Theories of Resistance
Transforming Capitalism

Series Editors:

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This book series provides an open platform for the publication of path-breaking and interdisciplinary scholarship which seeks to understand and critique capitalism along four key lines: crisis, development, inequality, and resistance. At its core lies the assumption that the world is in various states of transformation, and that these transformations may build upon earlier paths of change and conflict while also potentially producing new forms of crisis, development, inequality, and resistance. Through this approach the series alerts us to how capitalism is always evolving and hints at how we could also transform capitalism itself through our own actions. It is rooted in the vibrant, broad and pluralistic debates spanning a range of approaches which are being practised in a number of fields and disciplines. As such, it will appeal to sociology, geography, cultural studies, international studies, development, social theory, politics, labour and welfare studies, economics, anthropology, law, and more.

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Anarchism, Geography, and the Spirit of Revolt

Edited by Marcelo Lopes de Souza, Richard J. White, and Simon Springer
For the rebels of the earth—may you use the power of words, and may those words help change the world.
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Introduction

Subverting the Meaning of ‘Theory’

Marcelo Lopes de Souza, Richard J. White, and Simon Springer

Anarchists have often been accused of ‘voluntarism’ and hostility towards ‘theory.’ If we consider some apparently concrete aspects (such as a comparison between Marxism’s much more impressive record of achievements in the domain of theory and anarchism’s comparatively modest achievements in the same domain), it seems that there is real evidence to support this kind of thesis. However, upon closer examination things seem much more complex. The original meaning of theory is related to observation and to an outsider perspective. More precisely, *theoria* [θεοπία] is the Greek word for contemplation, the *theoros* being a spectator, or someone who contemplates something. These characteristics define a speculative activity, at first glance precisely the opposite of Marxism. Again: at first glance. Ironically, this supposed ‘philosophy of praxis,’ once synthesized by Marx in the famous XI thesis on Feuerbach (‘Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it’), has been strongly committed to ‘objectivity’ in a sense that is prone not only to a hierarchical and authoritarian approach to history and knowledge but also to rationalism and theoreticism. It is not necessary to be a ‘post-modern’ relativist to see the limits of this kind of approach, typical of both ‘orthodox’ Marxism and Marxism in general.

At this juncture, it is very useful to present more or less at length some key aspects of Cornelius Castoriadis’s reflection on ‘theory’ in the context of his radical critique of Marxism. His is probably the most original and profound critique of this sort ever made, and it offers the philosophical soil on
which we have tried to ground some of our own contributions to the literature. For Castoriadis, Marx’s dialectic is a ‘closed dialectic,’ like the Hegelian one that was its source of inspiration. Therefore, it ‘is necessarily rationalist. It at once presupposes and “demonstrates” that the whole of experience is exhaustively reducible to rational determinations’ (Castoriadis 1998, 36). For him, however, dialectical thought can be different from this—namely, it can be ‘open’ in the sense of a non-rationalistic, non-rigid and non-teleological way of thinking. But ‘such a transformation of the dialectic is possible . . . only if the traditional and secular idea of theory as a closed system and as contemplation is superseded’ (Castoriadis 1998, 37). ‘And this was indeed,’ as Castoriadis, one of the most radical and inclement critics of Marxism during the second half of the twentieth century, conceded himself, ‘one of the essential intuitions of the young Marx’ (Castoriadis 1998, 37). Apart from several other problems identified by Castoriadis, this ‘essential intuition’ unfortunately largely vanished within the framework of Marx’s later work (precisely the phase praised by almost all Marxists). This disappearance was for ‘good’ reasons: It corresponds to the approach that predominates in Marx’s oeuvre, especially in those works regarded by Marx himself as his most important ones. The political implications of such a view are summarized by Castoriadis as follows:

[1] ‘If there is a true theory of history, if there is a rationality at work in things, it is clear that the direction this development takes should be left to the specialists of this theory, to the technicians of this rationality. The Party’s absolute power—and within the Party, the ‘coryphaei of Marxist-Leninist science,’ in the remarkable expression coined by Stalin for his own use—has a philosophical status. It is based in actual fact more genuinely on the ‘materialist conception of history’ than on Kautsky’s ideas, taken up again by Lenin, concerning ‘the introduction of socialist consciousness in the proletariat by middle-class intellectuals.’ If this conception is true, this power must be absolute; democracy is then only a concession to the human fallibility of the leaders or a pedagogical method of which they alone can administer the correct dosage. The choice indeed is absolute. Either this conception is true, hence defines what is to be done, and what the workers do is valid only insomuch as they conform to it. The theory itself cannot be confirmed or inferred by their action, for the criterion lies within it and it is the workers who show whether or not they have been lifted to ‘the consciousness of their historical interests’ by acting in accordance with the watchwords which concretize the theory in given circumstances. Or the activity of the masses is an autonomous and creative historical factor, in which case any theoretical conception can be no more than a link in the long process of realizing the revolutionary project. It can, and it even must be overturned by this process. The theory, then, no longer takes for itself history as given in advance and no longer posits itself as the standard of reality but accepts entering truly into history and being jostled and judged by it. All historical privilege, all ‘primogeniture’ is then denied to the organization based on the theory. (Castoriadis 1998, 39)
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The ultimate consequences are lucidly stressed a few lines later:

Thus history was found, once again, to have produced something quite different than what it seemed to be preparing; under the cover of revolutionary theory, the ideology of a force and a social form that was yet to be born—the ideology of bureaucracy—was constituted and began to develop. (Castoriadis 1998, 40)

Fortunately for us, however, the point is not a matter of choice between this kind of theory and no theory at all. The task of binding together reflection and action in a way that those who practice reflection are not separated from all the others—this ‘union,’ as Castoriadis, underlined, is still our task, and it remains to be accomplished: ‘The intention of this union was present at the origin of Marxism. It has remained a mere intention—but, in a new context, it continues, a century later, to define our task’ (Castoriadis 1998, 41). While apologizing for quoting at length, we nevertheless think it is surely worthwhile to reproduce all three of the following paragraphs:

Since the beginning of the recorded history of human thought, innumerable philosophical doctrines have succeeded one another. For as long as we can trace the evolution of societies, political ideas and movements have been present. And all historical societies can be said to have been dominated by the open or latent conflict between social strata or groups, by class struggle. However, in each case, the world-view, the ideas on the organization of society and of power and the actual antagonisms between the classes have been tied together only in an underground, implicit and unconscious manner. And in each case a new philosophy has appeared, one that was going to reply to the problems that the preceding ones had left unresolved, a new political movement established its claims, in a society torn by a new social conflict—and yet always the same one.

In its beginnings, Marxism presented an entirely new demand. The union of philosophy, politics and the real movement of the exploited class in society was not going to be a mere addition but a genuine synthesis, a superior union in which each of the elements would be transformed. Philosophy could be something different and something more than philosophy, more than a refuge from impotence and a solution to human problems in the realm of ideas, to the extent that it would translate its demands into a new politics. Politics could be something other and more than politics, technique, manipulation, the use of power for particular ends, to the extent that it would become the conscious expression of the aspirations and interests of the great majority of people. The struggle of the exploited class could be something other than a defence of particular interests, to the extent that this class would aim at the suppression of all exploitation through the suppression of its own exploitation, at the liberation of all through its own liberation and the establishment of a human community—the highest of abstract ideas to which traditional philosophy had been capable of aspiring.
In this way, Marxism posed the project of a union of reflection and action, of the highest sort of reflection and the most every day action. It set out the project of uniting those who practice this reflection and this action and the others, eliminating the separation between an elite or an avant-garde and the mass of society. In the divided and contradictory world of the present it wanted to see something other than a new version of the eternal incoherence of human societies; it especially wanted to make something else of it. It asked that, in the challenges put to society by the people who live in it, we see more than a raw fact or the workings of fate, the first babblings of the language of a society to come. It aimed at the conscious transformation of society by the autonomous activity of men, whose real situation leads them to struggle against it. And it saw this transformation neither as a blind explosion, nor as an empirical practice, but as a revolutionary praxis, as a conscious activity that remains lucid about itself and is not alienated from itself in a new ‘ideology.’ (Castoriadis 1998, 41)

Undoubtedly, as some ‘heterodox’ Marxists would surely protest, there have always been Marxists (or at least self-professed ones) who were and have been sensitive and wise enough to largely avoid most of these problems. It suffices perhaps to remember cases such as that of a Marxist as lucid and honest as historian Edward P. Thompson (who incidentally knew and very much respected Castoriadis’s objections) to avoid the temptation of absolute demonizing of all those who regard(ed) themselves as Marxists in some way. However, if Thompson and some others only correspond to that type of exception that ‘proves the rule’ (as we think they do), the essence of Castoriadis’s point is totally valid.

Now, let us pose the question: What is to be done? How could we understand ‘theory’ from a radically different perspective? Again, Castoriadis can help us—and again in his characteristically provocative manner:

Theory in itself is a doing, the always uncertain attempt to realize the project of clarifying the world. And this is also true for that supreme or extreme form of theory—philosophy—the attempt to conceive of the world without knowing, either before or after the fact, whether the world is actually conceivable, or even just what conceiving of something exactly means. It is for this reason, moreover, that there is no question of ‘going beyond philosophy by realizing it.’ We ‘go beyond’ philosophy—that is to say, we do not forget it, even less despise it, but set it in place—when we understand that it is simply a project, one which is necessary yet uncertain as to its origin, its import and its fate; not exactly an adventure, perhaps, but also not a chess game, and certainly not the realization of the total transparency of the world for a subject and of the subject for itself. And if philosophy were to set down for a politics that aspired to be both lucid and radical the prior condition of total rigorousness, demanding that this politics be wholly founded on reason, politics would be within its rights to answer: have you then no mirrors at home? Or does your activity consist in setting up standards for others which you are incapable of applying to yourself? (Castoriadis 1998, 49)
A further (and for us crucial) question is, then, the following one: How well have anarchists and other left-libertarians performed when measured by these standards?

As far as anarchists are concerned, we are convinced that they have been by and large—at least intuitively—aware of the flaws, shortcomings, bottlenecks and risks typically embodied in Marxists’ use of ‘theory.’ We are also convinced that this has been one of the reasons why they have been very often partly misunderstood by Marxists (and others), as they seem to be ‘anti-theoretically’ minded. There are other reasons, however, and these belong to the reasons why we are equally convinced that left-libertarians should be self-critical in some respects in the face of the legacy of classical anarchism—as well as convinced that in order to grasp the radical alternative to Marxism we urgently need, we must go beyond (classical) anarchism. Indeed, this is precisely what Castoriadis did, and many more have done since the second half of the twentieth century, by being radically critical of both Marxism and capitalism at the same time but not endorsing the classical anarchist legacy uncritically.¹

As mentioned, anarchists and other left-libertarians have been at least intuitively aware of the problematics typically embodied in Marxists’ use of ‘theory.’ However, even if it is true, this is no excuse for a problem whose existence we should admit, and which Castoriadis criticized as early as the end of the 1940s: ‘Theory’ has often been regarded with suspicion or as something pejorative by many anarchists (‘theory’ as something opposed and inferior to ‘practice’). This refusal of ‘theory’ is based on a prejudice, and a particularly (self-)damaging one, as it narrows our vision and diminishes our ability to put things into context, to make comparisons and to think forward. Voluntarism (in political terms) and empiricism (in philosophical and scientific terms) cannot be but miserable alternatives to Marxist rationalism. It is fair to concede that anarchists and other left-libertarians have had their motives for thinking this way, as ‘theory’ has often served as intellectualized justification for heteronomous power, very often expressed in a hermetic language (and being as such an exclusionary power tool); be that as it may, it is high time to depart from this ‘theory-is-nothing-but-blah-blah-blah’ bias.

This condemnation of theory has very often presented itself as an anti-academic bias, as if science/philosophy could be reduced to products produced by universities and the academic industry (not to mention the fact that not all academic works are bad or useless, right?). An important aspect lies in the fact that Marxists, unlike anarchists, massively entered the academic world during the second half of the twentieth century—and, self-identified (even if not always in a totally conscious way) with the class of bureaucracy, they have been easily co-opted by the state apparatus under ‘real socialism’ (in a rather sophisticated, insidious manner) both in the West and, more recently, in Latin America. But have left-libertarians been ‘pure’ or ‘immac-
ulate,’ as somehow implicitly suggested by many? Admittedly, this lack of interest in systematic, deep engagement in conceptual, theoretical and philosophical discussion does not necessarily have anything to do with ‘purity’ in the sense of ‘intellectual honesty’ and ‘political integrity.’ In many cases ignorance is just that—ignorance (and maybe an excuse for sectarianism, arrogance and dogmatism, problems that have been by no means a monopoly of Marxists).

Yet Marxists have used the empiricism of many anarchists as an alibi to denigrate them as a whole—and that is simply unfair. The problem here is not only that Marxism’s ‘theory’ is, as we have seen, objectionable; the problem is also that left-libertarians have always produced knowledge, and often a sophisticated one—sometimes even in form of high-level theoretical contributions. Failing to acknowledge it (due to intellectual blindness or simply for political reasons, as Marxists have done for almost two centuries, beginning with Marx himself) is ridiculous. Let us consider first the work of Proudhon. Despite all its problems and shortcomings, his several contributions, from the discussion of the ‘federative principle’ to the theories of surplus-value (acknowledged even by a Marxist such as Georges Gurvitch; see Gurvitch 1980), cannot be denied (Souza 2012b; Springer 2014b). Let us now consider those two figures who count among the most consistent authors of the classical period of anarchism: geographers Élisée Reclus and Piotr Kropotkin. As far as Reclus is concerned, it suffices to give as an example his posthumous major work, *L’Homme et la Terre* (Reclus 1905–1908), where we can find several important theoretical insights, to see the extent of his intellectual achievements. Reclus was, among other things, a forerunner of what could be termed ‘critical and dialectical conservationism’ (Souza 2015, 428)—that is, neither an environmental ‘conservationist’ prone to make concessions to capitalism nor a ‘preservationist’ in ‘deep ecology’ style—a pioneer of critical urban studies (his analyses of residential segregation, the role of urbanization and urban networks are remarkable, and to some extent they anticipated several ideas later developed by others, such as Walter Christaller’s ‘central place theory’), a sophisticated thinker about the relationships between ‘evolution’ and ‘revolution.’ The case of Kropotkin is no less important, as he offered, for example, a deep refinement of the ‘federative principle’ by means of his seminal discussion about territorial decentralization and economic-spatial deconcentration (see Kropotkin 2002)—not to mention his other theoretical achievements, such as the theory of ‘mutual aid,’ whose merits were still acknowledged one hundred years later by nothing less than one of the most famous paleontologists of the twentieth century, Stephen Jay Gould. More recently, the works of Murray Bookchin demonstrate the possibility of prolonging the tradition without becoming intellectually fossilized. From his discussions of ‘social ecology’ (Bookchin 2005 and 2007; for the ‘pre-history’ of his approach, see the important essays con-
tained in Bookchin 2004) to his analyses of ‘urbanization without cities’ (Bookchin 1992 and 1995; for an earlier discussion, see Bookchin 1974) to his proposal about a ‘libertarian municipalism’ (see, for instance, Bookchin 1992, 1995 and 2007), Bookchin made many politically important theoretical contributions. Interestingly, in spite of a remarkable record of intellectual achievements, knowledge developed by anarchists and other left-libertarians has commonly been neglected and not seldom attacked and dismissed as irrelevant (for instance, Marx’s and Engels’s derogatory remarks about Reclus, who was reduced by them to the status of a mere ‘ordinary compiler’). Is it not possible to see in this kind of devaluation a kind of elitarianism? ‘Theory’ is something politically crucial, provided it is intimately connected with practice in the context of praxis.

Certainly, left-libertarians have presented some important weaknesses, and they can and should be addressed not only by political agitation and organizing but also by reflection and study. For instance, the domain of political economy is a veritable Achilles heel of left-libertarian thought, as it has not been developed with the same richness as Marxian versions, even if such latent potential exists. However, their weaknesses and strengths are curiously connected with each other: Though there is an evident lack of deep knowledge in terms of economic processes and factors on the part of many left-libertarian authors (a situation that has generated some inconvenient dependencies, such as Bakunin’s less critical acceptance of Marx’s economic theories, while divergence between these thinkers was largely confined to the realm of explicit power relations and also derived from a clash between egos), left-libertarians’ usual refusal of economism has often been narrowly interpreted as a weakness when it is actually a strength. Considered from this point of view, left-libertarians are not behind Marxists; at least to a large extent, they are actually ahead. Such an impression, obviously, should not lead to any arrogance: Self-criticism is absolutely necessary if left-libertarians want to play an increasingly relevant role in the future. But they have demonstrated a path that is an alternative to econocentrism, and existing society more generally, since the nineteenth century in terms of both theoretical and philosophical reflection, even if very often only in an ‘embryonic’ or rudimentary way—and this advantage cannot be underestimated.

Beyond making libertarian theorizing deeper, wider and infused with greater density (in order to cover a whole set of subjects to some extent neglected by left-libertarians), it is also necessary to achieve it without entering theoreticism, elitarianism and scientism. It is possible, though not easy. Reclus and Kropotkin represent fascinating examples, and their works are filled with plenty of ideas and insights that are still useful for us. But we do not share their time, and so their approaches to subjects such as the idea of ‘progress,’ the role of science and technology, and the importance of Com- tanean positivism are similarly not shared by us. Castoriadis and Bookchin
correspond to more contemporary examples and sources of inspiration. In fact, the left-libertarian ‘family’ includes anarchism (from the classics to more contemporary attempts to slightly update the classical heritage without making any major revision, such as Latin American ‘especifismo’), as well as streams that are significantly different from classical anarchism, such as Bookchin’s neo-anarchism (later termed ‘communalism’) and Castoriadis’s radically anti-Marxist ‘project of autonomy.’

The reasons for distinguishing between anarchists in a strict sense and some heterodox representatives of the left-libertarian ‘family’ are above all conceptual and theoretical in nature, despite some practical implications. Nevertheless—and this is a crucial point on which Marcelo Lopes de Souza has insisted for many years (see, for instance, Souza 2014)—the (left-)libertarian alternative (both to the capitalist and to the Marxist approaches to society, history and the production of space) includes a wide range of perspectives, all of them belonging to the same ethical and political universe. It is for this exact reason that Simon Springer (2014a, 306) writes:

You can call this ‘anarchism,’ ‘critical anti-hegemonic iconoclasm,’ ‘paradigm destabilizing recalcitrant analysis,’ ‘non-conformist insurgent praxis,’ or ‘don’t tell me what to do theory’ for all I care. The point is, we are talking about a mind-set of breaking archetypes, tearing up blueprints, and scribbling over leitmotifs.

In terms of commitment to self-management, horizontality and decentralism, and above all in terms of an anti-authoritarian/anti-statist ethos, it could be said that classical anarchists, neo-anarchists and ‘libertarian autonomists’ all speak the same ‘language’ regardless of their specific divergences or ‘dialects.’

Even if there are and there must be (in the name of coherence) strong connections between our concepts/theories, on the one hand, and our practices, on the other, there are not necessarily fundamental disagreements between, say, anarchists and neo-anarchists (or even ‘libertarian autonomists’) in terms of practice, and by no means automatic ones (in the sense of being automatically or mechanically derived from conceptual and theoretical differences). Convergences have been much more important than divergences between all kinds of left-libertarians. This is already clear when we consider the old anarchists of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, and it is still evident within the broader framework of the left-libertarian thought of the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. After all, what differentiates left-libertarians from each other is not a matter of aim/end, but rather a matter of emphasis (more on certain aspects than on others) or, in some cases, even just of aesthetic and
stylistic preferences and idiosyncrasies, sometimes maybe also of tactics (more than of strategy, though these also exist).

Nonetheless, from a non-dogmatic perspective, a few controversies are unavoidable; and they should be regarded as highly positive, as they show the vitality of the left-libertarian thought. The idea of a ‘society without power,’ for instance, as central as it can be for many in terms of identity, was consistently criticized by Castoriadis, who objected that it represented too narrow an understanding of the concept of ‘power’ (usually reduced by classical anarchists to state power, or at least to heteronomous power in general).\(^3\) On this basis, considering that a society entirely ‘without power’ would be no more than an ‘incoherent fiction’ (Castoriadis 1983, 16), he proposed instead of ‘anarchy’ the concept of ‘autonomy.’ Nowadays, autonomy is a key concept even among anarchists, whether aware of Castoriadis’s work or not. Incidentally, the narrowness of the typical classical anarchist understanding of concepts such as ‘power’ (not reducible to a possession of the state), ‘law’ (not reducible to formal, state-sponsored laws), ‘government’ (not reducible to the state apparatus and heteronomy) and ‘authority’ (not reducible to heteronomous forms of authority and to authoritarianism) were criticized not only by Castoriadis but also by neo-anarchist Murray Bookchin.\(^4\)

A further flaw (but hardly a true controversy nowadays) is related to the epistemological and methodological value of positivism (and the example of natural sciences) for understanding society: While praised by Piotr Kropotkin as detrimental to dialectical thought, positivism (and scientism) has been refuted by many authors (among them some brilliant Marxists like Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, main figures of the Frankfurt School). Additionally, the belief according to which science and modern technology are essentially good (as keys to ‘progress’), shared by classical anarchists such as Kropotkin and (in a more sophisticated way) Élisée Reclus, has been largely discredited. In short, anarchism, as we have received it from the classics, cannot be treated un-historically (as Marxists have very often done with Marx’s legacy). Nevertheless, beyond all possible and necessary updating and rectifications, a core of principles, values and traditions of ethical and practical-political (‘praxical’) importance remains as a powerful bond between all those who share the left-libertarian field. And one thing is certain: Anarchism was the first representative of the left-libertarian ‘family,’ and it still is its most well known representative.

