kept him in close contact with prominent German and Swiss anarchists, it was Proudhon, whom Ball had encountered only through secondary sources and conversation, who eventually piqued his interest in extending an anarchist critique of language into a artistic practice. On the 7th of January 1915, Ball made an entry in his diary that appears to prophesize aspects of the compositional method of the ground-breaking poems he would perform a year later at the Cabaret Voltaire, a performance which effectively launched Dada as an artistic movement. I will quote this salient passage at length:

> Proudhon, that father of anarchism, seems to have been the first to understand its stylistic consequences. I am curious to read something by him. For once it is recognized that the word was the first discipline, this leads to a fluctuating style that avoids substantives and shuns concentration. The separate parts of the sentence, even the individual vocables and sounds regain their autonomy. Perhaps one day it will be the task of language to demonstrate the absurdity of this doctrine.
>
> The language forming process would be left to its own resources. Intellectual criticism would have to be dropped, assertions would be bad, and so would every conscious distribution of accents. Symmetry would presumably cease; harmonizing would depend on impulse. No traditions or laws could apply. I do not think it is easy for a consistent anarchist to achieve harmony between person and doctrine, between style and conviction. And yet…*the style of an author should represent his philosophy, without his expressly developing it*. (Ball 1974, 22)

Although we cannot locate any reference to specific works by Proudhon in Ball's diary, it does not seem a great stretch of the critical imagination to suggest that Ball pursued this hypothesis about the confluence between literary and political forms in the year leading up to his performances at Cabaret Voltaire. Indeed, his diary shows that the necessity of articulating a link between anarchist theory and literary composition tormented him during this time: "I can find no compromise between socialism and art," he wrote in March, 1917, "[w]here is the path of social productivity for this art? An application of its principles that would be more than applied art? My artistic and political studies seem to be at variance with one another, and yet my only concern is to find the bridge" (Ball 1974, 100).

Ball attempted to build this "bridge" between his cultural practices and his anarchism in a number of ways. One of the more striking examples is the seditious anti-war poem "Totentanz 1916," the performance of which involved organizing a "Revolutionary Chorus"—a group of young

militants affiliated with Brupacher and his anarcho-syndicalist magazine *The Revoluzzer*—to recite the poem alongside a well-known Prussian march (White 1998, 59). Following the performance, which was immensely popular, the poem was printed on leaflets and dropped from airplane (by the French military!) on German troops, in an attempt to convince them to lay down their arms and defect from the army (White 1998, 55). Less dramatically, Ball also organized performances of songs by Erich Müsham, the important German anarchist who would be arrested only months later when he made a speech to ten thousand factory workers in Munich, calling for a general strike against the war (Ball 1974, 52).

His attempts did not stop there, however. Eventually, Ball's writing broke with any attempt to argue its politics in conventionally political terms; instead, he wanted language *to demonstrate* an anarchist critique, by allowing "individual vocables and sounds [to] regain their autonomy" (Ball 1974, 22). By establishing a connection between "person and doctrine," and overcoming the distinction between art and life, poetry might finally live up to its potential, in the words of the Situationist Raoul Vaneigem, "as the revolutionary act *par excellence*" (1983, 146). One attempt at such an *anarcho-poiesis* was Ball's now well-known piece "Gadji Beri Bimba,"[11] one of a series of sound poems which attempted to demonstrate how language might operate once it had defected from the demands of conventional semantic productivity—a kind of "refusal of work" via a *refusal of words*:

gadji beri bimba glandridi laula lonni cadori
gadjama gramma berida bimbala glandri galassassa laulitalomini
gadji beri bin blassa glassala laula lonni cadorsu sassala bim
gadjama tuffm i zimzalla binban gligla wowolimai bin beri ban
o katalominai rhinozerossola hopsamen laulitalomini hoooo
gadjama rhinozerossola hopsamen
bluku terullala blaulala loooo

zimzim urullala zimzim urullala zimzim zanzibar zimzalla zam
elifantolim brussala bulomen brussala bulomen tromtata
velo da bang band affalo purzamai affalo purzamai lengado tor
gadjama bimbalo glandridi glassala zingtata pimpalo ögrögöööö
viola laxato viola zimbrabim viola uli paluji malooo

tuffm im zimbrabim negramai bumbalo negramai bumbalo tuffm i zim
gadjama bimbala oo beri gadjama gaga di gadjama affalo pinx
gaga di bumbalo bumbalo gadjamen
gaga di bling blong gaga blung

In his carnivalesque performances of these works, which completely shocked the bourgeois theater-goers of Zurich, Ball was demonstrating how the social order, conceived of as a set of relationships and practices, was maintained in part through its reproduction in a *discursive* order which denied expression to emergent forms of radical subjectivity. The maintenance of conventional syntax, the demand that language be always referential—that words under capital must always labor to reproduce the conventions of social meaning—was, to Ball, partially responsible for our inability to articulate, let alone imagine, a radical alternative: "[l]anguage as a social organ can be destroyed without the creative process having to suffer. In fact, it seems that the creative powers even benefit from it" (Ball 1974, 76). In this sense, Ball's work lends itself as evidence to an observation made later by Julia Kristeva, that "certain currents of anarchism did not confine themselves to opposing existing social and state structures alone, but also propounded the necessity of a profound transformation in the very conception of the speaking-subject" (1998, 44).

The desire to experience such a transformation led Ball to utilize poetry as part of a broader project of cultural de-programming, an "erasure" of the social texts that interpellate and constitute the subject under capital:

> "Know thyself." As if it were so simple! As if only good will and introspection were needed. An individual can compare himself, see himself, and correct himself wherever an eternal ideal is firmly anchored in closely-knit forms of education and culture, of literature and politics. But what if...all the voices in the symphony are at variance with one another? Who will know himself then? Who will find himself then?
> It is necessary for me to drop all respect for tradition, opinion, and judgement. *It is necessary for me to erase the rambling text that others have written*. (Ball 1974, 35 [emphasis added])

Clearly there is a "nihilistic" impulse behind such a project; however, such an observation must go further. For when it is read as an attempt to advance a new model of communication, a tentative model informed by and gesturing towards anarchist theory, Ball's work can be seen to encourage both the performer and the audience to participate in the decentralized and fluid anti-authoritarian subjectivities that emerge only in those revolutionary moments and situations where the world is turned upside down, such as the one Bakunin famously described in his *Confession to the Tzar*, a text with which Ball was very familiar:[12]

> It was a festival without beginning or end; I saw everyone and no one, for each individual was lost in the same enormous strolling crowd; I spoke to

everyone *without remembering either my own words or those spoken by
others*, because everyone's attention was absorbed at every step by new
objects and events, and by unexpected news. (Bakunin quoted in Vienet
1992, 71)

At worst, such a project is hopelessly utopian, offering weird poetry as
cerebral compensation for "real" social change; at best, it is a cogent
critique of the extent to which the social order reproduces itself in part
through the maintenance of psycho-linguistic uniformity. The deciding
factor, I think, lies in the relevance of Ball's work to contemporary
anarchist praxis.

Back to the Future

The critique of political discourse and reason advanced by the
anarchist avant-garde poses a significant challenge to traditional models of
communication, models which many radicals would find hard to abandon.
Anarchists have long recognized that communication is an integral
element of social organization, and the anarchist project, as Landauer and
many others have stressed, is aimed largely towards the development of
new forms of social relations, new forms of *community*, based on the
essentially open-communicative concepts of mutual aid, free association,
and autonomy. In this respect, classical anarchism is a rational, if
somewhat wayward, child of the Enlightenment.

However, it is also evident that in the current period of advanced
capitalist globalization "communicational development…is no longer one
of 'enlightenment' in all its connotations, but rather of new technologies"
(Jameson 1998, 55). In other words, as Ball warned us almost a century
ago, language "has become a commodity," and capital has colonized
everyday life to the extent that not only words themselves but the very act
of communication itself now mimics, or rather *animates*, the processes of
capitalist production. In what linguists have identified as "the conduit
metaphor," a metaphor which frames the way we talk about language,
communication is described as a channel, a conduit, a conveyor belt along
which "a sender" tries to "get a message across" to a passive "receiver"
who "decodes" it (Reddy 1979, 164–201). For anarchists, the significance
of this transformation of communication from an act of "mutual
enlightenment" into a reified instrument of exchange cannot be ignored. In
fact, because of the ambivalence in the anarchist conception of power as
outlined by May, anarchist theory may be especially receptive to the
recognition that the terrain of struggle has spread from the factory floor to
a much wider "social factory," as the autonomist Marxists have called it: a

dispersed site of fully socialized production which relies heavily upon the rationalization and reification of language and communication to keep it functioning.

Certain currents of contemporary anarchism have already entered this terrain. Alfredo Bonanno, for instance, describes how the "greatly increased speed of productive operations" resulting from the intensification of organic capital in the form of information technology cleaves the proletariat into two new social strata, "the included and the excluded" and brings about an important "cultural and linguistic modification" (Bonnano 1990, 32). Unlike previous stages of capitalist stratification, these new "classes" are distinguished primarily by their relationship to the dominant *language* rather than by their position within the economic order. Moreover, as Bonanno recognizes, the expansion of global capital has required the break down of community, the destruction of any kind of "common language," the denial of the excluded from the language of the programers and financiers, and subsequently, the denial of any of the material benefits of advanced capitalist production. "The ghettos of the future," he writes, "will not necessarily be geographically circumscribed, as the hotbeds of unrest are farmed out to bleak and manageable dimensions, but will be culturally defined, through their lack of means of communication with the rest of capitalist society" (Bonnano 1990, 32). In his recent *Capital and Language*, the autonomous-Marxist economist Christian Marazzi draws a similar conclusion:

> [i]n the post-Fordist context, in which language has become in every respect an instrument of the production of commodities and, therefore, the material condition of our very lives, the loss of the ability to speak, of the "language capacity," means the loss of belonging in the world as such, the loss of what "communifies" the many who constitute the community. (2008, 131)

But Bonanno does not exactly lament this situation: as an anarchist, he does not put his hope in legal instruments or rights, which are rightly viewed as discursive forms extended by capital and the state in order to maintain the illusion of a dialogue rooted in so-called "common interests." As Jacques Lacan quipped in 1968, "there is no such thing as dialogue, it is a swindle" (Quoted in Mannoni 1970, 215). Thus, while the included may attempt to provide a bogus social consensus by allowing the occasional collective agreement to be signed, or by providing "a pre-fabricated language to allow a partial and sclerotised use of some of the dominant technology," (Bonnano 1990, 35), they will not be able to stop what has been set in motion by the destruction of a common language and

the withering of the Enlightenment values that have buttressed western civilization for the last four hundred years. In this light, we might understand the Invisible Committee's recent warning that "[t]here will be no social solution to the present situation…because there's no longer any language for common experience. And we cannot share wealth if we do not share a language" (2008, 25–26). If anarchist social transformation is to be successful, or *thorough*, it will, as Ball pointed out, require the development of a tactical language capable of precisely this "communizing" task—a post-capitalist language "newly invented for our own use."

Conclusion

It must be said in closing that the avant-garde anarchism propagated by Ball is not without its problems. Like other radicals of his time, Ball could not predict the extraordinary ability of capitalist social democracies to recuperate those cultural and linguistic practices which seek to resist the accumulation of surplus value; indeed, as Nicholas Thoburn points out, "[the] essence of capital is that it continually sets free its lines of flight…to open new territories for exploitation" (Thoburn 2003, 29). Distressingly, this "flight" is usually piloted by some of the most inventive elements in society: artists, scientists, poets, activists, philosophers, and all kinds dreamers. Moreover, history suggests that social movements rooted in spontaneity and irrationalism can take nasty right-turns, to put it mildly. But we must be careful here not to foreclose on our dreams by inducing from the *nightmares* of European civilization a universal prohibition against spontaneity and experimentation as positive and decisive elements in genuinely anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist political struggle. Indeed, it could be argued that to confuse anarchist-inflected *anti-rationalism* with "mystical" or fascist *irrationalism* is to commit an ethnocentric fallacy: what was true once for Europe becomes true for everyone, forever.

For in the final analysis, if it is true that capital must continually decompose and then restructure standardized communication in order to maintain just enough cooperation as is needed to coordinate production, then the defection from this process in favor of the development of autonomous communication models and networks, whatever they look or sound like, emerges as a viable, if limited, tactic. Thus, in terms of its relevance to contemporary anarchist praxis, what may be of lasting significance in Ball's work is his attention to language and communication as vital sites of anti-authoritarian critique and intervention, and his life-long commitment to "[experimenting with] areas of philosophy and of life that our environment—so rational and precocious—scarcely let[s] us

dream of" (Ball 1974, 67-68).

Notes

1. Thanks to Jesse Cohn for including an early version of this paper in the 2004 MMLA panel on Anarchism in Literature, where it was first presented, and to the small group of St. Louis anarchists who turned up; to Robert Graham for reading a subsequent draft and clarifying a few points; and to Jerry Zaslove for his advice.

2. "The critique of culture is confronted with the last stage in the dialectic of culture and barbarism: to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric, and that corrodes also the knowledge which expresses why it has become impossible to write poetry today." Theodor Adorno. 1982. *Prisms*. Boston: MIT Press, 34.

3. There have been several attempts to correct this critical gap in the last decade; see especially Antliff, Blechman, Casey, Madlec, and Weir.

4. As Tom Morris writes, "[f]ew documents so well reveal the stress lines of the social within the critically conscious self." "Bursting the Foundations" in Arthur Efron (ed.) *Paunch* (SUNY–Buffalo, English Department, 1980) 55–56: 86.

5. The term "structural homology" is used by Pierre Bourdieu to articulate linkages in power relations across distinct conceptual and social fields. See *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1977).

6. Only four years later Ball would note bitterly in his diary: "Landauer too has been assassinated" (165). The other two anarchists could be Müsham, Brupacher, or Bloch, or perhaps Ball himself.

7. Landauer's formulation precedes Gramsci's use of "hegemony" by several decades. For a lucid exposition and critique of "the logic of hegemony," see Richard Day, *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*, Toronto: Between the Lines (2005).

8. Max Nettlau, *Michael Bakunin: Eiene Biogrpahie*. Completed between 1896 and 1900, only 50 original copies are said to exist. A German facsimile was published in the 1970s. See Paul Avrich, "Bakunin and the United States," *International Review of Social History*, XXIV (1979): 320–340.

9. Brupacher was an associate of Kropotkin, Nettlau and Trotsky, and is best known for his *Marx und Bakunin: Ein Bietrag zur Geschichte der internationalen Arbietrerassoziation* (Birk, München 1922). In his diary Ball offers some brief but noteworthy commentary on Brupacher's book: "Characteristic of the style of the book is a sentence about the Jurassier, the anarchistic avant-garde: 'They were not,' it says, 'emaciated factory workers, but people whose circumstances permitted them the luxury of possessing a bit of desire for liberty.' The value of the book is in sentences like that one: his ironical indulgence towards the Marxists, his hesitant sympathy with Bakunin's impatient excesses'" (99).

10. Translated into English by Brian Harris as *Critique of the German Intelligensia*, New York, Columbia, University Press, (1993).

11. A performance of this poem, which must be heard to be fully appreciated, is available on-line at <http://www.ubu.com/sound/ball.html>. I am quoting the poem as it appears in Jerome and Pierre Joris Rotenberg (eds.), *Poems for the Millenium*,

vol. 1, Berkeley: California University Press, (1995): 296.

12. Although Ball would have encountered Bakunin's *Confession* by 1916, it is noteworthy that Paulette Brupacher, Fritz's wife, published a French translation in 1932 (Paris, Rieder).

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CHAPTER TWO

THE FAILURE OF CIVILIZATION FROM AN ANARCHO-PRIMITIVIST PERSPECTIVE[1]

MAX LIEBERMAN

> Anarchists are as varied as Mankind. There are governmental and commercial Anarchists as well as a few for hire. Some Anarchists differ from Marxists only in being less informed. They would supplant the State with a network of computer centers, factories and mines coordinated 'by the workers themselves' or by an Anarchist union. They would not call this arrangement a State. The name change would exorcise the beast. (Fredy Perlman)

Cultural critics often imagine futures in which the world becomes a strange and ugly place. Human societies alter forever the surface of planet, sometimes expanding even beyond the bounds of the Earth into outer space. The physical environment becomes degraded and toxic as a result of the continuous growth of industrial society. Human relationships to all living things, including other human beings, become largely devoid of emotion or meaning. In pinpointing a cause of such futures, those portraying these dystopias often show them as results of the ills of modernity intensified. These depictions, whether developing from an anarchist perspective or not, often portray hierarchical, stratified societies gripped tightly by totalitarian governments.

Science fiction provides a basis for cultural critique by extrapolating from current events into the future. Two such novels, George Orwell's *1984* and Philip K. Dick's *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, imagine futures that are quite plausible even today, decades after they were first written. Both examine the repercussions of living in highly socially stratified societies, living under authoritarian governments, and living with even higher amounts of technological mediation than current societies, all of which serve to create terrifying futures. Orwell's novel is not only a

classic, but offers a scathing critique of modern systems of government. Dick's novel critiques society through examining many phenomena, including technological growth, substance abuse, and authoritarian power structures. While neither author intended their work to be anarchist critique, both of these texts approach many of the same problems anarchists are constantly struggling with. While both anarchists and a number of science fiction authors have portrayed the state as an institution of oppression, the elimination of the state does not mean the end of hierarchy, or the end of oppression. Anarcho-primitivism offers a form of anarchist critique that attempts to understand the origins of these problems, making for a particularly interesting re-reading of novels such as Orwell's and Dick's. Hierarchy as we understand it (namely, societies organized as states) is a solidification of earlier forms of oppression that began long before the first state. Understanding the history and development of hierarchy will allow these critiques to be pushed further. The futures imagined by authors such as George Orwell and Philip K. Dick are made possible, and contain problems endemic to, what many of us take for granted as "civilization." A word that often connotes a sense of superiority and refinement, "civilization" simply refers to a society that is agricultural, urban, and stratified. The civilizing process, enabled by factors such as domestication, sedentism, and agriculture, necessarily creates hierarchical and oppressive societies. The very institutions anarchists seek to abolish, the institutions seen in science fiction to grow and expand to horrifying reaches, originate not with modernity, not with capitalism, not with the industrial revolution, not with the state, but with the civilizing process itself. This raises serious problems for reformist and revolutionary ideologies attempting to pare away only the "excesses" of modernity; modernity represents the culmination of problems embedded in the civilizing process, meaning reform and revolution do not challenge the totality of the situation.

Today's industrial civilization (and the futures imagined by Orwell and Dick) are the endpoint of the events set in motion thirteen to fourteen thousand years ago with the first instance of domestication. The anarcho-primitivist critique has been successful in addressing the totality of the current situation, tracing it back to its origins. The first instance of domestication marks the first fragmentation of the human relationship with the natural world.

The Creation of Unlimited Wants

Philip Dick describes a future in which humans are constantly

capitulating to vices, ranging from alcohol, tobacco, and harder drugs to unrestrained consumerism to damaging forms of sexual activity. The protagonist of *Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said*, Jason Taverner, is invited to take part in the "phone grid," a high-tech pleasure center in which "[y]our—everybody's—sexual aspects are linked electronically, and amplified, to as much as you can endure" (Dick 1993, 153). Many of the participants in this grid become so addicted that they hook into it too frequently, until "they've deteriorated physically—and mentally—from it…For them it's a sacred, holy communion" (Dick 1993, 153).

Winston Smith, protagonist of George Orwell's *1984*, is plagued by daily coughing fits so bad that they "emptied his lungs so completely that he could only begin breathing again by lying on his back and taking a series of deep gasps" (Orwell 1977, 29). Despite his poor health, Winston continues to smoke cigarettes so poorly constructed that the tobacco falls out, and drinks Victory Gin, which "was like nitric acid, and moreover, in swallowing it one had the sensation of being hit on the back of the head with a rubber club" (Orwell 1977, 8).

How is a world created in which humans are ruled by a seemingly insatiable desire, even willing to destroy their bodies in pursuit of pleasure? The history of the civilizing process is the history of these desires, beginning with domestication. David Courtwright pinpoints a possible cause of rampant substance abuse, noting that

> the use of drugs to cope with fatigue and obliterate misery is in many ways a by-product of civilization itself. Humans evolved in itinerant band societies. Life in the sedentary peasant societies that succeeded them was less varied, fulfilling, egalitarian, and healthful. While hunter-gatherers prized certain drugs for shamanistic rituals, they rarely relied on them to cope with dawn-to-dusk manual labor. Taking drugs to get through the daily grind (or to treat the intestinal and parasitic diseases attendant to settled life) is peculiar to civilization. (Courtwright 2001, 138–139)

The institution of addiction is, at least in part, a reaction to the civilizing process. For over ninety-nine percent of the existence of our species, humans have lived as bands of hunter-gatherers (also referred to as foragers). The human species traces back over two million years ago with *Homo habilis*, while non-foraging societies begin developing only a little more than ten thousand years ago. Winston Smith, protagonist of Orwell's *1984*, longs for the "ancient time… a time when there were still privacy, love, and friendship, and when the members of a family stood by one another without needing to know the reason" (Orwell 1977, 28). While Winston is thinking idyllically of his own childhood, the ideas of mutual love and affiliation between people characterize the existence of

our hunter-gatherer ancestors, a way of life nearly pushed out of existence by the agrarian world he views so nostalgically. Anthropologist James Woodburn states that

> although very many societies are in some sense egalitarian, those in which inequalities are at their minimum depend on hunting and gathering for their subsistence…only the hunting and gathering way of life permits so great an emphasis on equality. (Woodburn 1982, 432)

This does not mean that foraging bands are always egalitarian, but that it is in these societies that egalitarianism is most achievable. Woodburn goes on to note that immediate-return hunter-gatherer bands most often exemplify this sort of social organization. In an immediate-return system:

> People obtain a direct and immediate return from their labour. They go out hunting or gathering and eat the food obtained the same day or casually over the days that follow. Food is neither elaborately processed nor stored. They use relatively simple, portable, utilitarian, easily acquired, replaceable tools and weapons made with real skill but not involving a great deal of labour. (Woodburn, 1982: 432)

These societies are not only egalitarian in practice, but assertively so (Woodburn 1982, 431). Woodburn's research suggests an overall ease and quality of life associated with nomadic foragers. This sentiment is echoed in Michael Finkel's recent *National Geographic* article describing the time he spent living among the Hadza people of Africa. Finkel writes:

> The days I spent with the Hadza altered my perception of the world. They instilled in me something I call the 'Hadza effect'—they made me feel calmer, more attuned to the moment, more self-sufficient, a little braver, and in less of a constant rush. I don't care if this sounds maudlin: My time with the Hadza made me happier. (Finkel 2009, 118)

How, then, does domestication mark a departure from this way of life? When human beings domesticate plants and animals, they engage in "active interference in the life cycles of these species in such a way that subsequent generations of these organisms are in more intimate association with, and often of more use to, people" (Wenke and Olszewski 2007, 231). Scholars have often believed that this "active interference" takes place as part of a quest to find or ensure a stable and abundant food source; images of starving and struggling hunter-gatherers permeate Western culture, providing a basis for believing domestication to be a positive progress that reduces human suffering. Anthropological studies, however, suggest otherwise. Marshall Sahlins describes how through

limiting their wants, hunter-gatherers achieve a sort of "richness" that today we could only dream of. Tending to see the natural world as abundant and providing, "[i]t is not that hunters have curbed their materialistic 'impulses;' they simply never made an institution of them" (Sahlins 1972). The first instance of domestication can, in light of research such as that undertaken by Sahlins, be seen to be one of the first human enactments of domination. The institutionalization of the desire for more than is necessary marks a significant downturn for the human species. By becoming an institution with domestication, unending desire becomes the norm for human societies—the logic of the civilizing process makes it no longer a negative. With domestication, humans often cease viewing the world around them as abundant and providing. Sahlins writes:

> From the internal perspective of the economy, it seems wrong to say that wants are "restricted," desires "restrained," or even that the notion of wealth is "limited." Such phrasings imply in advance an Economic Man and a struggle of the hunter against his own worse nature, which is finally then subdued by a cultural vow of poverty. The words imply the renunciation of an acquisitiveness that in reality was never developed, a suppression of desires that were never broached. Economic Man is a bourgeois construction - as Marcel Mauss said, "not behind us, but before, like the moral man." (Sahlins 1972)

Unlimited wants, the creation of the "sacred, holy communion" of addiction described by Dick, begin with domestication. Sedentism also constitutes a break with the heritage of our species; nomadism is an integral part of maintaining an egalitarian society. For the egalitarian peoples Woodburn studied

> nomadism is fundamental. There are no fixed dwellings, fixed base camps, fixed stores, fixed hunting or fishing apparatus—such as stockades or weirs—or fixed ritual sites to constrain movements. People live in small camp units containing usually a dozen or two people and moving frequently. (Woodburn 1982, 435)

While people have long built dwellings and shelters, permanent settlements (human domestication) are, like plant and animal domestication, a relatively new development (Wenke and Olszewski 2007, 234–235). Until settled communities, humans lived in band societies of limited number, related mostly through kinship. Sedentism and domestication of plants and animals, while sometimes arising independently of each other, both

> represent not just a technological change but also a change in worldview.

> Land was no longer a free good, available to anyone, with resources scattered randomly across the landscape; it was transformed into particular territories, collectively or individually owned, on which people raised crops and flocks. (Schultz and Lavenda)

The potential for ownership, hierarchy, and oppression is seen in the adoption of domestication and sedentism. When access to land (and therefore food, water, shelter, and so on) becomes limited by boundaries of possession, human autonomy is limited. As most humans would not willingly give up this equal access, autonomy is often limited by coercion or outright force.

Understanding these distinctions is crucial, since it is often easy to conflate and confuse all pre-civilized societies. So far, we have seen that a very specific mode of existence characterized the lives of our earliest ancestors—they were nomadic hunter-gatherers living in band societies. Critiques of non-civilized societies often lose sight of this distinction. John Zerzan succinctly addresses this problem:

> At times, however, the crucial factor of domestication can be lost sight of. 'The historic foraging populations of the Western Coast of North America have long been considered anomalous among foragers,' declared [Mark Nathan] Cohen (1981); as [Robert] Kelly (1991) also put it, 'tribes of the Northwest Coast break all the stereotypes of hunter-gatherers.' These foragers, whose main sustenance is fishing, have exhibited such alienated features as chiefs, hierarchy, warfare and slavery. But almost always overlooked are their domesticated tobacco and domesticated dogs. Even this celebrated 'anomaly' contains features of domestication. Its practice, from ritual to production, with various accompanying forms of domination, seems to anchor and promote the facets of decline from an earlier state of grace. (Zerzan 1994, 45)

What may seem like an unimportant distinction, as the amount of domestication is rather small, is of great significance. The tribes Zerzan discusses kept large storehouses of fish, also suggesting a greater amount of social complexity than many other hunter-gatherers. Anthropologist Douglas P. Fry describes this phenomenon in relation to a much-cited study by Carol Ember, in which she claimed to have found evidence to dispute the idea of hunter gatherer societies as peaceful. Fry notes two significant problems with this study. First, "Ember defines war so as to include feuding and even revenge killings against a *single individual*" (Fry 2006, 173 [emphasis in original]). Second, "*almost half of the societies in Ember's sample are not simple nomadic hunter-gatherers at all!*" (Fry 2006, 173 [emphasis in original]). The study includes a variety of cultures with varying levels of domestication and social complexity, which means

that the author does not accurately represent human origins. While the relationship between domestication and violence is not necessarily causal, a strong correlation exists between increases in violence (especially warfare) and social stratification seen as domestication is adopted. Once again, we see that not all pre-civilized societies are the same; a slow transition from the lifeways of nomadic foragers to fully stratified societies takes place, with all of the negative consequences the civilizing process entails.

The psychological split noted in the adoption of domestication and sedentism is accompanied by physical changes for all domesticated species. Philip Dick describes Jason Taverner's realization that "[t]he animal at bay was himself" when he finds himself panicking in a difficult situation (Dick 1993, 38); only for a fleeting moment does Taverner feel what could be considered an "animal" or "natural" instinct. The effects of domesticating animals, or "keeping at bay" their wild existence, are characterized well by Paul Shepard. Some of these physical and mental transformations

> include plumper and more rounded features, greater docility and submissiveness, reduced mobility, simplification of complex behaviors (such as courtship), the broadening or generalizing of signals to which social responses are given (such as following behavior), reduced hardiness, and less specialized environmental and nutritional requirements. (Shepard 1998, 38)

Shepard's observations on domestication suggest an interesting reading of a moment in *1984*. Winston Smith describes typical members of the totalitarian Party as being "little dumpy men, growing stout very early in life, with short legs, swift scuttling movements, and fat inscrutable faces with very small eyes. It was this type that seemed to flourish best under the domination of the Party" (Orwell 1977, 53). One such Party member is Winston's neighbor, Parsons, "one of those completely unquestioning, devoted drudges on whom, more even than on the Thought Police, the stability of the Party depended" (Orwell 1977, 22). The ideal member of the political system in this particular vision of the future does not seem characterized by good health; rather, the ideal member exhibits the roundness and docility desired in domesticated animals.

Considering Shepard and Orwell's descriptions, domestication seems to constitute an overall loss for the species that undergo it—unless success in multiplying is considered a net positive that outweighs the negatives of domestication, as it often is by modern humans. Comparing the wolf to the domesticated dog, author Michael Pollan writes:

> The big thing the dog knows about—the subject it has mastered in the ten thousand years it has been evolving at our side—is us: our needs and desires, our emotions and values, all of which it has folded into its genes as part of a sophisticated strategy for survival. (Pollan 2001, xvi–xvii)

Many species, the wolf included, survived and evolved for millions of years before domestication. Annual domesticated grains, for example, are similar to domestic dogs; they overwhelmingly outnumber their wild relatives. For grains and dogs, domestication serves to create a huge success in multiplying—these species use us as much as we use them. The anthropocentric view that these species mold to our desires as a strategy for survival isn't true for the history of life on the planet until humans begin practicing domestication. It is not a strategy for survival, but a strategy for growth and expansion. Population growth beyond natural carrying capacity can only be sustained by relatively recent practices such as domestication and agriculture. As manifested in agricultural societies, population growth, as opposed to maintenance, becomes valued by the culture of desire created with domestication.

Industrial society today is experiencing a serious health issue that can be reread in the context of both Shepard's work and Orwell's novel. The World Health Organization reports that humankind is experiencing a global obesity epidemic. With over one billion overweight adults in the world (at least 300 million of them obese), the WHO has concluded that the epidemic is the result of "profound changes in society and in behavioural patterns of communities over recent decades" (World Health Organization). Certainly physically speaking, humanity seems to collectively grow to resemble the Party of Big Brother. Given Shepard's basic outline of the effects of domestication on animals, however, this health crisis can be seen not to represent just the changes of recent decades, but the realization of events set in motion thousands of years ago, beginning with domestication and sedentism. How often do medical professionals label "sedentary lifestyles" as a leading cause of obesity, heart disease, and other physical maladies? The supposedly more fortunate among industrial populations have entered a new age of sedentism; no longer meaning simply dwelling in fixed communities, today's sedentism is accompanied by sedentary bodies.