All these discussions show that the torch that has been carried since the mid-nineteenth century by thinkers like Proudhon and Bakunin continues to illuminate our discourses and actions. The flame that has been kept alive for many generations and in many countries is very strong today not only politically but also intellectually. At this right moment, history is being written by social movements, protests and resistances that are largely or basically in-
spired by a left-libertarian ethos—a praxis that is directly or indirectly, deeply or superficially animated by theoretical ideas debated by many people at many times and many places.

The scholars(-activists) whose contributions are contained in this volume work in and/or come from different countries, where they are conducting research and contribute to conceptual and theoretical advances about the spatial dimension of resistance against heteronomy (and of building autonomous, non-authoritarian alternatives). Owing to this geography of our authors, they bring to the subject different sets of experiences and approaches. That is what we envisaged from the very beginning when we first conceived of this project. We wanted it to be geographical in the double sense of being about geography, but also written from a broad dispersion of authors. Though Anglophone authors are overrepresented here—a problem difficult to solve especially for practical reasons, although all three editors of Transgressing Frontiers have been committed at least to mitigating it, dealing with problems such as the unexpected withdrawal of the contributions of three non-Anglophone colleagues—it would be unfair to say that an Anglophone (or Eurocentric more generally) approach clearly dominates this volume. In a very consequent way, our authors are usually far away from Eurocentrism (something that even continues to plague the left more often than not), and they sometimes even try to question the very pillars of Eurocentrism in an explicit and systematic way, as the chapters by Adam Lewis and Vanessa Sloan Morgan so eloquently demonstrate.

The first chapter is by Marcelo Lopes de Souza. It is a contribution to more conceptual clarity regarding the term ‘libertarian,’ in order to avoid a too narrow interpretation of the ‘(left-)libertarian family’ as well as to help in overcoming a specific (but increasingly influential) U.S.-American bias regarding that term. Who are the ‘libertarians’? Is their message (still) reducible to anarchism? How have different political cultures perceived the contents and meanings of this contested word? Who has contested it, and what is actually at stake? The author has tried to offer a discussion around these issues that helps in expanding our horizons beyond the usual clichés.

The next chapter on non-domination, governmentality and the care of the self is by Nathan Eisenstadt, whose analysis is based on a four-year autoethnographic engagement with two anarchist social centres and associated projects in Bristol (England). As the terms ‘governmentality’ and ‘care of the self’ already suggest, Michel Foucault’s thought is one of the pillars of his arguments; however, he develops a rich and complex dialogue with several other authors (late twentieth-century Black Feminist critique plays an important role here) and looks for inspiration in contemporary anarchist anti-
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oppressive practices such as social centres. Refreshing in comparison to the narrow understanding of ‘government’ that has been held by most anarchists in the past (and even some anarchists in the present), Nathan acknowledges that counter-governmentalities are still governmentalities. As he concisely puts it:

Anarchists are concerned with the taking and re-making of space and territory: from squats, social centres and community gardens to factories and farms. They are concerned with the cultivation of self-governing subjects: from consensus decision-making at occupied encampments and self-organization in the workplace, to the ethics of everyday-life including dietary choices, conduct in relation to others and in the cultivation of a liberating relationship to oneself. These practices require a certain ‘bridling of the passions,’ ‘work on’ or ‘care for the self’ in order to attain a particular state of being to which anarchists aspire: non-dominating and non-dominated. Freedom requires self-discipline. Moreover, as an assemblage of discourses and practices that aspires to universality, anarchism urges others to discipline themselves: to participate, to take control, to resist, to drop-out, to rage, to organize, to get empowered.

Thus, according to Nathan, ‘[a]narchism is a mode of governing through freedom.’

The chapter by Gerónimo Barrera de la Torre and Anthony Ince is a dense, yet beautifully inspired, contribution that deals both with theory/epistemology and with pedagogy, as it explores ‘the possibilities of a “post-statist” epistemology in geography and its possible contributions to a radical pedagogical and methodological agenda within the discipline and social sciences more generally.’ As a continuation of the themes explored in Volume 1 of this series (The Radicalization of Pedagogy), it is clearly a relevant contribution both to a (political-)pedagogical debate and to the advancement of theoretical and epistemological reflections about the links between geography and (left-)libertarian political thought. This framework draws mainly from anarchist thinkers, but also from other writers such as Bouaventura de Sousa Santos and Bolivar Echeverría. Agreeing with Maia Rammath, Gerónimo and Anthony contend that in spite of being contrary to colonialism, as a project that appeared within European modernity, anarchism has specific historical and geographical roots, hence being necessary to ‘decolonize our concept of anarchism.’ Again quoting Maia Rammath, and in line with Souza’s (2014) insistence of libertarian plurality, the authors then suggest that ‘anarchism should be conceived as just one manifestation of a large family of egalitarian and emancipatory principles and projects. In a decolonial approach to anarchism’s Occidental roots, [Rammath] considers that “we could locate the Western anarchist tradition as one contextually specific manifestation among a larger—indeed global—tradition of anti-authoritarian, egalitarian thought/praxis, of a universal human urge toward emancipation,'
which also occurs in many other forms in many other contexts. Something else is then the reference point for us, instead of us being the reference point of everything else. This is a deeply decolonizing move.” Erin Araujo’s main source of inspiration, the Mexican Zapatistas—who can by no means be reduced to the label ‘anarchists,’ while nonetheless clearly being libertarian and anti-authoritarian at the same time—demonstrates this point very nicely.

In her chapter Erin asks the question ‘What Do We Resist When We Resist the State?’ Basing her approach on a distinction between ‘strong theory’ and ‘weak theory,’ she says that ‘strong theory is recognized as the use of powerful discourse based in evidence sought through simplified, clear, nonmessy descriptions of events that fall easily into clean categories and explanations, while weak theory embraces nuance, thick description and emergent spaces that may not necessarily be clear, clean discourses, but rather a mixture of openness and exploration in the research process.’ She also claims that ‘weak theory’ is particularly useful and promising regarding the task of ‘embracing horizontal forms of research.’ In a fashion similar to that of Gerónimo Barrera de la Torre and Anthony Ince, she also engages in a dialogue with post-colonial thinkers from the Global South such as Walter Mignolo and Boaventura de Sousa Santos (the latter of which is actually an ‘in-between scholar,’ a Portuguese intellectual who has developed strong ties with Brazil) in order to better understand the possibilities of surpassing a colonial and strict Western/Eurocentric way of thinking. The spatial practices of Mexican Zapatistas finally serve here as vivid illustrations and sources of inspiration.

For their chapter, Nick Clare and Victoria Habermehl deal with a peculiar and particularly difficult task: To bring ‘communication theory’ (a heterogeneous set of approaches and ideas rather than a single theory) and anarchist geography (from several points of view an even more plural reality) together within the framework of an attempt at nurturing a dialogue between anarchism (or [left]-libertarian thought and praxis) and so-called ‘autonomous Marxism.’ What potentially makes this task difficult, and perhaps even a little risky, especially from a left-libertarian point of view, is indirectly answered by the following chapter. Be that as it may, to the extent that they recognize that ‘communication theory fails to properly engage with any form of space, let alone an anarchist/anti-capitalist approach,’ their engagement with the commons and their ‘wish to develop a theory that engages with these spatialities in producing communication: communization’ surely deserve attention on the part of left-libertarians.

Although the kind of dialogue envisaged by Clare and Habermehl can be at least partly fruitful, the difficulties that are historically implicated (and recently updated) in a largely hypothetical dialogue between Marxists and libertarians (a dialogue that has been actually neglected or avoided by both sides) are precisely the subject of the chapter titled “‘Feuding Brothers’?”
written by Marcelo Lopes de Souza. The author examines the various aspects of the challenge Marxism represents for left-libertarians today, focusing especially on the difficult relationship between libertarian and Marxist socio-spatial researchers and activists. In terms of the respective intellectual heritages, ‘ideally,’ the author states, ‘Marxists would give libertarians due credit for idea(1)s such as horizontality, self-management and radical decentralization (as well as for criticisms against “socialist” statecraft, “dictatorship of the proletariat,” and so on); in turn, libertarians should show more interest in political economy (but without falling into the trap of Marxist economism, as Castoriadis brilliantly warned). Furthermore, libertarians of all sorts would do well to recognize classical anarchism’s shortcomings (“naturalism,” narrowness of its understanding of concepts such as “power,” “law,” “authority” and “government”).’ Unfortunately, as the author stresses, we do not (and never will) live in a perfect world. ‘Therefore, this kind of expectation is unrealistic, and such a delusion can do libertarians a big harm in this moment of history, when they are potentially strong as never before since the 1930s.’ This is not to deny the importance of dialogue, but just a plea for non-naivety on the part of libertarians.

The next chapter also deals with a difficult dialogue, but this time within the boundaries of left-libertarian thought itself. In ‘The Citizen and the Nomad,’ Ben Pauli focuses on and discusses the differences but also complementarity of the ideas developed by two (neo-)anarchists, Murray Bookchin (who towards the end of his life preferred to call himself a ‘communalist’) and Hakim Bey. From our own viewpoint, the conflict between Bookchin and Bey should be understood in the context of a conflict between generations, although Ben’s contribution is less explicit in this regard. Bookchin, who was born in 1921, grew up in the 1920s and 1930s, a time when classical anarchism was still very much alive. Bey (alias Peter Lamborn Wilson), in contrast, was born in 1945 and was politically socialized in a very different world, being a teenager and a young man during the decisive years of the raising of the ‘rebels-without-a-cause’ generation (1950s) and Western counterculture (1960s and early 1970s). Every piece of knowledge is deeply rooted in culture, geography and history, and so it is also ‘situated.’ Bookchin’s concerns and attacks (against not only Bey but also what he called ‘lifestyle anarchism’ in general) can be seen as a manifestation of discomfort on the part of an activist forged within the framework of a working-class milieu in the face of more fragmentary (and individualistic) manifestations of anarchism that are themselves the expression of an age characterized by disillusion and, especially in comparison with the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, also by pessimism and conformism. Bookchin misses ‘revolution,’ though not in a Leninist sense, and is very suspicious about the glorification of fragmentary insurrections. Bey, on the other side, instinctively understands some aspects of our age better than Bookchin and
adapts himself with fewer difficulties. That is not to suggest that Bookchin was a sort of anachronistic classical anarchist lost in the second half of the twentieth century; on the contrary, Bookchin’s contributions to the critical reflection on ecology and technology, his very positive valuation of social movements other than the workers’ movement, and his sensitivity towards the potentials and limits of our big cities in terms of re-invigorating/re-creating direct democracy practices show very well the essentially contemporaneous character of his major contributions. However, Bookchin could not easily accept what he understood, perhaps even correctly, as a rather defensive or (even worse) individualistic and ‘aestheticizing’ posture.

If Murray Bookchin can be criticized for a certain lack of sensitivity in terms of some limits (and perhaps also potentialities) of our time, Hakim Bey can be criticized for being largely an adaptive expression of this same time, in spite of all the radical elements and intentions present in his thought. But beyond these criticisms, the question about prospects and possibilities for resistance remains open, and surely both Bookchin and Bey can (on the basis of a re-contextualization of the virtues and limits of their ideas) contribute to our efforts in this direction. Perhaps some concrete examples of contemporary emancipatory praxis, such as the ‘Zapatist territory’ in Chiapas (regarded as inspiring by Bey, as Ben Pauli shows), can help in building some bridges between Bookchin’s and Bey’s approaches to socio-spatial transformation. At the end of the day, we can confirm again and again that good radical theory is illuminated all the time by radical praxis. We must bear in mind this intellectual and political principle particularly when dealing with the two next contributions: Vanessa Sloan Morgan’s and Adam Lewis’s accounts of indigenous resistance and the need for anarchism not only to be radically anti-colonialist but also to purge itself from colonial residues.

In fact, the two following chapters deal with the same subject—colonialism and its long-lasting effects—and show a remarkable mutual complementarity. Both are a mixture of theoretical discussion and empirical evidence from North America. Vanessa Sloan Morgan goes first, where she discusses the importance of making it clear from an anarchist perspective that ‘colonialism, and therefore capitalism, remains at the centre of socio-spatial state institutions.’ More specifically, she wants to investigate the entrapment involved in a certain logic of violence and silence, and with this purpose she explores the ‘culturally hegemonic, relationally ontological form of settler colonialism that is at the core of Indigenous-settler relations.’ She wants to highlight the strong relationship that must exist between anarchist and anti-colonial thought and praxis, insisting that only on the basis of a clear anti-colonial commitment can anarchism be truly coherent. For his part, Adam Lewis develops a dilaceratingly (self-)critical reflection that is even more viscerally opposed to granting any privileges to ‘settlers.’ In a chapter of broad significance, he offers readers what can be understood as a deeply
critical reflection on settler colonialism, having the United States and Canada as ‘sources of inspiration.’ Interacting with the Indigenous resurgence movements across Canada and the United States and the attempts to formulate Indigenous futures outside the state and capitalism, Adam shows that there is no possible emancipatory project (at least not a coherent one) that can be committed to decolonization while sparing capitalism and statecraft—in a nutshell, the very pillars of our heteronomous world. Adam Lewis wisely and acutely warns that ‘without attention to the histories of settler colonialism, and enduring Indigenous resistance, anarchism is overlooking a foundational structure of oppression and domination (and privilege for anarchist settlers) while also pushing aside engagement with some of the people who know most about living outside and confronting the state and capital.’ In light of this, he then goes on to conclude that ‘[a]narchism needs to develop a critique of settler colonialism (and, more specifically, relationships to land, place and context), so we can more effectively fight where we are, but also so our methods of resistance and hopes for the future don’t come at the expense of others who were resisting long before us.’

The final chapter—this time dealing with the presence of ‘invasive’ beings—is by Nick Garside. As he says, ‘In nearly all cases referring to feral or invasive animals that I examined, there was a common theme that meant feral animals, aliens and non-natives were judged as unnatural (and thus unwelcome) outsiders and, as such, a disturbance to be dealt with by whatever means necessary. However, the discourse ‘autochthoneous’ (‘native,’ ‘indigenous’) versus ‘exotic’ is a power discourse full of consequences. The reason most often given for eradication of the individual species is preservation of the ‘integrity’ of the collective environment, while much of the language (‘authenticity,’ ‘purity,’ ‘natural,’ ‘native’) associated with conservation projects has rightly been challenged and shown to have xenophobic or even racist connotations. However, as Nick asks, ‘How could anyone not want to save the integrity of the ecological/social/cultural community?’ As we see, this question embodies an ideological trap. Nick’s viewpoint is against this logic, where he looks to a ‘disruptive promise’ that can emerge from claiming the language of the ‘invasive’ as a kind of political metaphor for envisioning one’s political agency: ‘[T]he disruptive promise of being feral can become a radically democratic way of participating in modern democracy. . . . I consider feral a border or boundary term that describes a creature that is neither wild nor domestic, and at times both wild and domestic—never conforming to either simplistic classification. As such, one who is feral is invasive.’ In a world full of tensions in the wake of (partly exogenously ignited or nurtured) civil wars and their many refugees, not to mention immigrants driven by famine or ‘natural’ disasters, Nick argues that ‘[f]eral citizens know they do not have the answer to democracy’s many paradoxes and tensions, so, along with being interested in expanding the
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public sphere and revitalizing democratic culture, they are perpetual learners who perform as observers and active listeners as well as storytellers and actors.’ This is a perspective that promotes a highly stimulating intellectual and political enterprise.

Undoubtedly, many challenges lie ahead—and numerous gaps remain within the landscapes of left-libertarian geography that wait to be filled. But it is hoped that this volume will be of assistance for all left-libertarian scholars and scholars-activists who want to meet those challenges with the purpose of helping advance radical theory and praxis in the spirit of revolt.

NOTES

1. Alongside Castoriadis (1922–1997), several other relevant names could be remembered here, such as neo-anarchist (and later self-identified as a ‘communalist’) Murray Bookchin (1921–2006). By the way, one of us (Marcelo Lopes de Souza) has not regarded himself as an anarchist in a proper or strict sense, but rather as a ‘(left-)libertarian autonomist’ particularly inspired by Castoriadis’s ‘project of autonomy.’ (A brilliant introduction to this ‘project’ can be found in Castoriadis [1990]. Anglophone readers can also benefit, for instance, from the text ‘The Logic of Mmagas and the Question of Autonomy,’ included in The Castoriadis Reader edited by David Ames Curtis [Castoriadis 1997], and, of course, from The Imaginary Institution of Society, Castoriadis’s magnum opus, also available in English [see Castoriadis 1998].)

2. We should not forget that disagreements are nothing new among left-libertarians. The sometimes explicit disagreements between Proudhonian mutualistes, Bakuninian collectivists, Kropotkinian anarcho-communitists, and so on testify to the differences among classical anarchists themselves (we can call ‘classical anarchism’ the thinkers, political forms of organizing and practical experiments carried out particularly between the middle of the nineteenth century and the 1930s; after the Second World War, classical anarchism has been only residualy present as a political force, and its intellectual legacy has been more or less strongly re-framed—apart from a few very dogmatic people who insist in living in the past). Those who one of us (Souza 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2014) has called ‘neo-anarchists’ (such as Murray Bookchin) depart from the classics on several important points (in Bookchin’s case, both the interpretation of concepts like ‘government’ and ‘power’ and the approach to some organizational or strategic aspects such as the value of consensus, strongly relativized by him) while at the same time maintaining an explicit commitment to the anarchist tradition. In so doing, neo-anarchists stand in contrast to a thinker such as Castoriadis, who did not see himself as representing the continuance of this tradition—in spite of the fact that there are, in essence, many more convergences than divergences between Castoriadis’s projet d’autonomie and the anarchist tradition. From the viewpoint of Marcelo Lopes de Souza (not shared by Castoriadis himself, who was unfair towards anarchists sometimes), the ‘project of autonomy’ basically corresponds to an updated and particularly sophisticated version of the century-old political project of a radically free society. Last but not least, it must be stressed that, as the left-libertarian lineage cannot be mistaken with the ‘right-libertarian’ approach to society (a grotesque, typically U.S.-American species. For continental Europeans and Latin-Americans, ‘libertarian’ does not even need the word ‘left-‘, as it is implied that libertaire [Fr.], libertario [Span. and Ital.], libertário [Port.] and libertär [Germ.] traditionally do not have anything to do with right-wing, hyper-liberal tendencies—see Souza’s chapter “Libertarian,” libertaire, libertario in this volume), similarly Castoriadis’s approach to autonomy cannot be mistaken with Marxist ‘autonomism’ (an interesting oxymoron!) as represented by authors such as John Holloway, who wrote a book about ‘changing the world without taking (state) power’ without giving any credit at all to those who first developed this view: the anarchists.

3. ‘Anarchy’ comes from the Greek word anarchia (ἀναρχία), which can be understood as a society ‘without rulers’ (= an [not, without] + arkhos [ruler, leader, authority]). In practice, it
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has been also understood as ‘powerlessness’ and ‘lawlessness.’ On Castoriadis’s critique of the idea of a society entirely ‘without power,’ see, for instance, Castoriadis (1983, 16); on his widening of the concept of ‘power,’ see Castoriadis (1990).

4. The following passage is highly illustrative of Bookchin’s broad perspective: ‘[A]narchists have long regarded every government as a state and condemned it accordingly—a view that is a recipe for the elimination of any organized social life whatever. While the state is the instrument by which an oppressive and exploitative class regulates and coercively controls the behavior of an exploited class by a ruling class, a government—or better still, a polity—is an ensemble of institutions designed to deal with the problems of consociational life in an orderly and hopefully fair manner. Every institutionalized association that constitutes a system for handling public affairs—with or without the presence of a state—is necessarily a government. By contrast, every state, although necessarily a form of government, is a force for class repression and control. Annoying as it must seem to Marxists and anarchists alike, the cry for a constitution, for a responsible and a responsive government, and even for law or nomos has been clearly articulated—and committed to print!—by the oppressed for centuries against the capricious rule exercised by monarchs, nobles, and bureaucrats. The libertarian opposition to law, not to speak of government as such, has been as silly as the image of a snake swallowing its tail. What remains in the end is nothing but a retinal afterimage that has no existential reality’ (Bookchin 2007, 95).

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Introduction


Chapter One

‘Libertarian,’ Libertaire, Libertario . . .

Conceptual Construction and Cultural Diversity (and Vice Versa)

Marcelo Lopes de Souza

This short chapter was originally intended as a section (titled ‘For the Sake of Clarity (and Justice): Who Are the ‘(Left-)Libertarians’?) of my chapter “Feuding Brothers”? Left-Libertarians, Marxists and Socio-Spatial Research at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century’ (see this volume). Following a suggestion made by our publishers, however, I decided to make that other chapter more concise by means of transforming this conceptual discussion into an autonomous piece. Considering the importance of this terminological/conceptual debate beyond the borders of the specific problem analysed in that text on the complex and difficult relationship between (left-)libertarians and Marxists, an autonomous existence of this piece can be of advantage by means of shedding light upon a crucial challenge in terms of intercultural communication inside the (left-)libertarian field.

Maybe it is a surprise for some, but ‘libertarian’ is an astonishingly polysemous word. For several reasons, this is not a minor question, and several misunderstandings have arisen from this polysemey—a phenomenon largely connected with cultural diversity. Although it is certainly not the case of simply advocating some culturally embedded discursive context detrimental to others, it is surely important to clarify what different authors and peoples/(political) cultures understand and have understood as ‘libertarian.’ This task is necessary not only because the meaning of this word has been very often reduced to anarchism, especially to what I have called ‘classical anarchism’—an oversimplified interpretation that must be challenged—but also because this term has gotten a peculiar meaning among Anglophone
people, particularly in the United States. This U.S.-specific meaning strongly contrasts with the one that has shaped the continental European (French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and even German) and Latin American traditions.

The French word *libertaire* was coined by writer and poet Joseph Déjacque in a letter to Pierre-Joseph Proudhon written in 1857, in which he criticizes the latter for the scandalously misogynous aspects of his thought (see Déjacque 2014). Since then, ‘anarchist’ and ‘libertarian’ are terms which have inextricably connected with each other to the point of being regarded practically as synonymous in almost all countries.

A broader, more plastic view, however, is possible—and indeed convenient or even necessary. In my works (see, for instance, Souza 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2014, and 2015), the adjective *(left-)libertarian* covers a wider spectrum of political-philosophical streams and types of political and spatial practice than that set of authors, movements and experiences directly related to anarchism in a strict sense. In fact, it covers the set of approaches to society which historically evolved within the framework of what can be called a ‘two-front-war,’ in the context of which (left-)libertarians have theoretically and politically fought simultaneously against capitalism and against ‘authoritarian’ approaches to socialism (above all, Marxism’s statism and centralism). In spite of the essential convergence of all left-libertarian positions within the framework of this ‘two-front-war,’ the aforementioned set of approaches has become increasingly heterogeneous since the middle of the twentieth century, as several conceptual and theoretical aspects and premises shared by nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century anarchists have begun to be criticized or strongly relativized from new libertarian perspectives. In other words, left-libertarian thought and praxis should not be taken as synonymous with anarchism in a strict sense which I have proposed calling classical anarchism (whose maximum influence stretched from the second half of the nineteenth century to the 1930s); we must also include in the left-libertarian ‘galaxy’ the approaches that have been developed since the second half of the twentieth century and which tacitly or explicitly challenge the classical heritage in various degrees, mainly encompassing the several forms of neo-anarchism (e.g., Murray Bookchin’s ‘libertarian municipalism’) and autonomism (brilliantly represented by Cornelius Castoriadis’s ‘projet d’autonomie’).

As I already pointed out in Souza (2014), classical anarchism, regardless of its enduring importance as a source of inspiration in some respects, has also presented several limitations, which were stressed for instance by both U.S.-American neo-anarchist Murray Bookchin and Graeco-French autono-
mist Cornelius Castoriadis many years ago (from partly convergent and partly different perspectives, but always from an essentially [left-]libertarian viewpoint, as both were at the same time radically anti-capitalist and consistently anti-Marxist minded). One of their objections is that one related to the understanding of concepts such as power, law and government. In contrast to classical anarchists, who typically used the term ‘power’ as synonymous with something necessarily bad, Bookchin refused to reduce power to heteronomous power (i.e., structural power asymmetry, control, verticality). Symptomatically, among his criticisms against Foucault was precisely the fact that the latter assigned in a way more or less similar to classical anarchists’ style a pejorative connotation to the word which corresponds, in Bookchin’s (1995, 228–29) opinion, to a pernicious narrow-mindedness. Castoriadis (1983) expressed a similar disapproval of this kind of conceptualization typical of classical anarchism, and in a number of works he showed the reasons why concepts like ‘power’ and ‘law’ deserve to be understood in a non-reductionist way—a position that far from being detrimental to a radically anti-capitalist approach in fact enhances a deeper grasping of the circumstances under which human emancipation is realistically possible (see Castoriadis 1983, 1990, 1996). Bookchin also pleaded for a broader, more flexible understanding, admonishing orthodox anarchists for making the mistake of reducing the meaning of concepts such as ‘government’ and ‘law’ to the state apparatus.5

Besides all that, there is a further, broader problem that Bookchin apparently did not become aware of: the exaggerated attachment of classical anarchism to physis (i.e., Greek ‘nature’ in the strict sense of ‘first nature,’ erste Natur)—in other words, its ‘naturalism’—and its underestimation or even its relative neglect of nomos (i.e., Greek ‘law,’ broadly understood as rules, norms, habits and customs, or as the proper domain of society and culture in an even broader sense). It is not difficult to see that this problem conditioned several of classical anarchism’s limitations. Convinced that the ‘laws of nature’ decisively influence human behaviour and condition human possibilities from the very beginning, classical anarchists typically believed ‘harmony’ and ‘progress’ could be achieved through learning and respecting these ‘laws’; society should, hence, adjust to them, and the main problem of state power, laws and authority (or, in direct spatial terms, state boundaries and socio-spatial identities conditioned by them) would lie in the supposed fact that they were not ‘natural’ enough. This kind of ‘naturalizing’ of society, which actually goes far beyond vulgar ‘environmental determinism,’ can be clearly illustrated by Piotr Kropotkin’s case. For him, ‘mutual aid’ among human beings is as much a fact of ‘human nature’ as it is a component of nature as a whole.6 Considering this, it is not a surprise that Kropotkin explicitly rejected dialectics, advocating instead positivism and championing the inductive method of experimental sciences within the framework of an
approach to nature and society according to which science and natural science are ultimately synonymous. This ‘naturalizing’ way of thinking, systematically defended by Kropotkin but strongly present in most of classical anarchism altogether, is also a factor behind beliefs such as those related to the teleology of ‘progress,’ the optimistic (and we should add unhistorical) view of an immutable and essentially good ‘human nature’ and the belief according to which ‘power’ and ‘law’ are always to be seen as something negative—the alternative being a society supposedly based on ‘spontaneity,’ and it is clear that this ‘naturalistic’ ideology prevented classical anarchists from seeing that rules (even self-imposed and self-managed ones, that is autonomy [autos + nomos]) are unavoidable, and that explicit, easily and regularly changeable rules are preferable than the insistence on a metaphysical, unrealistic state of ‘pure spontaneity.’ It is interesting to notice that even Élisée Reclus, a very sophisticated author in several respects, had his creativity restricted by the chains of a largely (though increasingly relativized throughout his life) physis-oriented approach.

Murray Bookchin had shown reservations towards the nostalgic traditionalism of many anarchists. In a very symptomatic way, at the beginning of a lecture in 1980, he announced his intention with that speech: ‘My remarks are intended to emphasize the extreme importance today of viewing Anarchism in terms of the changing social contexts of our era—not as an ossified doctrine that belongs to one or another set of European thinkers, valuable as their views may have been in their various times and places’ (Bookchin 2012, np). As far as Castoriadis is concerned, his criticisms against (classical) anarchism date back to the late 1940s and comprise objections against anarchism’s individualism (a real problem in many cases, but which was grossly oversimplified and exaggerated by Castoriadis) and against the typically reductionist understanding of concepts such as ‘power’ and ‘law.’ Bookchin and Castoriadis, on the one hand, and also many social movements such as Mexican Zapatistas, on the other, illustrate the necessity of widening the scope of the term ‘libertarian’ in order to do justice to contemporary reflections and forms of emancipatory praxis.

Last but not least, a further clarification is very much needed, envisaging U.S.-American readers. While ‘libertarian’ is a word inextricably connected with leftist traditions in all Latin languages (and even in German), it has often a different meaning in English, particularly in the United States.

The English adjective libertarian was apparently coined at the end of the eighteenth century by late-Enlightenment freethinkers, initially meaning just an anti-deterministic belief in free will. However, while in France libertaire eventually became strongly associated with anarchism, in the course of time
a quite different meaning has developed on the other side of the Atlantic. In the United States, where political-cultural ideas and values have been inextricably conditioned by a long tradition of individualism and privatism, the term libertarian often designates a kind of ultraliberal ideology and the defence of a ‘minimum state’ commonly in the absence of any trace of criticism against possessive individualism and capitalism, as exemplified by bizarre phenomena such as ‘anarcho-capitalism’ and the Libertarian Party (formed in 1971). As a consequence, it is usually necessary in the United States to differentiate between ‘right-libertarian’ and ‘left-libertarian’—a precaution that is virtually superfluous or even confusing in most other countries. In fact, the historical role of individualism and privatism in U.S.-American political culture has been so overwhelming that even anarchism in a strict sense has been often represented in that country by ‘individualist anarchists’ like Benjamin Tucker and, to a large extent, even Emma Goldman. Be that as it may, it is important to notice that there have been outstanding Anglophone thinkers and activists who have always used the term in its original, left-libertarian meaning, such as George Woodcock, Murray Bookchin, and Noam Chomsky.

In light of all the above considerations, from a Latin American (or continental European) perspective, the struggle over the meaning of the term ‘libertarian’ is worthwhile.

NOTES

1. Nonetheless, we must keep in mind that nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century anarchism was by no means homogeneous, as the differences between Proudhonians, collectivists, anarcho-communists and anarcho-syndicalists demonstrate.

2. Some Anglophone authors have recently used the term ‘post-anarchism’ to make reference to contemporary, post-classical libertarian contributions. Apparently, they ignore that the Latin prefix ‘post’ does not suggest renewal, but rather overcoming, as if ‘post-anarchism’ were something totally different from anarchism instead of a renewal of the anarchist tradition.

3. Bookchin saw himself as a kind of anarchist during several decades (for this reason, it would be appropriate to see him as a neo-anarchist rather than simply as an ‘anarchist,’ considering that this word has usually implied affiliation or a very strong connection with classical anarchism), until he—misunderstood and attacked by orthodox anarchists—finally broke with it towards the end of his life (see Bookchin 2007, 90), then beginning to call himself a ‘communalist.’ As for Castoriadis, he never understood himself as an anarchist; his objections against classical anarchism (see Castoriadis 1949, 1983) seemed to prevent him from seeking the same kind of ‘conflictive membership’ that characterized Bookchin’s positions for many years. Nevertheless, Castoriadis’s approach to autonomy does not have anything to do with ‘autonomism’ in its neo-Marxist sense (usual in Anglophone countries since the last decade and largely inspired by Italian autonomia operaria of the 1970s), as it is clearly both anti-capitalist and anti-Marxist (see, for instance, Castoriadis 1975, 1983, 1990, 1996, 2005); in order to avoid misunderstandings, it is perhaps preferable to refer to Castoriadis’s ‘project of autonomy’ as libertarian autonomism. Both Bookchin’s ‘communalism’ and Castoriadis’s ‘project of autonomy’ demonstrate that it is perfectly possible to be libertarian in the broader, aforementioned sense, even if more or less clearly outside anarchist tradition.
4. As Castoriadis synthetically expressed, power in its essence is ‘the capacity of a certain instance (personal or impersonal) to bring a person (or persons) to do (or not to do) something which, left alone, he or she would not necessarily do (or could have done)’ (Castoriadis 1990, 118). In an autonomous (in other words, truly democratic) society, the freedom to do what I want of course includes the freedom to try to persuade other people through dialogue about my opinion and necessities; in fact, the possibility of being persuaded by others on the basis of a genuine dialogue and in the absence of structural power asymmetries are by no means conflicting demands.

5. ‘Anarchists have long regarded every government as a state and condemned it accordingly—a view that is a recipe for the elimination of any organized social life whatever. While the state is the instrument by which an oppressive and exploitative class regulates and coercively controls the behavior of an exploited class by a ruling class, a government—or better still, a polity—is an ensemble of institutions designed to deal with the problems of consociational life in an orderly and hopefully fair manner. Every institutionalized association that constitutes a system for handling public affairs—with or without the presence of a state—is necessarily a government. By contrast, every state, although necessarily a form of government, is a force for class repression and control. Annoying as it must seem to Marxists and anarchists alike, the cry for a constitution, for a responsible and responsive government, and even for law or nomos has been clearly articulated—and committed to print!—by the oppressed for centuries against the capricious rule exercised by monarchs, nobles, and bureaucrats. The libertarian opposition to law, not to speak of government as such, has been as silly as the image of a snake swallowing its tail. What remains in the end is nothing but a retinal afterimage that has no existential reality’ (Bookchin 2007, 95).

6. However, this problem should not be mistaken for a naïve or ‘Rousseauian’ belief in an innate ‘good nature’ of human beings even if Kropotkin’s explanation for the universal importance of ‘mutual aid’ among humans and actually among many species of animals is inextricably linked to his proverbial optimism. Kropotkin made it clear in his famous book Mutual Aid that neither ‘love’ nor ‘sympathy’ was responsible for ‘mutual aid,’ but rather deep instincts of an almost pragmatic kind relating to human solidarity (Kropotkin 2008, 4–5).

7. Spanish: libertario; Italian: libertario; Portuguese: libertário; German: libertär.

8. Judged by Latin American or continental European standards, the U.S.-American (political-)cultural atmosphere is understandably confusing. After all, ‘minimal statism’ is usually called ‘minarchism’ and even an oxymoronic term such as ‘anarcho-capitalism’ apparently does not shock many people. Symptomatically, Robert Nozick’s famous book Anarchy, State, and Utopia (2013) sustains that a ‘minimal state’ can arise naturally and logically from anarchy while ignoring the whole social anarchist tradition (he only briefly mentions individualist anarchism, actually in order to criticize its incompleteness).

9. See on U.S.-American anarchism and the role of individualismo in this context, for instance, Max Nettlau’s classical account of the history of anarchism (2011, chapter 3). However, we should not forget the relative importance of other, non-individualistic strands as well, especially within the framework of the U.S.-American labour movements of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.

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Chapter Two

Non-Domination, Governmentality and the Care of the Self

Nathan Eisenstadt

Non-domination has been a powerful concept for contemporary anarchist scholarship (Newman 2001; May 1994, 2007; Gordon 2008, 2010). It is attentive to multiple and intersecting modes of oppression that delimit possibilities for human becoming. It refuses a hierarchy of oppressions, and thus avoids privileging a particular mode revolutionary subjectivity as primary. And it links the freedom of one to the freedom of all. Domination, May argues, is but one deleterious effect of power—one that arises in situations of inequality (2007, 21; 2008). Thus, non-domination requires a maximal equality of power relations—it renders freedom and equality inseparable while avoiding defining freedom through recourse to an essentialized human subject. The contemporary preoccupation with non-domination has its roots in the thought of fin-de-siècle and early twentieth-century anarchists like Bakunin, Kropotkin, Reclus, Goldman, Landauer and others—who were famously attentive to the inseparability of freedom from equality and to the diffuse and situated character of power whether manifested in state, religion, class relations, the family unit, gender norms or any other hierarchically organized social form (Antliff 2007; Franks 2007).

In this chapter I take issue with what is arguably the dominant conceptualization of non-domination within contemporary anarchist movements—non-domination as empowerment as advanced by Gordon (2008). I argue that while this concept is useful in attentiveness to intersectionality and its linking of freedom with equality, it lacks an account of the disciplinarity of the call to empower others and thus of the constitutive character of power. In so doing, non-domination-as-empowerment re-establishes the idea of a sovereign subject, and thus, the humanist essentialism that contemporary schol-
ars, in particular, have been at pains to avoid. In the second part of the chapter I draw on governmentality scholarship to account for the disciplinary character of anarchism’s ‘will to empower’ others. However, while governmentality scholarship is useful, I argue that it lacks the tools to differentiate between liberal and illiberal forms of empowerment and thus to articulate a more liberating mode of governing through freedom, despite its crypto-normative (Heyes 2007, 11) claim that the freedom we are invited to embrace under liberalism is insufficiently liberating. In order to articulate a more liberating mode of governing through freedom without recourse to the liberal subject, I draw together Foucault’s later work on the care of the self, late twentieth-century Black Feminist critique, and contemporary anarchist anti-oppressive practices. The claims I make are based on a four-year autoethnographic engagement of two anarchist social centres and associated projects in Bristol, England.

NON-DOMINATION AND THE CONSTITUTIVE CHARACTER OF POWER

The idea of non-domination as form of empowerment is rooted in eco-feminist-activist-writer Starhawk’s proposal for a three-fold schematic for understanding power (Starhawk 1987). This differentiates between ‘power-from-within’ as personal capacity and ‘inner strength’; ‘power-over’ as power wielded so as to dominate the will of another; and ‘power-with’ as power wielded non-coercively amongst people who see themselves as equals. Holloway (2002) uses this schematic, recasting it through Marx’s theory of alienation and simplifying ‘power-from-within’ to ‘power-to’ as the capacity to affect reality. In Capitalism, Holloway argues, the worker’s ‘power-to’ is sold as labour-power, transforming it into an owner’s ‘power-over,’ thereby alienating human begins from their capacity to do (ibid., 36, 37). However, as Gordon points out, this fails to account for inequalities of ‘power-to’ in non-capitalist relations, such as within anarchist groups (2010, 44). In a brilliant and influential book based on extensive empirical research, Gordon (2008) articulates and re-confirms what is arguably the dominant understanding of power in contemporary anarchist praxis. This draws on Starhawk’s three-fold framework to analyse the sources of inequalities of ‘power-to’ within anarchist groups and expose the tension between overt and covert forms of power. Through signalling the possibility of productive power (as ‘power-to’ and ‘power-with’), this framing seems to avoid an account of power as a ‘constitutive outside’ from a benign human subject and is attentive to the multiple and intersecting forms that oppression can take.

The non-domination-as-empowerment argument is compelling and useful. It is attentive to intersectionality and neatly brings together the egalitar-
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ian and libertarian currents of anarchist praxis. If anarchists are for freedom with equality, then the practice of freedom (or non-domination) must be self-directed. Hierarchies must be abolished ‘out there in the world’ and in movement organizing practices in order to empower all to lead their own process of emancipation.

Despite its extensive uptake, the Gordon/Starhawk approach to non-domination has four main flaws. Firstly, it fails to account for the ways in which self-discipline, as ‘power over’ the self, might have a liberatory character. This is not encapsulated by the concept of ‘power-to’ which refers, instead, to an individual’s ability to act on the world. This is problematic since self-discipline is a key part of subject formation in the absence of authority: the ethical practices in which anarchists engage—from dietary choices, long meetings and rainy day actions to everyday anti-oppressive practices—require immense self-discipline. But non-domination does not provide us with a tool to account for this as liberating. Without tools to think self-discipline in liberating terms, anti-oppression work and other ethical practices necessary to creating equality can be seen as an imposition, duty or obligation on an otherwise free self. Experienced as a burden, activism can become both paternalistic and personally unsustainable.

Secondly, non-domination-as-empowerment sees authority as always already illegitimate: authority is a form of ‘power-over’ (Gordon 2008, 51). While anarchists have been represented, and some represent themselves (cf. Ludd 2013)—as ‘against all authority’—there are certain forms of authority that anarchists accept. I willingly, if not uncritically, submit to the authority of my friend teaching me how to use a chain-saw; I privilege the authority of the survivor of sexual abuse; and if my affinity group buddy says ‘run,’ I run. There are also situations in which authority is deployed collectively in the interests of justice (Baker Miller 1991; Tew 2006)—for example, the facilitator who privileges the voices of historically marginalized subjects by jumping them up the queue of those waiting to speak. Autonomous spaces are bounded territories within which certain modes of conduct are unacceptable, and certain subjects—like police, journalists and fascists—are barred from entry (Ince 2012). In community accountability cases, certain interventions, though enacted with reluctance and as an ultimate last resort, are nonetheless instances of power-over—as authority—that are crucial to prefiguring egalitarian spaces. Such spaces are often understood as ‘non-normative’ (Breton et al. 2012) or as the ‘antithesis’ of hegemonic norms (Day 2005; Eichhorn 2010; Graeber 2002; Pickerill and Chatterton 2006), but as Cooper (2009) argues, they are neither straightforwardly counter-hegemonic nor simply reproductive of hegemonic norms. Non-domination as empowerment veils this complexity through its rejection of legitimate authority.