Agriculture helps to solidify the effects of domestication; it is the purposeful *production* of plants and animals as sources of food and goods. Contrary to what the public assumes, the effects of agriculture on health are not desirable; Mark Nathan Cohen notes that

> both ethnographic descriptions of contemporary hunters and the

archaeological records suggests that the major trend in the quality and quantity of human diets has been downward…. Prehistoric hunter-gatherers appear to have enjoyed richer environments and to have been better nourished than most subsequent populations (primitive and civilized alike). (Cohen 2005, 81)

These health effects are observable in Turkey and Greece, where skeletal remains around the end of the ice age show an average height of 5'9'' for men and 5'5'' for women; after the adoption of agriculture, average height decreases to 5'3'' for men and 5' for women. Greeks and Turks today have yet to regain the average height of the hunter-gatherers who formerly lived on the land (Diamond 1987). The skeletons of 800 Native Americans excavated from Dickson Mounds in the Midwestern United States illustrate:

Compared to the hunter-gatherers who preceded them, the farmers had a nearly fifty percent increase in enamel defects indicative of malnutrition, a fourfold increase in iron-deficiency anemia (evidenced by a bone condition called porotic hyperostosis), a threefold rise in bone lesions reflecting infectious disease in general, and an increase in degenerative conditions of the spine, probably reflecting a lot of hard physical labor. (Diamond 1987, n.p.)

All of these factors contribute to a life expectancy that is lowered by about seven years for the post-agricultural Native Americans (Diamond 1987). The practice of agriculture decreases the number of available food sources. Because of reliance on a limited number of crops, societies that practice agriculture "[run] the risk of starvation if one crop failed" (Diamond 1987, n.p.). The idea that agriculture was adopted because it was beneficial, easier, or more reliable is directly contradicted by modern archaeological and anthropological evidence.

 Despite this evidence, many people living in industrial societies look upon the agrarian world nostalgically; they imagine a "quaintness" and "simplicity" to the rural. Conjured up are images such as Winston Smith's "Golden Country," comprised of "short springy turf," "an old, rabbit-bitten pasture, with a foot track wandering across it," and a "ragged hedge on the opposite side of the field" (Orwell 1977, 29). While this idyllic image expresses a common nostalgia for a vaguely defined past, most of the industrial world believes the same lie told to Winston; this lie would have us believe "that people today had more food, more clothes, better houses, better recreations—that they lived longer, worked shorter hours, were bigger, healthier, stronger, happier, more intelligent, better educated" (Orwell 1977, 64). When examining the ill effects accompanying every

step of the civilizing process, however, this myth of progress quickly falls apart. Sahlins finds that studies of contemporary hunter-gatherers "suggest a mean of three to five hours per adult worker per day in food production. Hunters keep banker's hours, notably less than modern industrial workers" (Sahlins 1972). Diamond's research demonstrates the original decrease in lifespan, height, and overall health accompanying the adoption of agricultural production.

As to claims that people today are more intelligent, Jared Diamond offers his thirty-three years of experience living among traditional New Guinean societies:

> From the very beginning of my work with New Guineans, they impressed me as being on the average more intelligent, more alert, more expressive, and more interested in things and people around them than the average European or American is….Modern European and American children spend much of their time being passively entertained by television, radio, and movies. In the average American household, the TV set is on for seven hours per day. In contrast, traditional New Guinea children have virtually no such opportunities for passive entertainment and instead spend almost all of their waking hours actively doing something, such as talking or playing with other children or adults. Almost all studies of child development emphasize the role of childhood stimulation and activity in promoting mental development, and stress the irreversible mental stunting associated with reduced childhood stimulation. This effect surely contributes a non-genetic component to the superior average mental function displayed by New Guineans. (Diamond 1991, 20–21)

In modern industrial societies, forms of stimulation found to be healthy for childhood development are increasingly replaced by stimulation in the form of passive consumption. While many people consider technological inventions such as the television to be indicative of human intelligence and potential for creation, these same inventions are often detrimental to the well-being of those who engage with them. In the context of Diamond's observations, the invention and use of televisions, films, video games, and other modern forms of sedentary, consumptive entertainment contribute to a decrease in the overall health of a society. They certainly contribute to the obesity epidemic by encouraging inactivity during consumption.

Agriculture is not only detrimental to human health; it marks the beginning of massive environmental degradation that only increases with civilization. Winston Smith's idyllic "Golden Country," representative of many nostalgic images of the agrarian past, quite simply never existed. All forms of agriculture are damaging; in Mexico, for example, the Spanish introduction of plow agriculture was no more destructive than the

traditional forms of agriculture already being practiced there (Zerzan 2002, 156). This means that in some cases, environmental damage was increased through other effects of civilization, such as explosive population growth. The mindset of production that accompanies agriculture also becomes more destructive as production becomes applied to more than just food and simple goods. Civilization leaves an annihilated natural world in its wake.

> [C]ivilizations declined in the same geographical areas that had nurtured them, mainly because man himself despoiled or ruined the environments that helped him develop his civilizations.
>
> How did civilized man despoil his favorable environment? He did it mainly by depleting or destroying the natural resources. He cut down or burned most of the usable timber from the forested hillsides and valleys. He overgrazed and denuded the grasslands that fed his livestock. He killed most of the wildlife and much of the fish and other water life. He permitted erosion to rob his farm land of its productive topsoil. He allowed eroded soil to clog the streams and fill his reservoirs, irrigation canals, and harbors with silt. In many cases, he used or wasted most of the easily mined metals or other needed minerals. Then his civilization declined amidst the despoilation of his own creation or he moved to new land. There have been from ten to thirty different civilizations that have followed this road to ruin (the number depending on who classifies the civilizations). (Carter and Dale 1974, 8)

Today's environmental crisis is, rather than simply the result of industrialism, a problem that has been building for thousands of years. John Zerzan describes agriculture as "the triumph of estrangement and the definite divide between culture and nature and humans from each other" (Zerzan 1999, 73). Agriculture, "the indispensable basis of civilization" marks the formalization of what is set in motion by domestication; it is the beginning of *production*, as opposed to earlier systems of cultivation. Agriculture introduces intensive, ecologically detrimental modes of production through methods such as changing the flow and direction of waterways not found in horticultural societies. While domestication and sedentism can be seen as laying the groundwork for civilization, the practice of agriculture enables the massive population growth needed for the formation of the "state," constituting civilization as we know it today. This is the first condition of Henri J.M. Claessen's outline for the formation of a state: "There must be a sufficient number of people to form a complex stratified society" (Claessen 2004, 77). Three other prerequisites must also be met:

> The society must control a specified territory….There must be a productive

system yielding a surplus to maintain the specialists and the privileged categories….There must exist an ideology, which explains and justifies a hierarchical organization and socio-political inequality. (Claessen 2004, 78–79)

The ideology of stratified societies, ownership, privileged classes, hierarchy, and inequality, must exist before the state can form. The state, defined as hierarchical government, is often the main focus of hostility for anarchists. The previous information makes it clear that the inequality found in state societies begins well before such a complex form of organization takes place; the institutions and beliefs anarchist combat originate in that first fracturing of the human condition, domestication.

The path from domestication to civilization, and to today's techno-industrial world, should not be thought of, however, as a series of well-defined, monolithic events. This progression is much more subtle than it first appears. Each of these steps leading to civilization is characterized by increasing degrees of social complexity, a term comprehensively defined by Wenke and Olszewski. The degree of social complexity found in a society is determined by a number of variables:

For any given society these variables include (1) the degree of *differential access to wealth, power, and prestige*; (2) the extent to which differential access to wealth, power, and prestige are *inherited*, as opposed to earned; (3) the degree to which individuals in a community are *specialized* in their *occupations*, and the extent to which these occupations are *integrated* and *organized* in the economy as a whole; and (4) the degree to which political power is *centralized* in a government. (Wenke and Olszweski 2004, 280)

Domestication is the first clear indicator of increasing complexity; many of Wenke and Olszewski's variables contain elements that should trouble anarchists. Clearly, some of the first instances of increasing complexity appear 13,000 to 14,000 years ago with human domestication (defined by sedentism), which is followed by plant and animal domestication. This knowledge should lead anarchists to question far more than simply the existence of hierarchy in the form of the state.

Warfare

The state is the basis of civilization. If the effects of the civilizing process are as detrimental as I have argued them to be, how did the civilization expand and come to define the lives of nearly all of humanity? Stanley Diamond (not to be confused with Jared Diamond) wrote that "[c]ivilization originates in conquest abroad and repression at home"

(Diamond 1974, 1). One of the primary means of conquest and repression found in civilization is warfare.

Orwell depicts a world in which warfare has become an ongoing and cyclical process. The cycle of warfare is endless, "like the battles between certain ruminant animals whose horns are set at such an angle that they are incapable of hurting one another" (Orwell 1977, 164). While damage is done in Orwell's imagined wars, no force can dominate any of the others; victory is impossible because warfare has become such a constant that it is vital to the functioning of these societies. Orwell's description of warfare is certainly plausible, but in critiquing modern nations' propensities for extreme violence we need to question both the origins and expansion of warfare.

A simple definition for warfare is "organized, lethal violence by members of one group against members of another" (Ferguson 2008b, 15). This form of violence has not always been with us; the earliest archaeological evidence of warfare found so far is dated to between roughly 12,000 to 10,000 B.C. (Ferguson 2008b, 25). Unless earlier evidence is found, this puts the advent of war at around the same time domestication and sedentism begin. While, "over time, war regularly appeared in agricultural societies, and many civilizations became chronic war machines," earlier preconditions for the development of warfare include shifting to sedentism from nomadism, increases in population density, more intensive exploitation of resources, and increases in the complexity of social structure (Ferguson 2008b, 24). Warfare spread at a great rate with the creation of state societies; Ferguson notes that "the rise of states pushed the development of war beyond their frontiers" (Ferguson 2008b, 27). As states grew and expanded, cultures that formerly did not practice warfare were brought into war by these states. Bruce Knauft summarizes the increase in, and spread of, warfare over the past 10,000 years, stating that for cultures in which

> sedentism, property ownership, and male status differentiation are more developed, and conflict tends to arise from overt and chronic political status competition, both within and between groups, and from competition over access to resources. In contrast to that in simpler human groups, violence in middle-range societies tends to be valued as a dimension of masculinity, frequently takes the form of collective reciprocating conflict (i.e., warfare), and is often linked with fraternal interest groups, social boundedness, and ethnocentrism. In the evolution of Homo sapiens sapiens, it is likely, as [Ernest] Gellner (1989: 521) suggests, that coercion and violence as systematic means of organizational constraint developed especially with the increasing socioeconomic complexity and potential for political hierarchy afforded by substantial stored food surplus and food

production. (Knauft 1991, 391)

Knauft demonstrates that warfare increases with social complexity. The future imagined in *1984*, characterized by a constant state of warfare, is at one end of this continuum; rather than representing the failure of civilization, it represents civilization itself. John Zerzan writes that "[a]ncient civilizations spread as a result of war, and it can be said that warfare is both a cause of statehood, and its result" (Zerzan 2008, 26). While civilizations spread through warfare, they also create higher rates of war.

In the future imagined by Orwell, citizens of Oceania participate in Hate Week, a series of events geared toward creating citizen support of war through hatred and fear of the "enemy." This is one means of the Party's creation of its ideal member, who would be a

> credulous and ignorant fanatic whose prevailing moods are fear, hatred, adulation, and orgiastic triumph….The splitting of the intelligence which the Party requires of its members, and which is more easily achieved in an atmosphere of war, is now almost universal, but the higher up the ranks one goes, the more marked it becomes. (Orwell 1977, 158–159)

To organize and support a war, a hatred for (or at least indifference to) other's lives must exist if one is to kill them. Rather than warfare being characteristic of the actions of "savages," we have seen that it accompanies and facilitates the growth of the state. Considering war before the state, Ferguson notes that

> [o]ne of the greatest differences between wars by states and wars by tribal peoples is that in states, war decisions are made at the top, with those below being compelled to follow….Certainly, leaders do not always advocate war. It is often in their interests to avoid it. (Ferguson 2008a, 45)

If it is in their interest to avoid it, why do leaders of states so frequently engage in war; or, why does war increase with social complexity? One of the most prevalent reasons is that

> [w]ar often forces a coalescence of groups in a way that makes the management of people more possible. It leads to the acceptance of certain situations— heightened aggression in war leaders and acquiescence to their directives—that would not be tolerated if there were no lethal enemy. (Ferguson 2008a, 45)

This trend is noted among even tribes and chiefdoms that were relatively simple but engaged in warfare; the trend Orwell describes, in

which the Party uses warfare as a means of coercion both abroad and domestically, is a phenomena that has existed for thousands of years.

Civilization's destructive tendencies are not limited, however, to other humans. If we consider the phrase "members of a group" from the previous definition of warfare, we understand it to be limited to human groups. Examining actions that are detrimental to the natural world, we can see non-human life forms being systematically destroyed. As ideas of property and ownership originate with domestication, so do notions of control. Domestication entails purposeful intervention in the life of another being, plant or animal. Whether a desire for control drives domestication, or notions of control are a byproduct of the action, greater control is the final outcome. One of the purposes of warfare is controlling populations; if lethal violence is used to manage or control populations of plant or animal life, is this not strikingly similar to warfare? As "members of a group," plant and animal populations often suffer because of warlike actions perpetuated by humans.

While much of today's ecological destruction can be said to be indicative of an indifference to nature, overt acts of violence against the natural world take place, though we often refuse to identify them as such. The small town of Cayuga Heights, New York has a deer problem—the size of the deer population must be reduced to "reduce ecological and other landscape damage, traffic accidents (deer-vehicle collisions), incidents of Lyme Disease, and other unwanted deer-human interactions" (Supron, Boyce, Hermanson, Mangione, and Mount 2009). This statement comes directly from a proposal written by the members of the Deer Remediation Advisory Committee. While I would submit that cars do far more "ecological and landscape" damage than deer, and that cars, and humans in general, are far more of a threat to deer than the proposal suggests, the idea of population control is garnering favor among the residents of the town. Keep in mind, too, that the landscape being damaged by deer is often exactly that—*landscape*, as in landscaping, or human shaping of natural surroundings. The DRAC is proposing a three-part plan as of now. It includes

> Phase I: the surgical sterilization of 60 does within a two-year period; followed by Phase II: the culling of the remainder of the herd within the year subsequent to completion of the sterilization program; followed by Phase III: ongoing maintenance of the herd size through further sterilization and culling, as necessary. It is expected that the sterilization and culling phases will, once implemented, result in a reduced and stable deer herd in approximately 3 years. Research supports this, noting that while male deer roam, females and their young stay within a smaller home territory. It is the growth and reproductive capacity of these young that

necessitates the program of ongoing maintenance. And while there are very few male deer in our area, veterinarians are unwilling to castrate male deer due to the difficulty of anesthetizing them adequately before surgery. We would also like to point out that the VCH is surrounded by a number of communities with similar concerns and hope our efforts can be coordinated in the very near future. (Supron, Boyce, Hermanson, Mangione, and Mount 2009)

The Committee wants to hire a Deer Management Director, who "would oversee the hiring of professional sharpshooters or bow hunters to shoot unsterilized deer at bait sites" (Supron, Boyce, Hermanson, Mangione, and Mount, 2009). This group of citizens of Cayuga has drafted a plan to lure deer they cannot sterilize to sites at which they will be executed from long distances by trained sharpshooters. One of the groups considered as a sharpshooting contractor is White Buffalo. The white buffalo is an important symbol to many Native American cultures, and now is also the namesake of a deer sharpshooting organization. The following is from White Buffalo, Inc.'s description of their sharpshooting techniques:

> Often the negative public reaction to sharpshooting is minimal if firearms are fitted with suppressors. Also, perceptions of public safety can be enhanced by having police or other uniformed officials responsible for shooting the deer and/or providing on-site security.
> The level of experience of the personnel involved and the program design should be thoroughly assessed. As for any population reduction method, the extent and distribution of access to deer on private or public property will directly affect program efficiency and outcomes. The following methods are recommended for sharpshooting programs: (1) use baits to attract deer to designated areas prior to removal efforts, (2) shoot deer from portable tree stands, ground blinds, or from a vehicle during the day or night, (3) when possible, select head (brain) or neck (spine) shots to ensure quick and humane death, (4) process deer in a closed and sheltered facility, and (5) donate meat to food banks for distribution to needy people in the community. (De Nicola, VerCauteren, Curtis, and Hygnstrom 2000, 27)

This is an organized use of lethal violence by one population against another, using the tactics and rationale of warfare.2 The language is thoroughly disturbing—it describes actions to be carried out as discretely as possible, sometimes with the cooperation of police or "other uniformed officials" to promote a perception of safety and to maintain order around the site. The violent pathology of warfare is expressed by this organization in the cold and calculating terms one would expect. The desire for control

portrayed by Orwell and Dick manifests itself in many forms of violence. Orwell's description of a future of constant warfare and Dick's description of a technological police state embody the unyielding desire to control *all life*, not just human life as the authors focus on. The pathology of unyielding desire that creates such futures is an inextricable part of the civilizing process.

Patriarchy

In Knauft's statement on social complexity and war, he notes that as social complexity increases, violence, especially in the form of warfare, "tends to be valued as a dimension of masculinity." One of the forms of increased social complexity he describes is more highly developed "male status differentiation." As societies form more complex structures, male dominance is codified as patriarchy, simply defined as "a political system ruled by men in which women have inferior social and political status, including basic human rights" (Kottak 2009, 234). Violence associated with patriarchal systems takes many forms. "Such practices as dowry murders, female infanticide, and clitoridectomy exemplify patriarchy, which extends from tribal societies such as the Yanomami to state societies such as India and Pakistan" (Kottak 2009, 234). Patriarchal violence in industrial, first-world nations, is best exemplified by domestic violence, for which "[c]ities, with their impersonality and isolation from extended kin networks, are breeding grounds" (Kottak 2009, 234). All of these types of oppression and violence grow with the civilizing process, just as warfare does.

Patriarchal thought also manifests itself in much more subtle ways than physical violence. In Dick's imagined future America, Jason Taverner thinks to himself that telling the truth is "overrated as a virtue. In most cases a sympathetic lie did better and more mercifully. Especially between men and women; in fact, whenever a woman was involved" (Dick 1993, 39). Taverner expresses a typical Western attitude by characterizing women as fragile and emotionally excitable. This sort of general mindset is troubling, and is indicative of the sort of thinking used to justify mistreatment of, and violence against, females. Winston Smith exemplifies a much more problematic and frightening view of women. While watching a video of the Party's chief political enemy, Goldstein, he

> succeeded in transferring his hatred from the face on the screen to the dark-haired girl behind him. Vivid, beautiful hallucinations flashed through his mind. He would flog her to death with a rubber truncheon. He would tie her naked to a stake and shoot her full of arrows like Saint Sebastian. He

would ravish her and cut her throat at the moment of climax. Better than before, moreover, he realized why it was that he hated her. He hated her because she was young and pretty and sexless, because he wanted to go to bed with her and would never do so, because round her sweet supple waist, which seemed to ask you to encircle it with your arm, there was only the odious scarlet sash, aggressive symbol of chastity (Orwell 1977, 16–17 [emphasis in original])

In Winston's fantasy, violence and sexuality are explicitly tied together. They become so interwoven that they are barely distinguishable from one another. His fantasies of rape and murder arise partially because he believes he will be denied the chance to ever have sex with this woman. This attitude suggests a sense of entitlement or ownership Winston feels as a male toward her as a female; in his mind, denial of sexual access to a woman provokes fantasies of violent action.

Desire and the pathology of addiction originating with domestication create the sort of insatiability that Winston Smith is expressing. Like the violence of warfare, sexual violence is exactly that—*violence*. The primary concern of Winston's fantasy is killing the woman; the idea of rape as a crime committed due to overwhelming "passion" is a myth. The hatred that is necessary for acts of war is also needed to commit acts of sexual violence. Often, the purpose of the violence of the civilized is control. After developing a relationship with the same woman he has fantasized about raping and murdering, Winston believes that "[s]he had become a physical necessity, something that he not only wanted but felt he had a right to" (Orwell 1977, 115). The truth is, Winston does not feel that "she," a mentally and physically complex living creature, had become necessary to him. Rather, Winston believes sexual access to this woman is a necessity to which he has a right. In this context, his desire to rape and kill her has nothing at all to do with a sexual desire, but rather a desire for control that manifests itself sexually.

The attitudes expressed by Jason Taverner and Winston Smith are very similar to American cultural attitudes today. One need look no further than contemporary media to understand the extent to which patriarchy shapes the thoughts and actions of those living in Western industrial societies. Tucker Max, author and blogger, wrote a book titled *I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell*. He recounts all of his sexual conquests and drunken exploits in the book, his fame having begun by posting these stories on a blog. Jaclyn Friedman summarizes his stories quite succinctly; she notes that "women in his stories are insulted, tricked, coerced, traded and discarded. One conquest is vomited on and videotaped without her consent" (Friedman 2009). Not only is videotaping someone during a sexual act

without their consent reprehensible, it is a crime in most states. The story in question is described in full detail in both the book and on his website. Tucker Max writes:

> A week prior, after Jaime consented to buttsex, I realized that I didn't have any idea how to do it. How exactly do you fuck a girl in the ass? Luckily, I had the world's best anal sex informational resource at my disposal: The gay waiter. I consulted several gay waiters who worked at one of my parents' restaurants about the mechanics of buttsex, and each one recommended AstroGlide as the lubricant of choice. Much to my dismay, I learned that spitting on your dick is not enough lube for buttsex. Stupid, lying porn movies….Before I knew it I was fucking her like the apocalypse was imminent, burying it to the hilt with impunity. After a few minutes I was ready to come. My urgency was expressed in my tempo, and I began really jackhammering her.

The story culminates in a mess of bodily fluids and substances and embarrassment for all parties, though mostly for the female involved. Just as she never agreed to be filmed during the encounter, she never agreed to have it publicly shared through Max's writing. The language Max chooses to use is also telling; phrases such as "jackhammering," "burying it to the hilt," "and fucking like the apocalypse was imminent," all convey a certain level of violence. Though less severe, this seems similar to Winston Smith's conflation of sex and violence. Possibly more horrifying than the actual content of the stories is the fact that Tucker Max's book spent two years on the New York Times bestseller list and was the basis of a feature-length film of the same name. Actual quotes from the film include "Your gender is hardwired for whoredom," "Fat girls aren't real people," and "Get away from me or I'm going to carve a fuck hole in your torso" (Hess 2009). These quotes are intended as humor. The fact that this sort of humor sells so well to American audiences exemplifies the degree to which patriarchy distorts cultural attitudes regarding women.

While authors, filmmakers, and consumers laugh at tasteless, misogynistic humor, violence associated with patriarchy continues to plague the modern world. Daily, the news carries stories of sexual assault and rape. Despite hearing about sexual violence constantly, many experts (including law enforcement) estimate that only a small percentage of rapes and sexual assaults are reported. The prevalence of sexual violence in American society challenges many common misconceptions about rape; namely, it challenges the common belief that rapists are criminally insane or abnormal. Though the image of the criminally insane rapist hiding in the bushes or a dark alleyway is popular in entertainment media, most sexual violence is perpetrated by someone known to the victim. Susan

Griffin writes:

> Yet, though the theory that rapists are insane is a popular one, this belief
> has no basis in fact. According to Professor Menachem Amir's study of
> 646 rape cases in Philadelphia, Patterns in Forcible Rape, men who rape
> are not abnormal. Amir writes, "Studies indicate that sex offenders do not
> constitute a unique or psychopathological type; nor are they as a group
> more invariably disturbed than the control groups to which they are
> compared." Alan Taylor, a parole officer who has worked with rapists in
> the prison facilities at San Luis Obispo, California, stated the question in
> plainer language, "Those men were the most normal men there. They had a
> lot of hang-ups, but they were the same hang-ups as men walking out on
> the street." (Griffin 2008, 500)

This does not mean that the average male is a rapist; rather, it suggests
that the mindset that enables such an egregious action is pervasive and has
become a cultural norm. Winston Smith's violent fantasy and Jason
Taverner's justification for lying to women are both on a continuum of
patriarchal thought that, rather than being indicative of dystopian futures,
are right at home in contemporary patriarchal societies.

Modernity

From the inception of domestication, the civilizing process is
accompanied by an increasingly fractured human relationship to other
humans and the natural world. Civilization grows by force; its rise is
intimately linked with violence and oppression. As it spreads, this process
replaces countless other ways of living, and, in the words of Fredy
Perlman, "What's left is Civilization…Civilization is a humanly
meaningless web of unnatural constraints, it is the organization of
repression within the entrails of Leviathan" (Perlman 1983, 208).

The "humanly meaningless web" is perhaps best embodied by the
modern city. Previously noted is the problem that cities are defined by
their "impersonality and isolation from extended kin networks." Vaunted
as an achievement of industrial civilization, the modern city is the ultimate
estrangement from the natural world. Concrete and steel, high density
populations, growing pollution—the city is the product of a destructive
and fundamentally flawed way of life. John Zerzan writes of the city that

> [i]t is the dominant culture at its center, its height, its most dominant.
> Joseph Grange is, sadly, basically correct in saying that it is "par
> excellence, the place where human values come to their most concrete
> expression." (If one pardons the pun, also sadly apt.)…Everyone can see
> the modern "flatscape," in [Christian] Norberg-Schulz's terse term (1969),

the Nothing Zones of placelessness where localism and variety are steadily being diminished, if not eradicated. The supermarket, the mall, the airport lounge are everywhere the same, just as office, school, apartment block, hospital, and prison are scarcely distinguishable one from another, in our own cities.

The mega-cities have more in common with each other than with any other social organisms. Their citizens tend to dress the same and otherwise consume the same global culture, under a steadily more comprehensive surveillance gaze. This is the opposite of living in a particular place on the earth, with respect for its uniqueness. These days, all space is becoming urban space; there is not a spot on the planet that couldn't become at least virtually urban upon the turn of the satellite. We have been trained and equipped to mold space as if it were an object. (Zerzan 2008, 39–40)

Through intensive manipulation of the environment, civilization increasingly gains power and control. The city is often thought of as a place to escape; whether the immigrant "starting a new life," or the suburban couple getting away for the weekend, this motif is always present in modern society. But technological modernity makes any true escape, any true freedom from the industrial age, nearly impossible. Consider the story of Evan Ratliff, who wrote an article for *Wired Magazine* about attempting to disappear in high-tech America. Ratliff was required to "create false accounts online, stay in cities and live in a way he would if truly starting life anew" (Thompson 2009). A group of people seeking the monetary reward for capturing him were given occasional online clues. Ratliff used fake internet accounts, creating a new identity in an attempt to hide. Left with these clues and the power of the internet, it took less than a month for a man named Jeff Reifman to find Ratliff (Thompson 2009). Ratliff's project is described as "an amazing experiment in what privacy means in the digital age (and how much Google knows about us!)," and a symbol of "how hard it is to escape one's identity online" (Thompson 2009). Autonomy in today's age is obviously limited; no matter where you are, access to you (or at least information about yourself) is available to nearly anyone with access to the internet. Google, a single search engine of many, becomes almost an anthropomorphic being—"it knows about us" implies consciousness and cognition. As technological urbanity increases, it will become only harder to escape this vast system.

After being picked up because he didn't have the right cards to verify his identity, Philip Dick's Jason Taverner is let go by the police. They have mistakenly identified him as an auto mechanic in Wyoming owing to a simple clerical error when entering his information into a computer

system. Feeling relief at his release "[h]e thought, Thank God for the weaknesses built into a vast, complicated, convoluted, planetwide apparatus. Too many people; too many machines" (Dick 1993, 72). Taverner rightly identifies the fact that an underlying weakness pervades a system as complicated as industrial civilization. Adilson E. Motter and Ying-Chen Lai provide an interesting perspective on this weakness in their study at Arizona State University:

> We live in a modern world supported by large, complex networks. Examples range from financial markets to communication and transportation systems. In many realistic situations the flow of physical quantities in the network, as characterized by the loads on nodes, is important. We show that for such networks where loads can redistribute among the nodes, intentional attacks can lead to a cascade of overload failures, which can in turn cause the entire or a substantial part of the network to collapse. This is relevant for real-world networks that possess a highly heterogeneous distribution of loads, such as the Internet and power grids. We demonstrate that the heterogeneity of these networks makes them particularly vulnerable to attacks in that a large-scale cascade may be triggered by disabling a single key node. This brings obvious concerns on the security of such systems. (Motter and Lai 2009)

Nodes are simply points of contact, such as a modem. The authors note that complex networks can be crippled, or even brought down, by attacks on their smaller components (such as nodes). The industrial world survives only through the use of complex systems that are easily toppled because of their complexity. Industrial agriculture, mass transportation of goods, electronic communications, global economy—all of these systems are essential to modern industrial life, but also fragile because of their complex structures.

Winston Smith believes that "[i]t is impossible to found a civilization on fear and hatred and cruelty. It would never endure" (Orwell 1977, 221). There is no civilization, however, which is founded on anything more positive. While some civilizations, especially religious ones, have claimed to be founded on seemingly benevolent principles such as love or faith, in practice they have functioned as all other civilizations have. Dr. Stephen O'Brien, who is an expert on research of the genetics of domestication, states that "[d]omestication was really the lever by which civilization was able to organize into communities larger than those of foraging families" (Wade 2009). Winston is correct that no civilization founded on such principles will ever endure; indeed, this means that no civilization will ever endure, as all are founded on ideologies that begin with domestication. Past civilizations have risen and fallen, and today's

industrial civilization continues on a death march to the same fate. Warfare, patriarchy, environmental degradation—nothing so destructive could last infinitely.

Cities, an invention of the civilized, illustrate the wasteful and destructive nature of contemporary civilization. Today, large, high density populations (both urban and suburban) are increasingly common, and continue to replace natural space with concrete and steel, or else the "planned communities" of the suburbs. Philip K. Dick describes cities of the future as essentially the same as today; there are "cluttered streets, overflowing ashtrays, the pavement littered with pieces of broken bottles," (1993, 23) while everywhere there are "competing, flashing, winking, flooding pools of color created by the rotating, pulsating, jiggling, lit-up signs" (1993, 52). Walking through such a cityscape, Jason Taverner thinks that "[t]his kind of neighborhood did not please him; he had seen it a million times, duplicated throughout the face of the earth" (Dick 1993, 52). The reader gets the sense that the largest difference between the landscape of Dick's imagined future and that of today is only that urbanity has spread, and that cities have become more uniform. Orwell imagines a city torn by war and fallen into decay. Looking over this landscape, Winston Smith wonders:

> Were there always these vistas of rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides shored up with balks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy garden walls sagging in all directions? And the bombed sites where the plaster dust swirled in the air and the willow herb straggled over the heaps of rubble; and the places where the bombs had cleared a larger path and there had sprung up sordid colonies of wooden dwellings like chicken houses? (Orwell 1977, 7)

Conjured here are images of contemporary cities in struggling parts of the world, whether stricken with war or poverty, whose shantytowns and states of disrepair mirror Orwell's description.

The costs of the culture of cities, of industrial civilization, are staggering. A recent press release from the United States Department of the Interior summarizes the findings of a study conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey; of samples of fish taken from almost 300 American streams, mercury was found in every single fish (Scudder and LaVistia 2009).