Thirdly, the concept of freedom embedded in idea of non-domination-as-empowerment is defined by the absence of ‘power-over’—freedom/non-
domination is attained by accessing one’s ‘power within’ and joining with others to create ‘power with.’ While this allows a space for the productive character of power, it nonetheless rests on the idea of a sovereign subject waiting to be uncovered beneath layers of ‘power over.’ The assumption here is that the subject is essentially benign. As May has argued, if ‘human essence is already benign, then there is no need to articulate which kinds of human activity are good and which kinds are bad’ (1994, 64)—all we need to do is remove the obstacles to the subject’s natural fulfilment. The idea of a benign human subject can thus be understood as responsible for a peculiar kind of moral universalism, but one which is beyond deliberation, since which traits constitute the ‘natural and good’ is not open to question.

Lastly, the ‘freedom as empowerment’ model sees power as a ‘commodity’ to be redistributed. Being in ‘possession of power’ in this sense enables person A to force, coerce or manipulate person B to do something person B does not want to do, and as such, to dominate them (Gordon 2008, 51). If person B is empowered such that A and B possess equal power, domination would not be possible. This ‘power-as-commodity’ understanding is useful in allowing us to uncover and analyse varied forms of domination that are operative in social groups. It is useful also in forcing a reflection on the distribution of material and psychological ‘resources’ that imbue particular subjects with the capacity to dominate others. However, it fails to account for the extent to which person B may be constituted as a subject such that s/he wants to comply with person A. Likewise, it fails to account for the co-emergence of wills and desires; while ‘power-with’ allows for co-emergence of power by linking sovereign agents, any interference with the rational will of another—like seduction—would count as domination. It fails to account for the constitutive character of power. As Kinna and Prichard (forthcoming) note, freedom in Gordon’s account boils down to the minimal liberal formulation: ‘freedom as non-interference.’ Kinna and Prichard’s issue with this understanding of freedom is that it would be possible to exercise one’s will yet remain dominated. Kinna and Prichard’s response is to see non-domination as freedom ‘from arbitrary interference.’ The problem with this approach is that there is no realm that is ‘free from interference.’ To lay claim to such a realm re-establishes an ‘outside’ from power. If we are constituted as subjects through practices of power, then we are always-already interfered with. This interference should not imply that we are always-already ‘dominated.’

GOVERNMENTALITY AND THE CONSTITUTIVE CHARACTER OF POWER

Accounting for the constitutive character of power is important for those interested in liberation since the modes of subjectivity we are called upon to
fulfil impose limits on what we can be. They define freedom, usually in ways that are beneficial to those writing the definitions. It has been following this line of argument that post-colonial theorists called out the category of ‘man’ as rooted in a particular patriarchal ethno-philosophy serving the colonial powers (Sandoval 2000; Chakrabarty 2000); that feminists of colour called out the category of ‘woman’ as reflective of and serving the particular white, middle-class social movement that claimed ‘woman’ to be a universal category (c.f. hooks 2000; Collins 1990), and that queer activists and theorists have called out the categories of ‘Lesbian,’ ‘Gay’ and ‘Bisexual’ as limiting possibilities for becoming (c.f. Butler 1990).

Governmentality scholarship has been similarly attuned to the ways in which subjects are constituted through discourses and practices of freedom, participation and empowerment. However, unlike more avowedly ‘radical’ currents of feminist, postcolonial and queer thinking, rather than speaking in terms of ‘limitation’ (which would explicitly imply a ‘purer’ or ‘more liberating’ freedom is possible), work on governmentality identifies the production of subjects as a mode of governing, and one that is particular to, and constitutive of, advanced liberalism.

Advanced liberalism, in this view, is less reliant on disciplinary power (like that performed by schools, asylums and prisons) and more on the cultivation self-governing autonomous subjects (Dean 1994; Rose 1999). The cultivation of self-governing subjects is attained through a range of discourses and practices that encourage individuals to ‘care for’ or ‘work on’ themselves in order to attain a particular state of being, happiness or truth. Individuals are called upon to ‘empower’ themselves, to create themselves within specific moral and socio-economic frameworks: as autonomous, rational decision-makers (Cruikshank 1999), responsible tenants (Flint 2006), community partners (Larner and Butler 2005) and development participants (Li 2007; Sharma 2008). Through doing so, they become active participants in their own governance.

Governmentality analyses usefully show freedom to be a historically contingent mode of governing rather than an immanent and universal characteristic of the subject. But they do more than signal the contingency of freedom. Though governmentality scholars are reticent to articulate their critique in such terms, they imply that a more liberating freedom is possible—or at least that the freedom we are offered is unsatisfactory. Thus, Dean highlights the fact that while ‘the thinking involved in practices of government is explicit and embedded in language and other technical instruments it is also relatively taken for granted, i.e. it is not usually open to questioning by its practitioners’ (2010 [1999], 25).

There is a coded—or ‘crypto-normative’ (Heyes 2007, 11)—claim here (evidenced by Dean’s considering the critique worthy of publication): It is better when we are more aware of the parameters of the modes of liberated
subjectivity we are invited to fulfil. Similarly, critiques of state and NGO-led empowerment programmes tend to stress that while subjects are ‘empowered,’ economic inequalities remain unaffected (Cruikshank 1999; Li 2007; Kwon 2013). The implication here is that subjects are not ‘really’ being liberated.

Rimke’s normative critique is much more explicit:

[T]o be a responsible citizen means to be responsible for oneself, not others. Concerned citizens are thus urged to develop a new form of social responsibility, one that is not socially oriented at all but, rather, is one that produces a hyper-individuality for which an inherent, responsible relationality with others is actively discouraged and pathologized. (2000, 67)

Whether for their mental health (Rimke 2000; Rimke and Brock 2011) or employment status (McDonald and Marston 2005), governmentality scholarship depicts external agents urging and educating others to bridle their passions through the inculcation of variant technologies of the self. Self-governance is participatory, but not self-initiated, nor is there the possibility of the ‘empowered’ to reflect on the rationality driving their ‘empowerment.’ Modern power in liberal forms is shown to operate through cultivating particular individualized subjects while constraining alternative forms of human becoming (White and Hunt 2000, 72). Thus, in line with anarchist and feminist movement auto-critique, governmentality scholars call attention to the individualizing character of advanced liberal practices of freedom and their concomitant disavowal of social equality. However, while governmentality scholarship ‘calls out’ freedom on its emancipatory claim, it simultaneously disavows calls for a more empowering empowerment. Thus, while anarchist empowerment is inattentive to its disciplinary character which governmentality scholarship is poised to identify, governmentality scholarship does not provide the tools to think a more liberating mode of becoming.

ANARCHISM AS MODE OF GOVERNING

The anarchist invocation empowerment is rather different to that ‘rolled out’ under and constitutive of advanced liberalism: It is not directed, provisioned or protected by a state, NGO or private company and the rationale for the autonomy of the subject is not only explicit but also profoundly at odds with the government of one by another. Moreover, unlike advanced liberal empowerment, anarchist empowerment is radically linked to equality to the extent that the aspiration to non-domination is universalist—it is desired for all and its attainment by all is a requisite for any individual to be truly empowered. However, while anarchism and neoliberal governmentalities must be differentiated, ‘[b]oth counterhegemonic and hegemonic uses of
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empowerment are, following Foucault (1991), governmental, in that they aim
to produce aware and active citizen-subjects who participate in the project of
governance to mold their behaviour toward certain ends’ (Sharma 2008, 3).

Counter-governmentalities are still governmentality (Larner 2009, 4; Li
2007, 275). Anarchists are concerned with the taking and re-making of space
and territory: from squats, social centres and community gardens to factories
and farms. They are concerned with the cultivation of self-governing sub-
jects: from consensus decision-making at occupied encampments and self-
organization in the workplace to the ethics of everyday life including dietary
choices, conduct in relation to others and in the cultivation of a liberating
relationship to oneself. These practices require a certain ‘bridling of the
passions,’ ‘work on’ or ‘care for the self’ in order to attain a particular state
of being to which anarchists aspire: non-dominating and non-dominated.
Freedom requires self-discipline. Moreover, as an assemblage of discourses
and practices that aspires to universality, anarchism urges others to discipline
themselves: to participate, to take control, to resist, to drop-out, to rage, to
organize, to get empowered. Anarchism is a mode of governing through
freedom.

That anarchism is a mode of governing is not a problem in itself. It only is
problematic to the extent that the mode of subjectivity elicited and cultivated
is the autonomous subject of liberalism and that this particular form of free-
dom is presented as freedom ‘as such.’ If freedom is understood as empower-
ment, then we remain limited to liberal subjectivity even when this is posi-
tioned within the radically egalitarian framework of non-domination.
Through such a commitment, we position a Western patriarchal form of
freedom—rational autonomous man—as universally embedded in all sub-
jects. Not only does this close off other possibilities for becoming, but it also
creates a perverse relationship to the practices of self-discipline in which we
engage in order to create more egalitarian relationships. If the subject is
autonomous and yet, to be free, must live in equality with others, the ethical
practices that cultivate equality become duty. While this provides a useful
imperative to act ethically, as an imperative it is also an imposition that
contravenes the very sovereignty on which it rests. Like Kant’s rational
autonomous subject who, in virtue of the rationality of moral law, will act
morally, the subject is free, but only to make the right choice.

If anarchism is to exceed the authoritarianism of liberal subjectivity, we
need to think and practice freedom, and crucially, self-discipline, without
recourse to the autonomous subject and with an attentiveness to the constitu-
tive character of power. Unless we understand anarchist practices of freedom
as governmental, then we will be unable to think and practice more emanci-
patory modes of governing. The question for anarchists, and for anyone
desiring freedom with social equality, is how we differentiate between
governmental techniques that foster individuality at the expense of equality,
and those practices of care that might help the freedom-with-equality to flourish. In order to answer this we need, firstly, to think of freedom and discipline as mutually constituted—to look to the ways in which practices of self-discipline that are required to cultivate egalitarian relations with others might be liberating for the subject of ethics. Secondly, we need to see subjects as mutually constituted—to discard the sovereign subject as the fulcrum of human liberation and instead imagine liberation in a context in which subjects and selves overlap and agency is never pure. Neither contemporary anarchist thought nor governmentality scholarship are equipped for this task. As I have argued, dominant anarchist thinking tends to position liberation as co-extensive with the attainment of autonomous subjectivity and lacks an attentiveness to the constitutive character of power. While governmentality approaches are useful in attending to the disciplinarity of practices of freedom, including anarchism’s will to empower, they are profoundly reticent to articulate more liberating routes for being and relating. This reticence to adopt a normative stance is understandable, rooted as it is in a well-founded critique of the authoritarianism of moral universalism. However, there is already a coded normative character to the practice of critique in which governmentality scholarship is engaged. By failing to acknowledge this, this work is unable to distinguish between more and less liberating modes of governing through freedom.

CRITIQUE AND THE CRITICAL ONTOLOGY OF OURSELVES

In Foucault’s later work, he expands on the idea of critique and, in so doing, pushes beyond governmentality to tentatively propose a more liberating mode of becoming. In the following section I use this work to think through anarchist anti-oppression praxis, which, I argue, offers a route towards freedom/non-domination in absence of the sovereign agency. For Foucault, critique is not only

a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought, the practices that we accept rest. Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as we believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such. (Foucault 1988a, 154, my emphasis)

While governmentality scholarship is adept at ‘flushing out that thought,’ it does not answer why we should try to change it, why we should refuse to accept the self-evident. Writing much later, Foucault argued that an uncritical acceptance of the self-evident norms, discourses and practices through which we come to understand ourselves as subjects commits a certain ontological
foreclosure—it delimits what we can be—and therefore constitutes a form of subordination. Critique, as provisionally elaborated in his later work, is the practice of exposing the ‘ontological limits’ of ourselves in order to open the way for other modes of becoming. This ‘art of voluntary insubordination,’ as Foucault (1997, 32) described it, is clearly opposed to domination (of which subordination is a form), but it does not constitute a foundational critique linked to a prescription for how others should live: ‘it does not tell us how we should practice our freedom’ (Dean 2010 [1999], 50). Rather, it seeks ‘to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom’ (Foucault 1984, 46, my emphasis). Critique in this sense avoids the authoritarianism of moral prescriptiveness yet simultaneously carries a normative claim: it suggests that experimentation with other modes of being is not only possible but also desirable. This idea that alternative practices should be allowed to flourish can be understood as one of poststructuralism’s ethical principles (May 1994, 132).

Drawing on his studies tracing practices of self-cultivation from late antiquity through to early Christianity, Foucault tentatively and incompletely proposes a form of care of the self that is oriented to precisely this kind of critique. He calls this the critical ontology of ourselves (1997). Like in governmentality, the ‘care of the self’ in here is understood as the attentive cultivation of a relationship to oneself so as to transform the individual to attain a particular state of being, happiness or truth (Foucault 1997, 283). However, whereas his work on governmentality and subsequent/neo-governmentality scholarship has been focused on the ways in which individuals are encouraged to care for themselves in particular ways, and are duly governed, Foucault is interested, in this later work, in how technologies of the self might render suspect the very norms through which we come to enact them. To the extent that such a practice might open other possibilities for becoming, it can be understood as more liberating than a practice of freedom (like liberal empowerment) that assumes its form to be singular and universal.

Of course, ‘rendering suspect’ still requires agency—practices of the self remain guided by an aspiration for self-transformation that is very much the subject’s own. Thus, it might be countered that by calling for a ‘critical ontology of ourselves’ Foucault reinscribes the primacy of the reflexive autonomous subject. Crucially, technologies of the self are not ‘something invented by the individual himself. They are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society and his social group’ (Foucault 1997, 291).

Critique encourages experimentation with and the cultivation of an attentiveness to the given so as to question and exceed it, but the subject is always ‘formed within the limits of a set of historically specific formative practices and moral injunctions’ (Mahmood 2012 [2005], 28). The subject is already ‘interfered with.’ This ‘existing repertoire’ of norms does not pro-
duce the subject as its necessary effect, ‘nor is the subject fully free to disregard the norm that inaugurates reflexivity; one invariably struggles with the conditions of one’s own life that one could not have chosen’ (Butler 2005, 19). Moreover, drawing on Aristotelian ethics, ‘practices’ here—including those technologies of the self that render norms suspect—are not seen as the expression of the innate desires of a pre-formed subject. Rather, they are a practical activity through which the subject is formed. This radically changes how we think about ethical conduct. Unlike the empowered liberal subject, full and transparent self-knowledge is not a pre-requisite for acting ethically. Rather, ethical conduct is the set of practices through which the subject transforms herself in relation to particular desire for being, happiness or truth. Since practices are understood as productive of subjects, the care of the self precedes self-knowledge. As Mahmood argues, ‘it is only from the standpoint of the dispositions formed through these practices that the Kantian question of moral deliberation can be posed’ (2012 [2005], 27). In this reversal of autonomous subjectivity, performative acts (like not eating meat) are understood as cultivating or training desires (ibid., 135), including the desire for self-transformation that ‘guides them.’

From this perspective, anarchist practices like consensus decision-making or anti-oppression work can be re-thought, not as an expression of a sovereign subject (or indeed, of a benign cooperative human nature), but as practical activities through which anarchist subjectivity is constituted (and human natures are shaped). This radicalizes the notion of prefiguration as understood by anarchists. Whereas prefigurative practices have traditionally been seen in rather instrumentalist terms—as issuing forth from the autonomous subject as a consequence of their own free will (or benign nature) so as to enact a particular change in the world—we might better understand them as processes through which subjects emerge. They are both practice and performance—a ‘trial run’ or ‘training’—and, simultaneously, the ‘main event.’

Agency, in this framework, is thus understood as always-already ‘impure’ and distributed across the social field—selves are assembled through the enactment of normative practices not entirely of the subjects’ choosing, yet at the same time, it is possible, through specific practices, to cultivate an awareness of disciplinary norms and to create oneself differently. The emancipatory character of the critical ontology of ourselves is not in the attainment of a sovereign agency free from the arbitrary interference of the norms, discourses and practices through which we emerge, but in the cultivation of a ‘critical relationship’ to existing norms (Butler 2005, 17) that opens the way to alternative possibilities for becoming (Foucault 1984, 50).

This praxis of transgression, of disobedience to the authority of the given, and of continual experimentation and self-transformation, is understood (1) as an aesthetic practice—as a crafting of oneself through practices of care and attentiveness; (2) as a practice of freedom opening other possibilities for
becoming; and (3) as a form of virtue. As a form of virtue, it is a prefigurative practice—it's value lies not within the promise of a new order soon to be established but in the undoing and creative experimentation it performs in the present. In the final part of this chapter I argue that contemporary anti-oppression praxis can be re-thought as critical ontology of the self that offers a route to thinking and practicing freedom-with-equality in absence of the liberal subject.

ANTI-OPPRESSION PRAXIS AS A CRITICAL ONTOLOGY OF THE SELF

Anti-oppression praxis (AOP) is rooted in the critical interventions of late twentieth-century Black Feminists who called attention to the ways in which their experiences of oppression as women intersected with race, class and sexuality among other axes of difference (Crenshaw 1991; Davis 1981; Dill 1983; Lorde 1984). Analogous to the way in which anarchists had argued against collapsing multiple forms of domination articulated through church, state, gender and the family beneath economic exploitation (c.f. Goldman and Havel 1910), intersectional analyses refused collapsing radicalized and class-based modes of oppression beneath gender.

For anti-oppression activists, a key way of speaking to the ways in which categories of difference intersect without positing one category as primary has been through the concept of ‘privilege’ (Bailey 1998). The term ‘privilege’ is rooted in Du Bois’s (1975 [1935]) concept of ‘white skin privilege,’ which he used to refer to the invisible benefits ‘paid’ to the white working class—among them, to be first hired and last fired; to be less severely disciplined in the workplace and penal system; and to have preferential access to schools, credit and healthcare. While all members of the working class were understood as ‘oppressed,’ some were privileged in relation to others. Crucially, it was not a requirement to be actively racist to benefit from (or be privileged by) a coalescence of practices that produce and institutionalize racist power effects. Linked to this work, yet with its own specific trajectory, feminist analyses of (and organizing against) gendered violence similarly positioned practices as constitutive of systemic effects (Brownmiller 1975; Deal 1977; Walby 1990). Thus, rape was seen not as an aberration but as a constitutive feature of patriarchy, sustained in part by other ‘less extreme’ practices of gendered oppression and their continual re-presentation in popular culture (Cahill 2001). From this perspective rape and sexual assault were to be challenged not only by ‘bringing perpetrators to justice’ through increased conviction rates but also through micro-changes in interpersonal relations and a focus on altering the images and discourses that promote or legitimize gendered oppression in popular culture.
Drawing on the Freirean notion of the colonizer/colonized relationship, early anti-racist critique called for an attentiveness to the ways in which oppression can be ‘internalized.’ Going beyond Freire, this referred both to the modes of self-policing taken up by members of marginalized groups and to the ways in which the form of freedom dominant in feminisms called forth, presupposed a particular subject and, in so doing, foreclosed diverse avenues of liberation (see, for example, Lorde 1984). The discourses of consciousness-raising and empowerment that co-constituted these critical interventions have subsequently been criticized, especially by governmentality scholars (c.f. Cruikshank 1999). As I have argued, ‘empowerment as freedom’ presupposes a conception of power as a commodity to be re-distributed and is therefore inattentive to the extent to which power is constitutive of subjects. Yet there are currents running through Black Feminist critique that cannot be so neatly collapsed into the problematic politics of empowerment that followed from them. hooks called for ‘fashioning new selves,’ practices of liberated self-formation without reliance on already-existing subject positions offered by liberal feminism or its Other, an essentialized ‘black experience’ (2000).

Contemporary anti-oppression praxis (AOP) emerges from this analysis of oppression that draws a structuralist critique of political-economic ‘systems’ together with a sensitivity to the ways in which systems—or systemic effects—and modes of subjectivity are performed through everyday practices. The ‘privilege’ concept has been useful in these intersecting struggles to the extent that it gets at the systemic character of oppression without reifying systems as ‘things’ or, in contrast, suggesting that social change is solely down to a change of mind-set. It has since been expanded to refer to an ever-growing set of differences. The effect of privilege—be it on account of race, education, class, gender, (dis)ability, sexuality or other axes of difference—is systematically to the disadvantage of certain subjects over others in particular contexts. Following this logic, we can understand ‘oppression’—what anarchists might understand as ‘domination’—as referring not to the suppression of an essentialized subject but to an inequality of the availability of possible forms of life, an ordering fixed in place by multiple, intersectional and contextually specific power effects. Oppression is a closing off of possibilities for becoming that is challenged by micro-practices alongside the transformation of political and economic institutions (Collins 1990, 221).

**ANARCHISM AND AOP**

As a critical praxis oriented towards exposing and challenging multiple and intersecting forms of oppression in the present, AOP and anarchism share a deep affinity. Though its rise has not been uncontested, with the crosspolli-
nation and co-constituted character of contemporary anarchist movements with anti-racist, queer, anti-colonial and radical feminist organizing (Breton et al. 2012; Dixon 2012; Crass et al. 2013; Luchies 2012), anti-oppression work has arguably become one of the mainstream, if necessarily incompletely enacted, organizing practices within the contemporary anarchism of the last decade. Central to the analytical and practical shift that has placed it centre-stage, has been the practice of reflexive critique and its varied reverberations in practice. In the tradition of 1980s Black Feminism, movement critics have tirelessly turned movement aspirations back on existing practices: on account of their racism or implicit white supremacy (Crass 2000; Gould et al. 2011; Martinez 2000; McCleave Maharawal 2011); sexism (Alphabet Threat n.d.; Crass 2003; Nopper 2005; Walia 2006); classism (Mahin 2013); hetero (Shanti Fernando n.d., Wilkinson 2009) and queer-normativities (Brown 2007; Lipstick Terrorist 2012), and often through a framing that positions the ‘sub-cultural’ character of anarchist spaces and organizing practices against their self-proclaimed universality (see Olson 2010; Wu Ming 2002). These critiques attain grip precisely in exposing the gap between the aspiration to universalize equality and the claim that already-existing inequalities radically circumscribe participation in allegedly ‘radical’ (i.e., universally accessible) spaces.

It is in this context of unending critique towards a freer, more equal world that anti-oppression praxis takes hold within the anarchist milieu. AOP here is oriented to the cultivation of awareness of, and a commitment to challenge, the ways in which differences in social privilege work to systematically and asymmetrically foreclose diverse avenues for becoming. Challenging these complex effects involves a combination of commitment to engage in forms of collective action to counter the ‘systemic effects’ of constellations of practices in which one might not be actively engaged alongside a nuanced set of embodied practices that seek to interrupt conformity with norms, discourses and practices that sustain existing patterns of oppression/domination.

One practice commonly positioned as central to the cultivation of anti-oppressive subjectivity is ‘checking yourself’ or ‘checking your privilege’ (Cliffton 2015; Karynthia 2009; McIntosh 1989; SnowdropExplodes 2007), referring to the practice of looking inwards, thinking about one’s own positionality in relation to others in a particular social context and about the ways in which thought processes, forms of speech, body language, and other behaviours may (re)produce oppressive relationships. Of course, simply reflecting on and naming privilege is not sufficient for challenging its power effects (Frye 1983). Thus, varied practices of self-restraint are elicited and trained. For example, an individual may withhold from speech in the context of a meeting if they have already spoken, tend to informally lead the group, or inhabit a subject position (like white, formally educated, male) that often occupies leadership roles. Conversely, it may entail speaking more loudly or
more clearly, or else consciously avoiding jargon so as to facilitate greater equality of participation in a group context. Cultivating an awareness of who gets listened to and who gets credited for ideas and challenging these dynamics if they seem to reinforce existing hierarchies or create new oppressive relationships are key aspects of AOP in anarchist and activist groups.

Similarly, attentiveness to the reproduction of stereotypical roles is valued in anarchist spaces, and varied attempts to challenge them are commonly practiced. Formalized workshops are often aimed at training individuals in skills they may have had reduced opportunities to learn due to existing patterns of prejudice and exclusion—for example, a women’s welding workshop or a men’s childcare group. Skill-sharing is also enacted informally through everyday practices. As we break buildings, change locks, make repairs, cook food, organize and make decisions, anarchists are almost always attempting to share the knowledge and skills they possess. The aim here is to minimize the possibility that hierarchies can emerge or persist since it is through hierarchies that domination is understood to be articulated. Doing this well requires the cultivation of particular virtues and further skills. For example, the ability to build capacities in others through positive reinforcement and sensitive criticism is crucial to skill-sharing, as is the ability to take the critique of others with gratitude. Patience is also required, since output is slower when explaining and offering space for others to experiment. This, in turn, requires the cultivation of a different disposition towards the relationship between time, space, value, output. The prefiguration of anti-oppressive spaces requires a privileging of process over output such that they become inseparable.

AOP is also ‘taught,’ albeit in differing ways, through ‘workshops’ and trainings that encourage self-reflection and, when done well, can elicit more egalitarian conduct in everyday life. Such formalized pedagogical practices range in subtlety. A common (and duly criticized) workshop technique calls upon participants to stand in a line with their eyes closed and take a step forward or back when a statement is read aloud that describes a ‘privilege’ the participant has or has not experienced. While such techniques can elicit profound realizations that lead to changed practices, they can also be unsafe spaces for less privileged subjects. As Smith (2013) argues, such ritualized practices of confession can also serve to reify and fix an innate self and give the impression that AOP is something that can be ‘done’ or achieved in a single workshop. This is especially the case with the uptake of AOP within the non-profit and public sectors, where freedom as a state of being ‘non-oppressed,’ like the contemporary anarchist conception of ‘non-domination,’ treads very close to the minimal liberal conception of non-interference, privileging the personal at the expense of challenging broader systemic power effects. These problematic practices, however, should not discount the validity of skilfully enacted AOP, which aspires, on the contrary, to a continual
undoing of fixed selfhood. It is rare that this can be achieved in a workshop context. Thus, more significant in ‘training’ AOP is simply its reflective practice with others and the quotidian interventions that elicit and remind participants of their own commitment to it in everyday life.

Collectively written ‘group agreements’ that foreground consensus decision-making processes are a key tool of returning mindfulness to anti-oppressive aspirations. Some explicitly call on participants to ‘check in’ with themselves or to ‘actively listen’ to the previous points, rather than formulating a contribution while others talk. Others request that ‘we attempt to interpret the speech of others with benevolence’—that we start from an assumption of good intent in order to minimize aggressive reactions to the speech of others. One linguistic technique rooted in person-centred psychotherapeutic practices asks participants to ‘be conscious of who you are referring to when you say “we” in a group context, and try to avoid using “you” to describe to others what is in fact your own experience’ (QUBARRG 2011). Beyond self-reflection, group agreements can also establish consent for normative practices—for example, privileging the voices of historically marginalized subjects in the queue of participants waiting to speak or in leadership roles within the organization. Alongside codified reminders of commitment is the positive example of others, and especially of socially respected participants. With the conversations and critique that accompany them, these performances constitute a more subtle, yet pervasive, everyday training in reflexive self-limitation and the cultivation of particular modes of being that are central to the formation of anti-oppressive selves within anarchist spaces.

If AOP is premised forms of self-limitation, how does it avoid adherence to precisely the duty-bound rational subjectivity I have set out to contest? How might the necessary curtailment of the self be thought of and, indeed, experienced as liberatory? The answer here is in the manner or in the intent with which these practices are enacted. ‘Holding oneself back’ need not be, nor should be, practiced as sacrifice. To think and practice it in this way presumes (and through the performance reifies) a pre-formed and repressed subject. Thinking freedom through the late Foucauldian lens I set up in the previous section, the emancipatory character of AOP is not in the reduction of constraints in order to better fulfil one’s human essence. Rather, it consists of contesting the limits that the imposition of an essence entails in order to live differently.

Graeber (2009) argues that as a result of poststructuralist critique of the essentialism of ‘alienation,’ post-anarchists (whom he considers to be solely an academic group [p. 260]) have centred on ‘oppression’ as the locus of resistance and in so doing risk an individualized politics that the privileged have no incentive of their own to engage in. Against this, he argues that the idea of alienation should be retained so as to provide a rationale for the privileged to be involved in social struggle. However, the lost authentic
relationship to the self that the term ‘alienation’ is positioned to recover simply imposes a new ideal of humanness that we should live up to. As Foucault argued in his earlier work, ‘the man [sic] described for us whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself’ (Foucault 1979, 29). It is freedom from the constraints of an idealized human subject rather than commitment to such an ideal that provides a self-interested reason for participation in radical social change. Failing to fulfill normative modes of conduct from a position of privilege is one way of contesting the limits imposed by the ‘man’ I am invited to live up to. It is through such failures to perform and by actively creating ourselves in accordance with a positive desire for an alternative mode of being that we may be freer and live in greater relations of equality with others.

While this provides a self-interested rationale for egalitarian practices, AOP as a practice of care of the self remains deeply tied to the subject’s capacity for self-reflection. If we reject the idea of the sovereignty of the subject (as an epistemologically untenable feature of liberal subjectivity), we also discard the possibility of fully transparent self-reflection. If we cannot fully know ourselves, how can we avoid self-deception around our own anti-oppressive conduct? What happens when reflexivity fails?

FAILING TO TAKE ACCOUNT: ALLIES, FRIENDS AND ANCIENT MASTERS

In an interview in 1984, Foucault is asked whether care of the self can become a way of dominating others. ‘No,’ he replies, ‘because the risk of dominating others and exercising a tyrannical power over them arises precisely when one has not taken care of oneself and has become the slave of one’s desires’ (Foucault 1997, 288). But how do we know which desires we are enslaved to, and which we liberate ourselves through their cultivation? It became apparent relatively early on in Foucault’s investigation of Greco-Roman monastic and pedagogical practices that if the care of the self was to avoid egoism, the subject needed to be called to account by another (Gros 2011, 378). Here entered the figure of the ‘ancient master’ as an ‘indispensable mediator’ in an individual’s relationship to his/her constitution as an ethical subject (Foucault 2005, 127). The master’s role, at least from the Hellenistic period onwards, was not to attend to the student’s lack of knowledge, but rather to the fact that he/she may be ‘gripped by bad habits’ (2005, 130). Becoming an ethical subject was not a matter of attaining the right knowledge but one of right practices and changing practices understood as formative of the subject.
Non-Domination, Governmentality and the Care of the Self

So what is the significance of this for an anarchist anti-oppressive practice of the self? ‘Mastery’ would not go down well with most anarchists. It is useful to equip ourselves with one more concept here. Foucault draws our attention to work of Philodermus, an Epicurean philosopher who argued that the guidance of the master had to obey two principles. Firstly, that there should be an ‘intense affective relationship of friendship between the two partners, the guide and the person being guided’ (2005, 137). Secondly, that this guidance should have a certain quality, a certain ‘ethics of speech’ or way of speaking. This he refers to as ‘Parrhēsia’ (ibid.). Parrhēsia is a form of open communication, a mode of speaking truth to the other involving ‘opening the heart, the need for the two partners to conceal nothing of what they think from each other and to speak to each other frankly’ (ibid.). While much of Philodermus’s text refers to the relationship between teacher and student—a relationship that would be problematic for anarchist ethics—Foucault calls our attention to the sign of a transition of the master’s Parrhēsia to the Parrhēsia of the students themselves. The practice of free speech on behalf of the master must be such that it serves as encouragement, support, and opportunity for the students who will themselves also have the possibility, right and obligation to speak freely. Mastery encourages students to become masters—to ‘speak freely’ to one another. (2005, 389)

Moreover, ‘the students’ free speech will increase the euonia (benevolence) or friendship between them’ (ibid.). If ancient mastery highlights the centrality of the other in the practice of self-formation, this anti-hierarchical practice of Parrhēsia, as one of its necessary qualities, opens the possibility for much more egalitarian pedagogy of the self. Unlike the spiritual director, whose authority to guide is based on a special relationship with God, or the psychiatrist in modern culture, whose legitimacy is based on a claim to expert knowledge, the Other as partner and guide is authorized by the quality of their speech, its free-spokeness or Parrhēsia (Foucault 1984, 6).

In the context of AOP there is a similar and radically decentralized dynamic in the role of the ally through the practice of ‘calling out’ oppression. ‘Allyship’ refers to the practice by which those with privilege in a particular context align themselves to work with individuals and groups experiencing oppression (CRAC 2011, 3). Central to this practice is that those most affected (in a particular context) should lead the struggle for their own liberation and those with the ‘privilege’ of not directly experiencing that particular form of oppression should work in support, as allies. For anti-oppression allies, entering into this work involves ‘stepping out of one’s comfort zone’ (Breton et al. 2012) and committing to self-examination. However, it is recognized that no self-examination can ever be complete. Allies accept that they will be ‘called out’ where their conduct fails to live up to their aspiration
to enact anti-oppressive relationships. As Winfrey Harris (2009b) argues, ‘This is one way that good allies gain our trust. They unite with us, knowing that doing so means laying their imperfect selves bare.’ The idea that self-deception is easy, and that fully transparent self-knowledge is impossible, is thus ‘built in’ to collective practices. Allies also commit to ‘call out’ others on their perceived oppressive conduct on the basis that the responsibility for challenging oppression should be collectively held.

While there is no guarantee that an individual will transform their practices on the basis of being ‘called out,’ a particular ‘ethics of relationships’ (Heckert and Cleminson 2012) makes a transformative response more likely. The manner of speech, like the parrhēsia of Foucault’s Epicurean students, should offer truth with compassion—as if ‘spoken from the heart’—rather than a desire to expose an enemy or prove one’s own purity. The practice of calling out another (like the commitment to being called out) thus requires not only rational reflection but also the cultivation of virtues, like a ‘generosity of spirit,’ and skills, like benevolent ‘timely and clear communication’ and ‘an ability to hear and listen [to critique] without taking offence’ (Fithian 2012). Of course, there are situations where those who feel hurt need to express their rage in whatever form it comes (Winfrey Harris 2009a). Legitimate rage should not be forced to fit a rational expressive frame, even as we valorize the cultivation of compassionate forms of calling one another out. Friendship in such cases is crucial. Having someone with whom to have ideas and feelings heard and reflected back can facilitate greater self-reflection as well as provide the solidaristic affective sustenance necessary to continue through difficult processes. For the friend in the ‘support’ role, such interactions can provide an opportunity to reflect on their own relationships and commitments, and serve to renew them. In a context where adherence is voluntary and forms of enforcement are rare, these kinds of mutually supportive relationships are absolutely crucial.

Drawing on Foucault’s later work, White and Hunt (2000, 99) argue that the practice of truth telling about oneself (as in confession) is a form of ethical conduct through which an individual is exposed to the judgement of others. While they are correct to understand such practices as ethical, the form of confession they refer to is that of modern ethics described in Foucault’s earlier work. Whereas in modern ethics the judgement of an external authority is required to direct proper conduct, within the positive Aristotelian ethics Foucault outlines, self-examination takes place within voluntary relationships of mutual guidance (Burchell 2009, 62). In line with this positive ethics, anti-oppression allies, when acting skilfully, relate to one another not as police castigating improper conduct, but rather as catalysts for self-transformation in relation to the ethical precept they collectively aspire to embody: non-oppressive and non-oppressed.
Finally, the relationship to the self is a critical component in anti-oppressive allyship. Day writes of the relationship to the other in anti-oppression work that it is one of ‘infinite responsibility,’ which ‘means always being open to the invitation and challenge of another Other, always being ready to hear a voice that points out how one is not adequately in solidarity, despite one’s best efforts’ (2005, 18). Day’s ‘infinite responsibility’ is in the spirit of the practices I have highlighted. However, as an obligation to the other, it is too self-sacrificial. AOP as a practice of care for the self is enacted out of a positive desire to be a certain way—albeit a desire that itself is cultivated through those very practices. Having said that, this desire does entail an infinitely demanding relationship to the self. Given the impossibility of final arrival, reflective practice is always open to the possibility of concealed forms of domination. The cultivation of virtues—like compassion, patience, empathy, and good listening—and the delimitation of seemingly natural oppressive patterns of thought and behaviour—from racism and sexism to jealousy and defensiveness—is always unfinished. Yet living by an impossible demand is simultaneously a repetitive failing. Does it then lead to the self-sacrifice it strives to avoid? Just as the practice of calling out another should be practiced with benevolence, so should the practice of self-critique. The difficult balance here is in cultivating a relationship of benevolence to oneself (that eschews punishment) without offering incompleteness as an excuse for lack of effort. This is a relationship that balances benevolence with accountability—or, rather, refuses to see them in opposition. Where there is benevolent treatment of the self in relation to the impossible demand, yet an acceptance and openness to accountability, we get closer to a form of self-formation that is emancipatory for the subject of ethics, yet egalitarian in its orientation to minimizing domination in every aspect of social life.

CONCLUSION: THE FREEDOM TO PLACE FREEDOM IN DOUBT

The care of the self in Foucault’s later work places the givenness of the self, its supposedly innate desires and sovereign will, in doubt. Co-extensive with the practice of critique, it is concerned with cultivating an attentiveness to the normative discourses and practices that shape our possibilities for becoming—or our ‘ontological limits.’ In calling attention to the limits and historical specificity of the desires and subject positions we are invited to fulfil, the care of the self opens the way for other practices of becoming. While such practices are always modified from an existing repertoire, engaging in that practice of modification to create oneself as a subject can be understood as more liberating than the practices of freedom through which liberal government is attained.
Anarchist anti-oppression praxis can be understood as practice of freedom in this late Foucauldian sense—that is, as an aesthetic practice of care for the self. Through formal workshops and skill-shares and an array of informal interventions—from skill-sharing and the performance and repetition of proper conduct in everyday life to the ethos of anti-oppressive allyship—these practices perform and cultivate habits of critique, constantly bringing the subject back to reflect on positionality, learned ‘bad habits’ and ways of being and relating that do not live up to the form of life to which the subject aspires. Built into this ethos is the recognition that self-reflection will always fail, and thus, we rely on allies and friends, not to police us, but to assist us in cultivating the forms of freedom and constellations of desire to which we aspire.

Paradoxically, while the cultivation of oneself is taken up out of a desire to be a certain way, that desire is never fully the subject’s own. Desires co-emerge and are co-created through the enactment of practices. What the anti-oppressive practice of care for the self offers that is different from other daily practices in which we are engaged (and through which desires emerge) is an attentiveness to the ways in which our desires are cultivated. This offers a way of intervening in the production of desire. Though it is impossible to separate oneself completely from the social practices through which we become desiring (and reflective) subjects, anarchist AOP permits a greater degree of agency in the creation of ourselves, and can, therefore, be understood as a practice of freedom.

Liberating as this may be, anarchist AOP remains an intended normative practice of cultivating subjects. Though it is maximally self-directed, maximally voluntary and oriented to the creation of equality, to the extent that it seeks to cultivate particular modes of subjectivity and replicate itself, it remains a mode of governing through freedom. It is simply a more emancipatory and egalitarian mode of governing than that elicited by and constitutive of advanced liberalism.

NOTE

1. The privilege concept first appears in print in the anarchist milieu in the U.S. zine Love and Rage in 1989 and is met with considerable criticism from class struggle anarchists. It is not until the mid-2000s that anti-oppression praxis starts to become the standard aspirational organizing method within the North American anarchist milieu. In the United Kingdom, these are relatively new ideas.

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In this chapter, we explore the possibilities of a ‘post-statist’ epistemology in geography and its possible contributions to a radical pedagogical and methodological agenda within the discipline and social sciences more generally. Beginning with a critique of the naturalization of statist logics of social organization as indicative of a series of problematic epistemological assumptions within geography, we construct an anarchist framework for practicing geographical scholarship. This framework draws from anarchist thinkers and geographers, alongside other left-libertarian authors such as Pierre Clastres, whose _La Société contre l’Etat_ (1989) offers insights into how foregrounding stateless and non-capitalist social relations can help to construct new, anarchistic epistemological, methodological and pedagogical frameworks. We also consider aspects of decolonial thought, such as ‘epistemologies of the south’ (Santos 2010), and feminist perspectives which seek to overcome the idea of the superiority of certain viewpoints, worldviews or epistemologies, and see the construction of knowledge as a cooperative and horizontal process. Since epistemology is too wide and analyzes multiple aspects of the fundamentals and methods by which knowledge is acquired, constructed, justified and so on, we will particularly focus on how we know and the limits of knowledge (Baergen 2006). We maintain that the state has a significant role in shaping the epistemic contours of geography and that colonialism in thought and subjectivities, culture and epistemological frameworks prevails.

Hierarchical power relations, typified by the state, need to be recast not as the end-point of a linear process towards efficient and just social organization but as merely the outcome of spatio-temporally situated processes. Through-
out the chapter we emphasize the relevance, actuality, and expediency of anarchist thought, alongside other perspectives that can help to critically interrogate statism. In making this epistemological shift, one can find ways of transforming the processes and relations embedded in knowledge production and dissemination and, in addition, indicate research approaches that can help overcome privileged viewpoints, employing methods and valorizing knowledges that do not perpetuate subjugation.

We therefore offer a number of methodological and pedagogical approaches that transgress statist and other authoritarian epistemologies, and outline some possibilities for geographers to prefigure collaborative, non-hierarchical ways of knowing and understanding the world. The chapter begins with an overview of how statist perspectives have become dominant in geographical knowledge production, before considering anarchist and other critiques of the modern state. Finally, after outlining several key principles for a post-statist epistemology, we consider a number of ways in which these principles could be implemented in pedagogical practice.