> About a quarter of these fish were found to contain mercury at levels exceeding the criterion for the protection of people who consume average amounts of fish, established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

More than two-thirds of the fish exceeded the U.S. EPA level of concern for fish-eating mammals. (Scudder and LaVistia 2009)

Presumably, the authors meant that more than two-thirds of the fish exceed the EPA's level of concern for *non-human* mammals. For some reason, the EPA seems to believe that humans can tolerate higher levels of mercury contamination than can other mammals (while many mammals are smaller than humans, we must also note that "non-human mammals" includes bears, deer, and a number of other creatures larger than us). As evidenced by this study on fish, water sources in industrial nations have reached unbelievable levels of toxicity. Consider this story from the state of West Virginia:

Jennifer Hall-Massey knows not to drink the tap water in her home near Charleston, W.Va. In fact, her entire family tries to avoid any contact with the water. Her youngest son has scabs on his arms, legs and chest where the bathwater—polluted with lead, nickel and other heavy metals—caused painful rashes. Many of his brother's teeth were capped to replace enamel that was eaten away. Neighbors apply special lotions after showering because their skin burns. Tests show that their tap water contains arsenic, barium, lead, manganese and other chemicals at concentrations federal regulators say could contribute to cancer and damage the kidneys and nervous system. (Duhigg, 2009)

Jennifer Hall-Massey lives only 17 miles from the state capital, Charleston (Duhigg 2009). Water pollution is also reaching crisis levels globally. In the middle of the Pacific Ocean is "a sea of debris thought to be twice the size of Texas" (Sullivan 2009). Often referred to as the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch," this accumulation of trash is indicative of a larger problem. According to a 2006 U.N. study:

every pound of plankton in the central Pacific Ocean is offset by about 6 pounds of litter. The report adds that every square mile of ocean is home to nearly 50,000 pieces of litter, much of which tends to harm or kill wildlife that either ingests the plastic or gets trapped in discarded netting, which is just as common in the Northern Gyre as discarded soda bottles (Sullivan 2009)

This pollution is not a goal of industry; rather it is merely a byproduct, an unintended consequence. The refuse of the lifestyles of industrial nations and dense, sedentary populations is making water, the very basis of life, unsafe for all living things.

Despite widespread ecological devastation, some scientists and experts debate whether or not humans "need nature." A compilation of

studies finds that

> [e]lderly adults tend to live longer if their homes are near a park or other green space, regardless of their social or economic status. College students do better on cognitive tests when their dorm windows view natural settings. Children with ADHD have fewer symptoms after outdoor activities in lush environments. Residents of public housing complexes report better family interactions when they live near trees" (Science Suggests 2009).

Frances Kuo, professor of natural resources and environmental science and psychology at the University of Illinois, has this to say:

> So when people say: 'As a scientist, would you say that we know this now? Do we know that people need nature?' I say: 'As a scientist I can't tell you. I'm not ready to say that.'
> 'But as a mother who knows the scientific literature, I would say, yes.' (Science Suggests 2009)

As a scientist, she is unsure as to human need for the natural world. This is the ultimate in civilized insanity; the idea that humans don't need nature, that human life is not a part of the natural world or has somehow risen above it, is a manifestation of a deep-seated pathology. Of course, Kuo's identity as a mother, an actual human being, tells her that the natural world is important. Under civilization, identity is fragmented in thousands of ways. The fracturing beginning with domestication intensifies with the civilizing process, leaving us with a toxic and alienating modernity.

Observing others around him in a city, Jason Taverner notes, "[t]hey had not invented it; they did not like it; they endured it" (Dick 1993, 52). If we decide to no longer "endure" modernity, what other ways of life are possible? Considering a variety of non-civilized societies, from Native Americans to groups in the Philippines and Africa, Claude Lévi-Strauss notes:

> Their extreme familiarity with their biological environment, the passionate attention which they pay to it and their precise knowledge of it has often struck inquirers as an indication of attitudes and preoccupations which distinguish the natives from their white visitors. (Lévi-Strauss 1966, 5)

This sort of knowledge of, and intimacy with, the natural world is increasingly lost in modernity. The sprawling urban and suburban areas increasingly enveloping the world are the antithesis of this way of living; they offer interaction only with increasingly artificial environments. Could any of these cultures create something so alienating, so destructive, as

modern industrial civilization?

Being rooted in a natural landscape provides not only a spiritual connection lacking in modernity, but also a very basic security. Richard B. Lee writes:

> The !Kung Bushmen have available to them some relatively abundant high-quality foods, and they do not have to walk very far or work very hard to get them. Furthermore this modest work effort provides sufficient calories to support not only the active adults, but also a large number of middle-aged and elderly people. (1968, 39)

Considering that this observation was made after the !Kung people had been forced onto fairly marginal lands in the Kalahari desert, their former autonomy and freedom of movement limited by contemporary state societies, we can assume that the !Kung fared even better in their original state. Lee describes a society that experiences a security not found in Orwell and Dick's imagined futures; the !Kung have a greater security, at least in food sources, than many people in today's industrial nations have. The !Kung also share interpersonal relationships that are as desirable and beneficial as their relationship with the natural world. Author Bruce Chatwin writes of the Kalahari Bushmen that their babies

> never cry and are among the most contented babies in the world. They also grow up to be the gentlest people. They are happy with their lot, which they consider ideal, and anyone who talks of 'a murderous hunting instinct innate in man' displays his wanton ignorance. (Chatwin, 1996: 102)

Unlike the alienated citizens of impersonal cities in Orwell and Dick's novels, peoples such as the !Kung enjoy close relationships with each other and the natural world.

Colin Turnbull's studies of the BaMbuti Pygmies gives us an idea of the lives of contemporary hunter-gatherers; this is one example of the thousands of ways of life that are possible outside of civilization. He writes:

> The Pygmies are no more perfect than any other people, and life, though kind to them, is not without hardships. But there was something about the relationship between these simple, unaffected people and their forest home that was captivating. And when the time came that I had to leave, even though we were camped back near the village, the Pygmies gathered around their fire on the eve of my departure and sang their forest songs for me…Then I was sure that I could never rest until I had come out again, free of any limitations of time, free simply to live and roam the forest with the BaMbuti, its people; and free to let them teach me in their own time

what it was that made their life so different from that of other people…They were a people who had found in the forest something that made their life more than just worth living, something that made it, with all its hardships and problems and tragedies, a wonderful thing full of joy and happiness and free of care. (Turnbull 1961, 23–26)

The BaMbuti suffer from hardships, sadness, and loss just as those in industrial societies do; the BaMbuti, however, live a life of joy and wonder. They have intimate relationships not only with each other, but with the land on which they live. It is this intimacy with the natural world that partially helps to create such a beautiful society. The BaMbuti give us not only an idea of what we have lost through the civilizing process, but also what humans are capable of in their relationships with each other and the natural world.

Civilization and all it is built upon has existed for less than one percent of the time the human species has been on earth. The life of our ancestors, living in bands of nomadic hunter-gatherers, is that of wildness and egalitarianism. This wildness is our heritage as a species, and given the short amount of time that humans have strayed from it, it is not so far removed from modernity. Though civilization rapidly overtakes the planet, it has not existed long, and the very complexity that enables it to spread also provides many points of built-in weakness. Retrospectively, we can call the egalitarian lives of nomadic foragers "anarchist." They, however, have no such designation; their lives are the manner in which the human species evolved, rooted in the natural world. The anarchic lives of our nomadic ancestors are an intrinsic part of life in the wild; wildness is anarchy, and *true* anarchy is wildness. No way of life allows more autonomy than the life of nomadic hunter-gatherers. If we are able to learn from these ancestors, we may begin to recover all that has been lost in the civilizing process. Ten thousand years of civilization seems overwhelming—"*But there behind us, green and still living, was this possibility—a day's walk back into a future we could have touched: Such tenderness, such joy*" (Griffin 2009, 149).

Thousands of ways of life are possible with the dismantling and abandonment of civilization. Both George Orwell and Philip Dick imagined highly plausible futures; these futures are not only the result of industrial civilization, but also represent the trajectory of the civilizing process. To maintain the institutions of civilization is to maintain the values that built them, and if the values of civilization are inherently at odds with anarchy, then they must all be dismantled. We are not yet too far removed from our ancestral anarchy to begin to recover it. While ecological devastation and unchecked population growth make any

immediate return to a life of pure nomadic foraging impossible, we have to look to successful lifeways of the past if we wish to conceptualize an anarchic future that is sustainable. For an anarchist future, for a future that is in distinct opposition to what Orwell and Dick have imagined, we must rediscover our ancestry of wildness.

Notes

1. This paper owes a great deal to Professor Kathryn Hume of the Pennsylvania State University for her constant guidance and feedback. I am also indebted to Jeff Gonzalez for his advice and comments through many revisions. Also, many thanks to Kevin Tucker for providing both assistance in revision and research.
2. It must be noted that I am objecting to the killing of a large segment of the deer population not only because it is cruel, but also because the reasoning is so absurd. Other options to reduce "unwanted deer-human interactions" would include driving more slowly and building fences. The deer most likely have no natural predators left, causing a larger deer population to grow. These predators were probably driven out or exterminated by humans. I am objecting to non-human populations suffering further because of a human-created situation. I am not objecting to hunting for food. The White Buffalo actions are carried out in a military fashion, with possible obtaining of food as only secondary to the purpose of killing the animals to make life "easier" for the residents of Cayuga Heights.

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CHAPTER THREE

ANARCHIC RESISTANCE AND BUREAUCRATIC APPEAL: EDWARD ABBEY, WALLACE STEGNER, AND LITERARY APPROACHES TO ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE

LIAM NESSON

The wildest animal I know is you, gentle reader, with this helpless book clutched in your claws... We need wilderness because we are wild animals. Every man needs a place where he can go to go crazy in peace. Every Boy Scout troop deserves a forest to get lost, miserable, and starving in. Even the maddest murderer of the sweetest wife should get a chance for a run to the sanctuary of the hills... Because we need brutality and raw adventure, because men and women first learned to love in, under, and all around trees, because we need for every pair of human feet and legs about ten leagues of naked nature, crags to leap from, mountains to measure by, deserts to finally die in when the heart fails. (Abbey 1977, 229)

In this passage from his essay "Freedom and Wilderness, Wilderness and Freedom" Edward Abbey makes a case for wilderness preservation with a jocular tone and distinctive argumentative approach. Abbey assumed the cause of environmental defense early in a writing career marked by frequent challenges to government bureaucracy and its economic exploitation of land, people, and resources. All novels subsequent to his first directly implicate common practices of wilderness exploitation. His fiction, along with his journals and academic writing, justify particular forms of resistance to this exploitation. After serving in the Army, he began to formulate these reactionary philosophies. With allegiance to philosophers he interpreted as anarchistic (i.e., Chuang Tzu, Plato, Diogenes, and Thoreau), Abbey glorified high risk resistance to established authority (Bishop 1994, 84).

Alternatively, Wallace Stegner's even-handed though passionate tone contrasts with Edward Abbey's combative approach to environmental defense. Stegner proclaims a democratic approach to solving conflicts between environmentalists, policy makers, and industrialists. In a December 1960 letter to the director of the Wildland Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley, Stegner states a convincing case to the Outdoor Recreation Review Commission for wilderness preservation:

> Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clear air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free in their own country from the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste. (Stegner 1998, 112)

He urges political leaders and policy makers to value nature for humanity's sake, and he argues for the inherent value of wilderness—not solely for purposes of recreation. This letter eventually drew international attention and, according to his son Page Stegner, has become "one of the central documents of the conservationist movement" (Stegner 1998, 110). Stegner's "Wilderness Letter" is exemplary of how he uses his academic reputation, authorial success, and rhetorical skill to encourage an increased progress in American wilderness conservation. This letter, along with essays and letters preceding it, not only encourages a nation to value its wilderness but also promotes clearly stated laws that help establish this value as a cultural norm.

Differing Approaches to a Common Cause

Despite their differing approaches, Stegner and Abbey were part of a growing environmentalist movement that confronted the post-WWII industrial, chemical, and technological economic boom. Stegner's "Wilderness Letter," Abbey's *Desert Solitaire*, and other movement-shaping works invigorated a focus on the natural environment and its importance in sustaining human life. Among Stegner and Abbey's contemporaries were authors, scientists, journalists, and activists who also took part in conservationist efforts through their writing. Some of the more influential environmentalist writers during the 1950s and 60s were Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, and Paul Ehrlich. Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) helped establish ecology as a bona fide science and

encouraged a widely accepted "land ethic." Leopold defines this term as a social value that normalizes respectful treatment of the non-human environment and its inhabitants. In his chapter "The Ethical Sequence," he explains this concept as "a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence" and as "a differentiation of social from anti-social conduct" (Leopold 1970, 238). In the essay, "Alone in a World of Wounds: The Question of Audience in *A Sand County Almanac*," Daniel G. Payne writes that Leopold formulated "a blueprint for human-land relations that provides the most succinct standard yet formulated for a biotic approach to land use" (Payne 1996, 124). With a more alarmist tone and with substantial scientific evidence, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) pinpoints industrial biochemicals and agricultural pesticides as threats to countless ecosystems that sustain human and animal life. In the "Introduction" to a 1994 edition of Carson's study, Al Gore writes, "*Silent Spring* came as a cry in the wilderness, a deeply felt, thoroughly researched, and brilliantly written argument that changed the course of history. Without this book, the environmental movement might have been long delayed or never have developed at all" (Gore 1994, xv). Population growth and its effect on environmental conditions gained added recognition in the late 1960s. Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968) drew attention to the dangers of exponential population increase, which developed in the twentieth century along with the industrial age. A sample of the Stanford entomologist's fear-inducing rhetoric reveals his encouragement of institutionalized population control mechanisms:

> It now seems inevitable that death through starvation will be at least one factor in the coming increase in the death rate. In the absence of plague or war, it may be the major factor. It is all too easy, however, for a layman to discount the potential for population control possessed today by plague. (Ehrlich 1971, 37)

A developing discourse, constructed around a new science of ecology and an unveiled awareness of the dangers of industrial pollution, grew out of the momentum of a building environmentalist movement. A new and changing language of environmentalism promoted increasingly nuanced discussions focused on substantial evidence. Abbey and Stegner, key conversationalists in this discourse, interacted with writers, scientists, and activists taking roles in the growing environmentalist movement. But Abbey was beginning errant discussions of his own, taking a tangential trajectory in relation to the primary conversations in which Leopold, Carson, and Stegner took part. Abbey's approach may have caused these writers and scientists to shy away from his aggressive polemics and

militant, anarchistic rhetoric. Alternatively, Stegner was a central figure in the mainstream environmentalist movement for much of his career, taking key roles with groups like the Sierra Club and even serving as an advisor to Kennedy's Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall.

Introducing "Wilderness Letter" in the posthumous collection *Marking the Sparrow's Fall*, Page Stegner explains that his father began writing about conservationism in 1953 with an article in the *Reporter* titled "One-Fourth of a Nation: Public Lands and Itching Fingers" (Stegner 1998, 109). What followed this article was a life-long effort at environmental protection that grew in strength throughout the remainder of Stegner's career.

In the previous passage from Abbey's essay "Freedom and Wilderness, Wilderness and Freedom," the writer injects sardonic humor into a serious issue—the same issue that Stegner approaches so gravely in his "Wilderness Letter." Abbey's point is similar to Stegner's: people need wilderness to remind themselves of their connection to the natural world—to remind themselves that they, in fact, are part of this world. Yet Abbey's approach is humorously confrontational, drawing exaggerated pictures of the wildness in people. He sensationalizes the situation, creating a brief drama of life in the wild. Through these methods he charms the reader in his polemic works, appealing to emotion in a plea for wilderness conservation. Yet he does so by writing for a sympathetic audience, because his persuasive tactics are often too scathing to convince those unsympathetic to his cause.

Stegner discusses the potential for compromise realistically while Abbey romanticizes resistance to authority. Stegner urges each stakeholder to consider the multitude of interests related to natural resources and wilderness preservation. In his essays and letters, Stegner challenges environmental exploitation with historical, scientific, and legal argument, rather than with cynical or petulant appeal. Alternatively, Abbey argues for wilderness preservation without compromise. The two authors' ideological approaches to conservationism are prominent in their respective nonfiction; however, these perspectives are more apparent in Abbey's fiction than in Stegner's. Abbey moves beyond interpersonal relationships in his fiction and continues to deal with wilderness preservation for humanity's sake.

Uncompromising Perspectives in Abbey's Fiction

Abbey's second novel, *The Brave Cowboy*, expresses concern for the wilderness of the American Southwest, an increasingly fenced and

industrialized region where the open range is shrinking. Jack Burns, the aloof cowboy protagonist, represents Abbey's ideology, his desire for the idyllic past. In a passage from the beginning of the novel, Burns seems to ride his horse out of the past and into this segmented landscape:

> When the arroyo turned he rode up out of it and across the lava rock again... until he came eventually to a barbed-wire fence, gleaming new wire stretched with vibrant tautness between steel stakes driven into the sand and rock... The man looked for a gate but could see only the fence itself extended north and south to a pair of vanishing points, an unbroken thin stiff line of geometric exactitude scored with a bizarre mechanical precision over the face of the rolling earth. (Abbey 1956, 18)

With retrogressive desires, Abbey's character ventures on a sometimes stoic, sometimes idiotic journey, striving for a way of life that had vanished with the end of the frontier age nearly one hundred years before. Burns is a stoic shepherd who is displaced in time and trying to fit his ideals into a modern context. His trouble begins when he has a bar fight with a one-armed man with the intention of going to jail in order to make a jailbreak with his friend Paul Bondi. Bondi does not want to escape, and Burns goes it alone, leading the local authorities and eventually the Air Force on a manhunt—all for the futile purpose of resisting authority. Burns, as a modern cowboy, rides through an increasingly systematized and segmented world, bucking against the influence of commercial, military, and industrial control. In the author's view, the result of this control is an exploitative organization of life, and he offers Burns as the embodiment of frustrated resistance to these controlling influences.

Burns' inability to adapt is representative of Abbey's approach to environmentalism. Both Burns and Abbey confront unwelcome realities by challenging modern industrialism with uncompromising resistance. Burns is unable to compromise stoicism and outdoor living even though his preferred habitat is becoming increasingly mechanized, paved, and populated. Abbey, through characters like Burns (and later through members of the Monkey Wrench Gang), also expresses an unwillingness to concede to a rapidly changing society.

The modern cowboy cannot remain independent of the increasingly systematized and segmented world. Yet Burns remains a bastion of resistance to commercial, industrial, and corporate control. In the author's view, the result of this control is an exaggerated organization of people's lives, and he offers in Burns a prototype of frustrated resistance to these controlling influences.

One of Abbey's most well known works, a comic novel that sensationalizes extremist environmental activism, gained cult appeal and

established the writer's legacy of reactionary militancy. *The Monkey Wrench Gang* gained equal if not more attention than *Desert Solitaire* and spread popularity for "monkey wrenching," or sabotaging machines, engineering projects, or other human encroachments on the natural surroundings. In the novel, the gang of eccentric miscreants plans to destroy Glen Canyon Dam. Their goal is to drive a houseboat to the top of the dam, sink the boat, and swim to safety in time to detonate a large cache of explosives on board. They lead up to this goal with smaller acts of sabotage, toppling billboards and damaging bulldozer engines. These acts gradually increase in their destructive scale; eventually the gang sabotages construction machinery used to build a "modern high-speed highway for the convenience of the trucking industry" (Abbey 1975, 75).

While Abbey depicts sympathetic characters committing violent acts of eco- sabotage, he clearly shows their moral limits, having them draw the line at injuring humans. For example, when the Gang begins to toy with the idea of exploiting people and animals, Seldom Seen Smith emphasizes their mission statements, and Doc Sarvis agrees: "Not people, Captain...We're talking about bulldozers. Power shovels. Draglines. Earthmovers." George Hayduke then chimes in with a resounding, "Machines" (Abbey 1975, 66). However, the author sensationalizes the character Hayduke, a psychopathic Vietnam veteran and former Green Beret—a loose cannon who threatens the Monkey Wrench Gang's restraint from violence toward humans. A reader is always anxious when Hayduke ventures out alone on sabotage missions, because of the absence of the other gang members' moral guidance. Similarly, when Hayduke intermittently garners leadership of the gang, we cringe because we are aware of his violent tendencies and his history as a Green Beret. After the previous mission-forming conversation, the gang's militant direction takes form with their first destructive acts.

With the publication of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* in 1975, Abbey spreads an ideology for active wilderness defense. The author portrays destructive counterattacks that, in theory, offer the heroic potential to sway mainstream opinion in favor of wilderness preservation. Infrequently in his nonfiction, and largely in his fiction, Abbey encourages such acts of ecological sabotage, which have fallen under the label "eco-tage" (Bishop 1994, 15). After the publication of this novel, environmentalist groups such as Earth First!, under the leadership of its founder Dave Foreman, adopted methods of "direct-interventionist eco-warriors," as depicted in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (Cahalan 2001, 178). Foreman's 1985 manual for eco-tage, *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching*, is just one illustration of this popularity (Cahalan 2001, 74). Abbey's responsibility

for inciting such groups is debatable, but one cannot deny the mounting popularity of eco-tage, particularly following his novel's publication.

Reflecting on the Monkey Wrench Gang's destructive sabotage, one might also consider the labor and creativity embodied in engineering and building projects that are targets of sabotage. Though these targets are apparently hostile to wilderness serenity, surely such damage also intrudes on the placidity of the natural world. For example, the demolition debris from Glen Canyon Dam Bridge would cause added problems for ecosystems below the dam.[1] In the fervor of destruction and in response to the empowerment its members feel with each act, the Monkey Wrench Gang becomes progressively more devastating. As expected, the gang first invites the aggression and reactionary violence of a local search and rescue team, and finally of the State Police. Eventually, the gang's subversive militancy provokes the Utah State authorities on a hunt for its members. The novel concludes with the final provocation. The State Police unload a barrage of gunfire in their attempted assassination of Hayduke, the most militant gang member (Abbey 1975, 373–374).

Despite his possible advancement of destructive action, the author discourages eco-tage that could potentially harm humans. Though eco-saboteurs justify themselves as defenders of wilderness, they disregard human effort similar to the way industrialists disregard the non-human environment. Both groups use destruction for their own gains.

Lee Rozelle's essay "Sabotage and Eco-Terror: Edward Abbey, the Unabomber Manifesto, and Earth First!," is skeptical of Abbey's justification of eco-tage. Rozelle describes what can be learned from extremist reactions to the troubling influences of modern industry. The article encourages an alternative response: one that avoids militancy and searches for action that will influence a culture, rather than provoke law-enforcement and litigation. Rozelle encourages more productive opposition, though he states that one might learn from the reactionary perspectives of militant activists. Without rejecting the validity of Abbey's concerns for wilderness destruction, Rozelle suggests that publicizing these concerns through more productive "direct action tactics…can better promote an ecological ethos than vandalism alone" (Rozelle 2006, 92). The critic also states that one can even take lessons away from the most murderous acts without justifying such action. For example, Rozelle allows for the validity of Ted Kaczynski's emotive responses to troubling realities but condemns his actions. Though he chose an unproductive way of addressing his concerns, Kaczynski reacted to aspects of modernity that are unsettling to even the most peaceable observers (Rozelle 2006, 84–87). However, such destructive reactions, such as those of Kaczynski or the

Monkey Wrench Gang, beg the questions: Do such militant reactions only fuel the fires of aggression? How might those who want to steer civilization away from this advancing path of mechanization and wilderness destruction better encourage alternate modes of what our culture might accept as progress? For surely acts of provocation do not encourage alternative perspectives, nor do they suggest compromise. Rozelle concludes the argument by stating, "If green politics is to grow, it will have to grow up" (Rozelle 2006, 92). Certainly, the reactionary approaches like those of the Monkey Wrench Gang and Ted Kaczynski offer an immature response to injustice. The first is a fictional group of miscreants, the second a methodical murderer, and neither offer viable resolutions to their disagreements with modern techno-industrialism.

Abbey's Philosophy: Anarchic Reactions to Industrialism and Idealistic Visions of the Future

Considering the Monkey Wrench Gang's behavior, one is led to investigate the author's own reactions to increased mechanization and government control. In a 1951 journal entry, Abbey identifies an archetypal image of the death match between government control and rugged individualism:

> My favorite melodramatic theme: the harried anarchist, a wounded wolf, struggling toward the green hills, or the black-white alpine mountains, or the purple-golden desert range and liberty. Will he make it? Or will the FBI shoot him down on the very threshold of wilderness and freedom? (Abbey 1994, 10)

Tempered by the controlling maxim that people should value all sentient life, Abbey encourages, often with humor, aggressive action to promote positive change through the limitation of industrial intrusion on wilderness lands. In response to destructive development of wilderness areas for recreation and resource use, and in objection to exaggerated control of citizens' lives, Abbey embarked on writing projects that scrutinized "our contemporary techno-industrial greed-and-power culture" (Abbey 1989, xiii). He critiqued the interconnected corporate and military influence on American lives and government. In his essay "Down the River with Henry Thoreau," he writes:

> We are slaves in the sense that we depend for our daily survival upon an expand-or-expire agro-industrial empire—a crackpot machine—that the specialists cannot comprehend and the managers cannot manage. Which is,

furthermore, devouring world resources at an exponential rate (Abbey 1982, 17)

In 1960, Abbey completed a Master's thesis at the University of New Mexico. His thesis, *Anarchism and the Morality of Violence*, investigates anarchy's historical and theoretical background. The study tends to sympathize with influential philosophers' justification of violent acts, as long as they are committed to the interest of a nation-state's majority population. However, Abbey writes, "There is no necessary connection between anarchism and violence...[I]t is even possible, as the examples of Tolstoy and Gandhi illustrate, to be both an anarchist and a pacifist" (Abbey 1959, 55). Abbey finally concludes "that anarchists had failed to satisfactorily justify violence" (Cahalan 2001, 174). His thesis is a selective account of anarchy's development as a political doctrine, its largely misconstrued "association with illegality and crime" (Abbey 1959, 2), and its popular invalidation as a viable means of attaining democratic ends. Despite this majority view, Abbey's investigation validates certain anarchist movements (i.e., those of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Michael Bakunin[2]) as viable means for disenfranchising the oppressive minority who control the functions of a nation-state.

According to Abbey, exploitation by the oppressive minority is the inevitable result of America's increasing use of mineral and water resources, burgeoning tourism, growing military-industrial corporatism, and continuing over-reliance on mechanization. Much of his work reacts to these trends with heated attacks on industrial capitalism's paradigms of growth and progress. Though the author's attacks appear humorous at times, readers cannot miss his harsh critiques of America's standard economic practices, as in the following passage from the "Preliminary Notes" to *Down the River*: "Communists like capitalists believe above all in technology, the ever-expanding economy (nice self-contradiction!), industrialism, militarism, centralized control—the complete domination of nature and human beings" (Abbey 1982, 6).

The writer's essays convey inflexible perspectives, rejecting contemporary economic paradigms that drive technological and industrial development. Because of disagreements with America's wartime history, partly as a result of his father's socialist influence, and in response to the regimentation he experienced in the Army, Abbey directly challenges modern industrialism and capitalist definitions of "progress." He interprets modern economics as inimical to human progress and damaging to people's democratic empowerment. In his 1984 essay on Arizona's political encouragement of population growth and industrial development, he derides "the runaway growth that enriches a few and gradually

impoverishes the rest of us" (Abbey 1988, 23). Abbey directly challenges the Arizona governor and Tucson mayor's flawed approaches to improving their state's economy.[3] The essayist reacts with disgusted sarcasm to Arizona's, and America's, economic practices:

> Growth is good, they say, reciting like an incantation the prime article of faith of the official American religion: Bigger is better and best is biggest...Where, when, and how is this spiraling process supposed to reach a rational end—a state of stability, sanity, and equilibrium? (Abbey 1988, 20)

Some of Abbey's early philosophies on environmental protection drew from a reactive response to what he saw as threats to democracy. Included in these philosophies are notions of how to protect people from increasingly intrusive government control and how to allow self-sufficient communities to sustain unspoiled areas of the natural world. If this paraphrase of the author's ideas sounds idealistic, then his notions of how to attain these goals are equally so. His idealism finds expression through fiction, and one is inclined to view these ideals as improbable and fantastical. However, even in fantastical stories, the ideal existence is unattainable, as we see in the tragic fate of his character Jack Burns.

Abbey offers no compromises with the values of economic expansionism he opposes so strongly. He vehemently rejects widely accepted notions of growth for the sake of growth as inimical to peaceful and humane ways of life. He encourages civilized progress instead, which he defines in an interview with Joseph Wood Krutch. Abbey writes that civilization is "a form of human society in which the primary values are openness, diversity, tolerance, personal liberty, and reason" (Abbey 1988, 179). Yet Abbey's reactive environmentalism appears to contradict values such as tolerance, openness, and reason.

The author's approach represents a development in the modern environmental movement that took place in the 1960s and 70s. This period saw the development of a generational fracture throughout American society; while members of the younger generation railed against the mainstream, the older generation tended to cling to conservative notions of tradition. Along these dividing lines, environmentalist groups took tangential directions with regard to their methods of activism and resistance. Phillip L. Fradkin, Wallace Stegner's most recent biographer, observes that there was a growing chasm between conservationists of Stegner's generation and those of Abbey's. According to Fradkin, environmentalists of Abbey's perspective were "newer converts whose concerns were wider and whose attitude was increasingly intransigent"

(Fradkin 2008, 166). However, Abbey claimed that if people took his fiction as serious social commentary, or as advocacy for a particular approach to environmentalism, they were making a serious mistake. According to him, he wrote comic novels and was merely entertaining a reading public. But we cannot ignore his involvement with intransigent environmentalist groups like Earth First! or his less comic commentary on eco-sabotage.[4]

Abbey's proffered subversive solutions overshadow the more reasonable efforts he made to encourage alternative practices in wilderness preservation. He was in fact an ardent environmental activist, staying abreast of government policies and practices that endangered western bioregions. As essay collections *Abbey's Road* and *One Life at a Time, Please* illustrate, not only was he aware of the bureaucratic decisions that result in damage to wilderness areas, he was also concerned with the environmental racism that often goes hand in hand with wilderness exploitation (in places such as Australia and Mexico, as well as in the American Southwest).

At times, Abbey did acknowledge that obstinate subversion was not a productive route toward amending a culture's relationship with its environment. In various works, he undercuts his suggestions for eco-tage by describing less destructive approaches to reform. *Slickrock: Endangered Canyons of the Southwest* and *The Hidden Canyon: A River Journey* are two of his notable efforts that offer more productive ideas for reform. Both books include photography and essays that focus on deserts and river canyons of the American Southwest. Both describe the sanctity of these areas that are also, in places, impeded by large-scale engineering projects spearheaded by federal government and private interest groups for the purposes of energy, water, and recreational use. Both were published after extensive dam-building projects on the Colorado River; as a result, the essays in these collections lament the loss of canyons that now lie submerged under Lakes Mead and Powell.

In the *Slickrock* chapter "The Damnation of a Canyon," Abbey identifies Glen Canyon as part of the "living heart" of Utah's canyonlands. Glen Canyon and "the golden, flowing, wild Colorado river" are sources of creation and sustenance in the Southwest (Abbey and Hyde 1971, 64). Abbey admires them in various essays and works of fiction and he documents his explorations of Glen Canyon's grottos and tributaries.[5] Much of his focus on Glen Canyon Dam has a tone of remorse at the loss of a place where he sought haven. *Slickrock* is an epitaph for the Colorado River as Abbey knew it before it was dammed. Merritt Chapman Scott Corporation began the Glen Canyon Dam project in 1956 and dedicated it

in 1966 (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation), and the Sierra Club published *Slickrock* in 1971 after large-scale damming projects on the Colorado were complete. In *Slickrock*, Abbey describes how he escaped to these places of sanctity as a young man and then saw his idyllic sanctuaries submerged under reservoirs:

> Having thus seen Glen Canyon both before and after what we may fairly call its damnation, I feel that I am in a position to evaluate the transformation of the region caused by construction of the dam. I have had the unique opportunity to observe firsthand some of the differences between the environment of a free river and a power-plant reservoir. (Abbey and Hyde 1971, 64)

At the conclusion of "The Damnation of a Canyon," he tempers a reactive tone with an optimistic vision of the future. Instead of suggesting militant action in order to bring about change, Abbey sees into a future when people rely less on hydroelectric power (a primary reason for Glen Canyon Dam) and more on solar and wind-generated power. In this preferred future, he predicts the demolition of the dam:

> As alternate methods of power generation are developed—and Glen Canyon Dam is already plainly obsolete as a power producer—or as the nation establishes a way of life adapted to actual resources and basic needs, so that the demand for electrical power begins to diminish, we can shut down Glen Canyon power plant, open the diversion tunnels, and drain the reservoir. (Abbey and Hyde 1971, 69)

He predicts a thirty year resuscitation of Glen Canyon and the Colorado River, after which "the river canyons will bear a decent resemblance to their former selves" (Abbey and Hyde 1971, 69). According to Abbey's prediction, this section of the river would return to an ecologically balanced state.