**NATURALIZATION OF STATIST LOGICS IN GEOGRAPHY**

**Statism, Anarchism and Epistemology**

We first turn to discuss the ways in which statism shapes and delimits the epistemological foundations of geography. In proposing the notion of statism, we refer particularly to it as a pervasive yet historically contingent organizing logic that naturalizes and valorizes forms of organizational and social relations that, in diverse ways, replicate the state form as the dominant mode of governing society. Statist logic—or, rather, multiple interconnected logics—foregrounds verticalist (although not always necessarily vertical), coercive, sovereign and legalistic qualities as central institutional principles for the management and governance of society, both within and beyond the spaces of the state itself. For example, the neoliberalizing transition from government to governance has been a state-driven process of restructuring not only the state itself but also the range of formalized organizations across society (e.g., Swyngedouw 2005). Thus, whereas the state and other institutions can change form, statism remains a consistent logic throughout, nurturing and reinforcing structures that reflect or imitate its own.

This pervasiveness of statist logics, however, is not necessarily adopted consciously, but its dominance in the vast majority of formalized structures means that it is reproduced and strengthened through practice. Geographers have increasingly emphasized the ways in which the state is a contested and complex outcome of everyday practice and interaction (e.g., Marston 2004; Painter 2006), yet our conception of statism stretches far beyond the realms of the state itself, envisioning statism as a set of logics that institutionalize
certain statist social relations in general (see Ince and Barrera de la Torre, in review).

**Statism and Knowledge Production in Geography**

In this section, we consider how statist epistemologies have shaped geographical knowledge production throughout the discipline’s history. Early geography was heavily dominated by scholarship oriented explicitly towards the valorization and strengthening of the (colonial) state (e.g., MacLaughlin 1986, 14–23). Thus, geography as a distinct discipline emerged at the same time as the European state form was being transplanted across the world through colonialist expansion. In this context, geographical knowledge was required not only to provide the technical and cartographic knowledges necessary for efficient resource extraction but also to ‘strengthen and popularize the idea of the nation state’ (Castro 2005, 59) in the eyes of colonial subjects, citizens, and creoles alike (Anderson 2006; Dell’Agnese 2013). Moreover, within schools, a key role for geography was to conceal the state’s role in the organization of space and justify colonial enterprise (Santos 1990, 32). Thus, aside from the anarchist geographers—notably Élisée Reclus, Peter Kropotkin, Lev Mečnikov and Charles Perron (Ferretti 2011, 2014)—geographical knowledge was intimately connected to colonial statism (Kearns 2004).

The shaping of scholarship by the (colonial) state in early geography has been critiqued in contemporary geographies, yet the state’s role in shaping the epistemic contours of geography has endured. This has not gone unnoticed (Brenner 1999; Fall 2010; Håkli 2001; Marston 2004; Moisio and Paasi 2013; Painter 2006), but critiques have not been articulated unproblematically. For example, Sallie Marston, in an otherwise excellent exposé of the state’s role in shaping cultural meanings, argues that

> what we imagine ourselves and others to be in relation to the world is absorbed into, refracted through and reproduced by state practices; practices that *reflect* hegemonic notions and beliefs that end up sustaining racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of oppression. (2004, 12, our emphasis)

Marston notes that state practices ‘end up’ sustaining oppressive relations; rather than positioning the state as an active, politicized social relation, Marston represents it as passively, or accidentally, ‘end[ing] up’ shoring up other oppressions, implying that the state is somehow politically neutral. Moreover, in noting that state practices ‘reflect hegemonic notions’ rather than statism being a hegemonic notion itself, Marston’s comment implies that it is not only beyond politics but also beyond time and historical change. Hegemonic beliefs come and go, but the state remains throughout.

Marston is not the only critical geographer to inadvertently reproduce what we, below, term ‘myths of the state.’ Moisio and Paasi, in their critique
of state-centric understandings of territory, argue that the state is ‘character-
ized by the contextual forms of territory-territoriality which are manifesta-
tions . . . of power relations’ (2013, 255, our emphasis). Like Marston, their
argument is underpinned by an understanding of the state that is politically
neutral, passively ‘characterized’ by the ‘real’ politics that take place within
and between states (via governments, social movements, businesses, etc.).
Elsewhere, Brenner (1999, 49) criticizes the centrality of the state within
geography, positioning it as historically contingent; yet, in doing so, he re-
mains fixed on the idea that the state is only contingent in the sense that it is a
politically neutral ‘infrastructure for capital’’s developmental dynamic’
(1999, 50).

Similar examples of problematic epistemologies abound (see Ince and
Barrera de la Torre, in review), especially among scholars who do not study
the state so intently. However, we wish to emphasize that the way geogra-
phers talk and think about the state is shaped by a problematic set of episte-
omological assumptions that reflect the continuation of a pervasive (if unspok-
en) statism within the discipline. This can be summarized by a core set of
myths (ibid.):

1. The state is the outcome of a ‘natural’ tendency towards hierarchical
organization.
2. The state is the only medium through which societies can function
efficiently and justly.
3. The state is an irreversible, ahistorical and unchangeable fact of life.
4. The state is a neutral, apolitical container of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ govern-
ments.
5. The state in its regulatory capacity (state socialism) is the only alterna-
tive or counter-balance to free-market neoliberal capitalism.

We do not presume that all geographers will reproduce all of these myths
throughout their work, but that they produce a broad and largely unconsciu-
s framework of silent statism across a range of geographical imaginations and
perspectives. Following Häkli (2001, 412), ‘[w]hile a given analysis may not
be state-centred in the sense of openly supporting state governmental poli-
cies, it nevertheless may be statist in the sense that it adopts the state’s
perspective on the social world.’ It is therefore possible to inadvertently
reproduce a certain epistemology without consciously ascribing to it.

Statism thus shapes not only our everyday experiences of the world but
also the mechanisms and modalities of knowing. This is embedded in the
state’s tendency towards monopoly, in which it claims total control over the
governing institutions and regulations of a particular territory. This trans-
poses into a statist epistemology, which claims total control over the defini-
tion of what are in/appropriate or un/acceptable modes of knowing and relat-
ing to the world. Conversely, by outlining a post-statist epistemology, below, we seek to explore not only a much wider range of epistemologies but also much more horizontal, collaborative and decolonized techniques for acquiring and sharing knowledge in practice.

OTHER FRAMEWORKS, OTHER PERSPECTIVES

In this section we outline proposals and critical views from anarchism and other disciplines which give us elements for an alternative epistemological framework to geography’s silent statism. We begin by discussing some ways in which anarchist perspectives can help us to understand some of the problematic ways in which statism functions through, and acts upon, knowledge structures. Then we go on to explain some of the contributions that contemporary authors have made in relation to decolonial thought and radical anthropology.

Critiques on Relations of Domination

Anarchists have long noted that the state is only one of a multitude of oppressions and inequalities, yet it remains arguably the clearest example of how authority and hierarchy are manifested formally and institutionally in society. Much like geographical analyses of the everyday ‘state effect’ in which the state is the actualization of ‘complex networks of prosaic practices of making, unmaking and remaking by actors within and outside state institutions’ (Painter 2006, 770), an anarchist perspective foregrounds the ways in which

> [t]he state is a social relationship; a certain way of people relating to one another. It can be destroyed by creating new social relationships; i.e., by people relating to one another differently. . . . We, who have imprisoned ourselves in the absolute state, must realise the truth: we are the state! And we will be the state as long as we are nothing different. (Landauer 2010, 214)

Anarchists move beyond geographical work in two ways. First, like Landauer, they emphasize that if the state is a contingent outcome of social relations, then it is possible to abolish it altogether. Second, the anarchist perspective integrates a critique of the state with a much broader critique of authority. On this second point, anarchist writers have often differentiated between authority based on expertise and knowledge, and authority that formalizes, promotes and buttresses hierarchical and oppressive relations (McKay 2008, 296–98). Generally, when anarchists critique ‘authority,’ they refer to the latter—which Kropotkin (2009a, 34) called ‘Roman’ authority— representing centralized, managerialist and expansionist ways of knowing, organizing and governing space, typified by the state. Power is therefore not
necessarily oppressive; rather, its oppressiveness is linked to whether it is used to reinforce unequal power relations (as in ‘Roman’ authority) or develop ‘horizontal’ ones.

Key to the statist epistemology that is interlinked with Roman authority is Thomas Hobbes’s dystopian ‘state of nature,’ in which Hobbes claimed that, without a strong centralized state, life would be ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short’ (Hobbes 1660, in Hoekstra 2007, 110). In his text Leviathan, Hobbes uses this state of nature as a rhetorical device to explain what he perceived as the necessity of the state. In exchange for sacrificing freedoms to a sovereign ruling body, security and wellbeing could be achieved. This perspective has endured to the present day, and anarchists have routinely criticized Hobbesian liberal statism for its simplistic and factually incorrect assumptions about ‘human nature’ (e.g., Kropotkin 2009b). Anarchists invert this view that understands humans as atomized, selfish citizens that require coercive authority to prevent conflicts; instead, they view freedom as something necessarily social, augmented by immanent connection with others:

Instead of seeking to curtail [unmediated relations], we should see in them the real condition and the effective cause of our liberty—that liberty of each man [sic] that does not find another man’s freedom a boundary but a confirmation and vast extension of his own. (Bakunin 1971a, 262)

Consequently, ‘the state is, by its very nature, a breach of this solidarity’ (Bakunin, 1971b, 276). The solidarity that statism breaches is, for Kropotkin (2009b, 24), not a conscious sense of ‘love’ or ‘care,’ but a deeper, evolutionary ‘unconscious recognition of the force that is borrowed by each man [sic] from the practice of mutual aid.’ In many respects, mutual aid continues within statist-capitalist society—specifically, in spite of statist-capitalist society—and it is here where anarchists see possibility for alternative futures.

Key to this possibility is another central concept. The notion of prefiguration connects anarchists’ philosophical analyses of statist authority, and the glimmers of mutual aid that endure within it, with its political strategy. Rather than seeking to establish a free and equal society through unfree or unequal means, anarchism seeks to implement and valorize anarchist principles through political praxis and everyday life. As early as the mid-1800s, anarchists were already warning about the risks of the vanguardist, centralized methods that their orthodox Marxist contemporaries advocated, arguing that a revolution led hierarchically would inevitably lead to tyranny. Instead, anarchists have always sought to act in such a way that is consistent with the future society they wish to create (Marshall 1992).

Prefigurative politics refers, in philosophy, to a belief in the unity of means and ends (Franks 2006). Every act contains the seeds of a future world; in acting, a decision is explicitly or implicitly made to act in a way
that prefigures a certain future (Ince 2012). A course of action is usually made according to circumscribed parameters, and this tends to reproduce the same social relations that already exist. For anarchists (and others, see Siltanen et al. 2015), in making a conscious decision to act otherwise, there is power to create the foundations of alternative social relations. This is not necessarily a rejection of the revolutionary ‘moment,’ but one way anarchists seek to minimize the chances of such moments producing new systems of oppression (Price 2007). Crucially, prefiguration is a necessarily collective endeavour that seeks not simply personal moral choices but the proliferation of new, liberatory relationships and structures. In practice, it is also a means of collectively self-educating and sharing knowledges that may develop greater resourcefulness and refine political strategies in the future. Thus, for anarchists, ‘alternatives to the state do not arise from the order that they refuse, but from . . . forces that are alien to that order’ (Springer 2012, 1617).

Hence, prefiguring genuine alternatives requires a wholly different philosophical and epistemological basis (Ince 2012).

The notion of prefiguration, however, also suggests that unchallenged statism may continue and deepen over time, as relationships, interactions and spaces ‘solidify’ along statist logics. This ‘Roman’ logic cuts through society as a whole, since, within a state system, even non-state structures and relations are overwhelmingly shaped in a statist image. Yet the structures of society are not merely organizational, and the relations produced also reflect certain epistemologies, since societal structures are co-produced alongside and articulate with structures and processes of knowledge-making. Why else would people create a (physical, organizational, social, etc.) space in a particular arrangement unless they at least tacitly accept a certain set of knowledges that claim this course of action and mode of relating to be correct or effective? People act according to a complex meshwork of beliefs and knowledges about the world, and much of this is inherited through situated practices, experiences, and encounters, as feminist scholars have long argued (e.g., Haraway 1988).

In turn, the prefigurative element within anarchist thought and practice suggests that the state’s dominance—through discursive, material, coercive, and other techniques—is a self-reproducing phenomenon linked closely to statist epistemology. Anarchist thought also indicates that non-statist modes of acting in the world are conducive of alternative epistemologies and pedagogies. In essence, then, statism is partly a claim to knowledge about the world—not only what is true or false but also how we go about acquiring or discovering knowledge, and what the limits of knowledge may be.

In order to understand how statism shapes the epistemological foundations of scholarship, as mentioned above, feminist analyses are helpful. The feminist philosopher Miranda Fricker has identified two forms of what she terms ‘epistemic injustice’ (2007). First, testimonial injustice refers to the
disregard of certain knowledges due to the knower’s positionality—for example, as a woman in a patriarchal society. Second, hermeneutic injustice refuses knowledges that are not fully explainable in contemporary language, but which nonetheless are true and valid. Examples include ‘transphobia’ or ‘age discrimination’; though these are relatively recent ideas, people experienced these injustices before the terms were invented. Hence, there was no way of articulating them, offering little opportunity to challenge them. Fricker’s idea of epistemic injustice is useful since it both explains how ‘other’ knowledges are marginalized and hints at forms of anarchistic pedagogical and methodological practice with which to decenter dominant epistemologies and forge a geography ‘which has its centre everywhere, and its circumference nowhere’ (Reclus 1876, in Ferretti 2013b, 1351).

Critiques of the Colonial Way of Generating Knowledge and Conceiving the World

In recent years, new tendencies in social sciences have tried to transcend the colonial legacy. Especially from the Global South, authors like Anibal Quijano (2014) and Boaventura de Souza Santos (2010) have contributed to the search for other ways of thinking that consider so-called Eurocentric thought as one in a diversity of forms of thinking and seeing the world. While this perspective assumes some questionable aspects (for example, the idea that colonized peoples have the privileged standpoint to invert such inequality), this approach looks to make an epistemological deconstruction of coloniality which is highly useful to our post-statist project.

From this perspective we consider the idea of epistemological pluriversality, which transcends the universalist idea of the world. The aforementioned authors consider, on one hand, that the comprehension of the world goes far beyond the occidental conception, meaning that the diversity of the world is huge (Santos 2010); on the other hand, coloniality continues to define criteria and points of reference (epistemological frames) as ‘science’ (Jara Cifuentes 2014). Thus, it should be recognized that the latter is manifested in distinct social spheres, which Quijano (2014) has identified as the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, which together with the coloniality of nature (Jara Cifuentes 2014), impact on daily forms of acting. This has also established, among other things, the idea of state organization as inherent to ‘human nature.’ We follow Jara Cifuentes (2014), arguing that it is necessary to ‘decolonize knowledge by means of an intercultural dialog between different cultures considering them in this process as equals, both the invisibilized and the dominant,’ thereby allowing us to ‘learn from each other from different epistemologies.’

These ideas have made important developments in recent decades; however, they are not external to libertarian thought, which was characterized by
anti-colonialism, although not without polemic inside the movement. In the work of the anarchist geographer Élisée Reclus, we find that his conception of progress is complex, non-linear, and considered of great importance what we call now cultural diversity and local or vernacular knowledges. This approach does not advocate a social standardization with occidental civilization as the reference point; in fact, ‘the geography of Reclus can be considered as one of the first attempts to remodel European hegemony in global dynamics’ (Ferretti 2013a, 146). This remodelingforegrounds colonial pretentions and imperialist forms of seeing and exploring the world. In his writings Reclus never accepts the existence of inferior races; even when he recognizes phases of material progress, he rejects the notion that this gives cultural superiority to a certain society. Thus, he is interested in the different forms of adaptation/relation of peoples to their environments to understand the diversity of social organization and cultures (Ferretti 2013a).

Nevertheless, Ramnath suggests that despite libertarian thought being contrary to colonialism, as a project that appeared within modernity it is necessary to ‘decolonize our concept of anarchism’ (2011, 6). Therefore, anarchism should be conceived as just one manifestation of a large family of egalitarian and emancipatory principles and projects. In a decolonial approach to anarchism’s Occidental roots, the author considers that ‘we could locate the Western anarchist tradition as one contextually specific manifestation among a larger—indeed global—tradition of antiauthoritarian, egalitarian thought/praxis, of a universal human urge toward emancipation, which also occurs in many other forms in many other contexts. Something else is then the reference point for us, instead of us being the reference point of everything else. This is a deeply colonizing move’ (2011, 6).

Critique of the State as an Ontological Structure and Ways of Thinking about Power

The knowledge generated by anthropology could be of great help in recognizing the contingency of hierarchical and statist structures as well as in the analysis of power. For anarchist geographers Élisée Reclus and Piotr Kropotkin, ethnographic studies were fundamental to develop their ideas and works considering the Other and their perspectives as sources of possibilities in the searching for an egalitarian society (Ferretti 2013b; Kropotkin 1973). Also, as we mentioned, their studies allow us to decenter the reference point, which was generally occidental civilization, expressed from the ‘diffusionism imaginary’ from the nineteenth century onwards (Blaut 1992; Morris 2008). We consider that anthropological studies are relevant for geographical analysis and particularly in the critique of silent statism, since it allows us, on one hand, to know other relations between humans and between humans and their
environments and, on the other, to recognize from a self-critical standpoint the form of knowledge that the discipline generates.

One study we recognize as especially fundamental for the construction of other epistemic frames is Pierre Clastres’s *Society against the State* (1989). We wish to highlight three aspects of this work that, from our perspective, have not been appreciated or developed extensively in geography: (1) the verification that the state is not an ontological structure; (2) his critique of the idea of a one-way history related to evolutionism which defines advanced and backward societies in relation to the presence of the state and the power relations within society; and (3) his critique of the idea that the economic realm is primordial to hierarchical power relations. Thus, next we expose these points in relation to one another. This does not imply that we do not recognize other authors whose work has foregrounded other visions (e.g., Barclay 1982 or Scott 2009), but Clastres’s study seems to us especially engaged with the aspects with which we are concerned.

*The State as an Ontological Structure*

Clastres’s (1989) analysis demonstrates that modern discourse considers the State as one of the main aspects of progress, development and as a phase of society through which the character of advanced civilization is proved. As Clastres (1989, 145–46) comments, ‘all modern education, liberal or antiliberal, tends to suppose the idea of State as a necessary and perfect form of society. . . . The State is presented as an ontology category.’ Consequently, all human societies are ‘destined to develop and improve their institutions until [they] achieve a society of the State. The State, together with the technical progress, the economy of accumulation, the writing, the class division, etc., are the achievements that evolution gives to human society and are those to whom society is directed.’ Thus, as Clastres (1989, 165) notes, the need for a state only reveals the *ethnocentric background* of this vision. For Clastres, non-state societies are not ‘pre-state’ or ‘backward’; so-called primitive societies are those that tend to reject inequalities, and for that, they are of their own decision *against* the state. Therefore, the state is a contingent structure that develops in particular social, geographical and historical contexts but does not correspond to any intrinsic necessity in human society.

In his distinction between societies against or with the state, Clastres (1989) asserts that coercive power is what differentiates the forms of power between leaders and chiefs of the first and the authorities of the latter. Thereby ‘only one structural, cataclysmic upheaval is capable of transforming primitive society, destroying it in the process: the mutation that causes to rise up within that society, or form outside it, the thing whose very absence defines primitive society, hierarchical authority, the power relation, the subjugation of men—in a word, the State’ (1989, 203).
Linear History and Evolutionism

Clastres (1989) rejects the idea of a linear history in which gradual change leads a society without a state to become a civilized society with a state. He demonstrates that since the two types of society are fundamentally distinct, a change from one to the other cannot signify a step ahead or above. Thus, history is not linear in the sense that occidental civilization (among others) has tried to impose, as part of its discourse to justify its expansion, hegemony and atrocities across the world. This linear view suggests that societies without a state are incomplete, but this only represents the short-sightedness of classic modern thought, which sees in primitive societies delayed species of universal history. Moreover, the axiom which guides civilization is attributing to it the category of a ‘true society’ when it develops under the aegis of the state (Clastres 1989).

Finally, Clastres (1989, 218) declares that ‘the history of peoples who have a history is the history of class struggle. It might be said, with at least as much truthfulness, that the history of peoples without history is the history of their struggle against the State.’

Between Power and the Economic

One of the aspects emphasized by Clastres (1989) is that power does not have to be coercive in the organization of society since, as we mentioned, while power is inherent to society, this does not necessarily lead to authority. We face, again, an ‘ethnocentrism prejudice,’ ‘the political coercive power (which implies the obedience-order relation) cannot be considered as the model or archetype of real power. It is just a particular case, a concrete realization of political power in certain cultures, as the occidental. There is consequently no reason to take this modality of power as the point of reference and principle’ (Clastres 1989, 147). The societies that Clastres studied invented means to neutralize political authority, rendering their chiefs at the service of a socially defined project in which the people have no duty of obedience. In this regard, coercive power becomes a limitation on the multitude of the societies, which ‘never sacrifice political equality, that do not recognize governing–governed division, to the pseudo-security that the hierarchical coercive apparatus of the State provides’ (Clastres 1989, 149).