Abbey's Emotional Appeal

Slickrock and *The Hidden Canyon* appeal to an audience that already sympathizes with Abbey; his readership probably needs little convincing that massive dams on the Colorado River are unsustainable means of garnering water and energy. However, Abbey also frequently wrote with ineffective persuasive techniques to an unsympathetic audience. He attempted to influence government change by writing letters to senators and newspaper editors, but he does so with self-righteous tones (Abbey 2006, 46–47). Through such letters (which this study will take up shortly),

he challenges politicians' lack of foresight as their policies blatantly neglect ecosystems in the Southwest. Though he identifies government practices that many would acknowledge as troubling and unwise, his polemics devolve into impassioned and exaggerated appeals for a drastically altered approach to progress than what the pervasive commercial culture promotes. It might be helpful to analyze how his argumentative approaches are ineffective for practicable conservationist reform.

Carle Herndl and Stuart Brown argue in their introduction to *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in America* that policy-making institutions tend to respond more constructively to familiar discourse. Herndl and Brown refer to this discourse as standard correspondence for "the powerful institutions that make decisions and set environmental policy. This discourse usually regards nature as a resource, one among many others, to be managed for the greater social welfare." This approach assumes that the government's role is to oversee the "utilitarian management of natural resources" (Herndl and Brown 1996, 10). Through specific examples, the two rhetoricians argue that resource management administrations seldom consider poetic and impassioned appeals for conservationism. Rather, they tend to base decisions on appeals to fact: "[T]echnical data and expert testimony usually represent the basis of policy decisions, often at the expense of other participants or other forms of rhetorical appeal" (Herndl and Brown 1996, 12).

Herndl and Brown recognize the intermixing of various appeals to conservationism; they label three of the major approaches as "ethocentric" or appealing to *ethos* and "regulatory discourse," "ecocentric" or appealing to *pathos* and "poetic discourse," and anthropocentric or appealing to *logos* or "scientific discourse" (Herndl and Brown 1996, 11). Each of these approaches considers nature differently, in accordance with the argumentative aims of an individual or group. And individuals and groups tend to prioritize one or another of these methods according to their aims. However, these rhetorical approaches, or varied combinations thereof, have unequal success in political arenas. As Herndl and Brown indicate through their consideration of contemporary scientific culture, substantiated appeals to *ethos* and *logos* tend to overshadow argumentative appeals to *pathos*.

Though emotional appeals have their place in organized approaches to effecting change, the legalistic and scientific systems that underlie contemporary governance demand a language and argument that fits within particular rhetorical modes. Instead of recognizing such actualities, Abbey is loyal to the modes of polemical essays and dramatic fiction:

while his letters and essays aim to encourage real change, they often appeal more to sentiment than to a scientific or bureaucratic rationale. He maintains the patterns of his fiction in his nonfiction: the author's essays and letters are intended to jolt people into awareness with sensational appeals to heated topics. In nonfiction, as in fiction, Abbey includes anecdotes that are animated, humorous, and often distressing. In an interview with Judy Nolte Lensink, Abbey says, "I write in a deliberately outrageous or provocative manner because I like to startle people...It's hard for me to stay serious for more than half a page at a time" (Trimble 1988, 27).

Scott Slovic's conclusion, concerning Abbey's polemical aims in his fiction, appears accurate. But one cannot deny the appeals to action in Abbey's nonfiction. In "'Rudolf the Red knows rain, dear': The Aestheticism of Edward Abbey," Slovic proposes that Abbey is not writing to encourage deliberate action or "to launch a mass movement." Slovic focuses primarily on the aesthetic appeal of Abbey's language and contends that instead of aiming for practical change, the author

> is trying to prompt a more basic kind of consciousness among his readers, to provoke not a singleminded political movement but rather an awareness of the individual need to question moral and aesthetic assumptions. *The Monkey Wrench Gang* is less a clear cut call to action than a 'call to feeling.' (Slovic 1992, 103–104)

Abbey's letters and essays also incorporate this "call to feeling," rather than a direct call for a movement or particular action. The seeming calls to action, as Slovic argues, are also appeals to the aestheticism of Abbey's writing, or to "the passions of the human characters and the passionless gaze of the cosmos" (Slovic 1992, 105). Passages that depict the destruction of the tools and products of industrial development are not only appeals to characters' passions—they are appeals to readers' passions (which *may* or *may not* encourage them to act on behalf of the environment). However, Slovic's focus on Abbey's fiction overlooks a discussion of the action-oriented appeals in other genres, specifically in his flawed attempts at political appeal in letters to politicians and newspaper editors.

Seriousness and factual rationale, both of which Abbey was capable of conveying, might encourage a senator, governor, or even an editorial reader to take steps toward transforming a policy or, more immediately, to alter a customary behavior. Instead, Abbey's March 1973 letter to Frank E. Moss takes a different approach, opposing the Senator's effort to increase the water capacity of Lake Powell. Rather than a well-argued rationale for

increasing the volume of dam releases, the writer makes a petulant appeal with a contentious question:

> I also raised the larger question, which you failed to answer, as to what difference it makes anyway, to 99.9 percent of us Americans, whether the limited and badly abused and over-used Colorado River is exploited in the upper basin or the lower basin states? (Abbey 2006, 46)

Moss advocates holding more water in Glen Canyon and the surrounding canyons, whereas Abbey advocates allowing more of the river to run its course. Rather than following an argumentative route that provides even-handed evidence supporting his plan, Abbey quickly abandons references to legality and water acreage figures for a more emotional appeal. Unfortunately for Abbey's persuasive goals, bureaucratic proceedings tend to discount such plaintive argument. To the detriment of Abbey's intentions, his letter to Senator Moss, rather than persuasively encouraging the Senator, launches an unrelenting attack. Abbey's questions are laden with his own disgust: "Why, Senator Moss, why, I ask you, do you believe that 'more' is the same as better?" (Abbey 2006, 46). Abbey directly implicates the Senator in exploitive governance, and invites a defensive response by minimizing the complexities of the problem he addresses. He urges Moss to simply change a method of accounting in order to alter the means of water use for irrigation, energy, and recreational purposes. Abbey only focuses on the revenue that such accounting means for state funding instead of addressing the complexities of the problem. His question is one-dimensional:

> Why should Bridge Creek below Rainbow Bridge, as well as a hundred other lovely and world-unique side canyons in the Glen Canyon system, why should they all be flooded, destroyed, generally mucked-up when a simple change in book-keeping procedure would avoid the whole mess? (Abbey 2006, 46)

Bookkeeping is only one of the many factors that senators, engineers, and hydrologists must consider when altering the flow of a large river like the Colorado. And surely Abbey knew this, but he appeals to sentiment rather than to the Senator's professional perspective. Though this type of appeal may have been Abbey's rhetorical aim in challenging Moss, he probably gained little ground in convincing Moss of a conservationist agenda. If Abbey had a more bureaucratic approach, he might gain the Senator's sympathy; instead, he succeeds in his defiant polemics. Such an approach mainly serves the self-righteous goals of the polemicist and his already sympathetic audience.

Another of Abbey's regular targets for critique was the cowboy, and, more specifically, unsustainable approaches to livestock grazing. In a deliberate challenge to the ranching industry, he made a speech at the University of Montana in April 1985. During this raucous oratory, "Free Speech: The Cowboy and His Cow," he provoked angry reactions from the rancher and cowhand attendants as he criticized "the public-lands beef industry." He also implicates government policies for allowing "intolerable damage to our public lands—our national forests, state lands, BLM-administered lands, wildlife preserves, even some of our national parks and monuments" (Abbey 1988, 12–13). Abbey makes a reasonable claim that Western states' arid climate and sparse flora are not conducive to ranching. He presents researched evidence to support his argument: "More beef cattle are raised in the state of Georgia than in that sage-brush empire of Nevada. And for good reason: back East, you can support a cow on maybe half an acre" (Abbey 1988, 12). Despite this reasonable perspective on efficient agricultural practices, Abbey does not focus on practicable ways to diminish cow farming in the arid regions:

> Overgrazing is much too weak a term. Most of the public lands in the West, and especially in the Southwest, are what you might call "cowburnt." Almost anywhere and everywhere you go in the American West you find hordes of these ugly, clumsy, stupid, bawling, stinking, fly-covered, shit-smeared, disease-spreading brutes. They are a pest and a plague. (Abbey 1988, 13)

Instead of offering solutions, he condemns livestock owners and launches an attack on cowboys, ranchers, and ranching enthusiasts.

One might ask what progress this type of argument and brash challenge achieves for Abbey's cause. How does provoking shouts and jeers from those who are employed in the ranching industry achieve the speaker's aim? With this speech, does Abbey hope to convince people to reduce cattle farming? His means of encouraging these ends provokes an even more emotive response than his letter to Senator Moss. The speaker invites a reaction to his speech that might in fact counter his intended aims. With reciprocal reactive stances, Abbey's audience is unlikely to consider his point of view.

Stegner's Alternative Approach to Influencing a Culture

In order to contrast Abbey's polemics with Wallace Stegner's more even-handed persuasion, consider the following passage that urges the preservation of Utah's Dinosaur National Monument:

Though the writers, scientists, and photographers who have combined in these pages are all unalterably opposed to the suggested Echo Park and Split Mountain dams, they have not chosen to make this book into a fighting document. The struggle over the dams has already created enough bad feeling and bad prose, and there are better places than this for argument and counter-argument. The purpose here is simply to survey its possibilities for human rest and recreation and inspiration, in the belief that the people and Congress of the United States should have a very clear idea of what they would be losing if they chose to sacrifice this National Monument to make a reservoir. (Stegner 1955, v)

This is Dinosaur: Echo Park and Its Magic Rivers, a collection similar in form to Abbey's *Slickrock*, is an effort in support of the preservation of a treasured wilderness area—rather than a lament for a flooded wilderness paradise. At the time of the book's publication, Congress was considering a dam project that would submerge under a reservoir much of what is now Dinosaur National Monument. In fact, the book persuaded Congress to oppose the dam's construction; however, Stegner acknowledged that this decision catalyzed the construction of Glen Canyon Dam (Benson 1997, 199; Stegner and Etulain 1983, 169).[6] In his contribution to the essay collection, Stegner described the Dinosaur Monument region as "the three-pronged district of about 200,000 acres, straddling the Utah–Colorado border a little south of where that border meets the southern boundary of Wyoming" (Stegner 1955, 3). Stegner was intimately familiar with the area as well as with Glen Canyon and would have liked to see both areas preserved. After the Bureau of Reclamation completed its dams on the Colorado River, Stegner lamented the loss of Glen Canyon. However, prior to these damming projects, he took proactive measures to prevent the creation of a reservoir that would flood a geological treasure.

In the previous excerpt from the "Foreword" of *This is Dinosaur*, Stegner chooses a conscientious means of arguing against the construction of the Echo Park and Split Mountain Dams. His statements refer to the futility of uncompromising argument. From the start of the collection, he explicitly aims to avoid a contentious tone; instead he emphasizes the valuable treasures that will be lost with the creation of a reservoir. Essays in the collection do not attack government or private interests for resource exploitation, nor do they incite reactionary responses. Stegner's introduction sets the tone, and the essays within follow his guiding principles for the book. His contribution to the collection, "The Marks of Human Passage," provides a cursory history of the Dinosaur Monument region and identifies the valuable natural and historic artifacts that would wash away with the construction of these dams. Concluding the essay, he encourages conservationism for a particular type of utility—rather than a

customary harm. His effort at gentle persuasion refers to the "use without impairment" rationale that was key in establishing the National Park System in 1916 (Stegner 1992, 127–128). In fact, this clause also gave Stegner and Brower legal grounds for opposition to the Echo Park and Split Mountain dams (Benson 1997, 226). Stegner uses the same argument with a characteristic eloquence:

> It is legitimate to hope that there may [be] left in Dinosaur the special kind of human mark...that distinguishes man from all other species. It is rare enough among men, impossible to any other form of life. *It is simply the deliberate and chosen refusal to make any marks at all*. Sometimes we have withheld our power to destroy, and have left a threatened species...a threatened beauty spot...scrupulously alone. We are the most dangerous species of life on the planet, and every other species, even the earth itself, has cause to fear our power to exterminate. But we are also the only species which, when it chooses to do so, will go to great effort to save what it might destroy. (Stegner 1955, 17)

Stegner carefully considered his audience with his polemics, and his approach proved successful in essays such as "The Marks of Human Passage" and in correspondences like his popular "Wilderness Letter." Comparing this approach to Abbey's, one should ask why people would entertain Stegner's polemics more readily. An immediate response to this query is obvious: Abbey's challenges are simply too aggressive. His objections to the status quo in resource use are excessively brash and his arguments fall short of effectively addressing the concerns of the many groups involved in the use of coveted resources.

Stegner's argument, alternatively, is respectful of the interests it challenges: he takes into account the complexities of the issues he discusses. The writer adopts a mature tone and a vocabulary that reveals an understanding of legal proceedings and historical perspectives on the issues he addresses. His detailed understanding of the economic forces behind dam-building projects aids an ability to critique these ventures without petulance or simplistic naiveté. He points to the economic inefficiency of such projects in the introduction to his collection *The Sound of Mountain Water*. Referring to hydroelectric dams on the Missouri, Columbia, Colorado, and Rio Grande river systems, Stegner states:

> Along those rivers and their tributaries most of the feasible power, reclamation, and flood-control damsites have been developed. Additional main-stem dams are not likely to recommend themselves to any close economic analysis, no matter how the dam-building bureaus promote them. (Stegner 1997, 18)

However, instead of further exposing private and corporate economic inefficiencies related to dam building, Stegner tempers his attacks and relies on historical support, scientific evidence, and established law to present an environmentalist argument. His essay "A Capsule History of Conservation" uses these fundamental means—history, law, and science—to provide a rational basis for a view of conservationism. In the patterns of his contemporaries Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson, Stegner uses well-founded rationale to challenge industry and economic interests with arguments that government bureaus find hard to refute. And, as with his recommendation for stabilizing Lake Powell's water level, he proposes small changes to industrial and reclamation patterns that have been developing for over a century (Stegner 1997, 131).

Unlike Abbey's visions of restoring Glen Canyon to an unaltered state, Stegner has a vision of a stabilized Lake Powell and the preservation of canyons, grottos, and rock formations that still remain above the mean water level. Stegner uses the term "democratic accessibility" to express a desire for Lake Powell to remain a haven for outdoor enthusiasts of diverse interests (Stegner 1997, 128). Alternatively, Abbey proffers less democratic access to places he considers sacred, places only accessible by those who are physically capable of reaching them by way of a strenuous walk rather than a comfortable car ride (Abbey 1991, 108–111).

Alternative Ideologies Concerning Environmental Defense

Stegner's and Abbey's recommendations for Glen Canyon show the fundamental differences between their ideological approaches to conservationism and environmental defense. Stegner outlines a well-managed democratic access that allows for outdoor enthusiasts' varied interests. Abbey urges the preservation of hard-to-reach places at all costs. Keep people out, and the romance and serenity of unfrequented havens will remain. Stegner recognizes that people will inevitably want to use land for resources and recreation; Abbey equates utility with exploitation and reacts vehemently to the damages caused by utilitarian ventures.

The two authors' ideological differences also show in their fiction. While Stegner is a realist, Abbey envisions the romance of resistance to authority no matter what the authoritarian source. Alternatively, Stegner chooses not to challenge, with hard-hitting satire or potentially offensive criticism, the far-reaching authority of federal and state governments. Instead, he writes about close interpersonal relationships and how these relationships affect people throughout their lives. He accepts Bernard DeVoto's advice to write about people and their families and community

relationships (Stegner 1974, 159), whereas Abbey moves beyond these relationships to depict people's contentious dealings with their government.

In all, Stegner remains adaptable to diverse human desires, allowing for compromise when such compromise offers benefit. In fact, he suggests such conciliation readily when proposing conservation measures for Lake Powell, recognizing people's varied views on utilizing the earth's resources:

> Set the Escalante Arm aside for the silence, and the boatmen and the water skiers can have the rest of that lake...Save this tributary and the desert back from it as wilderness, and there will be something at Lake Powell for everybody. Then it may still be possible to make expeditions as rewarding as the old, motorless river trips through Glen Canyon...(Stegner 1997, 136)

His vision for Glen Canyon allows for the motor boaters and party barges—however, it maintains a conservationist's need for quieter, meditative havens.

At the heart of this comparison of Stegner's and Abbey's divergent approaches to conservationism are three central questions that may be hard to objectively answer. What do their approaches accomplish for the spread of environmentalist ideals? Were they able to reach end goals through their varied approaches to conservationist polemics? What are the proven results of Abbey's and Stegner's approaches?

Practical and Impractical Ideologies: Realism and Romanticism

These questions beg subjective responses, but we can look to one tangible triumph of Stegner's career: his and Dave Brower's ability to convince the U.S. Congress to preserve Dinosaur National Monument (Benson 1997, 226–227). Because of their foresight, the Upper Colorado River Project abandoned plans to develop two dams. Alternatively, Abbey laments the loss of Glen Canyon repeatedly but did not try to prevent, in any practicable way, Glen Canyon Dam's construction. Only with argumentative polemics that point to an ideal past does he challenge the authorities that maintain the dam. Abbey is an idealist with a romantic view of the past and impractical expectations for the future. He frequently expresses his disdain for the present in his essays and letters with self-righteous critiques of a supposed democratic society and mainstream conservationism. His fictional works tend to project a similarly negative view of contemporary culture. Abbey's writing is often antagonistic to the advancement of an alternative notion of progress—one that discourages ever-increasing production, consumption, and population growth. His

challenges are so aggressive that they would likely—and often did—elicit defensive, equally uncompromising responses. Abbey, impatient for results, cried out with challenges to the status quo. He did so with a combination of altruistic and selfish goals. Alternately, Stegner, with patience and moderation, planned how he would encourage change in a society seemingly trapped by a longstanding tradition of environmental exploitation.

Notes

1. In the opening scenes of The Monkey Wrench Gang, the author depicts the demolition of Glen Canyon Dam Bridge by clandestine saboteurs during a ceremonial ribbon-cutting for the bridge's formal opening (Abbey 1975, 6-7).

2. Chapter II of Abbey's thesis, entitled "Anarchist Violence: The Theorists," reviews the backgrounds and works of these and other thinkers who wrote and acted on their theories of anarchism.

3. The essay begins with complaints concerning Governor Bruce Babbitt and Mayor Lew Murphy, who were vocal proponents of Arizona's increased urbanization, population, and industrialization.

4. To protest Glen Canyon Dam's environmental impact, he participated in an Earth First! demonstration in March 1981. Other demonstrators positioned a "huge plastic strip...down the side of the dam, simulating a crack" while Abbey read a speech that condemned the construction of the dam (Cahalan 2001, 193). Abbey clearly stated his resistant and potentially militant position: "If opposition is not enough, then resist; if resistance is not enough, then subvert... Strike back at the empire by whatever means available to us" ("Cracking of Glen Canyon Dam", Earth Image Films. 1981).

5. For other works that express Abbey's reverence for Glen Canyon see his Desert Solitaire chapter "Down the River" and Chapter 23 of his novel Black Sun.

6. For references to Dave Brower (Executive Director of the Sierra Club) and Stegner's success in opposing the Echo Park and Split Mountain Dam projects see "The Wilderness West," in Richard Etulain and Stegner's Conversations with Wallace Stegner, and Jackson Benson's chapter, "From Short Story Writer to Environmentalist," in Wallace Stegner: His Life and Work.

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CHAPTER FOUR

BEYOND SOCIALIST REALISM: ANARCHISM AND GLOCAL CONCERNS IN THE POETRY OF WOLE SOYINKA

JEFF SHANTZ

The poetry of African poets over the last several decades asserts a fierceness, passion, originality and vitality that is lacking from much of recent Western poetry (Moore, 1998). Indeed, African poets are presenting some of the most compelling and exciting poetry in the world. The lack of broad discussion and attention given to African poetry is surprising given both the traditional significance of poetry in many African cultures and the creative power of recent African poets. The poems (of struggle) affirm another Africa, beyond the gloom and sorrow presented as the only face of Africa in the Western press. An appreciation and understanding of Africa poetry is essential in the current context where many are turning to cultural expressions opposed to the processes and effects of capitalist globalization.

> Not only the familiar ones of poverty and oppression, but those newly imposed by the IMF, with its insistence on cuts in health and education services, which mortgage the future as well as the present. And all this to the background of an international community that veers between blundering interference and cynical indifference; between using helicopter gunships to hunt down a single man and turning its back on genocide. (Moore 1998, xxiv)

In this poetry is a refusal to succumb, to let go of fundamental values. In the works of certain contemporary African poets one finds challenging perspectives within revolutionary thought that go beyond the categories and visions of much art or revolutionary theory. These poets raise alternatives based on the practices, values and ideas of indigenous forms of social organization which have been de-valued by some variants of

socialism.

Listening to voices that express viable African alternatives offers various benefits, "not the least of which is the opportunity it offers black Africa to become a source of usable ideas, rather than merely a consumer of them" (Owomoyela 1991, 36). This is as important as ever in the age of globalization as the circulation of social struggles and social visions is vibrantly and vitally expressed in processes of engagement that will shape the future of life on the planet. In these poems one can catch glimpses of organizing for self-determination and the undermining of oppressive systems. These glimpses offer responses to the pressing problems and challenges facing people around the globe. African poets like Wole Soyinka strive to see and understand their post-colonial (or neocolonial) worlds differently in order to resist, to fight back. Their works also offer new insights for others trying to fight back. At the same time these poets manage to avoid the risks some poets face of succumbing to rhetorical commonplaces as they struggle to put forward a political vision. There is no confusion of propaganda with art or substitution of propaganda for art. These poets do not compromise nor sacrifice their artistry to make a political point.

Beyond Socialist Realism:
Socialism by Tendency and Glocal Concerns

According to contemporary anarchist commentator Ashanti Alston (2003, n.p.), the contemporary works of African poets ask us "to accept the validity of a non-Western perspective and way of making sense of life." In doing so, the works of African poets offer an important opportunity for global activists to move beyond the confines of Eurocentric and authoritarian political theories as well as providing a point of departure for anti-authoritarian activists to develop broadened insights into community-based resistance to the predations of neoliberal capitalist globalization.

This will not necessarily be an easy task. As Alston (2003, n.p.) notes: "This may prove difficult for Marxists, anarcho-communists, and syndicalists who have learned to see the world only through the lens of science, reason and objectivity, with 'the worker' as the epicenter of change." Commentators and critics working from a Soviet socialist realist perspective have offered harsh evaluations of the sociopolitical visions of contemporary African poets.

This is not a prejudice that is confined to Western critics. Owomoyela (1991, 25) suggests that African leftist critics are "scrupulously faithful to

non-African models of conceptualization and terminology" and because of their preference for European models "might more appropriately be designated as Euro-Marxists." Significant commentaries such as Olafioye's *Politics in African Poetry* have implied that African poetry is inferior to Western poetry because African poets are too concerned with national issues while Western poets speak to global issues. Within such perspectives, Western cultures and discourses are held as universal while African alternatives are "aggressively derided" (Owomoyela 1991, 29). This criticism is entirely misguided, however, as it sidesteps the avoidance of politics that characterizes most Western poetry. Even more it overlooks the important voices of African poets who have spoken out against such global issues as apartheid and neoliberal adjustment. Ngara (1990) for example is impatient with Soyinka's nativism for its supposed failure to lead to "ideologically correct" visions of Africa's future. For Ngara (1990, 200), poets like Soyinka are inadequately devoted to "new and progressive forms of social consciousness." Unfortunately, this assessment by Ngara is based on the "revelations of Marxism" (1990, 197).

This is perhaps not surprising given the significance of Marxism in certain phases of African poetry. Ojaide (1994, 18) notes that by the 1970s Marxist-inspired "socialism had a firm grip on the minds of young African intellectuals." Into the 1980s many writers (Ugah, Osundare, Ngugi) identified as socialists. Of course this was typically a statist version of socialism rooted in alliances shown by Stalinist regimes in the USSR and China with emergent or young states in Africa such as Angola and Mozambique. This formed a pole of attraction against the exploitative interests of Western capitalism. As Ojaide suggests: "The workers and the common people sought the assistance of socialist countries. It was the Eastern bloc that cared for the have-nots, because their workers ruled and knew the problems of the working class and the disadvantaged" (1994, 18). Ojaide (1994, 18) recalls: "Socialism entered African literature to reinforce the tradition itself and especially the activist role of the verbal artist" (1994, 18). Much criticism has approached African poetry in terms of supposed universals. Marxist commentators have focused especially on presumed universals such as class. Others, arguing against Marxist interpretations have preferred to speak in terms of ethnicity or kinship. I do not intend to dismiss or denigrate either of these approaches. Instead I prefer to give attention to the possibilities of alternative visions and approaches.

Both the sociopolitical concerns and the visions of future social relations have undergone tremendous development in the post-socialist era of neoliberal capitalist globalism. Recent social and artistic movements

emerging through opposition to capitalist globalization have emphasized the convergence of local and global concerns, what some have termed "glocalization" or "glocality." From this perspective attention is given to locally rooted experiences, and especially experiences of struggle and resistance, that have global implications or address global concerns. These are not universalist or universalizing discourses which seek to present themselves as world historical or epoch-making. These glocal themes include pressing concerns for the natural environment and local communities as well as libertarian or anarchist visions of social regeneration along radically democratic lines beyond the authoritarianism of the state, including Marxist states. These themes express local visions and values derived from local experiences rather than the models of imported systems of thought. These visions and values suggest the continuation of radicalism within African poetry but in forms that are not easily categorized within the framework of Marxist socialism. As Ojaide (1994, 18) has proclaimed: "I myself was socialist in tendency but rejected being an ideologue." This is a key distinction.

> There are indications that despite the demise of communism in Eastern Europe, the flowering of multi-party politics in Africa, and the gradual dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, African poetry will continue to be radical. This is because of the debt burden created by the IMF and the World Bank and the worsening socio-economic plight of African countries. Thus, even though the ideological point has been blunted in international politics, there will still be strident calls for the amelioration of the plight of the abused masses. Poets will continue to portray the bleak socio-economic landscape with negative and ugly images and dream of light at the end of the tunnel. (Ojaide 1995, 17)

Focus on socialism by tendency, drawn from glocal experiences and cultures moves discussion of African literature beyond dualistic conceptualizations which posit a choice between socialist realism or African realism (Owomoyela 1991). At the same time it allows for proper recognition of emerging social(ist) visions in a post-Soviet age.

It offers some assistance in evaluating the political vision in Soyinka's writing, for example, by refusing to view as reactionary or anti-socialist his attention to Yoruban myths and traditions. It also avoids the contempt for Soyinka's work by others who view it as an appropriation of African culture within a Western framework. Again, the view presented here allows a new space for understanding beyond ideological dualisms.

If Western critics and commentators have overlooked African poetry, Western activists have also failed to engage with African political expressions. This is perhaps especially true for anarchists. Major histories

of anarchism as well as collections of anarchist writers have almost entirely excluded any mention of anarchist or libertarian visions that have emerged within Africa. Still some anarchists have begun to develop a respect for the insights of the indigenous thinkers and localist approaches to questions of knowledge beyond the limits of Western social science. As anarchist philosopher Paul Feyerabend (1975, n.p.) has noted, it is now necessary "to reexamine our attitude towards myth, religion, magic, witchcraft and towards all those ideas which rationalists would like to see forever removed from the surface of the earth (without so much as having looked at them—a typical taboo reaction)." Of course, while these intentions and concerns are well-taken, one must avoid replicating Eurocentric dualisms in contrasting Western rationality with supposed African emotionalism. This is a mistake that Wole Soyinka both identifies and attempts to overcome. The poems belong simultaneously to the history of Western poetry and the worlds of colonial and postcolonial African writing.

The Organic Anarchism of Wole Soyinka

While most known for his dramatic works, Wole Soyinka's wide ranging works include poetry, literary and cultural criticism, *Myth, Literature and the African World*; and political commentary, *The Open Sore of a Continent*. It was in recognition of the power of these diverse writings that Wole Soyinka was named the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986.

It is well known that Soyinka drew inspiration from the works of Franz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere. It is perhaps less well known that Soyinka also engaged with the works of such anarchist or libertarian thinkers as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Tolstoy and Albert Camus (Stratton, 1988). Along with these influences Soyinka's philosophical roots are deeply grounded in Yoruban culture and mythology.

It is in the organic mix of Yoruban and Western understandings of African mythology that Soyinka locates an anarchist presence (Alston 2003). His analysis of the postcolonial disappointments and reversals of African political dynamics and his call for an "organic revolution" that derives its power and authenticity from Yoruban cultural mythology has made his work both unique and controversial (Alston 2003). In his poems as much as his other works Soyinka has dissected the ongoing abuses of power that colonialism has fostered in generations of political leadership and state functionaries. This has placed Soyinka the poet alongside political commentators like Fanon and Nkrumah in highlighting the class

contradictions and other impediments of nationalism and neocolonialism. This is a critical vision that Soyinka has maintained for four decades as a citizen-rebel artist (Alston 2003).

Walunywa (1997) suggests that Soyinka's work poses the question whether the ritual drama in "endogenous society" might provide means for anarchic regeneration, recuperation and a praxis of the "creative-destructive principle" in contemporary life. Walunywa (1997) notes the recurrent anarchist themes that run through Soyinka's work in the representation and play with Yoruban myth and ritual drama. Soyinka's work provides a glimpse of anarchism that is based in African reality and, notably, in ritual or tragic drama. Indeed, his anarchism speaks of and through the ritual drama of endogenous society (Alston, 2003).

In his study of Soyinka's work, Walunywa (1997, 21) argues that Soyinka has introduced a specific form of anarchism in African intellectual discourse. The anarchism that Walunywa identifies in Soyinka's writings

> is defined as the desire on the part of the individual concerned to deconstruct the social, economic and political institutions which reflect the values of 'modern civilization' as conceptualized through the prevailing ideologies in order to pave the way for the recuperation of 'primordial culture' as conceptualized through the 'cosmologies' of 'endogenous societies'. (1997, 21)

This anarchism shares with other varieties of anarchism

> the consistent resistance—the desire to break free of—all forces, irrespective of whether they originate from 'the Left' or from 'the Right,' that seek to confine either the individual or the community within any established social, economic, or political constitutional barricade. (Walunywa 1997, 75)

The endogenous anarchism expressed by Soyinka refers to specific mythological or symbolic practices that preceded and in various ways survived the imposition of European colonialist modernity and remain part of cultures that continue their resistance to neocolonialism partly through their myths and rituals (Alston 2003). These are the cultural expressions of indigenous societies.