Conclusively, Clastres (1989, 198) established that the power relations exist prior to economic relations: ‘the political relation of power precedes and founds economic relation of exploitation. . . . Alienation is political before it is economic; power precedes labor; the economic derives from the political; the emergence of the State determines the advent of classes.’ Therefore, he does not consider that the political is a reflection of economic relations and characteristics, and for that, ‘political oppression determines, begets, allows exploitation’ (Clastres 1989, 203).
All the above mentioned do not have the intention to idealize the worldview of indigenous peoples or consider ‘primitive’ society as a model to follow, but to present it as other possible human experiences. Through this, we might construct new epistemologies, convinced that this knowledge of other experiences can enrich and expand the analysis and contributions that geography could make to the construction of decolonized knowledge liberated from state hegemony.

**FOR OTHER EPISTEMOLOGIES**

Considering the discussions above, this section presents an outline of an alternative epistemic frame questioning statism in geography, in which we discuss four main themes that we consider fundamental. This epistemological proposal foregrounds how knowledge in a post-statist geography could be constructed. Why do we consider these points as essential? In statism we find a discourse that does not make explicit the system of reference and worldview from which this social institution is conceived, thereby linking it to the modern Western ideological field. We seek to draw the state into a problematic where it can be analyzed by means of its fundamentals rather than solely in its details. This epistemic approach thus facilitates the overcoming of what we argue is the arbitrary notion of the superiority of a certain point of view and scarce radical approaches to questions of the state in geography.

By no means is this epistemic frame an ensemble of norms, but we seek to maintain ‘obscure zones’ that allow for discussion and continual transformation thereof. What we hope to do here is expand the possibilities of analysis so the state can be as deeply, critically and dynamically examined as any other social institution. Thus, as Raffestin and Lévy (1988, 35) note, ‘epistemology . . . for the geographer should be a means of defending as much against a spirit of hyperbolic criticism as against confining and conservative dogmatism. It is the preservation of scientific liberty as held by Feyerabend.’

With the above mentioned, we ask: On which principles could geographical enquiry be designed in order to employ a perspective that does not perpetuate domination? Which world-vision(s) and system(s) of reference can be suggested for a post-statist geography? And which perspectives could be introduced to geography to overcome this condition? Thereupon we will outline the epistemic alternative we propose in four points that in no way represent an absolute or ‘completed’ epistemic framework.

**1. Pluriversality, Power and Liberty**

Recognizing epistemic diversity through a plural and open perspective emphasizing the complexity and particularity of processes according to histori-
cal change is the first view that we consider appropriate to the epistemic framework proposed. The openness of science, in general, to non-oppressive forms of constructing knowledge that do not degenerate into strictly ideological discourses is a position defended by Paul Feyerabend (1981 and 1982). Some of Feyerabend’s ideas continue to be useful, particularly the notion of theoretical pluralism as a way to struggle against the uniqueness of method and totalitarian theories and his rejection of all authority in science (Tsou 2003). Hence, ‘for Feyerabend, science is just one epistemological tradition among many. It is open to him, therefore, to bring extra-scientific standards to bear on scientific practice. . . . [F]or [him] the cult of the scientific method has all the characteristics of a totalitarian ideology and produces equally damaging results’ (Larvor 2004, 90–91).

Thus, the idea of pluriversality allows us to reposition the occidental perspective as another worldview—as not the only way to comprehend the world. In this regard, we embrace some aspects of Santos’s (2010) Epistemologies of the South which emphasize the importance of a diversity of visions and the necessity of foregrounding this diversity. As Santos notes (2010, 48), all cultures are incomplete, therefore it is possible to enrich them through dialog and engagement with each other. Likewise, we stand by the significance that Santos gives to the rejection of all forms of inequality and naturalization that block the possibilities for emancipation.

Regarding the statist perspective, we consider that an alternative epistemic framework must critically examine hierarchical forms of organization, not only through using decolonial thought to re-orient and re-organize science (Jara Cifuentes 2014) but also through critiquing authority as the primary means of imposing homogeneity and discourses that benefit personal/group interests. To fully embrace the pluriversal proposal, a radical perspective on coercive relations must necessarily be incorporated. As Emma Goldman established (2010, 44), ‘authority is uniformity’ and the only way to reach the integration of, and to strike a balance between, different epistemic alternatives is through liberty. Thus, we add that a consistent form of decolonized knowledge production should be supported by something that resembles anarchism. From this point we define our first aspect of our reference system, maintaining an emphasis on pluriversality of visions within a framework of epistemic liberty and equality.

2. The Libertarian Perspective

In previous sections we have insisted on the relevance of anarchist thought in undermining statist epistemology and in overcoming the epistemic injustices (Fricker 2007) through which statism is established as the dominant form of conceiving power and social organization. We present two examples of me-
thodological and theoretical possibility in which a libertarian perspective can counteract the perpetuation of oppressive research practices.

The first example is the methodological openness that from this social philosophy, anarchism is promoted. The dialectical method of Proudhon (Cappelletti 1980, 10–16) offers a rich vision of global diversity in movement, and an idea of a multiple and irreducible reality. As Cappelletti (1980, 10) explains, ‘to Hegelian-Marxist monism is opposed the Prodhonian *pluralism*; to the dialectic of superior synthesis, the dialectics of *egalitarian synthesis*; to unification, *balance*’ (our emphasis). Thus, Hegelian-Marxist dialectics are manifested as a ‘vertical and rather more closed dialectic,’ whereas Proudhon proposes a dialectic that is necessarily horizontal and open. Proudhon’s position thus exposes the hierarchical nature of the Marxist alternative:

[T]he synthesis of Hegel—says Proudhon—is governmental (that is, hierarchical and closed), and showing itself as ‘prior and superior in the terms it unites,’ it leads to ‘the arrogance of the State’ and ‘the reestablishment of authority.’ Here is why the Marxist dialectics only lead necessarily to a centralist and authoritarian conception of State and a communist theory of property, while the Prodhonian perspective generates a federalist doctrine of society and a theory of no-property. (Cappelletti 1980, 11)\(^1\)

Furthermore, openness and tolerance to other knowledges and worlds is manifested in Voltairine de Cleyre’s (1901) works, an anarchist in whom we find the possibility to incorporate other forms of seeing the world from the same conception of the libertarian view. She considered that a ‘wholehearted acceptance of differences is what freedom (i.e. anarch)’, rationally intended and consistently practiced, is mainly about’ (1901). Besides, she did not conceive of anarchism as defined from a particular worldview (read modern Western), asserting that ‘it no longer seems necessary to me . . . that one should base his [or her] Anarchism on any particular world conception. . . . For myself, I believe that all these [proposals] and many more could be advantageously tried in different localities; I would see the instincts and habits of the people express themselves in a free choice in every community; and I am sure that distinct environments would call out distinct adaptations’ (1901, no pagination). In turn, since anarchism is not a simple systematization, it is neither an abstract preconception of the world nor a one-way proposal on how it should be organized.

In the same vein, Ramnath (2011, 37) further explains this openness characteristic of libertarian thought. Ramnath argues that ‘the anarchist tradition is a continuously unfolding discourse . . . and the content of this discourse is the quest for collective liberation in its most meaningful sense, by maximizing the conditions for autonomy and egalitarian social relationships, sustainable production and reproduction.’ In this way, the anarchist perspec-
tive allows us to take a step back from the statist discourse to interrogate the state as one social institution that humanity has developed, and that it has no inherent characteristic on social development. Instead, it is derived from the exercise of one type of power relations—namely, coercive power.

As an egalitarian social project among many others, the libertarian vision enables the coexistence of multiple worlds and contemplates this complexity. It suggests that there is no single solution for social organization, no program that can be imposed in all regions of the planet, but that there is a unified expression of liberty and equality. From this perspective, we could give a basic shape to a worldview that can support our epistemic framework, allowing us to bring other methodologies, pedagogies and ways of examining the world closer. The element of balance, exhibited in Proudhon’s anarchist dialectics, also articulates multiple worldviews in contrast to universality.

3. The Problem of the Reference Point

Considering our previous discussions, the point of reference is a fundamental aspect of our epistemic framework because decentering our point of view will lead us to greater proximity to other knowledges and experiences, leaving behind the statist cultural prejudice that forms an ‘epistemological obstacle’ within scholarship. This is because if we do not have a systematic and deep critique of the properties of the state and its prevailing power relations, analysis will always start from assumptions that originate in the realm of ideological (statist, occidental, etc.) discourses. Returning to Clastres, he mentions that statist’s supposed universality (that, as Santos argues, defines scientific endeavour in many ways) remains closely linked to its own particularity, both historical and social, while ‘its pseudo-scientific discourse quickly deteriorates into genuine ideology’ (1989, 16). Additionally, he recalls the importance of other knowledges and experiences to avoid judgments from self-referential models—that is, that knowledge should ‘not [be] situated at the commencement of a historical logic leading straight to an end given ahead of time, but recognized only a posteriori as our own social system’ (Clastres 1989, 199).

The negation of other realities and experiences manifests itself through an ideological construction that derives a supposedly universal reality from the specific form that conceives it. Western, modern, or Eurocentric thought (which, ironically, excludes the majority of European reality) is based, as Gandler (2013, 73) notes, not only in the ‘reduction of thought to a certain reality but the reduction of thought itself, the epistemological and intellectual distancing not only from the realities outside “Europe,” but reality as such.’

Therefore, changing our reference point forces us to refuse the limits of our system of reference, and render it a system of dialogs and confrontations (as Santos [2010] has proposed), which is then open to debate a particular
problem, in a particular region and time. It is necessary that multiple experiences should be considered as equals and overcome the false universality ‘of the civilized model as the only model acceptable for humans (or at least the most developed)’ (Gandler 2013, 32). This post-statist epistemology would help to overcome the arbitrary assumption where ‘the state of civilization [is linked to] the civilization of the State’ (Clastres 1989, 190).

4. Overcoming Modernity

In connection with decolonial thought, the critique of modernity is another aspect we consider relevant to constructing an alternative epistemic framework. We follow the assertion that the goal is to overcome the modern project, not to reject it (Berque 2009) as ‘abyssal thought’ (Santos 2010). We argue this because, even if modernity presents itself as homogeneous, unique and advanced, it is in fact contradictory and contested. On the ‘abyssal’ characteristic of this thought, Gandler (2013) comments that in the ‘nonexistence’ and invisibility of the different, other experience becomes imperceptible. Thus, our intent in overcoming modernity is to propose alternative forms of knowledge production that seek a balance between distinct realities from an egalitarian and open synthesis.

There is a deep-seated conflict in Western modern thought and social science which Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) have analyzed in Dialectic of Enlightenment. For these authors, the Enlightenment led to an emancipation of humankind, becoming itself the master, the superior being in its relation with the other-than-human. That same relation of dominance with other-than-humans, of nature as subordinate to humankind, parallels the domination of other humans: ‘What human beings seek to learn from nature is how to use it to dominate wholly both it and human beings’ (2002, 16–17). The authors describe the emergence of this relation of domination: ‘Myth becomes enlightenment and nature mere objectivity. Human beings purchase the increase in their power with estrangement from that over which it is exerted. Enlightenment stands in the same relationship to things as the dictator to human beings. He [sic] knows them to the extent that he can manipulate them. The man of science knows things to the extent that he can make them. Their “in-itself” becomes “for him”’ (2002, 6). Thus, the universality of ideas is based in a real control.

Enlightenment is a totalizing project; as such, it aspires to homogeneity and uniqueness, the One. Its role is more significant considering how it reached most parts of the world and the methods through which it was imposed. This colonizer model of the world (Blaut 1992), superior to any other, manifests a particular form of seeing, a specific reality, which through ‘power confronts the individual as the universal, as the reason which informs reality’ (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 36). For these authors, the way to
shape reality from this perspective involves a simplified form mediated by, on the one hand, the immediacy of mathematical thought (e.g., statistics, the state science par excellence) and, on the other, inflexible objective rationality. These reinforce and contribute to the dichotomies that establish moments in a linear history, converting contingent elements into constitutive realities of the human condition.

In contrast to this vision, in which certain a priori elements (e.g., the state) are incorporated, it is necessary to reconsider reality as filled with possibilities, and to understand that modern statist knowledge is constructed from a singular view that appropriates reality as a scheme which adjusts to its own empirical referents to ensure its perpetuation (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002). Our proposal for a post-statist epistemic framework is to include the idea of ‘concrete universalism.’ Echeverría (2010, 124), who among others has developed this idea, proposes it as a way to ‘try to come close to the cosmos opened by another code, by another perspective of world.’ Avoiding the tendency (shared by human societies through social reproduction) to position its own cosmos as the measure of everything and everyone (the problem of the reference point), which we might call cultural imperialism, this approach recognizes the possibilities that an open and egalitarian dialectic could offer. So, how could universality become encompassing, to develop an approach not of excessive subjectivities or unification but of balance? Echeverría considers that ‘the challenge that [concrete universality] entails is to carry out a dialectical reaffirmation of the singular figure of the cosmos someone belongs to, and make it in a way that it implies introducing in that figure a revolutionary transformation, a substitution of its manner to articulate ingeniously the concrete with the universal, for another, critique, in which that articulation only occurs as mediated through the conjunction of a concrete universality’ (2010, 238, our emphasis). Overcoming modernity therefore entails the generation of alternative modernities or countemodernities in other contexts, worldviews, histories, environments and so forth (Ramnath 2011).

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PEDAGOGY AND METHODOLOGY

In the previous sections we first developed a critique of statist epistemology orbiting the myths of naturalization and ahistoricity of the state. We then discussed the possible features of a post-statist epistemology rooted in ‘other’ ways of knowing that transgress the boundaries of knowledge systems circumscribed by the modernity and universality of statist. The anarchist rejection of linear historical progression, its commitment to prefigurative and intersubjective forms of relating, and its foregrounding of marginalized voices and knowledges are central to a post-statist epistemology and its im-
plementation in the ‘real world.’ Hence, in this section we reflect on the theoretical discussions in the rest of the chapter in order to outline some practical implications for pedagogical and methodological practice.

Learning from Other Voices, Subjects, Times and Places

The decentering of the modern state system as just one of a multitude of societal structures in the long course of human history is a central element of deconstructing statism’s naturalization of the state. This process requires a certain level of humility since it involves a recognition that our own actions and initiatives as academics emanate from a certain epistemic reference point. This repositions contemporary knowledges as vulnerable, continually in a struggle to justify themselves in the face of a potentially vast array of other knowledge systems from other times and places.

In a post-statist epistemology grounded in anarchism, statism is thus re-worked as but one of many epistemologies presenting knowledge as situated in space and time. In practice, a multitude of mechanisms for enacting this shift are available to geographers, and these other schools of thought have already made efforts at developing strategies for both methodological and pedagogical innovation (e.g., Browne 2005; Newstead 2009). Since a central element of post-statist critique concerns the naturalization of a certain mode of social organization (the state), organizational form is an area of study where existing work has been less strong.

As geographers, there is a considerable body of research and teaching on the state, as well as anti-authoritarian practices within state spaces, but little about non-state forms of large-scale social organization, which are generally overlooked in research agendas and teaching syllabi. To decenter the state from dominant narratives, then, examples of non-state forms are needed. The huge anarchist-controlled regions of Spain between 1936 and 1939, which possess relatively comparable characteristics to contemporary Western society, may constitute an interesting case study on the functional mechanisms of complex non-state societies; yet they encourage us to step outside that same reference point of European modernity. Given its relatively contemporary setting, there is a multitude of documentary evidence to support advanced levels of examination as both a teaching aid and a research topic (e.g., Breibart 1978; Gorostiza et al. 2012; Guérin 2005, 437–70; Marshall 1992; Peirats 2001). Other examples could include the Ukrainian Makhnovshchina in the 1917 revolution (Arshinov 2002) or contemporary non-state systems in Chiapas (Cortez Ruiz 2004) and Rojava/Kurdistan (Baier 2014). Likewise, work in anthropology on non-state societies could provide a gateway to other, more radically different empirical examples to study alongside the state (e.g., Clastres 1989; Graeber 2004; Scott 2009).
Since the de-naturalization of statism relies on overcoming a particular scientific paradigm, we must consider not only what is studied but also how. However, this is not an appeal to simply ignore the state; on the contrary, much of what we have been arguing for in the earlier sections of the chapter has been a much more careful and attentive understanding of the state as both a scholarly concept and an actually existing phenomenon. A simple way of researching and teaching in ways that foreground the silenced non-state voices and narratives is to treat the state as a necessarily turbulent, uneven, and historically contingent set of social and power relations. This might involve the explicit rejection or critique of the state’s perceived neutrality, a greater emphasis on the use of anti-state and state-critical ideas (e.g., anarchism, libertarian socialism, decolonialism) in research and teaching frameworks, or a greater awareness of spaces and networks that exist outside or between state legal systems. Such approaches may serve, over time, to mainstream subjectivities and positionalities that exist outside statist frameworks by rendering statist visible.

However, as we have discussed in relation to decolonial thought, it is essential to avoid paternalistic approaches which position other knowledges as passively awaiting ‘recognition’ by expert actors in the Global North. Post-statist epistemologies must in practice become partly a project of othering the modern state system, rather than requesting its recognition of the Other. This priority might be reflected pedagogically through exercises that encourage students to learn about non-hegemonic epistemologies and apply those logics and solutions to questions (e.g., climate change, migration) which are usually dealt with in policy terms. Likewise, developing the right skill-sets to support these exercises might involve incorporating active listening and non-violent communication as core skills goals, as well as making their use a factor in grading priorities.

Another ‘how’ question relating to decentering and de-naturalizing the state concerns language. Language is a powerful representation of knowledge, and it has tremendous potential for variously strengthening or challenging statist epistemic injustices (Fricker 2007; cf. Anderson 2006), since the way we communicate knowledge about the social phenomena we study shapes the image of the world we convey to others. For example, to what extent does a positive-sounding term like ‘civil society’ relate to the notion of ‘civilization’ and the problematic statist and colonialisit politics that underpin it? Using the notion of civil society could discursively foreclose forms of political subjectivity and agency that exist outside the ‘social contract’ between the legal citizen and the state. A post-statist epistemology might ask: Are there ways that we can represent what is labeled civil society (or, indeed, civilization) in language that incorporates subaltern, transgressive and marginalized voices and subjects as equal to their hegemonic counterparts? By thinking critically about how statist language has become embedded through
statist epistemologies, we may make space for alternative forms of communication that de-naturalize and re-politicize the state.

Non-Linear Logics

Earlier sections of this chapter have discussed how countering linear politics is essential, since linearity tightly forecloses what is possible around the strictly guarded parameters of the modern state. Statism asks us to perfect and refine the existing system through a false neutrality linked to a disregard for other knowledges (Minh-Ha 1991); post-statism, conversely, brings these other knowledges to the fore and asks whether the existing system is the best option at all. As such, since the valorization of the state (as the ‘end of history’) goes hand in hand with its naturalization (as the outcome of ‘human nature’), efforts to destabilize statism’s irreversible, linear concept of progress have considerable overlaps with the above question of how to foreground non-state social forms.

Many of the ideas mentioned in previous paragraphs will support the critique and destabilization of statism’s linear notion of history—such as applying non-state solutions to policy problems—yet there remain particular characteristics of a linear epistemology that require special consideration. Firstly, since statism is a pervasive phenomenon that stretches beyond the spaces of the state itself, the statist preoccupation with progress is especially problematic from a pedagogical perspective. Notions of calculable progress and ‘ladders’ of learning goals set by state bodies have become ubiquitous, especially within neoliberal educational agendas which seek to replicate theories of capitalist economic growth in an educational context. Students are encouraged to compete via a ‘rationalization’ of learning, competing not only with their friends but also with standardized ‘ideal-type’ progression metrics (Hursh 2007, 500–501). Moreover, those doing the teaching are likewise not immune from this competitive linearity, in which ‘[a]n authoritarian logic of competition, hierarchy and separation [have entered] into the dynamics of reproduction of student and academic community’ (Motta 2013, 85).

The promotion of more Proudhonian, non-linear notions of (dialectical) ‘progress’ could therefore become an important means of undermining the mechanisms through which statist views of time and change are reproduced. This critique is not a total rejection of progress, however, since this leads us to a dubious ultra-relativism which allows little space for normative judgments about justice; instead, progress needs different ‘measurements’ and characteristics beyond the singular, unidirectional progress of statism. Rather than seeking the continual improvement of grades, writing quality, complexity of arguments and so on, according to rationalized metrics, the post-statist pedagogue might seek to collaboratively generate goals and learning agendas with students which might also support the learning process for the ‘teacher’
(Rouhani 2012). Marking, likewise, could become a more transparent, collaborative affair whereby students participate in various forms of collective or non-competitive peer-to-peer assessment. In doing so, learning has the potential to become an active confrontation with the tendency towards learning by rote sets of objective ‘facts.’