> They are endogenous reenactments of the unity, contradiction and struggle of existence; ritual archetypal reenactments found the world over that highlight and 'myth poeticize' such dramatic themes as death and rebirth, disintegration and recuperation, destruction and creation, suffering and compassion, fragmentation and re-assemblage, and fallibility and remediation. (Alston 2003, n.p.)

These traditions carry mechanisms for ongoing resistance, revision, regeneration and revolution (Alston 2003). According to Walunywa (1997, 22):

> the primary function upon which endogenous society is developed—"the ritual archetype"—is believed to be "revolutionary" in terms of the freedom it affords the individual and the community because it is thought to provide the medium through which the individual and the community in question maintain an intimate relationship with primordial culture and its liberating forces (and consequently exist in a diametrical opposition with modern culture and its alienating forces) without completely relinquishing their respective sense of selfhood and community.

Walunywa (1997) argues that Soyinka brings the anarchic, communal character of ritual dramas to center stage through his literary works as well as his commentaries on politics and post-colonial revolutions. Notably, Soyinka, found a personal affinity as a youngster with the god Ogun and it is Ogun that he develops as an archetypal anarchist (Walunywa 1997). Ogun initiated the return of divinity to humanity. For Soyinka, the transition from confinement and oppression to liberatory existence is a crucial principle. In Soyinka's work Ogun is the principal "transit conductor" (Alston 2003). As Soyinka (1976, 30) suggests: "Ogun is the embodiment of challenge, the Promethean instinct in man, constantly at the service of society for its full self-realization." In Soyinka's work the character of Ogun is recreated in such a way that it "can be most useful in the context of Africa's contemporary post-colonial, neo-liberal wreckage" (Alston 2003).

Soyinka places Ogun at the center of Yoruban metaphysics. Indeed, this "Ogunian anarchism is the theme that constantly expresses itself throughout Soyinka's art, life and revolutionary vision" (Alston 2003).

> He is the individualist anarchist, the iron worker, the reluctant leader, or Nietzsche's Superman, expressing the indomitable will to power (according to Soyinka) in the service of community. He is the only god willing to make the transition through the abyss, through the chaos, to prepare the way for the others in their quest to reunify with humanity. In making the transition, he is also willing to be torn asunder, so that in re-assemblage he might help bring about communal change. (Alston 2003)

The activities of Ogun assert the principle of destruction and creativity regularly invoked by anarchists such as Bakunin. This is not necessarily a pleasant journey but in it one might find the forces upon which creativity and regeneration might be realized. This transition, in which the individual working for the community lets go of itself within the context of the ritual,

"implies being torn asunder from all those alienating forces and ideological influences, individually and collectively internalized, that has kept one stuck in a restricted state" (Alston 2003).

According to Osundare (1994, 81), in Soyinka's work the Atunda/ Atooda paradigm, in which the slave Atunda shatters the god Orisanla to fragments with a boulder, also plays a key part. The paradigm presents the basis for a "supra-segmental ontology" of "multiplicity without chaos" as accidental fissures resolve themselves "into a plural unity." The Atunda paradigm, and Soyinka's invocation of it, offers a "fascinating mix of creative rebelliousness and rebellious creativeness" (Osundare 1994, 81). With the smashing of an absolutist hegemony comes a creative plurality.

> Union they had known until the Boulder
> Rolling down the Hill of the Beginning
> Shred the kernel to a million lights.
> A traitor's heart rejoiced, the god's own slave
> Dirt-covered from the deed. (Soyinka 1967, 68)

From the destructive act comes an act of creation.

> Man's passage, pre-ordained, self-ordered winds
> In reconstruction. (Piecemeal was *their* deft
> Re-birth). (Soyinka 1967, 69)

In the words of Osundare (1994, 84), like Ogun, "Atunda creates new orders by destroying the old Order, engineers a polyphony of accents from one invariate Voice" (Osundare 1994, 84). As the anarchist Bakunin famously proclaimed: "The urge for destruction is a creative passion also." So it is with Ogun and Atunda. In both, "the act of creation is locked in dialectical combat with the act of destruction" (Osundare 1994, 84).

Again, like Atunda, the anarchist is the "lone figure" who through an "assertive act" brings about epochal transformations (Soyinka 1967, 16; 18). The anarchist is the stray electron celebrated by Soyinka in *Idanre*.

> ...may we celebrate the stray electron, defiant
> Of patterns, celebrate the splitting of the gods
> Canonisation of the strong hand of a slave who set
> The rock in revolution...(Soyinka 1967, 82)

As in anarchist suggestions that the means and ends of struggle are interconnected, in the figure of Atunda "a mythic fusion occurs of act and actor, process and person" (Otundare 1994, 82).

Take note of the similarity between Marx's invocation that each class

produces its own gravediggers in relation to the suggestion in Osundare's (1994, 83) discussion of the Atunda/Atooda paradigm in Soyinka's work: "In a way, every Orisanla needs an Atunda, or more appropriately, every Orisanla creates his own Atunda, the chink in an elaborate, overdetermined armour, facilitator of a revolution made inevitable by a crass, obvious hegemony." Indeed the call to direct action moves Soyinka's telling away from the realm of saints, despite his reference in *Idanre*, to "Saint Atunda, First revolutionary" (1967, 83). In *A Shuttle in the Crypt*, Soyinka expresses impatience with the evolutionary contemplation of the saint.

> No saint — are saints not moved beyond
> Event, their passive valour turned to time's
> Slow unfolding? (1972, 21)

In his reference to Hamlet, "the prince of doubts" in *A Shuttle in the Crypt*, Soyinka offers a symbol

> for those dithering, prevaricating, procrastinating "intellectuals" of the Ivory Tower...ever ready to intellectualise and justify rank manifestations of the state's disease...These are the ghost-writers, special advisers, and hungry consultants to depraved governments, spongers on a nation's wealth—and will—more of madmen than specialists. (Osundare 1994, 89)

Instead of paralyzing contemplation, he calls for immediate and decisive direct action.

> A time of evil cries
> Renunciation of the saintly vision
> Summons instant hands of truth to tear
> All painted masks. (1972, 21)

Beyond criticizing corrupt or despotic leaders there is growing analysis and criticism of national middle classes of which many poets themselves are a part. This is often expressed in criticisms of the academic communities, again home to many poets, where rhetorical opposition is sometimes not matched by action.

In "My Tongue Does Not Marry Slogans" Soyinka offers a sharp rebuke of such paper tiger leftist academics:

> Midnight missed you at the barricades
> But found you snoring sweetly in your mistress's
> Arms, secured by campus walls, manned
> Day and night by "wage slave proletarians."

The poem "Ujamaa" from *A Shuttle in the Crypt* is dedicated to Julius Nyerere, a figure of much interest for libertarian socialists. In the poem, Soyinka offers a powerful vision of the communal solidarity of workers and the land that sustains them.

> Sweat is leaven for the earth
> Not driven homage to a fortressed god.
> Your black earth hands unchain
> Hope from death messengers. (1972, 80)

In the manner of radical ecologists and green anarchists, nature, rather than an adversary to be overcome through Promethean development, is the sustainer of communities. At the same time, labor must be self-determined, not exploited as "homage to a fortressed god," even a proletarian one. Soyinka affirms the connection between nature and community, against even Marxist progressivism:

> Bread of the earth, by the earth
> For the earth. Earth is all people. (1972, 80)

Soyinka's poems stand as shining examples of the work of the glocal poet, rooted in local experiences but speaking across boundaries. As Osundare (1994, 93) suggests: "Soyinka is a poet of unlimited latitude, a free-ranging, though stubbornly rooted spirit for whom the entire world is a legitimate constituency. His fame stirs the lips of the Four Winds, but his charity always begins at home."

Marxist socialist critics have assailed Soyinka for not being an explicit socialist (see Hunt 1985). Geoffrey Hunt (1985) has derided Soyinka's interest/focus on Yoruban history as romantic escapism.

On the other hand, Owomoyela (1991, 22) suggests that Soyinka "has been a rather attractive target for the leftists because, even though he epitomizes the maturity of African literature, he does not satisfy the ideological expectations of the Marxists." Balogun (1988) has argued that Marxist critics of Soyinka, who accuse him of not being a socialist, have misread his works. Balogun (1988) suggests that while Soyinka has not identified himself explicitly as a socialist, his works do espouse socialism. A focus on the libertarian or anarchist impulses of Soyinka's work may help to address and clear up some of the debates over Soyinka's relation to socialism. Looking at Soyinka's work in relation to anarchistic currents situates it within a broader socialist stream, notably a libertarian and anti-statist socialism. His is a socialism by tendency.

Conclusion

It has long been noted that social, political and economic histories have greatly impacted the development of writing on the continent (see Jahn 1961; Mutiso 1974; Ojaide 1995). During the early independence period one commentator noted that major global concerns are expressed in African poetry while interpreting them through "the peculiarly African experience that is superimposed on that of the common denominator of world concerns" (Mphalele 1967, 12). Colonialism and independence and its many convulsions and neocolonialism provide a certain commonality for African poets. These forces, which are profoundly global, also provide a deep resonance with people engaged in struggle against oppression and exploitation in other parts of the globe. This resonance is especially meaningful in the current age of neoliberal capitalist globalization as movements in defense of community emerge on every continent to assert that "another world is possible." The poems form a vibrant document of the political developments of people in struggle. At the same time their appeal extends well beyond the conditions of their emergence.

Ojaide suggests that the "contemporary African writer has become a warrior of sorts, ever devising new strategies to deflect bullets from himself and still knock down the enemy" (1994: 18). In his view: "Poetry, indeed all African literature, has become the guidebook for achieving certain goals to benefit the common people. The poet has become primarily an activist" (Ojaide 1994, 18). Yet the activism and activist concerns of the contemporary poets may be almost unrecognizable to earlier generations of political poets, artists and commentators.

> At this stage I feel that condemnation and lamentation are not enough for the African. I believe that commemoration of all that is good in the past and is still viable but ignored in the present should inspire hope. We need not write dirges for the living. For me there is hope, and that should be the common pursuit of African writers. We should be builders. Our vision should be such that it will raise us from the current low state to high hopes of what we can be. (Ojaide 1994, 21)

Soyinka puts forward visions of socioeconomic resistance and transformation but without necessarily being mass-oriented or ideologically informed in the manner of traditional left poets. At the same time his poetry takes up the plight of the poor, dispossessed, workers and peasants. His works also show a deep concern for the land and the ecological depredations wrought by imperialist development.

Ojaide (1995, 4) notes that poetry in Africa is "currently enjoying an unprecedented creative outburst and popularity." Many new writers have

been encouraged by the continent's burgeoning poetry workshops. Poetry books are receiving a wider readership and larger audiences attend reading sessions. All of this has contributed to a certain popularization of a medium once considered to be elitist, intellectual and obscure (Ojaide 1995). At the same time the cost of books has become prohibitive in many areas in Africa which hampers publication (Ojaide 1995). After the economic restructuring experienced by many multinational publishers beginning in the 1980s, major publishing houses came to publish little African poetry. Works by new poets are often difficult to come by due to the difficulties facing small publishers. Local publishers are constrained by economic conditions and have limited their publications of poetry. Even presses in North America and Britain that publish African poets cannot adequately expose emerging poets (Ojaide 1995). Thus there are some obstacles that may impede the circulation of African poetry to other parts of the globe where they might be taken up by activists. Hopefully the present work can at least provide an opening for global, or rather, glocal readers to begin an engagement with African poets.

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CHAPTER FIVE

"ALL OUR 'ISTS' AND 'ISMS' ARE NOTHING": ANARCHIST IDEOLOGY IN PUNK MUSIC

MARK WETHERINGTON

The majority of music critics and popular culture historians credit the British band the Sex Pistols as introducing punk music and its accompanying public image to mainstream Western society. The release of their single "Anarchy in the U.K." in November of 1976 forged a strong connection in the public perception between the subculture centered around the aggressive, iconoclastic music that eventually became known as "punk" and anarchist ideology.

Numerous bands that formed in the years after the Sex Pistols appeared adopted musical styles and symbols that reflected anarchist or counter-cultural beliefs and did little to dissuade the perception that anarchist ideals and punk music were part and parcel of a disturbing cultural shift among English and American youth.

While anarchism has been recognized as a branch of political thought for nearly two centuries, its association with the punk movement of the late 20th century has provided it with perhaps its widest exposure to the general public. Unfortunately, this association has resulted in a misunderstanding of the principles at the heart of anarchism and erroneously labeled many center-left punk bands as anarchist, further distorting the perception of anarchist philosophy held by casual observers in American society.

Punk's first-wave and anarchy

The late 1970s saw the formation of dozens, if not hundreds of "punk" bands who performed an incredibly diverse amount of musical styles that fell under the broad banner of punk. The political ideologies of these bands were as diverse as their music and geographical bases. Although the

punk music "scenes" in certain areas tended to be more vibrant, with those in New York, Los Angeles, Washington D.C. and London being the most recognized, punk was also a thriving scene in many smaller communities.

Following the Sex Pistols debut, a group of fellow British "punks" formed the band known as Crass. Crass incorporated anarchist imagery and ideals into not only their music, but their presentation and the production of their music. In southern California, Gregg Ginn and his seminal hardcore punk band Black Flag chose one of the most recognizable symbols of anarchy as the moniker for their recordings. Shortly after the formation of Black Flag, the group Dead Kennedys would emerge from the San Francisco Bay Area, offering scathing, sarcastic songs lampooning American politics and society.

Within a few short years, and in a manner every bit as shocking to mainstream America as the rock and roll rebellion of the 1950s and early 1960s, "punk" had become a household term. Generally speaking, it can be stated that the punk movement elicited the scorn of many "normal" Americans, particularly adults with teenage children, due to its rejection of the values of polite society and its embrace of hair and clothing styles that served as personal expression as well as means of which to shock and offend those outside the punk subculture; similar to the desire of those in the Hippie movement of the 1960s to "freak out the squares."

Given the tendency of many of the more popular "first wave" punk music groups to choose names, imagery, and subject matter for songs that reflected radical politics and a rejection of contemporary morals, it is not surprising that the association between anarchy and the punk movement became embedded in the psyche of mainstream society. However, thorough analysis reveals that the majority of the more visible bands and organizations related to the punk movement, both past and present, were not affiliated closely or genuinely with anti-establishment politics. Examination of the musical catalogs of many of the most influential punk groups demonstrates that much of the lyrics focus on personal issues, and those that address topics related to anarchist philosophy do so in a glib or superficial manner, particularly when compared to work by the relatively few bands which indeed incorporated anarchist philosophy into their message.

Despite the symbolism associated with Black Flag's name (although some insist that the name was as likely to have been inspired by the insect repellent of the same name as it was the most recognized symbol of anarchy aside from the "circle-A"), their early work focuses almost exclusively on psychological issues such as depression, misanthropy, and a general dissatisfaction with the limited opportunities available to them.

Songs such as "Six Pack", "TV Party", and "Wasted" clearly demonstrate that the band was more concerned with personal experiences than political thought during the height of the initial punk movement.

The anti-authoritarian underpinnings expressed in the band's work, most notably in the anthem "Rise Above", are vague and woefully underdeveloped. In the later years of the band, much of the aggression and outspoken nihilism shifts into introspection and more complex musicianship, further disassociating the band from any political agenda. However, it should be noted that the band's music was released through Greg Ginn's independent SST record label, allowing the band to avoid being associated with major record labels, similar to the Dead Kennedys and Crass.

The presence of a similar lack of meaningful and coherent expression of anarchist thought can be drawn from even the most fleeting glance at the Sex Pistols lyrics and their association with two of the largest record labels in the music business, EMI in England and Warner Brothers in the United States. In addition to introducing punk music to the masses, the Sex Pistols also introduced the concept of punk as a commodity. Crafted by manager Malcolm McClaren to be obnoxiously marketable, the band gave rise to a cottage industry of shops catering to those wishing to join in the trend of punk fashion. While their public appearances in concert often resulted in conflicts between authorities and attendees, their impact on the political perspective of the masses was decidedly understated, with many moving on from their packaged rebellion to universities or careers, where they would likely cease to question representative democracy as being the answer to the problems of society.

As noted by Steve Appleford in a column about anarchy within the punk community, the political sentiments expressed by the Sex Pistols were "not about smashing the state, but maybe about smashing personal boundaries, societal limits" (Appleford 2005). Unfortunately, the two were to become confused not only by those in the general public, but by those within the punk community as well. To many, being an anarchist was as much about the looking the part as it was about having come to the conclusion that by their nature any and all political systems infringe upon freedom.

Appleford's description of the "anarchy" embraced by early punks, and which continues to be perpetuated by many modern punks today, is compelling and disturbing for those who hold a deeper understanding of anarchy as a philosophy:

> casual punks would eventually scrawl the word and the striking 'circle-A'
> symbol everywhere, on walls and subways, on black leather and bare skin,

embracing the word, the call to arms, the excuse to drink more and smash
shit up. (Appleford 2005, n.p.)

The embrace of the word while remaining ignorant of its definition can
be viewed as one of punk's biggest disappointments for those who wanted
it to be a powerful counter-cultural movement with the aim of spreading
the theories of anarchism.

Offering a refreshing contrast to the Sex Pistols and their image
consciousness and major label associations were Crass. Eschewing the
emphasis on highly individualistic styles of dress and hairstyle publicly
pioneered by Johnny Rotten and Sid Vicious, Crass chose to consistently
wear plain clothes, often black military surplus fatigues. Like Black Flag,
Crass would release the bulk of their catalog on a record label operated by
themselves, whether than relying on a major record label as did the Sex
Pistols. Unlike Black Flag, however, Crass used their lyrics, packaging
and performances as a way to advance an anarchist agenda. Crass's
critiques of many aspects of the punk movement and their vocal advocacy
of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency would make an impact on
many listeners and future musicians, with certain artists expanding
particularly effectively upon the themes discussed in their music.

Crass were also one of the few bands whose members can be
accurately described as being familiar with traditional notions of anarchy
before becoming involved in the punk music scene, and who continued to
practice what they preached after they ceased to perform punk music. The
anarchist-pacifist Dial House commune, situated outside of London, that
two of the members founded in the late 1970s preceded their involvement
in the punk music scene and is still active today, over thirty years later.

Although Crass is credited with introducing the "circle-A" anarchy
symbol to the anarcho-punk community, they did so in a more genuine
way and recognized that many viewed anarchism and its symbols as
condoning recklessness and violence. To dissuade the symbol, from being
viewed in such a manner, Crass would accompany its image with the
peace symbol. Appleford offers a succinct description of Crass's use of
symbolism and political views:

Crass was loudly anti-violence, anti-police state, adopting the slogan
"Anarchy & Peace" with an image of a tommy gun being shattered by the
circle-A. The band also pointedly distanced itself from the first punk acts.
To Rimbaud and the others, the Pistols and the Clash were merely
comfortably left of center, barking of socialism and human rights, while
working for the corporate interests of Columbia and Warner Bros.
(Appleford 2005, n.p.)

In addition, Crass drummer Penny Rimbaud rejects the ubiquity and the obsession of so many with the circle-A as mere "logoism" and yet another example of the ability of capitalism to turn a concept into a brand, and the inability of many within the punk community to resist (Appleford 2005, n.p.).

Perhaps not as radical as Crass, but making similar criticisms of the punk movement and enjoying a broader appeal, were the Dead Kennedys. Much of the Dead Kennedys music harshly lampooned politicians, on both the left and the right, and poignantly addressed issues such as the loss of jobs to mechanization, commodification of youth culture and music by MTV, and American foreign policy. Similar to Crass and Black Flag, the Dead Kennedys also chose to release their records on an independent label, with lead vocalist and lyricist Jello Biafra and guitarist East Bay Ray creating the Alternative Tentacles record label in 1979. Discouraging the senseless violence and property destruction that had become common at concerts featuring punk bands during the late 1970s and early 1980s, Dead Kennedys challenged those who vandalized the venues where punk bands performed to channel their destructive energy to banks instead. In the same song, the Dead Kennedys referenced the strict ethics codes and hierarchy that were becoming apparent within the punk movement, remarking that "when you ape the cops, it ain't anarchy". Aside from those two verses in one of their more popular songs, elaboration among concepts of autonomy and other anarchist ideas were absent, with specific social justice issues receiving much of the lyrical attention. A notable exception to this is found in the song "Stars and Stripes of Corruption". Several verses in this song plainly illustrated the virtues of responsibility and its connection to freedom, as well as the irrationality of nationalism:

> We don't destroy society in a day, until we change ourselves first from the inside out. We can start by not lying so much and treating other people like dirt. It's easy not to base our lives on how much we can scam… We've got to rise above the need for cops and laws…Look around, we're all people, who needs countries anyway? ("Stars and Stripes of Corruption")

The song "Anarchy for Sale" on their last album, *Bedtime for Democracy*, directly addressed what lyricist Jello Biafra saw as the infiltration of punk and its ideals by persons motivated by profit and prestige among their peers rather than the pursuit of an authentically alternative way of approaching the challenges to personal freedom imposed upon persons living in modern, rational capitalist societies.

It is important to note that not all "first wave" punk bands adhered to any rigid political ideology. The Ramones, one of the most popular and

enduring punk bands, paid no attention to political topics in their music. Other than their logo, a parody of the presidential seal of the United States, no overt political imagery or statements would surface from the band during their career of more than two decades. This apolitical stance would be adopted by countless bands that played punk music in a style similar to the Ramones, and would characterize virtually all of the bands involved in the "punk revival" and "pop-punk" music scenes of the mid-1990s. The varied political beliefs of the aforementioned punk bands, in conjunction with their lack of unified and decisive action toward a political goal, makes the argument that the early punk movement on the whole, and by extension the music and lifestyle it spawned, lacked any coherent political ideology or anarchist agenda.

Upon the dissolution of the Dead Kennedys in 1986, two years after Crass ceased to record or perform music, it can be argued that the initial momentum that had propelled punk music and its associated politics into mainstream consciousness had been spent. According to Appleford, "punk rock became the ultimate marketing scheme for vague, conflicting ideas of anarchy that old-school revolutionaries never imagined. And never wanted (2005, n.p.)"

It would take nearly a decade for punk to return to the forefront of popular music, and upon its return it would be largely absent of any of the radical politics and vocal threats, no matter how vague, against the status quo that had been present in its earliest incarnations.

The previous description by no means intends to serve as a complete history of the political sentiments of punk during the 1970s and 1980s, but rather for to draw a contrast between the public interpretation of what "punk" stood with the actual political character inherent in each band's work. The bands were chosen for their initial popularity, although obscure by mainstream standards each band is considered legendary within the punk-rock subculture, as well as their continued relevancy due to their powerful influence on subsequent generations of punk musicians. Moreover, the bands demonstrate the varying roles played by anarchy during its initial years. The Sex Pistols and Black Flag used the concept of anarchy its symbols to shock, sell records and encourage anti-social, although not necessarily anti-political, behavior; whereas the Dead Kennedys intelligently discussed its concepts, and its misguided use by many within the punk community, but did not endorse anarchist philosophy with the fervor and dedication of Crass, who offered the most meaningful and consistent dialogue on anarchy of any of the first-wave punk bands. Coincidentally, members of Crass and Jello Biafra of the Dead Kennedys have stated that their political views were influenced by

many of the ideas at the foundation of the social movements of the 1960s, such as the Hippies and those who participated in the May 1968 Paris protest and the Situationist International actions.

Punk's second wave and a legacy of apathy

Hailing from the same metropolitan region of California as the Dead Kennedys, Berkeley punk band Green Day released their major label debut, *Dookie,* in February of 1994. The album would eventually sell more than 10 million copies, reach the number two position on the U.S. Billboard 200 charts and re-introduce punk music into the consciousness of mainstream America.

The lack of political expression on the album cannot be understated. A *New York Times* commentary on pop music in early 1995 noted "apathy has rarely sounded so passionate" (Pareles 1995, n.p.). Thus, punk was reintroduced to America, and a generation of its youth, in the mid-1990s not as a pointed tool for political expression but rather as a medium to express personal dissatisfaction with the suburban lifestyle. Although this can certainly be viewed as valid social commentary, and shares similarities to the lyrical focus of earlier bands such as Black Flag and the Descendents, it was nonetheless a harbinger of the lack of complex political analysis that would taint the image of punk as a vehicle for political rebellion for years to come, and undoubtedly influence future musicians playing the punk style in their choice of subject matter.

While Green Day stood as the most visible symbol of the emergence of punk music that lacked the lofty and counterculture ideals of its musical predecessors, many of the more popular "underground" punk bands that were active during the early and mid-1990s also refrained from venturing into political philosophy. Bands such as The Queers, Screeching Weasel and the Mr. T Experience played music in a similar style, with similarly lighthearted lyrics. Heavily influenced by the Ramones, both musically and lyrically, these bands and others would represent the decidedly apolitical faction of punk music. Ironically, these same bands shared the same record label, Lookout!, and generally geographic area as one of the most socially active and politically conscious bands to play music categorized as "punk".

Releasing their first album in 1992, Fifteen would play in many of the same Bay Area music venues as their labelmates on Lookout! Records, which included Green Day until they signed to major-label Reprise. Releasing over a dozen albums or EPs before disbanding for the final time in 2000, the band's catalog intelligently and compellingly addressed an

astoundingly varied array of topics, with numerous songs dedicated to concepts directly related to anarchist and primitivist thought. Upon examination of the lyrics, written by guitarist and vocalist Jeff Ott, the potential of punk music as a vehicle for anarchist political philosophy is clearly evident.

Throughout their career, Fifteen balanced addressing social justice issues through their music with discussion of more abstract issues that can be viewed generally as falling under the category of anarcho-primitivism. However, Ott does not self-identify as an anarcho-primitivist and is relatively unfamiliar with the term. He notes that the circumstances and experiences he had during the years the band was active could be broadly labeled as being in line with the philosophy of anarcho-primitivism, and that is why much of the band's lyrics were infused with lyrics containing anarcho-primitivist thought[1].

Therefore, it is accurate to state that rather than being the result of Ott's familiarity with the scholarly material available on anarchism, the lyrics are the result of the perspective Ott gained through his life experiences and exposure to the social constructs of Native Americans during his time working with activists on social justice projects in and around Berkeley, California. In response to the question of what experiences helped form the political thoughts expressed in his lyrics, Ott said, "I think not having regular shelter from 14 to 25 years old showed me very clearly that the privatization of land and shelter is one of the worst evils humans have come up with." This sentiment is simply and articulately expressed in several songs, particularly "Land" and "Payback is Beautiful".

The concepts of land ownership, autonomy, capitalism and deep ecology are often framed in either the autobiographical or non-autobiographical first person, facilitating a clear, compelling and concise communication of topics that are more often shrouded in the dense jargon of academia or the overly vague idealism of independent literature such as the works published by CrimethInc..

The simple and honest prose offered by Ott carefully and deftly alternated between these two styles, and by doing so offered listeners an introduction to anarcho-primitivist theory that was neither steeped in dogma nor ignorant of historical or sociological trends. Perhaps just as important is the fact that many of the songs, being simultaneously emotive and earnest, lacked the aggression and angst that became synonymous with punk music. While these attributes are appealing to disaffected youth, upon maturing many listeners find themselves apt to "grow out" of punk music, as well the messages delivered by the bands. Whereas much of Fifteen's music fits into the broad categorizations of punk rock style, the

subjects and delivery of their lyrics are quite distinct. In many instances, rather than focusing on how "the system" can be changed, Ott's lyrics encouraged listeners to question "the system" itself and the complicity of their own lifestyles in perpetuating it. The majority of punk bands who attempt to address political subjects through their music often do so by leveling simple, and often underdeveloped, criticism of large institutions, and rarely ask listeners to examine their day-to-day lives. Much of the criticism offered by focuses either on the inequalities or injustices found under governments, but doesn't advance the idea that governments and bureaucracies in and of themselves should have their purpose and legitimacy questioned.

Fifteen and anarcho-primitivism

When beginning an analysis of the anarcho-primitivist concepts contained in Ott's lyrics, it would be wise to start with the autobiographical material in the song "Mt. Shrink Wrap." In addition to offering criticisms of punk rock as well as consumer culture, the song provides a context in which to place other lyrics. In effect, the song argues against punk music as a medium becoming more important, either to audience or performer, than the ideas it can be used to communicate.

Ott begins by revealing his connection to consumer culture, both through his selling of "records, t-shirts and magazines" and purchasing of "cigarettes and coffee and gasoline." The introductory verses continue with expressions of dissatisfaction related to touring and its ecological impact, and the hypocrisy inherent in it given Ott's beliefs: "I just get in the car and drive from town to town and tell people not to drive but I'm just a clown, 'cause I drive more than anyone." After several verses of admiration for environmental activist Judi Bari and her ability to spread her message without relying on the conventional methods used by most punk musicians, Ott again focuses on his complicity in a system that he is unhappy with and believes should be abolished. Exploring the connection between egotistical motivations and music, Ott sings:

> it got me to thinking about how maybe I'm just too attached to people talking about my next record…and getting tax-free cash. And it got me to thinking about how I'm not really living the life I'm talking about, so I gave it up and left the city. Got a place with a yard and planted myself a garden. ("Mt. Shrink Wrap")

This critique provokes listeners with aspirations of punk-rock stardom to question the validity and ethical implications of that lifestyle, as well as

living by example in abandoning urban living for rural living and its opportunities for limited self-sufficiency. The common philosophy of extending personal responsibility to the consumption of food shared by Fifteen and Crass is apparent.

It is interesting to note that Green Day, and later, Saves the Day, a New Jersey pop punk band who enjoyed moderate mainstream success after the release of their album *Stay What You Are* in 2001, discuss the act of driving with a neutral, if not positive, tone. Whereas Fifteen and other punk bands with similar views discussed driving as a necessary evil for touring bands, they tended to advocate less destructive means of transportation. This concern for the environmental impacts of movement was not present in many other punk bands, and certainly not in mainstream music. When placed in context, this comparison can be viewed as showing that while punk bands might play a style of music different, their style of thinking was little different than that of most Americans in regard to considering the impacts of their consumption and vehicle-centric lifestyles.

Another notable critique of the connection between punk rock and the institutions that punk rock often rallies against is found in a verse from the song "Intelligence" on the album *Ultra Medium Kick Ball Star*, released in 1998. Written in a tongue-in-cheek style, Ott remarked "You're listening to a slab of vinyl, it's a by-product of making gas, we don't need war for oil we need it for punk-rock records." Although not developed as thoroughly as other criticisms, its simplicity nonetheless expressed Ott's disdain for the prevalent mindset that viewed punk-rock as an ends, rather than as a means. While numerous other punk bands have penned songs that parody or mock certain aspects of punk culture, such as NoFX and Propaghandi, the anarcho-primitivist philosophy advocated by Fifteen placed their criticism in a radically different context.

A perspective on American history influenced by an anarchist perspective adds to the depth of the topics discussed in Fifteen's lyrics and offers effective summaries of much of the political thought of anarchist philosophers. In regard to the ideas of Jacques Camatte and others that the intellectual curiosity of children is systematically replaced by pressure to conform to the standards of the society in which they life, the first verses of the song "Emancipation Proclamation," also on *Ultra Medium Kickball Star*, describe how children are confined by the roles ascribed to them by adults and reinforced by society, with free choice all but eliminated. The second half of the song offers a broader indictment of American society since the Civil War and the emptiness and futility of modern American culture:

Emancipation Proclamation, now the black man is free to join the white

man's slavery. Wages and terrorism are one and the same. Or are we afraid of what it is we really want to be? And the importance of our military industry is nothing. And the importance of our economy is nothing. And the importance of our self-deceptive convenience is nothing. And the importance of all our ists and isms are nothing ("Emancipation Proclamation")

Rarely are such complex, yet simple, ideas expressed in such a concise and compelling manner. Instead of relying on catchy slogans, which often contained little substance or critical though, to raise awareness of issues as many modern punk bands tend to do, Fifteen introduced listeners to ideas at the core of anarcho-primitivist philosophy through earnest and honest statements which encouraged listeners to look into the issues for themselves and consider them with as open a mind as possible.

Similar to "Emancipation Proclamation," the song "Violation II" reinterprets for listeners the context of other controversial pieces of American and world history: "Six million Jews we call it genocide, a hundred million Native Americans what an unfortunate price, for today's quality of life."("Violation II")

Although some might accuse the verse of playing the "numbers game" to make its point, it nonetheless introduces the listener to a radically different perspective on the way have been conditioned to view world events. While the song, and indeed very little of Fifteen's work, can be categorized as using a conspiratorial approach to understanding modern society and the world systems that influence it, there is a certain element of boldness in referencing the Holocaust and Jews in a way that could possibly be interpreted by the casual listener as callous at best and anti-Semitic at worst. At the time the songs were written, Ott was aware of the possible misinterpretation and slightly concerned. However, he believed that ultimately there was nothing anti-Semitic about comparing the genocide of Germany in the 1930s and 1940s to the genocide of the indigenous peoples of the New World perpetuated by Europeans. To say otherwise, Ott believed, would require the accuser to place a higher subjective value upon the lives of the Jews and therefore be an invalid criticism.

Another song which nonchalantly, but persuasively, prompts the listener to place contemporary society in an alternative context is "Did You Know?" The chorus of the song, which asks "Did you know there was a time on this land before there was any profession? Did you know there was a time on this land before we traded freedom in for an easy life?," is perhaps one of the most concise introductions to the concepts at the core of anarcho-primitivist philosophy. The reality that humans have not always

been defined by our professions is clearly implied, and the notion that freedom decreased as civilization and technology advanced is also apparent. However, Ott portrays neither reality in an ideal or romantic light, he merely poses a question which the listener can only answer by thinking "outside the box."

The song "Land" functions in a similar capacity as "Did You Know?" in that it posed a question to the listener about a concept taken for granted as legitimate and necessary by modern society. Rather than discussing the issue of homelessness in concrete and pragmatic terms of shelters, government funding and community programs, Ott uses homelessness as the medium through which to tackle the much broader topic of land ownership:

> The homeless are a problem for only one reason. Their presence raises the question: Who owns the land? Could it be millions of dead Indians? Could it be six million Jews? Is there a connection to our imperialism...Who owns the land? Maybe it's me and you, maybe it's not the corporations. Maybe the earth owns its own self. Maybe it's the Native Americans.("Land")

By not offering a definitive answer to the question, Ott gives listeners the opportunity to form their own opinion on the topic rather than simply internalize his perspective on land ownership. Although many in the punk community celebrate the notion that the subculture allows opportunities for intellectual freedom of expression, this has not necessarily been the case, due to either apathy or the intellectual laziness than leads to the catch-phrase lyrics of many "political" punk bands, whose lyrical talking points are often equally as vapid as those distributed by mainstream media. Ott's interpretation of homelessness and its causes are particularly interesting in that he doesn't propose the typical solutions of more shelters or government funding that many activists, including those involved in the punk subculture, propose. Instead, Ott calls into question the system of values and political philosophy that resulted in homelessness.

"Land" is also one of the many Fifteen songs in which Ott's personal experiences are incorporated into the lyrics. The middle verse of the song states:

> This morning I was awoken by a man with a hand gun. He's got a book of rules that says I ain't got no right to sleep. This morning I was awoken by a man with a hand gun. He's got a book of rules that says, I ain't got no right to be. ("Land")

The song's questioning of land ownership and its effect on individual autonomy is one example of the influence of primitivist perspective on

Ott's work, although it is important to note that the influence does not come directly from anarcho-primitivist literature but rather from personal experience. When asked about the primitivist themes that appeared in the bands lyrics and their inspiration, Ott spoke specifically to the difference between indigenous societies and the societal values and rules imposed by Europeans:

> The social constructs of white people oppressed me in the sense of hunting, camping, and fires all being illegal. Whereas the social constructs of Indian people, if they were still in effect where I live, would have allowed for a decent way to survive. Over time I did a lot of reading on AIM (American Indian Movement) and various other American Indian topics. (Personal communication)

As previously noted, Ott does not self-identify as an anarchist and the song "Man Against Man" makes it particularly apparent that on a certain level he views anarchism as yet another one of the political solutions invented by humans to solve the problems they create. It is necessary to quote the song in its entirety because of the depth of the message it contains, and its remarkable similarity to many of the ideas of primitivism, such as those expressed by John Zerzan, and its insightful critique and explanation of the problems of civilization:

> Fuck Marxism, fuck socialism, fuck capitalism, fuck anarchism
> White man's got a whole lot of solutions
> White man's got a whole lot of problems
> White man's got a lot of bright ideas
> White man likes to play God
> White man says, he says that God is a white man.
> Everybody else and everything else gets systematically objectified
> Fuck communism, fuck democracy, fuck science, fuck reason and rationality…
> White man says, he says nature is not a part of God
> White man's got progress, but its only pollution
> White man's got technology, it's only confusion
> White man's got Nature yeah, and he's got the papers to prove it
> White man's got the bomb and he's stupid enough to use it
> White man says, he says nature is not a part of God
> To kill her becomes justified
> White man says, yellow man, red man black man they are not a part of God
> To kill them becomes justified
> Man against God
> Man against Nature
> Man against Woman

Man against child
Man against Man ("Man Against Man")

"Man Against Man" is a relatively unusual Fifteen song for two reasons. First, and most noticeably, is the gratuitous use of profanity. Whereas uninhibited use of profanity was once a trademark of punk rock music, in reality many past and present punk bands used profanity sparingly. Aside from this song, a relative lack of profanity is characteristic of Fifteen.

The second characteristic which separates this song from others in the Fifteen catalog is that it is noted by Ott to be influenced by the writings of Russell Means, an Oglala Sioux and Native American rights activist. The majority of the songs written by Ott are inspired either by personal experience and related in the first person or use a narrative approach to exploring an issue related to injustice, inequality, racism or abuse. This is one of the few songs upon which Ott draws upon activist, although not necessarily anarchist, literature for his lyrics and focus.

Fifteen and deep ecology

In regard to deep ecology, there are two songs written by Ott which stand out as being particularly well-developed expressions. Appearing on their third album, *The Choice of a New Generation*, released in 1993, is the song "Perfection." The ideas touched upon by Ott in the song blend critiques of human arrogance and environmental pollution with the themes at the heart of deep ecology and anarcho-primitivism:

The brain seems to think with enough manipulation
The brain could be master of the sea, the land, the sky
The poor little brain could not seem to realize
That no measure of intelligence that could ever improve upon…
The land is the land, the sky is the sky, the water belongs to all of us
And I can find no reason to mutilate our mother with fences and borders
And obsessive thinking, of proving our individuality
Yeah, we can put a man on the moon, but that won't help us
When the ground's too poisoned and there ain't water enough
Left to grow our food ("Perfection")

While the style of narrative in this song is not as powerful as those in others, the message is as compelling as any written by Ott and contain an interesting amalgam of Native American spirituality and modern-day environmentalism, which on later albums would be revealed as one of the main strengths of Ott's songwriting.

The middle verses of "Payback is Beautiful" also provide an excellent introduction to the concept of deep ecology and contain perhaps the most concise expression of Ott's interpretation of the philosophical errors, and the subsequent physical destruction they justify, of modern, rational Western thought:

> I've been thinking about how us people tend to think that Nature is here, or Nature is there, or nature is in one place but not everywhere…I guess we're just too afraid to admit that streets are violence, buildings are violence, and our lives are violence. ("Payback is Beautiful")

Within the realm of contemporary anarcho-primitivist and deep ecology literature, there are few passages that are able to diagnose the problems of society as succinctly as Ott did, and it should be noted that many of the well-known writings espousing similar viewpoints were published several years after the release of the album. Within the realm of punk-rock, Ott's lyrics are a radical outlier in a genre practically defined by its rejection of the status quo.

Critique of the punk subculture

Furthermore, the anarcho-primitivist philosophy of Fifteen represented perhaps the most consistent and coherent political ideology of Bay Area punk rock during the 1990s. Many bands pursued decidedly apolitical topics for much of their careers, such as Green Day, Mr. T Experience and Jawbreaker. The catalog of punk group Rancid featured several "political" songs focusing on issues pertinent to the working class, with the track "Harry Bridges" (the title and song reference the famed labor leader) being the most obvious example. Among Bay Area punk music of the era, perhaps only J. Church (and Crimpshrine, of which Ott was a member prior to Fifteen) could be said to have expressed a similar worldview as Fifteen, although they did so to a lesser degree and relied more on allegory and literary-styled narratives than on clear and succinct verse.

The Berkeley punk rock scene of the late 1980s and early 1990s is one of the most legendary music scenes of recent history. Attempts to imitate the DIY (do-it-yourself) and socially conscious foundation of the scene, particularly the 924 Gilman Street music venue, have been imitated throughout countless North American cities, as well as worldwide. Ott's opinions on the city, as illustrated in the song "Welcome to Berkeley," are consistent with his general disdain for urban living and the social problems that come with it. The message Ott provided for listeners was strikingly different than that of other bands, who encouraged listeners to establish

similar scenes in their own communities, whereas Ott dissuades them from viewing Berkeley as the glamorous punk mecca that many viewed it as and instead suggests striving for self-sufficiency and autonomy by moving to rural areas. The philosophical belief present in the differentiation between Ott's message and that of others is one that is central to anarchist thought; rather than attempt to make cities socially permissive and egalitarian, abandon them for a simpler way of life more connected to the natural world and as free of authority as possible. Although Ott does not directly discuss the notion that a left-wing authoritarian government is nearly as undesirable as a right-wing authoritarian government, it is easily inferred upon reflection of the themes of his work.

The song "Welcome to Berkeley" harshly dispels the naïve view of the urban punk-rock lifestyle as utopian, a view held by many of those who headed to the Bay Area and other cities with thriving punk scenes during the 1990s for the excitement and acceptance that they believed would accompany life surrounded by others with similar tastes in music and dress and a disdain for the forty-hour work week and the values of their parents.

Although "Welcome to Berkeley" lacks any overt political commentary, the tragic incidents highlighted in the lyrics ("I knew a boy who tried to stop a fight he got stabbed to death, I knew a girl who was fifteen years old she died of an overdose and no one seemed to notice") are an emotional and personal indictment of the dark side of the "punk rock wonderland" that was so attractive to many youth involved in the punk community.

The theme of disillusionment with Berkeley, and through metaphor the notion of an idyllic punk culture in an urban setting as a desirable alternative to middle-class suburban alienation, is also found in the song "Violation II" featured on an earlier album and not performed by the traditional Fifteen lineup. Rather than celebrating the idea of ambiguous "unity" that is associated with certain punk groups, including the Bay Area's Rancid, the song states "Sun goes down in my town; Berkeley, California, sold me on too many dreams of justice and brotherhood…on too many dreams of peace on the earth in our time." In addition to the indictment of Berkeley, the song also provides an explanation of what constitutes a violation of individual autonomy, an idea which is at the center of anarcho-primitivist discussion. As is typical of many Fifteen lyrics, a relatively objective critique is made which often lends itself to a more complete and careful analysis of the issue than when an explicit endorsement of a particular political party or ideology is made, a tendency common among many of the more visible modern "political" punk bands. The statement made in the lyrics, "All people, every person, experiences

violation when told what is right, and told what is wrong, and told what to do under threat of violent intimidation," is one that is difficult to adequately counter and raises deep issues about the nature of governments and democracies. This idea is also one of the premises contained in Derrick Jensen's book *Endgame*, published nearly a decade after the Fifteen album (Jensen 2006). Jensen was honored by Press Action as "Person of the Year" for *Endgame*, which was called "the most important book the decade." It can therefore be inferred that Fifteen's lyrics should be viewed with similar appreciation for what they attempt to tell us about civilization and human progress.

As previously discussed, Fifteen balanced their critiques of modern society from the anarcho-primitivist perspective with critiques of the punk subculture of which they were a part. Fifteen's treatment of women in their lyrics is strikingly different when compared to that of other punk bands and serves to further distinguish them from their musical contemporaries. Despite its rejection of many of the norms of mainstream popular music and society, for the most part gender roles remained intact to a large degree in the punk subculture. Women were typically, although not exclusively, connected to the punk scene by their relationships with male musicians. Lyrics tended to place them into the familiar categories of either the object of affection or the reason for heartbreak. This trend became especially prominent in the emerging "emo" scene and remains a major point of contention among feminists in the punk community to this day.

In the mind of Ott as expressed through his lyrics, women were not relegated to these roles but were highlighted as important members of the activist community, rather "punk" or not, as was the case with his reference to environmental activist Judi Bari ("[I] Went to see Judi Bari talking about saving some Redwood trees and she sang some songs, she didn't need electricity, she didn't need to press up CDs, she didn't have to make no booklets or sleeves, she didn't have to kill nothing to say her piece"). Sexual abuse and the objectification of sexuality were also themes present in Fifteen's lyrics. However, perhaps the best illustration of Ott's objections to the treatment of women in punk music is in his solo rendition and re-working of the Jawbreaker song "Kiss the Bottle" into "Kiss the Rockstar."

Sharing ties to the Bay Area and active during much of Fifteen's early career, Jawbreaker became one of the more legendary punk bands and influenced countless members of bands at the forefront of the emotional punk-rock and melodic hardcore scenes of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Ott revised the lyrics of their song so that it called into question the values

of the punk culture that encouraged women to embrace the "rockstars" of the scene rather than to embrace themselves. Relying upon others for acceptance and emotional gratification can lead to an empty life, in Ott's narrative. The economic ethics were also examined: "When you broke up it hurt so bad, so he wrote a pretty song, but girl you wrote it too. Can you tell me, why he gets royalties and you get nothing but your story?" Ott goes on to encourage female listeners to, "Get your own guitar, write your own songs, make your own band." While Ott's attention to issues related to women compromise a relatively minor part of the lyrics of Fifteen, they are nonetheless delivered in a manner distinct from other bands and represent a radically different way of viewing females both within and outside the punk scene than those espoused by other bands.

Ott's views on manhood also stand in contrast to those espoused by many bands within the punk-rock community, and by extension many of the views of manhood displayed in popular culture and practiced by members of mainstream American society. As A.J. Metz of the defunct indie punk internet blog and radio station noted DailySonic, many punk bands in the late 1980s and early 1990s avoided political discussion and "struck poses of jock-ish aggression," thus establishing relatively traditional aspects of machismo as acceptable characteristics of males within the punk-rock subculture.

Ott's approach to, and definition of, understanding manhood is evident in several songs, but is most clearly addressed on "I Am a Man" off the album *Lucky*. The feminist notion that the idea of power *over* should be abandoned and the power *of* replace it is an integral part of the song. The other lyrics bluntly lay out what a man's obligations are, with Ott believing them to be as follows, "A man should be mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally available to his partner…to his children…to his community…to the other children in his community." Very seldom within any musical genre are such concrete suggestions made as to what should be expected of men for their well-being, as well as the well-being of their family and community.

Anarcho-punk: counterculture within a subculture

With several exceptions, a strong argument can be made that on the whole the punk movement never contained a coherent and universal political philosophy. From its earliest days to the present, nihilism and political apathy are the predominant views expressed. The bands who attempted to advance political discussion through their music often did so in a way that lacked context and discouraged critical examination of the

root causes of the problems they attempted to address.

In the case of the Punkvoter political action campaign, organized by record label owner and member of the band NOFX, Fat Mike, the focus was on opposing George W. Bush and the Republican party in favor of Democrats. Little, if any, of the official literature distributed by Punkvoter discussed the problems inherent in democracies and government and touted the idea of choosing the "lesser of two evils" to a new generation of potential voters.

Punkvoter garnered criticism from the anarchist collective CrimethInc., who launched their "Don't Just (Not) Vote" or "Don't Just Vote, Get Active" campaign in response, which encouraged activism and changes in individual consumption and lifestyle instead of solely relying upon political representation as a means of affecting change. However, this campaign would later be criticized in the journal *Green Anarchy* as another manifestation of "the unfortunately wishy-washy CrimethInc. non-position" (Anonymous 2004).

Ott, whose feelings about CrimethInc. are generally positive, supported the Punkvoter campaign and its ability to return politics, albeit the two-party politics of American democracy, to punk rock.

> I totally support the Punkvoter thing, and more than anything am amazed at the evolution of Nofx. In the 1980s there were loads of people into punk who were trying to promote [political apathy], and it's nice to see one of the main bands affiliated with that totally changed," he said. (Personal communication)

Despite his support, Ott expressed reservations about movements that endorse voting at the expense of facilitating deeper discussions about political systems:

> putting focus on voting nationally does seem to have the effect of reinforcing the idea that voting is the entirety of participation in the creation of our collective reality. Obviously, voting doesn't get you anything you're promised, but it does make you feel like 'we showed them' at least once every 8 years. (Personal communication)

Ott's qualified endorsement of voting, and by extension government, is not atypical of others in the punk community. After being nominated as the Green Party presidential candidate in 2000, Jello Biafra, formerly of the Dead Kennedys, stated that he doesn't believe humans are currently capable of functioning under anarchy (Biafra 2000). Biafra self-identifies an anarchist, but believes:

> We still need government to transfer the wealth from those who have too
> much to those who have too little, to make sure important projects get
> done, and keep territorial humans from screwing over and killing each
> other. (Biafra 2000)

Jack Grisham, another notable figure from the early years of California
punk rock who sang for the band T.S.O.L, expressed concerns similar to
Biafra. Although T.S.O.L wrote and performed several songs which
blatantly expressed anarchist theories, such as "Abolish Government" and
"Property is Theft", and Grisham was a fervent supporter of anarchy
during that time, he would become disillusioned with the philosophy over
the years. Grisham said in an interview with the online publications
ZZZlist:

> What I realized about anarchy is that we are not responsible enough to be
> anarchist. There's no way possible. We're not responsible enough to be
> that. That's a heavy concept. (Grisham 2008)

The fact that "anarcho-punk", or punk music that promotes anarchism,
exists as a relatively small, but vibrant, scene within the broader punk
community is proof enough that punk music and anarchist thought are not,
and never have been, as closely associated as they are often perceived. The
incidents in which anarcho-punk bands are linked with anarchist action or
collectives, such as with the overlapping Bloomington, Indiana CrimethInc.
convergence and concerts by bands affiliated with the Plan-it-X record
label in 2005, are often over-publicized and exaggerated, further skewing
public perception.

The Plan-it-X record label has released records by numerous active and
defunct anarcho-punk bands, including re-releasing several Fifteen
albums, and its sole employee, Chris Johnston, operates the label using
DIY ethics which those familiar with anarchist philosophy would find hard
to criticize. Similar to many of those involved in the post-1980s, anarcho-
punk scene, and contrary to earlier punk figures such as Biafra, Grisham
and Rimbaud, Johnston was introduced to anarchist philosophy through
punk rock. Conceived in 1994, Plan-it-X would become closely associated
with the anarcho-punk revival that was beginning at the time.

CrimethInc. also began to establish itself as an entity during the same
period of time, and awareness of the collective spread quickly through the
underground anarcho-punk music scene. The fanzine *Inside Front*, which
discussed anarchist theory and hardcore-punk music, provided the initial
organization and personal networking that would give rise to CrimethInc.,
and solidified the relationship between CrimethInc. and anarcho-punk.
Johnston notes, "I think the PIX crowd and the CrimethInc. crowd are

often the same crowd.[2]" Given this bond between CrimethInc. and those involved in the anarcho-punk scene, it would be prudent to apply the same criticisms of CrimethInc. made by those in the anarchist community to Plan-it-X and the anarcho-punk community it represents.

An article on the website Anarchist News discussed in-depth the merits and flaws of the "anarchist subculture" of which CrimethInc. and Plan-it-X are central components. Certain characteristics of the anarchist subculture listed by the author include

> dumpster diving, riding bikes, Food Not Bombs chapters, Really Really Free Markets, book fairs, urban exploring, Crimethinc. convergences, being vegan, listening to a narrow range of music, traveling, squatting, zines and non-monogamy…These institutions have now become connected with anarchy. Anyone who does, attends, eats, reads or listens to these things can be assumed to be part of the 'anarchist subculture.' (Anonymous 2008)

The article goes on to cite the practical concerns and philosophical issues that are present within the anarchist subculture. Chief among these concerns is the idea that the anarchist subculture eases the ability of persons acting on behalf of government organizations, such as the FBI, to infiltrate groups who participate in direct-action and proceed to assist law enforcement in building criminal cases against these persons[3].

After stating that CrimethInc. materials are likely the most accessible anarchist literature in the United States, the author makes the following criticism:

> The effect that these texts have had is undeniable. But it was these texts which created the current 'anarchist subculture'. I do not know if that was the intent. I do not know if this effect has been observed by its creators. But if they have not seen what they have done, I hope it is becoming disturbingly clear. Mass-production is a tactic of the enemy. CrimethInc. is creating an anarchist mono-culture. It is doing so by continuing to exist as CrimethInc. They are creating a false unity and denying the most basic point of anarchism by doing so. (Anonymous 2008)

A review by Ramor Ryan of the 2001 CrimethInc. publication "Days of War, Nights of Love" in *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory* also criticized the approach the collective took to spreading anarchist ideas and the lack of context it provided for many of its statements about anarchy. In regard to CrimethInc's view of anarchy, Ryan writes:

> CrimethInc. feel the need to resurrect anarchism 'as a personal approach to life.' Here they are borrowing more than an idea, but a historical tendency

that they are 'adjusting for their own purposes.' 'Anarchism is the
revolutionary idea that no one is more qualified than you are to decide
what your life will be.' There are many definitions of anarchism, but to
reduce the definition to such a purely personal sense is to do it a grave
injustice. Anarchism as a historical tendency, as a form of anti-
authoritarian community or workers' self-organization is a concept that
CrimethInc. throws out the window. Work is the problem for them, not
how workers organize. (Maybe workers are the problem for these
freewheeling non-workers.). (Ryan 2004)

Whether similar criticism should be applied to Plan-it-X is certainly
debatable. The relatively small amount of CDs, vinyl and tapes distributed
through Plan-it-X are far from mass-produced, and the label discourages
mono-culture in all its manifestations, including within the punk music
community. The variety of music performed by bands on the label's roster
is the most obvious example of this effort to discourage limiting the
anarcho-punk sound to a specific style of music. Johnston believes that the
way anarchy is discussed by the bands on Plan-it-X distinguishes them
from both the image conscious promotion by earlier punk bands and the
mono-culture CrimethInc. is accused of creating:

> bands like This Bike is a Pipe Bomb and Operation: Cliff Clavin and
> especially Los Gatos Negros, express a sincere anarchist message, without
> saying a word about anarchy. Most of the bands on PIX have a majority of
> anarchist members and live lifestyles that match their lyrics to some
> extent[4].

However, Johnston is not hesitant to note the validity in criticisms of
CrimethInc. and discuss aspects of the human experience which CrimethInc.
rarely addresses, such as the idea that their literature often neglects
concrete definitions of family and its importance with vague notions of an
abstract and ever-changing community:

> dumpster diving and shoplifting will never smash the state. I do believe
> strongly in the idea of self-sufficiency... I'm not sure about the
> "community" killing the family. It's an expansion of the idea. It's like a
> family we can choose. I guess I might agree that they ignore the idea of
> family in some way. It would be interesting to see their thoughts on the
> subject. I love the idea of family. I wish I had one. I wish I lived in my
> grandfather's house with my mom and dad and brothers and their wives
> and children and we could all work together to survive this capitalist hell,
> but, I don't and can't. The extended family is a great idea. (Personal
> communication)

Johnston's personal idea of anarchy shares some ideas in common with

Grisham and Biafra, and concisely makes clarifications of some of the finer points of anarchist philosophy that are often misunderstood by many of the people within the anarcho-punk community as they are first becoming familiar with the theories and concepts of anarchism:

> I don't think humans on a whole have ever been smart enough for anarchism. There has always been and will always be people who need order and leadership in their lives. There will always be less than intelligent people who cannot achieve self-sufficiency. There will always be people who are wicked or lazy. But, that doesn't take away from the dream of anarchism. Anarchy isn't going to work smoothly. That's not the point. The point is it would work without limits. It would work the way we want it to. The idea is freedom, not utopia. I don't believe in an anarchist utopia, free of strife and suffering and crime. I just want to be able to do what I want and be judged only by those around me. (Personal communication)

This interpretation of anarchy is perhaps the one most commonly held by those within the anarchist subculture of CrimethInc. and anarcho-punk, and is present in much of the literature and lyrics within the scene. Whether or not this interpretation is compatible with the anarchy envisioned by early anarchist philosophers, and by extension contemporary anarchist theorists who use earlier works as their primary foundation for discussion, is difficult to determine. For better or for worse, each person involved in the anarchist subculture will have a different understanding than their peers, just as each scholar who studies anarchy in an academic setting will often arrive at a different conclusion than their colleagues.

Ultimately, there can be no definitive conclusion in regard to the effect of anarcho-punk and the anarchist subculture on the integrity of ideas about anarchy and its value as a vehicle for the proliferation of anarchist thought and literature. However, certain observed characteristics and conditions do provide answers to the questions often raised regarding punk and anarchy.

The foremost truism is that not all punks are, or ever have been, anarchists and not all anarchists are punks. While this statement may seem absurdly simply, it is necessary because it dispels the common misconceptions that have become accepted by persons in mainstream society and those involved in punk or anarchist subcultures. Furthermore, the diversity of perceptions about anarchy within the punk movement and delivered by the bands and fanzines that are part of the community help to facilitate discussion and exchange of ideas, but have typically hindered the development of lasting organizations with coherent goals and literature applicable to the widest range of persons in the punk community.

That a thriving underground anarcho-punk scene exists is no more evidence of punk being closely tied with anarchy than is the fact that punk is closely related to white supremacy because there have been white supremacist punk bands. However, the fact remains that there do exist bands playing music in the punk genre that have lyrics which have served as the introduction to anarchist concepts for several generations of listeners. If viewed as genuine contributions to anarchist literature, the breadth of their reach would be quite disappointing given the small audience reached by the bands, but the quantitative effect and its impact on the anarchist movement among youth in North America and abroad is impossible to judge.

Notes

1. Unless otherwise noted, direct quotations or paraphrased statements attributed to Jeff Ott are taken from e-mail correspondence between Ott and the author between September 17 and December 5, 2009.
2. Unless otherwise noted, direct quotations or paraphrased statements attributed to Chris Johnston are taken from e-mail correspondence between Johnston and the author on December 15, 2009.
3. Indeed, it is alleged that both "Anna" and "Andy", two of the most infamous infiltrators who assisted law enforcement in bringing cases against anarchist activists, used CrimethInc. convergences as their "point of entry" into the anarchist subculture. Further, it is alleged that both "Anna" and "Andy" instigated the criminal actions and encouraged the persons who were convicted to participate in illegal activity.
4. Upon examination and reflection upon the lyrics of the bands mentioned by Johnston, it is the author's opinion that the "sincere anarchist message" expressed by the bands is heavily focused on the personal experiences of persons living autonomously rather than on interpreting anarchist theory and introducing listeners to concepts related to anarchism. The conjecture could be made that many of the songs of these bands indirectly promote the "lifestyle anarchism" criticized by Murray Bookchin in his essay "Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm".

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CHAPTER SIX

THE PUNKS OF PIRATE BAY: AN ANARCHO-ANALYSIS OF FILE-SHARING WEBSITES

BRYAN L. JONES

Culture is Anarchistic if it is alive at all.
—Siva Vaidhyanathan

Too many people had the suss
Too many people support us
An unlimited amount
Too many out lets in and out
Who ?
EMI
—The Sex Pistols

In a recent article covering the MIDEM music conference, U2 manager Paul McGuinness complained that record labels suffered from "lack of foresight and planning." Silicon Valley companies "create marvellous devices but don't think of themselves as makers of burglary kits," and governments "created a thieves' charter" by agreeing ISPs should not be responsible for what passes through their networks. The McGuinness rants included a comparison of ISPs to a "magazine advertising stolen cars, handling the money for stolen cars and seeing to the delivery of stolen cars." And because no revolution is complete without an ignored call-to-action, he demanded ISPs to do two things to change their naughty ways: first, *protect the music*, and second, "make a genuine effort to share the enormous revenues. 'Their snouts have been at our trough for too long,'" sneered the manager (U2 2008, 1).

The manager's comments are in direct contrast to the ways that several punk bands conceive of culture. They reveal the ways that mainstream record companies and established bands seek to control culture in an

authoritative "top down" mode, rather than allow culture its freedom. It seems that McGuinness would rather have a cultural revolution similar to the one Mao conceived of for China. Punk bands and record labels see things differently. They conceive of culture in a more anarchistic way. This "bottom up" representation of anti-authoritarian desire is evident in, not only punk's music, lyrics, and album art, but also the ways in which its art is produced, distributed, and even pirated from the internet. It is the punk's encouragement of internet piracy that is most consistent with the anarchist view of culture. In "Statism and Anarchy" Mikhail Bakunin writes:

> As revolutionary anarchists we advocate universal education, liberation, and the broad development of social life, and therefore we are enemies of the state and of any kind of state administration…[W]e have neither the intention nor the least desire to impose upon our own or any other nation any ideal of social organization that we have found in books or invented; but in the belief that the masses bear all the elements of their future pattern of organization in their more or less historically developed instincts, in their own vital demands, and in their own conscious or unconscious aspirations, we seek this ideal in the people themselves. Since any state power, any government by its nature and position stands outside and above the people, and must necessarily try to subordinate them to alien regulations and purposes, we declare ourselves the enemies of all governmental or state power, the enemies of state organization altogether. We believe that the people will be happy and free only when they build their own life by organizing themselves from below upward, by means of autonomous and totally free associations, subject to no official tutelage but exposed to the influence of diverse individuals and parties enjoying mutual freedom. (1971, 158)

Anarchy and Culture

Internet piracy and other violations of copyright law are consistent with anarchistic conceptions of culture. This anarchistic conception of culture will provide the listener of rebellious art with an action with which to partake in reaction to the antagonisms inherent within the music industry as well as late capitalism in general. Most Marxist analysts lead to an understanding of culture that is either merely a reflection of the economic base or, barring that, an assessment of how the aesthetic form of rebellious art effects the viewer without going on to provide that viewer with anything to do. By understanding that the artist effectively removes the commodification of rebellious art by encouraging that their art be pirated from the internet, we can close a gap in the research of how culture functions in late capitalism and offer a way out of the preprogrammed art

offered by what Theodor Adorno calls the Culture Industry.

As I write, there is a great debate raging over copyright infringement and a vast movement to stop people from engaging in online piracy. For some online piracy is an illegal act that should be punishable by fines or even jail time. For others it is the free exchange of information and is no more illegal than sharing tapes—a standard practice among early punk enthusiasts. To the anarchist online piracy means liberation. Pirating music from the internet puts control of the culture back into the hands of the people by taking it out of the hands of the Culture Industry. In the case of music, the Culture Industry would be what has come to be known as the big five record companies (BMG, EMI, Sony, Universal, and Warner). The big five and trade groups such as the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) and Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) have led the way in a move to ban online piracy because, according to NARAS president, Michael Greene, allowing it has left "the entire music food chain…starved" (Greene quoted in Bishop, 2004: 103). According to its website, the RIAA, "works to protect intellectual property rights worldwide and the First Amendment rights of artists"; however, a closer look shows that the big five have been actively working to exploit the very artists and fans that they say they are trying to protect (RIAA, 2007).

In an article published in 2004, Jack Bishop writes that

> [j]ust last year, the major labels were cited for using pressure tactics against music retailers to keep the cost of CDs higher than necessary. The Federal Trade Commission ruled that the record companies have violated fair trade practices by intimidating store owners into not advertising CDs below a certain price, leading to antitrust suits being filed by 28 of the 50 United States against the Big 5. These practices have added more than $500 million to CD prices since 1997! (2004, 101)

Add to this the fact that, as president of NARAS, Michael Greene "annually receives an income of nearly $2 million as the director of a *nonprofit* organization" and it becomes quite clear just who the real thieves are in this equation (2004, 101).

That the big five record companies are crooks is not new information—the Sex Pistols were singing about EMI as early as 1977. In addition, as, Jack Bishop points out:

> [t]he international music market has existed for nearly a century. Moreover, the record industry has always held control of production and distribution. The world's music consumers were simply forced to pay whatever price was placed on the product. With the adoption en masse of the cassette

recorder in the 1970s…the playing field began to change. (2004, 102)

The mix tape was soon invented and suddenly there was an explosion of underground music. In fact, several early punk bands advocated the practice as part of what came to be known as the DIY (do-it-yourself) ethic, but it was not until punk's second wave that bands like the Dead Kennedys and Crass began putting records out on their own labels. Fans were able to trade tapes, and bands were able to build followings. Siva Vaidhyanathan, author of *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How it Threatens Creativity*, describes the "free-music strategy":

> give away music to build a loyal following, establish a brand name and then charge handsomely for the total entertainment package. Whole creative movements have established themselves through this process of community building. In the late seventies, downtown New York punk fans found one another and discussed emerging artists through the handmade fanzines given away at the few clubs willing to host punk shows. At the same time, uptown in the Bronx, the hip-hop movement was spreading through a network of fans who would copy and lend tapes of artists like Grandmaster Flash and Kurtis Blow. Free music has always been essential to the discursive communities that fuel the creative process. (Vaidhyanathan 2000, 2)

Online piracy is nothing more than the latest version of this practice that has been brought about by the latest technology, the MP3. The invention of the MP3 has allowed the music fan to meet others and trade music in cyberspace, at websites such as Pirate Bay, rather than meet on the street. The advantage is not just to the fans, but to the musicians as well. Online piracy allows the budding artist a chance to build an audience while avoiding the trappings of the Culture Industry.

Adorno and the Culture Industry

It is important that Theodore Adorno's conception of the Culture Industry is understood properly. Adorno's critique was not against mass culture at large, but rather only the small percentage of people that were responsible for manufacturing culture that Adorno sought to counter. As Thomas Andrae writes "Adorno's Critique was not directed against popular culture per se, but the specific kind of mass culture produced under monopoly capitalism" (1979: 5). Andrae goes on to point out that

> Horkheimer and Adorno explicitly coined the term 'culture industry' to dispel the illusion that mass culture was in any sense produced by the masses. The term 'popular culture' was, in fact, ideological they claimed, mass culture imposed form above rather than derived from the people. (1979, 5)

For Adorno the main problem with mass culture was not that it came from the masses, but from a monopoly in control of the means of producing and distributing art that influences the masses to buy a product rather than participate in the creation of culture. Adorno called this feature of the Culture Industry standardization. According Andrae's research, Adorno may have begun to theorize about this feature of the Culture Industry once he was able to see firsthand the influence a monopoly has on mass culture. Andrae writes that at one time Adorno had been a

> collaborator on the Princeton Radio Research Project in 1938…[where] Adorno came in conflict with his colleagues over his refusal to measure and classify the reaction pattern of listeners as if these patterns were empirical "facts." Instead Adorno insisted that listeners' tastes could not be interpreted as spontaneously given, as in standard media research, but that they were artificially produced through consumer manipulation and product standardization (Andrae, 1979: 4).

Siva Vaidhyanathan calls it gatekeeping. According to Vaidhyanathan:

> Major music labels perform four basic tasks: production, distribution, price-fixing and gatekeeping. If bands use their home computers to record, mix and edit their music, put up their own websites or contract with Emusic.com, and charge $1 per song for MP3 downloads, they can evade the high costs of relying on major record companies. Production and distribution don't seem so hard anymore. And the major record companies have just been exposed as oligopolistic price-fixers, while they've been at it…A signal trait of this new technology, then, is that it offers the ability to evade the professional gatekeepers, flattening the production and distribution pyramid. MP3 is only rock and roll. It's the production and distribution equivalent of the three-chord garage band, made possible by cheap electric guitars and amplifiers. And like rock and roll, anyone can do it, and probably will. This scares the hell out of those who profit from cultural control. (1979, 2)

Horkheimer and Adorno's theories come out of a break with what came to be known as *vulgar Marxism*, which saw all art as a reflection of the base. The Frankfurt School, as the new Marxist theorists came to be known collectively, actually started to adopt a few Anarchist ideas and eventually the concept of the Culture Industry was born. According to

Andrae's research

> Adorno believed that [it was the] decline in the conditions of circulation
> and production [that] permitted the wholesale standardization…apparent in
> the culture industry's promulgation of hit songs, creation of singing and
> movie stars, and reliance on a series of invariant types, slogans, and
> repetitive formulas. (1979: 4)

A current example of what Adorno is theorizing about would be the
creation of Britney Spears. At one time Britney was a Mouseketeer on the
television show "The New Mickey Mouse Show," where she learned to
sing and dance and was able to be in contact with top members of the
Culture Industry. Once she hit puberty she was made into a pop star and
the rest is history.

 In his own words, Adorno says:

> Standardization…means the strengthening of the lasting domination of the
> listening public and of their conditioned reflexes. They are expected to
> want that to which they have become accustomed and to become enraged
> whenever their expectations are disappointed and fulfillment, which they
> regard as the customer's inalienable right, is denied, and even if there were
> attempts to introduce anything really different into light music, they would
> be deceived from the start by virtue of economic concentration. (Adorno
> quoted in Andrae 1979, 5)

Simply put, what this means is that before the advent of the MP3 and
online piracy a new band would have next to no chance of being heard
amid the din of the culture industry's ability to reach a wider audience.
Even if a new type of music was made, the second it became a profitable
commodity the Culture Industry would be there to either snatch it up or
mimic it. As Siva Vaidhyanathan puts it, the

> MP3 offers a wonderful opportunity for emerging artists, the very people
> copyright law is constitutionally charged to encourage and aid. Because the
> established music industry narrows the pipelines of production and
> distribution, manufacturing scarcity, established artists like Metallica [he
> might have said Britney Spears] profit best from the old system.
> (Vaidhyanathan, 2000, 2)

Making Sharing a Crime

 What better way for established artists, the big five, and nonprofit
trade groups like the RIAA, to maintain their strangle hold on culture than
to make sure that online piracy is an illegal act. As I mentioned above, the

act of copying a file and sharing it with others benefits both the artists and the fans—that, in fact, the practice of sharing music actually builds community from the bottom up. Of course, the mainstream music industry does not see it that way and they want to make sure that online piracy is seen as a crime. A recent article in the *New York Times* cites an expert opinion that seems to suggest that online pirates are under a type of false conscience. The article reads:

> Tim Kuik, director of Brein, a Dutch antipiracy organization, says there is a paradox in the way the public views copyright online and offline. "If you put 200 VCRs in your garage and start making and selling copies of films, you will get a visit from the police…If you do it from a Web site, everybody says, 'Hey, Freedom of information.'" (Kuik quoted in Pfanner, 2009, B4)

Mr. Kuik's statement merely builds a straw man because no one is accused of selling these copies. Pirate Bay users log on for free and find music files to share with other Pirate Bay users. No money ever exchanges hands. The Pirate Bay merely offers a space for music fans to meet and share music. Setting aside the straw man argument, the larger issue here is the understanding that online pirates are under a type false conscience. For Kuik it is purely reasonable to expect the artist to profit from the exchange of artwork. However, he fails to recognize that the laws in question do nothing more than support an economic system that allows for a few people who own the means of distributing art to profit from the work done by those who create that art. Jeffrey Reiman offers the following critique of criminal justice under the capitalism mode of production in his book *The Rich get Richer and the Poor get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice*:

> Criminal justice plays an ideological role in support of capitalism because people do not recognize that the principals governing criminal justice are reflections of capitalism. The principles of criminal justice appear instead to be the result of pure reason, and thus a system that supports capitalism is (mistakenly) seen as an expression of rationality itself! Engles—Marx's lifelong collaborator—writes that "the jurist imagines he is operating with a priori...principles, whereas they are really only economic reflexes; so everything is upside-down. And it seems to me obvious that this inversion…,so long as it remains unrecognized, forms what we call ideological conception." As a consequence of this 'inversion,' criminal justice embodies and conveys a misleading and partisan view of the reality of the whole capitalist system. Because capitalism requires laws that give individual capitalists the right to own factories and resources, a view of these laws that makes them appear to be purely rational makes capitalism

appear purely rational. (1998, 198)

It should be apparent that the big five or any of the trade groups that actively work to shut down file-sharing web sites such as Pirate Bay do not represent musicians. The claim that these companies and those who support them have the artist's best interest at heart would be laughable if only it were made clearer that these organizations exploit the very artists they represent. Mr. Kruik and others make it sound as though it is the artists that are being stolen from when an MP3 is copied. But it is clearly only the owners of the resources needed to record and distribute CDs that are being affected.

In other industries when a new technology makes it apparent that jobs will be lost due to the evolution of the industry, we are made to merely shrug and chalk it up to a fact of life. If a man loses his job due to the invention of a machine that can do the work at less than half the cost then we are made to see it as a natural occurrence. However, when the same happens in a way that allows the workers to benefit more directly, we are made to see that as illegal. That we are to see sharing music online as a crime but the exploitation of workers as a natural occurrence is the real example of false conscience. The big five and the trade groups are expecting to get paid only because they have been paid in the past. This habit has caused some to see online piracy as a crime. As Reiman points out:

> As exchanges occur over and over, people naturally tend to average out the peculiarities of individual cases and discern an "essential core." In time, when individual cases diverge enough from this essential core, they are seen as deviant and thus as violations. The legal reflex of economic relations, then, is not an exact replica but the result of a natural sifting out of arbitrariness and idiosyncrasy such that what emerges is an idealized "average" that stands in a normative relation to particular instances. This tendency to go from what happens "on average" to what is normative is a common feature of human social existence. People tend to take what usually happens as what should happen. (1998, 207)

The fact is online file-sharing web sites like Pirate Bay are merely disallowing the big five and trade groups such as the RIAA a cut of the profits made off the work done by artists. What this boils down to is the following paraphrasing of Jeffrey Reiman's Marxist analysis of criminal justice under the capitalist system, namely that making sure the big five and the RIAA are paid for the revenue lost due to online piracy only seems natural because capitalism seems natural. That is, it is natural that people own things and that as owners they have the right to dispose of what they

own in any manner they wish. It just so happens that the big five and the RIAA own the means of the distribution and the manufacture of music, and the musician owns the ability to create music—i.e. a brain and muscles with which to play instruments. Online piracy does not violate the musician's ability to make music; it does however violate the way that music has been distributed.

Too Many Outlets In and Out

As mentioned above, the ethos of punk was a DIY mentality that allowed for the free exchanges of ideas. That DIY mentality was largely just hyperbole and propaganda because many of the bands advocating it were signed to big five record companies. It was not until punk's second wave that a move away from these companies began to happen. Many punks began to see this contradiction in the distribution of music made by bands like The Sex Pistols and The Clash, and decided to record and distribute their music on their own independent labels. Dead Kennedys founded Alternative Tentacles in the United States and Crass founded Crass Records in the U.K. The trend continued after punk died and became the resistant walking dead form of rebellion that I theorized about in the last chapter, as more and more punk bands began to start their own record companies. Several punk bands started their own labels in the United States: Bad Religion started Epitaph, Fugazi started Discord, and NOFX started Fat Wreck Cords. These minor record labels still had to operate within the parameters of capitalism which by this time had become a rigged game that still benefited the big five because the sale of a CD—any CD, even those recorded on minor labels—still put money into the pockets of the big five. Add to that the fact those vampire corporations such as the RIAA and ASCAP—which exist under the guise of nonprofit organizations helping insure that artists are paid royalties whenever their music is played, but really only suck money out of restaurants and bars in order to pay its executives millions of dollars in annual salaries—also worked to exploit the artist, and it becomes quite clear that online piracy is a necessary reaction to the contradictions inherent within the culture of late capitalism.

Online piracy represents the evolution of resistance to the culture industry under late capitalism. In other words, online piracy offers a way for punk bands to offer their art to the public in a form that is as damaging to the Culture Industry's influence on popular culture as its aesthetic message seek to be to the culture at large. Punk scholar, Stacey Thomson writes that

even when punk bands refuse to sign with major record labels, attempt to develop an anti-commercial aesthetic, and operate as small enterprises rather than corporations, they still remain vulnerable to the very forces of commodification that they oppose. However,…[t]he efforts…to resist co-optation into commodity culture successfully map the shape of the very impossibility of such a project. (Crass 2004, 1)

Thompson concludes that the failures of punk bands to escape commodification effectively "counters the frequent postmodernist assumption that the surface of contemporary commodity culture is a sheer face that offers no handholds to those who would grasp and change it" by providing a conception of that culture as having "fissures everywhere" (Crass 2004, 14). It seems that online piracy, at least where the Culture Industry is concerned, offers a way of filling those fissures with dynamite.

Piracy, Exchange, and Anti-commodification

According to Thomson, Crass reworked the notion of commodification in the following way:

> Marx expresses this process of exchange as C-M-C',…where "C" stands for "commodity," "M" stands for "money," and "C'" (C prime) stands for a different commodity. The band [recording on Crass Records] exchanges commodities for money solely to purchase other commodities that it needs. For the record industry, the process of exchange can be expressed, according to Marx's model, as M-C-M', where "M'" (M prime) stands for a larger amount of money than "M": the major labels purchase bands and their products in order to exchange them for greater sums of money so that the labels can grow as corporations. By adopting a different form of exchange than that of the music industry, Crass replaced the corporate drive for profit as the force behind making music with he enterprising drive to transmit "information" of some sort and the possibility that money need not entirely determine the production of music. Nevertheless, the band still operated within the logic of capitalist commodity exchange, at best choosing an earlier stage of capitalism over the corporate version that EMI offered them. (Crass 2004, 11)

The same can be said for American bands that record on their own minor labels, such as Bad Religion or Dead Kennedys. What is offered here is the notion of the pirated music file as a way of de-commodifying music in a way that is better and more anarchistic than previous attempts to do so. For Marx, "a commodity…is…an object of wants, a means of existence in the widest sense of the term… [furthermore, the] commodity …has a twofold aspect—*use-value* and *exchange-value*" (Marx 1969, 27).

In a later work, Marx wrote:

> A thing can be useful, and the product of human labour, without being a commodity. Whoever directly satisfies his wants with the produce of his own labour creates, indeed, use values, but not commodities. In order to produce the latter, he must not only produce use-values, but use-values for others, social use values (Marx quoted in Hutchins 1952, 16)

To which Friedrich Engels added:

> [And not only just "for others." The medieval peasant produced grain for feudal dues and for the tithe. But this grain did not become a commodity merely because it was produced for others. In order to become a commodity, the product must be transferred by exchange to the person whom it will serve as use-value]. (Engles quoted in Hutchins 1952, 16)

According to Engels' footnote, he added the bracketed section "because, in its absence, the misunderstanding has frequently arisen that Marx holds any product consumed by a person other than the producer to be a commodity" (Engles quoted in Hutchins 1952, 16). What is the creator of punk music in this instance but that medieval peasant of which Engels writes? When music is shared on the internet it is no longer a commodity. The music changes hands based solely on its use-value. What is most interesting about this occurrence is that it can be interpreted as an attempt to de-commodify music. Here the punk musician receives no payment for the music he creates. There is the possibility that the musician could receive something incidental from the online sharing of his music, in the form of a larger audience to a live show, or the future purchase of a t-shirt, poster, etc., but the sharing of his music online removes the possibility of creating music solely for its exchange-value. Furthermore, any of the incidental gains made from online file-sharing mentioned above go to the musician whose labor is responsible for the creation of the music, rather than the record labels who own the means of production.

Online piracy offers a way to render visible those glaring contradictions inherent in late capitalism while effectively dowsing those vampire organizations that seek to profit from the exploitation of musical artists with holy water. What Pirate Bay offers is an open-source system similar to the one Vaidhyanathan envisions, when he writes that such a file-sharing network

> represents a new kind of Internet. But it's really what the old Internet was supposed to be back when Wired magazine and Nicholas Negroponte evangelized about its transformative potential—before Budwiser.com put those frogs on the web. It's free, open, decentralized, uncommercializable,

ungovernable and uncensorable." (Vaidhyanathan 2000, 5)

In short, Pirate Bay is what Gilles Deleuze calls rhizomic. It offers a way to change the culture. This change in culture is and must be anarchistic. In other words, it must change from the "bottom up" and not from the "top down." That is, the change must come from the masses and not from corporations nor from government. Corporations will continue to sue music fans for sharing based on the fact that they are in the habit of getting paid. They will continue to get those musicians who are the most established to make statements that online piracy hurts the artist when it is clearly only those exploiting the artists that are hurt. The comments made by the manager of U2 ask for a "top down" solution. Maybe Mao is the wrong example. It seems that Jello Biafra's lyrical rant on the dictator Pol Pot fits better. Perhaps U2 will

> Work harder with a gun in [their] back
> For a bowl of rice a day
> Slave for soldiers till [they] starve
> Then [their] head is skewered on a stake
> (Lyrics from "Holiday in Cambodia" on Dead Kennedys album Fresh Fruit
> For Rotting Vegetables).

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CHAPTER SEVEN

"I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT
REFUSAL IS WORTH MAKING":
THE FUTURE OF NEW PUNK IN *SLC PUNK*

JESSICA WILLIAMS

A Hope-Shattering Landscape

I grew up in Levittown on Long Island, NY, the epitome of suburban wasteland. Nothing to see, nothing to do. Thirty miles outside one of the greatest cities in the world, but no means of getting there and too apathetic to bother even if I did. Every house looked the same, side-by-side in neat little rows. Malls and shopping centers were all identical and useless. As an adolescent, I felt a void in my surroundings; something was missing. As a result, I carried a sense of hopelessness around with me, and I felt frustrated by the lack of stimulation in my surroundings. Apparently, this is not unusual in places like Levittown:

> There was so little…to do [on Long Island], and hardly any worthwhile destination reachable by bike or foot, for now all the surrounding territory was composed of similar housing developments punctuated at intervals by equally boring shopping plazas. Since they had no public gathering places, teens congregated in furtive little holes—bedrooms and basements—to smoke pot and imitate the rock bands who played on the radio. Otherwise, life there was reduced to waiting for that transforming moment of becoming a licensed driver. (Kunstler 1993, 14)

But I couldn't even think that far ahead. I couldn't see myself as a successful teenager with a license. By the time I was fourteen, I barely left the house. Long Island's hope-shattering landscape certainly had something to do with this. When everything around you is identical— houses, lawns, sidewalks, mom and dad and a golden retriever, station wagons, elementary schools, the Gap—and you feel like you don't match-

up, what's left to do but rebel?

It's not always the result of living in a place completely void of culture and stimulation, but when teenagers feel the sense of hopelessness I felt, one of the ways to combat it is through creating or immersing themselves in a subculture. My experience serves as a good example because it is a bit of a cliché: I didn't have many friends. I was an outcast amongst my classmates. I felt like a complete freak despite the fact that there was nothing inherently wrong with me. It was much more complex than this, certainly, but the emotional turmoil I felt at this point of my life and what I chose to do with it is, in some ways, rather typical of alienated teens.

I didn't feel like I belonged at school, so I set out to create my own community where I was accepted. My house became the hangout for all sorts of misfits. The crew got bigger and bigger. The parties got bigger. I became the center at which a lot of lives revolved: queen of the outcasts. A lot of my friends were older so it wasn't hard for me to get my hands on beer and cigarettes (and worse). People were crashing at the house all the time. We didn't have money. My older friends had beat-up cars, but we never went anywhere, really.

We listened to punk rock and metal, our generation's version: Rancid. NOFX. Pennywise. But also Marilyn Manson. Tool. Korn. Music had two criterion: it either had to release the pain (punk) or it had to make us feel it (metal). Physically, we tried to emulate these musicians. It wasn't unusual to find a spiked dog-collar around my neck, piercings and tattoos were practically prerequisites to hanging out with us, and cleanliness was certainly not a priority. Looking like outcasts cemented our separation from the society we felt rejected by.

In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf says, "Women, then, have not had a dog's chance of writing poetry. That is why I have laid so much stress on…[having] a room of one's own" (2005, 106–107). Misfits, likewise, have not a "dog's chance" of fitting into mainstream culture, or of even feeling comfortable in popular hangouts like the mall or the sports fields. Because we felt that we had nowhere else to go besides my backyard, we decided to make the backyard our own little island—a room of our own where we could make our own rules—so we built what we called the "crack shack" in my mother's backyard. One of my friends worked for a construction company and stole wood and other supplies. The rest of us stole everything else we needed and we built this bizarre little room in the corner of the yard. It had a roof and a floor and a locking door. Tables, an armchair, lots of ashtrays and a cooler. Posters on the walls, stolen street signs, stop signs. "Anarchy" symbols in black spray paint. The lyrics of our favorite songs. Paraphernalia everywhere.

'Greasers,' 'hoods,' 'beats,' 'freaks,' 'hippies,' 'punks.' From the 1950s onward, these groups have signified young people's refusal to cooperate. In the social order of the American high school, teens are expected to do what they are told--make the grade, win the prize, play the game. Sometimes it kills them; sometimes it sets them free. (Gaines 1991, 9)

I'm not sure which of these categories my friends and I fell under, but we all shared a similar experience: if we had "played the game" it would have killed most of us. For various reasons—having a dysfunctional family topped the list—none of us were capable of functioning in mainstream society, and we refused to simply fall away into oblivion. So we came together and made our own "normal" society.

I was no stranger to rebellion and destruction. Let's just say that during that time, my life, and the lives of those around me, was damaged, sad, painful, and it got worse over time. People went to jail. The drugs got bad. Fights got out of control. One of my friends beat his girlfriend in my living room. Another shot heroin in my bedroom. I shaved half my head. I let my friend pierce me. I wore ripped clothing, chains, too much eye makeup. I figured, subconsciously, that if I couldn't destroy the world I hated, I could at least destroy myself and piss off the world in the process.

It was what it was. Many would look at this experience, and those similar in nature, and write it off as a total cliché, or "teen angst," and maybe it was, but it was also undeniably meaningful and important. We loved each other. We stood for something. We were rebelling—together— against everything that made us feel like something was wrong with us, everything that had hurt us or failed us or embarrassed us. We felt so much shame for being "different" but we refused to feel any more. We broke the law because we hated the law. We listened to unpopular music because it was unpopular. We dressed like outcasts because "normal people" made us feel that way and we needed to defy them. We didn't fit into the mold, so we made our own. Conformity posing as non-conformity. At the time, I'm not sure any of us felt like it made much of a difference in our messed up lives—we were still messed up, hurt, embarrassed, shamed, sad—but in retrospect I think we all would have been much worse off had we not had a group to call our own.

The New Punk

In his benchmark account of subculture and style in post-war Britain, *Subculture, the Meaning of Style* (1979), Dick Hebdige does an impressive job of defining the term "subculture" and of exploring various British-born subcultures, some of which, like punk, partially originated from or found

their way to the States in some form or another. Hebdige unpacks the notion of subculture by using the example of the Bowie-ites, a David-Bowie-centered youth subculture; Hebdige says:

> they were attempting to negotiate a meaningful…space where an alternative identity could be discovered and expressed…They were engaged in that distinctive quest for a measure of autonomy which characterizes all youth sub- (and counter) cultures…They were simultaneously (1) challenging the…parent culture, (2) resisting the way in which this…was being made to signify the working class in the media and (3) adapting images, styles, and ideologies made available elsewhere…in order to construct an alternative identity which communicated a perceived difference: an Otherness. (1979, 89)

This description, I would argue and, I assume, as Hebdige intended, can be applied to all youth subcultures. As Hebdige so skillfully shows throughout *Subculture, the Meaning of Style*, all youth subcultures appropriate in some way ideals or images from the parent culture, but are subversive in that they also reject the dominant ideologies of that culture and create their own ideals and images instead. It is this meaning of subculture to which I will nod my head throughout.

In a sense, the subculture my friends and I created for ourselves was an appropriation of an existing subculture: punk. I was attracted to the angst I saw in punk rock because I felt I could relate to it, and so I set out to emulate certain elements of punk; I listened to the music, ripped my clothes, and painted anarchy symbols on the wall. Invoking the term "punk" is, of course, problematic, but I mean it in a very specific, non-historical context which I will map out here and throughout. For now, I will briefly introduce Hebdige's usage of the term "punk" as I think it is appropriate to this discussion and helps highlight, in part, why the use of the term "punk" has, for some time now, been so harassed.

> A new style was being generated combining elements drawn from a whole range of heterogeneous youth styles…the resulting mix was somewhat unstable: all these elements constantly threatened to separate and return to their original sources. (Hebdige 1979, 25–26)

In other words, punk style picked and chose from a variety of other subcultures in order to achieve its own hodgepodged identity. It borrows "narcissism, nihilism, and gender confusion" from Glam rock; "American punk offered a minimalist aesthetic…the cult of the Street and a penchant for self-laceration…Reggae its exotic and dangerous aura of forbidden identity." These seemingly odd mash-ups came together to form British punk, an "unlikely alliance…[which] found ratification in an equally

eclectic clothing style which…[was] literally safety-pinned together" (Hebdige 1979, 25–26).

Because punk comes from such an array of places, and because it has changed drastically—most would argue that it is long dead since Hebdige's 1979 account—punk is difficult to define. Adam Arola's "The Tyranny of Authenticity: Rebellion and the Question of 'Right Life'" helps situate punk in its more recent incarnations. Arola says: "More than any other subculture, punk was about getting a reaction" and that punk was not just "rebellious, liberating, and very often fun" but was

> a way for us to maintain a kind of autonomy. To be punk thus meant to think for yourself, to decide for yourself, to give the law to yourself—to be autonomous in a world of heteronomy…[O]ur sense of authenticity was that of consistency: an accordance of our practice with our guiding ideas of what it meant to be punk. (2007, 295)

It makes sense, then, that troubled adolescents would turn to something like punk for some sort of relief. Contemporary or new punk is a way for adolescents to individualize, take control, and get attention. They do so, as I did, by taking their ideas of what it meant to be punk and modifying them to fit their own needs. Part of this new appropriation of punk is an association with anarchy, but it is a new anarchy, not the Anarchism of political theory. For new punks, punk and anarchy seem to be interchangeable terms; they both represent disorder and subversion. It is this idea of new punk and anarchy to which I will be referring throughout.

Today's adolescents, especially those living in suburban settings, are often called poseurs or referred to as "pop punks" because of their appropriation of the subculture, and while it is true that this new punk is not an original movement but an imitation of the past, it does not suffice to say that this new suburban punk is disingenuous in its subversions. Generally, new punk is seen as manufactured and uninformed and thus as a watered down version of the real thing. It is not, some would say, an original form of rebellion springing up naturally but rather a tired reaction to the norm.

Despite the fact that in many cases these teenagers are not adhering to what many consider to be "true" punk and anarchist ethos, they feel true and genuine to the characters who have aligned and defined themselves with the terms of these subcultures and are, therefore, not worthless phases to be passed through on the way to adulthood. We don't have to see them as original subcultures for them to be valid—the definition of subculture, in the sense I'm using it, has nothing to do with history, politics, or originality. Youth subcultures are important to the teens who embrace

them, and are therefore, worthy of serious inquiry by popular medias.

What specifically concerns me about the common portrayal of new punks and suburban punks in popular culture is that while the protagonists in many of these texts subscribe to their own brands of punk and anarchism, they are portrayed as phasing out of or turning their backs on these subcultures not only because the real world will not accept such deviance, but because they inevitably learn the lesson that one simply cannot function as an adult while living in the parameters of punk rock or anarchist culture. In this portrayal, new punks are seen as poseurs rather than members of adolescent groups that hold real significance to those who belong to them.

SLC Punk, a film written and directed by James Merendino, is an example par excellence of how popular culture often discounts the teen punk subculture. In the film, as in many other texts (*A Clockwork Orange*, for one), punk and teen anarchism are represented as nothing more than youthful rebellion or angst, expressed through music, appearance, violence, and a belief system which is often verbalized but less frequently applied. When it's time to grow up, punk and anarchist ideals fly out the window and are left forever in the wind. My quarrel with this view lies in the fact that it implies the existence of only two options—outsider or insider—and both options are two-dimensional and unrealistic; no one is either/or. There is no middle ground available here—you're a dysfunctional punk or you're a functional member of society—but this is a false binary.

The split is an illusion—it's not one or the other—so what is it about punk and anarchy that the common interpretation in popular culture is that it must ultimately be abandoned in order to live a normal, healthy, productive, adult life? Either it scares people, or it isn't taken seriously. That the behaviors of characters like Steve-O, the protagonist in *SLC Punk*, are destructive is undeniable, but this destruction does not automatically denote them to be meaningless. Certain needs are being met by the behaviors these characters exhibit; they are serving a purpose, and therefore ought not to be so easily dismissed.

An exploration of *SLC Punk* highlights the connections between teen anarchy and punk in popular culture and how, both separately and jointly, notions of anarchy and punk influence characters who have a penchant for violence and a desire for acceptance into a clearly defined cultural subgroup. For many young people who identify with punk culture—both in the realm of fiction and in the real world— lifestyles of sex, violence, and anarchy change as punk youths grow into adulthood, but they do not have to disappear completely.

"A rebellious, young anarchist"

In *SLC Punk*, we are introduced to two characters—Steve-O, our narrator played by Matthew Lillard, and "Heroin Bob," his sidekick played by Michael A. Goorjian—two young punks for whom anarchism is a passion and a way of life. They live in Salt Lake City, Utah—hence the film's title—and they feel very much the same way I, and many others like them, felt growing up. There's nothing to see, nothing to do, and they want more. Steve-O and Bob have embraced punk and anarchy as a means through which to rebel against the backdrop of the conservative, and for them hopeless, Salt Lake City.

The film follows Steve-O the summer after he graduates from the local college and documents his journey from full-blown anarchist and punk rocker to turning his back on it all in order to go to Harvard and become a lawyer like his father. There are many factors that lead to Steve-O's about-face, but the two primary catalysts are when he finds his girlfriend in bed with another man, and when Heroin Bob—named such because he is afraid of needles and against drug use—dies, ironically, from a narcotics overdose.

The film portrays punk as an attitude manifest in violence and rebellion, tied up in notions of anarchy, and displayed proudly in visual clout such as safety pins, mohawks, and chains. For Steve-O and Bob, identifying themselves as anarchists is a means of *defining* themselves and drawing a clear line between them and the rest of society. Steve-O explains: "My place of residence was decorated in such a way as to clearly define who I was. It followed the strictest requirements for a rebellious, young anarchist." Merendino's screenplay describes their apartment as being furnished with:

> One single mattress, one metal folding chair, one thrift store coffee table, one half of a ping-pong table used as a dining room table, one ashtray filled with dead cigarettes, one [graffitied] poster of Ronald Reagan and one poster of the Tabernacle Choir. The walls are covered with black spray paint with various slogans and a large anarchy symbol. The floor is covered with empty beer cans and record albums.

For them, anarchism has something to do with minimalism, do-it-yourself (DIY) ethics, and anti-establishmentarianism. The description of their apartment is also important because in addition to providing insight into their ideas of anarchism, it tells us two things about Bob and Steve-O's sense of identity: First, that their ideologies are crucial to their identities, and secondly it tells us that visual representations of these

beliefs are an essential part of aligning themselves with this belief system and in separating themselves from mainstream society. It is not enough to subscribe to a life of anarchy; it must be seen by others in order to be taken seriously.

Upon closer inspection, we see that Steve-O's definition of anarchy includes violence, destruction, a sense of tribal community or subcultural unity, and, of course, the belief that government and systems are oppressive and must be resisted. He takes his belief in anarchy rather seriously; it is the system on which he and Bob have built their lives. For instance, he says that:

> Our mission, after leaving high school as two aspiring young punks, I think the only two punks living in Salt Lake at the time, was to go to University and bring down the system. Why? For obvious reasons: Anarchy. The only system of government that seemed to make sense to us.

So he goes to junior college to study law, which seems to play into his corporate lawyer father's pleas for Steve-O to follow in his footsteps. However, he refuses to actually become a lawyer. He tells his father, "I took law so that I could understand how full of shit your life's work was. I understand now. The system is filled with contradictions and lies. It's futile," and when his father tells him to "go to Harvard, become a lawyer and change things," Steve-O's response is, "Fuck that. Playing in the system is to become the system…to change it, you gotta blow it up." He believes that law is a function of government and therefore is the system, and in order to resist it, he must come to know and understand it.

The audience collectively rolls their eyes when Steve-O's father tells him, "I didn't sell out, son. I bought in." He is a wealthy, yuppie lawyer who has seen great success in his career, but who we don't take entirely seriously. When he pleads with his son to change his physical appearance and start acting like an adult, he does so with pathetic attempts to be "cool" and understand where his son is coming from, though he clearly doesn't get it. "I'm hip," he says. "I went to Woodstock...I know what it means to rebel." But this corporate lawyer is in no way portrayed as sticking to his "hippie culture" roots. He has, in fact, sold out, something Steve-O vows he will never do. What he comes to accept later is that his father is absolutely right—you can't play in the system without becoming it—but what he doesn't realize is that he is playing in the system the entire time. Despite his intentions to blow things up, he does nothing of the sort. Instead, he becomes a player in the game, and a successful one at that: "we had made it through…I did well even."

As he comes to realize more and more throughout the course of the

film, his brand of anarchism is a complex system that doesn't always make sense. Steve-O's long but telling narration on the ethics of fighting sheds light on the complexities of his belief system. As he explains why fighting is important to punks, he stumbles upon some contradictions:

> But fighting is a structure…Fighting is to establish power, power is government…government is not anarchy. Government is war…and war is fighting…Other peoples' ideals forced on someone else is, even if it is freedom, still a rule. NO ANARCHY!!! It goes against my beliefs as a true anarchist, but it was there. Competition, fighting, capitalism, government, THE SYSTEM.

At the beginning of his journey, Steve-O is able to justify these inconsistencies, to write them off as things he hasn't figured out yet but inevitably will. However, as Steve-O matures throughout the film, the result of rites of passage such as death and falling in and out of love, so too do his ideas about anarchism grow and change. Even though Steve-O struggles with these ideas, the message to the viewer is immediately clear: it is an imperfect system which doesn't work, and it is therefore disappointing but not surprising when Steve-O ultimately turns his back on anarchy and becomes, we are meant to imagine, just like his father.

Were we to simplify Steve-O's brand of anarchism, we might say that it is, quite simply, the belief that in order to be free, one must resist government and authority, and that one must know who the enemy is in order to try to resist the hegemony inherent in their power. One can resist through education, violence, and chaos. This ties in closely with his punk rock ethics. To be punk is, primarily, to listen to punk music, but it's also about violence, rebellion, and chaos. It's about not giving in. It's about being an anarchist. For him, they're inseparable. For example, toward the beginning of the film there is a scene where Steve-O and Bob are having a party, and Steve-O, speaking directly to the audience, provides a narration about some of his friends and talks about punk ethos. During his narration, his friend Mike, a tall, nerdy looking teen who would look more at home in a science lab than a punk show, gets smashed into by two out of control teens. His reaction is priceless: Mike grabs one of them by the shirt and forcefully slams the guy's head against the wall, then throws him back into the crowd. He doesn't say a word, just resumes leaning against the wall, nodding his head to the loud music. Steve-O reacts with, "See..PUNK ROCK!!! THAT'S PUNK ROCK!!!"

It's the attitude and the music, then, that make someone punk, not the history of what punk was or should be: "Who started punk rock music…? Who cares who started it. It's music. I don't know who started it and I

don't give a fuck. All I know is we did it harder we did it faster and we did it with more love." Steve-O doesn't get wrapped up in the cliché arguments about what it means to be punk. He wants nothing to do with the "Sex Pistols or the Ramones" argument that's been debated ad nauseam. The origins of the movement mean nothing to him because his brand of punk is read through his own vantage point, that of young, suburban America. He only cares that it's relevant to his life, and that it's hard, fast, and done with love. The latter may seem an odd sentiment coming from someone who believes that "mayhem and punk shows are like peas and carrots" but this idea of unity is essential to punk culture, because it's essential to all subcultures.

Music gives them something to bond over. It gives them something to share, something to connect to and through. After Bob's death at the end of the film, we see Steve-O's memories of how they got into punk: "Bob started it all" he tells us. "It was always Bob. We were the losers getting picked on by the jocks. We would have done anything to be cool. Then one day Bob had had it." They are two young, clueless kids in a basement. Steve-O thinks that John Denver "rocks" and Bob tells him he's sick of it. He feels like an outcast and he doesn't want to be like everyone else anyway—if they don't want me, then I don't want them either—and he puts on a punk record. "What is it?" Steve-O asks. "It's different" is Bob's poignant response.

And the difference is what matters. The music gives them an outlet and a means through which to rebel; the violence inherent to punk music lends itself to this. Jumping around in the pits at a punk show allows for the release of pent-up aggression. It does what music needs to do for any angst-ridden kid, what it did (does) for me: it either helps release the pain, or it makes you feel it.

Both in conjunction with the music scene and by itself, fashion is a significant part of punk culture. Hebdige rightfully notes that "the tensions between dominate and subordinate groups can be found reflected in the surfaces of subculture—in the styles made up of mundane objects which have a double meaning…these objects become signs of forbidden identity, sources of value" (1979, 2). The safety pins in Steve-O's clothing, for example, are signs of separation from the dominant culture. They are a form of capital within his subculture, and they are a sign of "beware" for outsiders. "Humble objects" such as safety pins "can be magically appropriated; 'stolen' by subordinate groups and made to carry 'secret' meanings: meanings which express in code, a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their continued subordination" (1979, 17–18). Steve-O and those around him use fashion as a means of expression,

separation, and identity-formation. Hebdige further claims: "In punk, alienation assumed an almost tangible quality" (1979, 28). I would argue that this alienation was so tangible because visually the punks were intended to be read. Their bodies were shouting out loud. Their clothing was the "communication of a significant *difference"* which, according to Hebdige, is "the whole 'point' behind the style of all spectacular subcultures" (1979, 102).

Interestingly enough, punk is not about what you look like, according to Steve-O. It's about attitude and the way one acts. However, Mike is the only one of the crowd who does not dress like an "outcast"; the rest of the group all conform to what a punk should look like. It could be argued, though, that because Mike is rebelling against society in his actions, and rebelling against the rest of the punks in his appearance, that he is truly the most rebellious of the group.

Steve-O, despite his denial of it for most of the film, uses fashion to be outside of mainstream society; though he claims that it doesn't define him, it most certainly does. His uniform of blue hair, ripped clothes, spikes and chains is a clear way of separating himself physically from society. A young, Caucasian male from Utah, Steve-O has no other visible way of separating himself. His physical appearance sets up clear boundaries between "us" and "them" and at this point in Steve-O's life this line is essential to his identity.

At the end of the film, when he meets and falls in love with Brandy, Steve-O begins to see the contradictions inherent in his dress code:

> BRANDY: Why do you go out of your way to look like a bum?
> STEVO: I look like a bum?
> BRANDY: Not in a bad way…but I mean, you're rebelling against society right?
> STEVO: Yeah, to put it simply.
> BRANDY: Well, wouldn't it be more of an act of rebellion if you didn't spend so much time buying blue hair dye and punky clothes. I mean, it seems a petty thing…you want to be an individual yet you look like you're wearing a uniform. You look like a punk. That's not rebellion. That's fashion.
> STEVO: So then what's rebellion?
> BRANDY: Rebellion happens in the mind. You create it. You just are that way.

This exchange is meant to be a way of showing that there are other ways to rebel that are less obvious, but in essence what it does it make Steve-O feel petty, and the audience begins to feel that way about him as well. It suddenly seems a lot less cool and a whole lot more immature to

both us and Steve-O.

"When all was said I done I was nothing more than a goddamn trendy ass poseur"

Even before meeting Brandy, Steve-O's sense of identity begins slipping away. He says, "I was feeling a growing sense of melancholy. I felt my firm Anarchist philosophy was somehow slipping. And it was all I had. The mechanism for me to survive." Anarchy is put into a trivial light here, seen as something which is an identifying factor yet somehow unnecessary and trivial at the same time. He finds his girlfriend, Sandy, in bed with another guy and reacts with the kind of chauvinistic violence he claims to hate. Soon after, he begins to feel like he is losing his long-standing argument with his friend Chris about anarchy and chaos:

> It wasn't that I loved Sandy. I knew that we had an understanding. But I discovered then that Chris was right. All things were systems. Even me. I was about to beat this guy because he had invaded my territory. No question about it. Just like in the wild. I was following nature and nature was order and order is the system...Above all: fuck anarchy.

He has decided that anarchy doesn't work because you cannot escape the system, any system. While his turn from anarchy here seems a bit sudden and extreme, his complete shift in beliefs and identity once Bob dies is even more problematic. He tells us, "It was getting old. No. I was feeling old" and says, "Life is like that. You change, that's all….Was I afraid? Was I angry? Or was it just the end and I knew it?"

The film ends with Steve-O sitting on bench after Bob's funeral. If Steve-O had been using his appearance to signify his identity throughout the film, then his appearance at the end of the film speaks volumes. His head has been buzzed; what little hair he has is clearly black, rather than blue or green. There are no safety pins, no chains, no punk signifiers at all. He is wearing a suit, appropriate for Bob's funeral, but also appropriate for the adult life which he is about to begin.

And so Steve-O ultimately rejects the belief system he has built for himself because he is now going to join the real world and therefore no longer needs punk and anarchism to define himself. He is done with this phase of his life and is ready to become a part of the society he rejected as a teenager. His final speech sums this up quite nicely:

> I was gonna be a lawyer and play into the goddamn system and that was that. I *was* my old man…I mean, there's no future in anarchy…But when I

was into it, there was never a thought of the future…We were certain that the world was gonna end but when it didn't I had to do something. So fuck it. I could always be a litigator in New York and piss the shit out of the judges. I mean that was me, a troublemaker...You can do a hell of a lot more damage in the system that outside of it…I guess that when all was said I done I was nothing more than a goddamn trendy ass poseur.

There is a bit of integrity in this final speech; he claims that he will continue to rebel while "in the system," but while it seems like Steve-O is staying true to his beliefs to some extent, after looking to his father, can we believe that this will in fact be the case? If he is just like his father then the assumption is that he will not be able to hold onto his roots and the cycle will continue. He will, presumably, exchange his subversive ideals for passage into adulthood, and perhaps will even one day have a child who will think their father's "punk and anarchy phase" was a joke compared to whatever it is they're into.

SLC Punk does a disservice to Steve-O and to its audience by not supplying Steve-O with a third option. The only character in the film who is able to function as an adult and a punk is Trish, Bob's girlfriend. She is older than the rest of the group, and doesn't fit as neatly into the punk paradigm as them. She is referred to as a "goddess," and physically looks different each time she is on screen, yet her various wigs and clothing styles are all symbolic of subversion in different ways. While fawning over Trish, Bob says that "she's like, responsible. She owns her own store. She's making a contribution to society" but the store she owns is, as Steve-O is quick to point out, a head shop, not exactly the most productive contribution to society. Nevertheless, she is able to be an outcast and a successful adult, but immediately before Steve-O's final speech we see Trish one last time; she has no wig on her head for the first time in the film. Her hair is short and black, she has dark eye-makeup on, she looks older, and certainly doesn't look like an outcast. She looks like someone who has lost, and so perhaps Merindino's comment is that heartache changes us, strips off all of the signifiers we hide beneath, and reveals a blank slate. Perhaps he is simply saying that at some point, everyone grows out of it.

Were Steve-O's days of punk rock and anarchy worthless, then? The film ultimately seems to be saying that they didn't count for much. Lines such as "Above all, fuck anarchy" and "I was nothing more than a goddamn trendy ass poseur" certainly support this view. Steve-O has turned his back on it all and the audience is left feeling defeated. It felt like it mattered, but maybe the film is saying that it only mattered at the time it was happening, or worse, not at all.

Hebdige pronounces that

> the process whereby objects are made to mean and mean again as 'style' in
> subculture…begins with a crime against the natural order, though in this
> case a deviation may seem slight indeed…But it ends in the construction of
> a style, in a gesture of defiance or contempt, in a smile or a sneer. It signals
> a Refusal. I would like to think this Refusal is worth making, that these
> gestures have a meaning, that the smiles and sneers have some subversive
> value. (1979, 3)

I, too would like to believe that "the sneers" have some value. Perhaps
it is because I can relate so closely to Steve-O's experience that I feel this
way, but it seems to be too common a phenomenon to be so easily
discounted. What I mean is that so many teens find solace in various forms
of dysfunction and obsession, especially when they feel like they don't
belong, or that the world doesn't have room for them because they are
somehow different. Though there are certainly varying levels of teen
subversion—from the current obsession with Vampire culture to Skinhead
culture—outcast teens are creating places for themselves when no one else
will. To send a message that these subcultures will ultimately become
meaningless, that once one passes into mature adulthood these groups will
vanish and become a mere glitch in one's life, or that "you change—that's
all," is drastically over-simplifying things.

Steve-O embodies what it means to belong to a subculture. He doesn't
have a huge group of trendy people surrounding him; he doesn't really
care what people think about him as long as they know he's different; he
has intelligent ideals in which he invests a lot of time and passion; and he
essentially creates a world in which, at least for a short time, he can be
himself without judgment. That his punk lifestyle ultimately cannot be
carried into a productive adult life is not the problem, however. Rather it is
the insinuation that in becoming exactly like his father, Steve-O will turn
his back on everything he once believed in when he doesn't really have to.

The film is saying that there are two ways the life of a punk can play
out, and I've seen them both happen. My friends were all older than me
and so I was able to see their fates play out long before I could get a hold
on my own life. Many of them still lead hopeless lifestyles, working
horrible, grueling jobs, selling drugs, having babies, being abused, abusing
others, drinking until they pee themselves, waking up on the train and not
knowing where they were, trying so hard to break the cycle, the bad
habits, but not being smart enough, running out of options, running out of
money, giving in to the cycle, knowing this was what they deserved,
knowing that they couldn't do any better, deciding they didn't want to do

any better, anyway.

Others are just as far gone, but in the other direction. They've moved away, settled down, and started families. They work at banks, or go to school, or are employed in some other sensible way. They get up at 6am, they walk the dog, they feed the kids. They fit right in with the other moms and dads, and they are happy, successful and hard-working. This is, I think, the adult life we are to envision Steve-O heading off to. He and Brandy will get married and live happily, and normally, ever after. I don't mean to imply that there is anything wrong with this lifestyle or that one needs to stay a punk rocker forever; my point is that taking a character like Steve-O and sending him off to this world feels disingenuous.

When *SLC Punk* was released on DVD, I was in a relationship with the bassist of a locally popular ska band, and the two of us went through a phase where we would watch the film all the time, sometimes two or three times in a week. Steve-O was so much like us, and watching him allowed me to reflect on my own life in ways I never had before. The end of the film, however, always bothered me. I was finishing my two-year degree at the local community college at the time and I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. I chose, ultimately, to grow up and pursue an education, and I altered my identity, just as Steve-O had done. I began to dress like everyone else. I got my Bachelor's, then my Master's degree, and immediately began working as an adjunct instructor. I became the opposite of everything I had been for so long. I had to. I didn't know how to be the girl I had been in this new world of academia.

At some point, I began to realize that the line between punk and adult, or normal and abnormal, was a lot more fluid than I'd once thought. As I write this, I am neck-deep in doctoral work, and I no longer struggle with balancing who I was with who I am now, because I've realized that I'm essentially the same person, just a little less rough around the edges. When I turned my back on my past, it was because I thought I had to in order to be successful in academia. But I've learned now, at 27 years-old, that I didn't have to leave all of it behind. What parts of my past do I carry around with me every single day of my life? The physical scars, lots of them. But more than that. The music. The edge. The uniform, sometimes. Most significantly, it has informed and affected my teaching in ways I never anticipated, but that I think are invaluable to my success in the classroom.

Just as my favorite bands tried to subvert the ways in which their fans thought about the world, so too do I try to challenge the conventions of the English Studies classroom. Nothing I'm doing is terribly radical, but the drive to constantly change what I'm doing, to help my students to see

things in different ways and to bring new and exciting texts into the classroom has been fueled by my past. My ability and desire to relate to students is genuine. I recognize them on the first day, the ones who are there because they don't know what else they're supposed to be doing. The ones who think it's all bullshit. I like to think that I have an insider's idea as to what that feels like, and my hope is to get them to see that there is value in the things they care about, as well as in the classroom.

It didn't have to be an either/or for Steve-O, successful law student or punk; it could have been both/and. It's about trying to find a balance, a middle ground. I don't teach composition courses wearing band hoodies, but I still do my holiday shopping that way. Steve-O's appearance at the end of the film implies that for him it will not be that way, but when I think of his future, something I tend to do with my favorite fictional characters, I will picture him having a stark revelation midway through his graduate school career that the break from punk didn't need to be as clean as he once thought. He will pierce his nose, perhaps, or begin to read real anarchist theory on the weekends, but in some way he will hold onto some semblance of his former life and in doing so will not become like his father, but rather will live up to our expectations of him and "do some damage" inside the system.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

DIRECT ACTIN':
A SKETCH OF ANARCHISM AND DRAMA

JEFF SHANTZ

Anarchists have used drama and performance to express opposition to values and relations characterizing advanced capitalist societies while also expressing key aspects of the alternative values and institutions proposed within anarchism. Among favored themes are anarchist critiques of corporatization, prisons and patriarchal relations as well as explorations of developing anarchist positions on polysexuality, non-monogamy and mutual aid. A key component of anarchist perspectives is the belief that means and ends must correspond. Thus in anarchist drama as in anarchist politics, a radical approach to form is as important as content. Anarchist theater joins other critical approaches to theater in attempting to break down divisions between audience and artist, encouraging all to become active participants in the creative process. Anarchist gatherings, conferences and bookfairs regularly include workshops on DIY theater. Typically performances, often impromptu, are put on in the neighborhoods (often literally in the streets) in which such gatherings are held.

At first glance it might seem odd to associate anarchism and drama, especially given the negative media portrayal of contemporary anarchists as street fighting vandals in response to "black bloc" actions at anti-globalization demonstrations. Lost in sensationalist accounts, however, are the creative and constructive practices undertaken daily by anarchist activists seeking a world free from violence, oppression and exploitation. An examination of some of these creative anarchist projects, in which drama is part of a holistic approach to everyday resistance, provides insights into real world attempts to develop peaceful and creative social relations in the here and now of everyday life. In this, drama plays a rich part, as a brief look at ongoing anarchist histories show.

Anarchy and Eugene O'Neill

The intersection of anarchism and drama is shown significantly in the works of Eugene O'Neill. Indeed, anarchism is the primary overtly referenced ideological influence on O'Neill's perspective. While O'Neill initially showed some sympathy for social anarchist movements, and looked favorably upon the writings of prominent social anarchist Emma Goldman, his primary personal commitment was to philosophical anarchism, which remained the greatest ideological influence on his thinking. Perhaps the strongest direct influence on O'Neill's anarchist perspective was Benjamin R. Tucker, the editor of the important anarchist journal *Liberty*. Tucker was the first prominent American thinker to identify himself as an anarchist. He would become the central figure in the emergence and development of philosophical or individualist anarchism in the U.S., introducing the works of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Max Stirner, among others, to North American audiences. Tucker was himself influenced by Stirner, being the first to publish an English-language version of Stirner's work. O'Neill was introduced to Tucker as an eighteen year old and spent much time at Tucker's Unique Book Shop in New York City.

The eclectic collection at Tucker's bookstore exposed O'Neill to experimental and provocative works of philosophy, politics and art that were not available anywhere else in the U.S. Many of the works had been translated and/or published by Tucker himself. Tucker was the first to publish in North America Max Stirner's individualist classic, The *Ego and Its Own*, a book that was quite influential on the development of O'Neill's political consciousness. Tucker published the important libertarian journals *Radical Review* and the highly influential *Liberty*, which became regarded as the best English-language anarchist journal. Tucker was admired by writers including Bernard Shaw and Walt Whitman.

Tucker's anarchism, unlike that of anarchist communist contemporaries Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, was based on gradual, non-violent, rather than revolutionary, social and cultural change. In place of force, Tucker advocated the liberation of the individual's creative capacities. Tucker looked to gradual enlightenment through alternative institutions, schools, cooperative banks and workers' associations, as practical means to enact change.

Social change, for Tucker, required personal transformation first and foremost, a perspective that O'Neill himself claimed as a great influence on his own outlook. At the same time, while rejecting force, which he termed domination, Tucker did assert the right of individuals and groups to

defend themselves against coercive force.

O'Neill was convinced to abandon socialism for anarchism by his friends Terry Carlin and Hutchins Hapgood. O'Neill studied at the Ferrer Center in New York City, an alternative school organized and frequented by numerous anarchists, in 1915. That year he also served an apprenticeship at the anarchist magazine *Revolt* published by Hippolyte Havel. A friend of O'Neill's, Havel is portrayed as Hugo Kalmar in *The Iceman Cometh*, in what one commentator identifies as "a rather nasty caricature" (Porton 1999, 12). Kalmar (Havel) is given to jovial, inebriated rants, as in his "soapbox denunciations" ("Capitalist swine! Bourgeois stool pigeons! Have the slaves no right to sleep even?," *Iceman*, 11) which begin as wild declamations and wind down into sound and sudden sleep. He offers this view of the anarchist future: "Soon, leedle proletarians, ve vill have free picnic in the cool shade, ve vill eat hot dogs and trink free beer beneath the villow trees!" (*Iceman*, 105).

O'Neill draws attention to Kalmar's concern with maintaining a fashionable and neat appearance, "even his flowing Windsor tie (*Iceman*, 4)," and the actual poverty of his material existence as reflected in his "threadbare black clothes" and shirt "frayed at collar and cuffs (*Iceman*, 4)." Havel's life displayed the duality that has often characterized anarchist existence. In Havel, the aesthetic dreams of a new world, reflected in the cafes and salons was juxtaposed with the reality of poverty and precarious work as a dishwasher and short order cook.

Born in 1869 in Burowski, Bohemia, and educated in Vienna, Hippolyte Havel was a prominent organizer, essayist, publisher and raconteur within the international anarchist movement. Now a largely forgotten figure, even among anarchist circles, Havel was, during his time, at the center of the artistic and political avant garde in Greenwich Village.

Among Havel's innovations was the development of creative spaces in which anarchist ideas could be presented and discussed, beyond the didactic form of political speeches. Influenced by the salons and cabarets he had experienced in Paris, Havel set about establishing such venues in New York, on an anarchist basis. Havel gave particular attention to nurturing performances of various types. Havel viewed such spaces as crucial to the creation of anarchist solidarity and community. Indeed this emphasis on the development of a sense of anarchist community distinguished him both from individualist anarchists, who stressed personal uniqueness, and anarchist communists who focused on class struggle.

For Havel, cafes, salons, dinner parties and theater were crucial for the development of solidarity among and between anarchists and artists. Havel viewed artists and anarchists as natural allies who challenged the bounds

of conventional thought and action, a challenge necessary both for creative development as well as social change. He advocated the idea that art was revolutionary, not strictly on a realist basis, as would be the case for the socialist realists who would follow, but through experimentation and abstraction as well.

O'Neill also shared Nietzsche's disdain for state socialist politics, inasmuch as its collective forms expressed the resentment of the herd. Nietzsche disparaged the anarchists and socialists of his day who were motivated by a spirit of revenge or personal weakness and fear. Speaking with indignation at their lack of rights, such anarchists and socialists were, in his view, too lazy or fearful to see that a right is a power that must be exercised, that their suffering rested in a failure to create new lives for themselves. Socialism stood as a new religion, a new slave morality, in Nietzsche's phrase. As in the case of Christianity, Nietzsche opposed the self-limiting, self-sacrificing characteristics of socialism that marked it as a new religion.

These criticisms are themes that appear in O'Neill's writings and statements on socialism, and anarchist communism, and are also reflected in his portrayals of these political movements in works such as *The Iceman Cometh* and *The Hairy Ape*. The slave mentality or sense that the powerless are more virtuous and thus must wait for an imagined salvation is reflected starkly in the hopeless longing of the characters in Harry Hope's bar in *The Iceman Cometh*.

O'Neill was also inspired by Nietzsche's views on art and theater and influenced by Nietzsche's view of Greek tragedy as Apollo's harnessing of Dionysus, the emotional element in life and art. Greek tragedy stood as the epitome of the creative force directing the passions (Dionysus).

Drama and Anarchy in the Work of Emma Goldman

Among the important influences on O'Neill was Emma Goldman, the most prominent American anarchist. "Red Emma", who was herself influenced by Nietzsche, contributed important reflections on the relationship of drama and anarchy. So influenced by modern theater, especially the works of Ibsen, was the influential anarchist Emma Goldman that her pioneering biographer Richard Drinnon was led to suggest that her anarchism was as influenced by the works of Ibsen as by the political writings of Kropotkin. Indeed, so interested was Goldman in the political potential of theater as a means for spreading and encouraging revolutionary ideas that her essay "The Drama: A Powerful Disseminator of Radical Thought" makes up the longest entry in her best known work

Anarchism and Other Essays. In fact "The Drama" easily eclipses other, supposedly more political works, as "Minorities versus Majorities," "The Traffic in Women" and "The Psychology of Political Violence" that stand as recognized anarchist classics.

Beyond merely its length, the character of the essay reveals the great value Goldman finds in theater as a possibly crucial aspect of "the tremendous spread of the modern, conscious social unrest" (Goldman 1969, 241). Indeed Goldman glimpses in the modern drama "the strongest and most far-reaching interpreter of our deep-felt dissatisfaction" (Goldman 1969, 242). For Goldman, drama allows for a greater appreciation of social unrest than can be gained from what she calls "propagandistic literature." More than this, however, the development of social unrest into a widespread and conscious movement necessarily gives rise to creative expressions, such as dramatic theater, "in the gradual transvaluation of existing values" (Goldman 1969, 242).

Contemporary Drama and Anarchy

Through the years anarchists have shared Goldman's enthusiasm for drama as well as her belief that theater is an important part of anti-systemic movements. Perhaps the most famous, and longstanding, anarchist theater project is the Living Theatre which has been operating for almost 60 years. Founded in 1947 by Judith Malina and Julian Beck, the Living Theatre continues to produce and perform works that uses experiments in theater to pursue themes centered around the interaction of political processes and forces of love and mutual aid. Addressing issues of authoritarianism, oppression and resistance in social and personal relations, the Living Theatre remains focused "on humanity's millennial dream of uniting these aspects of life in a cosmically inspired fusion that transcends the quotidian contradictions that have fostered the alienation that separates most people from the realization of their highest potential."[1] As an experimental political project the Living Theatre has directly confronted and contested these issues. Throughout the 1950s, in the climate of McCarthyism in the US, the Living Theatre's venues were repeatedly closed by authorities. As result the Living Theatre developed as a nomadic and collective effort pioneering new forms of nonfictional acting rooted in actors' physical commitment to using the theater as an agent for social change. Dedicated to reaching the broadest of possible audiences, and committed to taking theater beyond segregated specialist spaces, the Living Theatre has performed at the gates of Pittsburgh steel mills, at prisons in Brazil, in the poorest sections of Palermo and in New

York schools.

Among more recently organized anarchist theater projects, the "Trumbull Theater Complex" or "Trumbullplex" in Detroit is one particularly interesting example. Located in the low income "Cass Corridor" in downtown Detroit, the "Trumbullplex" houses a cooperative living space, temporary shelter, food kitchen and lending library. The former carriage house has been converted into a live performance space. In addition to staging more traditional forms of theater the Trumbullplex hosts experimental performances as well as providing a space for touring anarchist and punk bands and for public lectures. Recently the Trumbullplex has expanded, adding a building in another part of the city. Significantly, the Trumbull members use theater as a way to make connections with the working class residents of the Cass Corridor, offering a space for shared creative activities as well as a venue for spreading anarchist ideas and practices beyond the anarchist "scene." The activists and artists of the "Trumbullplex" are literally "building the new society in the vacant lots of the old," to quote a popular anarchist saying.

As exhibited in the activities of the Trumbullplex, anarchist theaters are liminal sites, spaces of transformation and passage. As such they are important sites of re-skilling, in which anarchists prepare themselves for the new forms of relationship necessary to break authoritarian and hierarchical structures. Participants also learn the diverse tasks and varied interpersonal skills necessary for collective work, play and living. This collective skill sharing serves to discourage the emergence of knowledge elites and to allow for the sharing of all tasks, even the least desirable, necessary for social maintenance.

In the face of capitalist alienation and mediation of creativity, one of the options left is "to begin *right now immediately* [to] live as if the battle were already won, as if *today* the artist were no longer a special kind of person, but each person a special sort of artist" (Bey 1994, 43). So, anarchists make insurrections now rather than wait for their desires to be revealed to them at some later date. For anarchists this immediacy contributes to a widening of the circle of pleasure and unalienated work.

Opponents of anarchism typically respond to it by claiming that it rests upon a naive view of "human nature." The best response to such criticisms is simply to point to the diversity of anarchist views on the question of human nature. There is little commonality between Stirner's self-interested "egoist" and Peter Kropotkin's altruistic upholder of mutual aid. Indeed, the diversity of anarchist views regarding "the individual" and its relation to "the community" may be upheld as testimony to the creativity and respect for pluralism which have sustained anarchism against enormous

odds. Anarchists simply stress the capacity of humans to change themselves and the conditions in which they find themselves. Social relations, freely entered, based upon tolerance, mutual aid, and sympathy are expected to discourage the emergence of disputes and aid resolution where they do occur. There are no guarantees for anarchists and the emphasis is always on potential.

Notes

1. This quote comes from the Sixth Annual Montreal Anarchist Bookfair, May 21, 2005. During the bookfair the Living Theatre gave two performances and was celebrated for its contributions to anarchism and other social movements.

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