Revisiting the anarchist idea of prefiguration as a processual form of collective learning and experimentation could provide a link to a related framework for research activities. In seeking to prefigure alternative futures through situated practice in the here-and-now, new forms of knowledge and new ways of knowing may emerge, but since they are not linked to a centralized, authoritarian rationality, their model of progress is radically different. We might think, following the poet Eduardo Galeano (in Notes from Nowhere 2003, 499), that ‘utopia is on the horizon.’ The important fact about the horizon is that it ‘surrounds us in all directions. Thus, rather than a linear view of prefigurative struggle taking place in a pre-conceived direction towards a specific end-point, it can be conceptualised as nonlinear, unpredictable and exploratory’ (Ince 2010, 82).

What is striking about prefigurative politics is that the temporality of pedagogical terms such as ‘progress’ and ‘success’ is radically transformed. Even in comparison to Marxist approaches, whereby waiting becomes a central facet of struggle in a linear, ‘scientific’ progress towards the crisis of capitalism that will bring about revolution, anarchist prefiguration foregrounds the transformative qualities of now. In what Gordon calls ‘present-tense’ politics, whereby ‘non-hierarchical, anarchic modes of interaction are seen as an ever-present potential of social interaction’ (2008, 21), a prefigurative perspective in pedagogical practice offers opportunities for recasting progress in an entirely different manner. Through prefiguration, progress might be decoupled from statist epistemologies, recasting it not as a linear pathway to a fixed end-point but as a 360-degree horizon of possibility. This decoupling could also become a process of decolonizing knowledge from the statist-colonialist order that valorizes and naturalizes ‘Roman’ ways of knowing as the final point in human intellectual progress.

Since such prefiguration can also emerge from unexpected ‘fleeting moments of non-conformism and carefree egalitarianism’ (Gordon 2008, 41), we might envision a much more student-led class in which students are rewarded for supporting and teaching one another, with the ‘teacher’ as a facilitator and knowledgeable supporter of their learning. Active reflection on such ‘practical’ activities can then provide a pathway to discussing more ‘abstract’ questions concerning the geographies of power and democracy (Rouhani 2012). Likewise, it is possible to imagine ways of conducting research that have concrete, ‘practical’ goals but which make space for the research to produce new meanings, debates and knowledges in a process of reflection between the researcher and participants. Such practices may have
the capacity to ‘jolt’ researchers and participants out of their established patterns and silos of understanding (e.g., Thomas 2014, 55–57).

Transforming Academic Administration

Anderson (2006, 53) has noted that ‘[t]o see how administrative units [states] could, over time, come to be conceived as fatherlands . . . one has to look at the ways in which administrative organizations create meaning.’ For Anderson, speaking of nineteenth-century European colonialism, mutual intelligibility of information across space was a central factor in this state-building process. He also emphasizes the role of censuses, maps and museums in organizing and representing knowledge to produce statist-colonialist meanings (ibid., chapter 10). Thus, the way knowledge is organized, categorized, and made available (or not) is a central factor in generating and sustaining certain epistemologies.

A recent upsurge in universities functioning as institutions for disciplining and regulating migration, social movements, suspected terrorists, and other marginalized and subaltern groups is indicative of the state’s priorities playing an active role in the shaping of academic knowledges and learning environments. Similarly, the state’s central role in the collection and storage of ‘big data’ has produced knowledge systems that are inherently bounded by state borders and legal categories of citizenship in two key ways:

On the one hand statistical data direct the analysis toward an operationalization of ‘society’ as defined by the state territory. On the other hand, the collection of statistics implies a (social scientific) understanding of society and social processes, that is, particular concepts and theories of ‘society,’ which are part of the social reproduction of the nation state. (Häkli 2001, 411)

In this context, although states are useful receptacles for knowledge storage, a post-statist epistemology must engage critically with the statist administration and organization of academic knowledge. Élisée Reclus, in Nouvelle Géographie Universelle (1876–1894), offers us a historical example of how to organize data in ways that transcend state boundaries. As Ferretti (2009, 7) notes, by focusing on the contested, ambiguous concept of landscape, rather than the bounded statist notion of territory, Reclus presented data according to broad, ‘naturalistic’ regions that divided space in a manner that was ‘independent of the rationality of the state.’ In turn, this approach afforded Reclus the opportunity to use landscape as ‘a tool for social emancipation’ (ibid. 11) by presenting ‘scientific’ knowledge in a way that acknowledged its situatedness.

Another technique used by Reclus was his insistence on illustrating his works with ‘human-eye’ views that counterposed the ‘God’s-eye’ views of maps in order to emphasize the lived, experienced spaces rather than the
mathematical, Cartesian gaze of states. Scott (1998) argues that states’ efforts to render populations and territories ‘legible’ through maps involves a profound simplification of lived reality; in addition, this rationality (re)produces forms of authoritative knowledge that delegitimize situated knowledges of the places they document.

One contemporary development that can support a post-statist epistemology is the emergence of participatory, popular and radical cartography which seeks to foreground knowledges, practices and processes that are marginalized, delegitimized or erased by statist mapping exercises. Such an approach, following Harley (1989, 15), helps us to ‘challenge the epistemological myth . . . of the cumulative progress of an objective science always producing better delineations of reality.’ By using technologies developed for statist forms of cartography, groups and individuals have increasingly used participatory mapping exercises as ‘performed mapping’ (Sanderson et al. 2007, 122) in order to tease out the multitude of experiences and generate a ‘sense of ownership’ (ibid., 130) among participants. Such techniques can thus potentially ‘provoke new perceptions of the networks, lineages, associations and representations of people, places and power’ (Mogel and Bhagat 2007, 6) by stressing bottom-up and shared forms of knowledge construction.

We might also consider other forms of research practice and data handling that promote lived experiences and knowledges, make space for collaboration across space and time, and undermine statist territorialities. A simple means for doing this is making ‘raw’ data—not only statistical and numerical data but also anonymized ethnographic and interview data—publicly accessible (e.g., Superstorm Research Lab 2013). By providing free, open access to data online, those from other parts of the world without state research funding or outside the traditional realm of academic scholarship can read, consider and analyse data in their own ways. While of course there are linguistic, technological and skill barriers to in-depth analysis of open-access data, its availability is still a step towards the freeing of knowledge production and storage from the confines of statist paradigms. Relatedly, prioritizing oral histories and popular archiving within open-access research designs can be positive for a post-statist research agenda. These practices can foreground the voices, experiences and subjectivities that would otherwise be erased by the ‘narrowing of vision’ (Scott 1998, 11) that goes hand-in-hand with statist priorities and metrics of knowledge and rule.

As geographers, we are necessarily interested in the spatialities of pedagogical practice, and this is another area in which it is possible to explore post-statist approaches to knowledge, its production, and its dissemination. Statism is partly a way of organizing space to render the world knowable from a bounded, ‘objective’ and ahistorical perspective; thus, by transforming the spaces in which knowledge is learned, it may be possible to create situations where situated experiences of encounters, embodiment, and emo-
tions come to play a part in the learning process. As Firth (2014, 262) notes, there is little use in appealing to a reified, pre-existing ‘public’ if it is shaped and defined by existing structures of domination; instead, pedagogical practice needs to emphasize creating spaces where it can nurture ‘becoming and creating something new.’ This might involve adapting and retrofitting existing learning spaces (e.g., classrooms) to destabilize power relations or encourage collaboration, as well as taking learning out of the classroom altogether, making greater use of public spaces as learning environments through walks, stalls, guerrilla installations, teach-ins and action research. In doing this, the established parameters of the teaching-learning relationship, as well as those of staff-student-university and insider-outsider relationships, may be disrupted.

In this section we have outlined three key principles for enacting post-statist epistemologies in pedagogical and methodological practice. First, an emphasis on foregrounding marginalized, invisibilized and delegitimized voices, experiences and situated knowledges can generate conditions in which the dominant statist knowledge paradigm is repositioned as one of many possibilities. Second, we propose that prefigurative and other ‘non-linear’ approaches to time and progress can usefully undermine the statist notion that the present order is the ‘end of history.’ Finally, we have outlined how statist modes of administration and knowledge management represent an under-explored area for critical engagement. In outlining these ideas, we do not present them as authoritative or complete; instead, they should be read as suggested avenues for further reflection in readers’ own contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter we have expounded our proposal for a post-statist epistemology in geography based on an anarchist framework and drawing from other perspectives that we argue can enrich it. In this sense, to overcome statist mythology as an ideological construct and draw it into the realm of critical reflection, it is necessary to consider different forms of knowledge construction in order to develop an alternative epistemic frame. At the beginning of the chapter, we proposed a number of myths of the state that provided an entry point to much deeper statist constructions linked to colonialism, modernity and universality.

Our proposal draws from a ‘dynamic’ system of reference in which the idea of a pluriverse allows us to decentralize points of reference and undermine colonialist forms of knowledge construction. Therefore, an egalitarian and libertarian approach to epistemologies and worldviews is necessary in order to facilitate open dialogue and engagement among diverse ways of seeing reality. Crucially, we do not consider that pluriversality is synony-
mous with epistemic relativism; conversely, we have argued that if it seeks to transcend the superiority of certain epistemologies, it must necessarily be rooted in an anarchistic commitment to liberty and equality. We therefore propose the idea of ‘concrete universality’ as a way to articulate the diversity of local forms within the possibility of the universal, underpinned by the proposal that the unity of human culture is such by virtue of its diversity (Echeverría 2010). In this context, we have outlined how an anarchist framework (understood as one expression of many in the search for libertarian-egalitarian societies) allows us to engage in depth with the problem of the state and helps to overcome certain premises—‘epistemological obstacles’—in order to seek an open and free epistemic framework liberated from statist control.

This worldview—or, rather, worldviews (plural)—expands the possibilities of knowledge construction to address oppressive forms of this construction. We have presented several examples and ideas regarding how this epistemological proposal could be applied in designing inquiries, pedagogical activities and methodological approaches, and we are convinced that this proposal can provide a framework to design other research practices, methods or pedagogical approaches that could lead geographers towards studies which examine the state question from an anarchist analysis.

NOTES

1. For an analysis of dialectics in Élisée Reclus’s work, see Clark and Martin (2014).
2. As Ramnath (2011, 31) argues, ‘the description of modernity as an existential condition consist of the full package of contradictions and contradictory vectors on all levels.’
3. However, see Ince (2012) for a theorization of territoriality that seeks to avoid statist perspectives.

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Post-Statist Epistemology and the Future of Geographical Knowledge Production


Chapter Four

What Do We Resist When We Resist the State?

Erin Araujo

Geography as a practice has long been entwined with state institutions and modernist conceptions of truth as an instrument for consolidating power (Livingstone 1992). The presence of the state in geography is evident by the silence and wavering appearance of anarchism in scholarly literature (Hewitt 2001, 17). This presence obligates anarchist geographers to deepen analyses of the state itself and modernity as both separate and entangled networks. From the beginning of published anarchist thought, scholar/activists have opposed domination by the state and capitalism, which over time has expanded to resisting all forms of domination (Clough and Blumberg 2012, 337). The state as identified by Kropotkin, Bakunin, Goldman and others is not necessarily the state that is resisted today in anarchist movements; rather, the state and anarchists have changed over time, though the goal of creating liberatory spaces and experiences continues. Many anarchists have moved to spaces beyond the earlier science-centered focus into a broader range of liberatory evidences (Souza 2014). Modernist thought has not been a monolithic entity, either. While some currents of thought have been constant, such as what Viveiros de Castro (2010, 28) identifies as ‘the three blessings of Modern Man: the holy trinity of State (the Father), Market (the Son) and Reason (the Holy Spirit),’ the varying forms of capitalism and myriad manifestations of power exerted by states to control their populations have continually been processes of change. A few centuries ago modernist thought was considered part of a liberatory politics, while today it is often referred to as one of the foundations of the consolidation of power that the state has used to exert control over its populations. Latour (2015) notes, ‘When people talk about modernity, they mean that they want to achieve something, which
usually is politically dangerous.’ The political danger in modernity comes from the myriad hegemonies that are imposed on populations in its name, though modernity in itself has become somewhat nebulous in that it can be used to describe just about any strategy for essentialization, construction and/or oppression (ibid.). This is because modernist thought provokes strong theory, while anarchism, which strives to avoid domination of all kinds, would do well to incorporate weak theory and move beyond its modernist roots.

Strong theory is recognized as the use of powerful discourse based in evidence sought through simplified, clear, non-messy descriptions of events that fall easily into clean categories and explanations, while weak theory embraces nuance, thick description and emergent spaces that may not necessarily be clear, clean discourses, but rather a mixture of openness and exploration in the research process (Gibson-Graham 2014; Sedgwick 2003; Wright 2015).

Anarchism, being one remnant of the liberatory politics (along with socialism) that arose within modernist thought, often in its initial documents sought liberation through scientism (see Kropotkin’s Mutual Aid or Bakunin’s God and the State for examples). Similar to state socialism and modernist democracy projects, many anarchists believed that science would provide liberating answers to the complex problems faced at the beginning of the twentieth century (Souza 2014); in this respect, anarchism was originally a modernist project. Today scientism is being decentered from its power nexus through much of the work within science and technology studies, which to a certain degree pursues the anarchist principle of undermining hierarchy in that the verticality of science as an institution is deconstructed. Weak theory (Sedgwick 2003; Gibson-Graham 2006) then becomes an important thinking technology that anarchist scholars can use to embrace possibility and multiplicity while moving beyond modernism. Weak theory recognizes that there are no singular truths and that theory is constantly changing and based on practice; it has the possibility of embracing horizontal forms of research.

Another thinking technology useful for moving beyond modernism is epistemic disobedience (Mignolo 2009), where we are invited to disconnect from the zero point hubris of singular truths. Within a decolonial approach modernity is often seen as essential to the colonial project of establishing what is permitted as true, real and possible while simultaneously negating the true, real and possible of those living within colonial (as well as post- and neo-) schema. Modernity has served as a justification for the creation of imperialist agendas and colonial occupations. The state as a power-consolidating vehicle is a manifestation of the many oppressions that are suffered to maintain and control populations; the myriad services that are provided to
citizens; bounded, militarized territory; and a conglomerate of specific economic policies/practices.

Many forms of autonomous resistance have established their own forms and systems of education and health services, as well as infrastructure and governance, to distance themselves from the reaches of a given state. However, these services are often limited in their capacity to provide institutions of higher learning, such as universities, or, in the case of health services, to provide complicated procedures in the form of surgeries or longterm care. Often resisting the state is fraught with contradictions and complications given that there are few, if any, areas of land that are not within a given state territory. In spite of the physical occupation of the land by the state, many people live, act and think in ways that do not coincide with state-mandated legal systems. These acts of resistance often take place in areas that have been subject to coloniality (post- and neo-) and coincide with an advantageous use of what Santos (2007) refers to as abyssal thinking—where the centers of power are condoned reason and truth, and the peripheries where coloniality has been exerted are considered extra-rational and extra-legal, and anything is permitted and simultaneously oppressed through appropriation/violence. These abyssal spaces are where resistance against the state has been most fruitful, not within an effort to create another state, but rather by occupying myriad spaces in order to create other possibilities. In many parts of the Americas, autonomous spaces, specifically in resistance to the state, have taken form. Often the experiences of those living in these spaces are complex and contradictory between desires to move beyond the classic schema of ethnic classifications, economic domination and myriad oppressions in order to realize spaces that (attempt to) engage in liberatory theory/practices.

This chapter explores the implications of using weak theory and a decolonial perspective on the concepts of modernity and the state. These analyses are then used to expand a framework for diversifying the state.

MODERNITY IN WEAK THEORY AND DECOLONIAL THOUGHT

Modernist thought is a political technology (among many other technologies) that has been used to many ends, including the consolidation of power through the development of institutions of government, science, religion and the expansion of hegemony. Santos (2007) characterizes ‘Western modernity as a socio-political paradigm founded on the tension between social regulation and social emancipation,’ while Wallerstein (2000) has identified two primary expressions of modernity: modernity of technology and the modernity of liberation. Modernity as liberation or emancipation has been noted by Harvey (1992) as growing out of Enlightenment thought, where the quest for
truth and rationality could be attained by anyone with the appropriate skills and logical process. The path would lead to universal freedom and liberation (once each person was properly educated, indoctrinated and inculturated into society). The liberatory nature of Enlightenment thought, realized as modernism, gave birth to the nation-state, capitalism, communism and anarchism, among a great deal of other ideas and practices. Each construct has sought liberation, though through very different means for very different populations. The nineteenth century saw the growth and expansion of each of these ideas as theory and practice constantly played off each other. Anarchism developed in response to the lack of liberty, the extension of oppression that comes with capitalism, nation-states and communism; if these pressures were not a constant force of violence and oppression, anarchism would not be necessary. Anarchism strives to make itself unnecessary by eliminating domination in all forms through practice of quotidian resistance.

Modernism inspired the ideas of liberation and equality that are fundamental to anarchism. In that sense we can see that modernist thought did not necessarily have to be the expression of singular epistemologies and ontological domination. Rather, these processes came about from the desire to maintain hierarchy and dominate large groups of people by any means. Where modernism has been taken up by nation-states within capitalism and communism, it has been practiced as creative destruction, dictatorship and unending bureaucracies that transformed the Enlightenment vision of a truth that could be found and a singular freedom that could be experienced and propitiated into a justification for oppression. These contradictions were realized within the desire to create marketable art, architecture, cities, machines and homes for producing a modern experience (Scott 1998). Enlightenment ideals became modernist theory and in practice created psycho-social spaces in which humans were able to theoretically create and control their realities. Wars could destroy lives, communities, towns and cities, which were then new markets for governments and corporations to construct anew. This is the modernity of technology. Utopias of administration, control, research and commodification of the lived experience could be designed from afar and built thousands of kilometers away in situ to create societies in which humans could theoretically (often catastrophically) work, live and flourish (Scott 1998). Harvey (1992) notes that artists became the ultimate conveyors of culture. New ways of seeing and experiencing the world, founded in constant ruptures with the past, became the ultimate goal. Within the structures of governance, nation-states could form scientific committees and agencies that would design the ideal (often highly exclusive) productive populace. Scott (1998) examined the calamity of bureaucratic design and the development of scientific forestry, cities and societies in Germany, Brazil, Russia, and the United States. He argues that state-driven policies, such as collectivization of rural Russia or Le Corbusier’s scientific cities built within
high-modernist goals, eliminated variables such as the desires and lifeworlds of Russian peasants or the complexity of constructing social spaces that foment experiences of community. In these examples the state actively engaged in enacting modernist ideals upon its populations. Within a framework of weak theory, it is not possible to claim that the state did modernism. Rather, certain individuals within specific networks and contexts engaged in particular practices which have since been incorporated into and artfully constructed within the strong theory of modernism. When we identify a singular force as responsible for a multiplicity of action/behavior, we reify what is reflected as the modernist agenda and negate the diversity of experience that is embraced by weak theory. Mignolo (1999) has written about border epistemologies and Santos (2007) has identified abyssal thinking, where modernity implies reality being constructed on one side of the line (border) and on the other side of the line (border) the abyss of all other kinds of thinking come into being as non-objects and non-subjects except where they become objects of domination by the other side of the line, the valid side of the line. Mignolo (2009) has noted that within a decolonial perspective there exists the *humanitas* in Europe and other centers of Western thought while in the rest of the world exists the *anthropos*. The state and modernity, simultaneously originating within the already ongoing colonialism and imperialism, cannot be delinked as independent objects, being that their origin has been simultaneous. However, they cannot be treated as the same universal actor. Rather, they expand networks of action and relationships that are mutually woven. Both works build on Foucault’s concepts of regimes of truth and power/knowledge where power decides what is true.

As part of abyssal (border) thinking, few ways of being have been permitted as acceptable within colonial (including post- and neo-) spaces. Many authors (see Said 2003; Fanon 2008; among others) have shown how representations and policies created within the centers of power have limited what are acceptable lifeworlds for colonial subjects. Those persons that did not live in accordance with the U.S. and European ontological precepts were considered literally undeveloped. Beginning around the end of World War II through the present, people and geographies became the objects of development; not only the infrastructure of a place but also the people within it could be improved. Their diet/nutrition, education, and history could be constructed so that they may fit within a capitalist society (Escobar 1995; Mitchell 2002).

Nation-states (as well as supranational organizations such as the United Nations) under a variety of types of governance have invoked modernist agendas to control and *develop* their populace. However, the policies and practices of a given state are not necessarily a representation of a monolithic entity. For example, while a given government may desire that market capitalism, lingual homogenization and nationalist education spread to the deep-
est reaches of its territories, the actual implementation of those ideals are often enacted differently from modernist practices, replete with bureaucracy, corruption, forgotten goals, absenteeism, and nepotism. The state and the practice of exerting the extension of the state within these spaces are highly divergent from the goals expressed in discourse and hegemonic statements of the expected outcomes of such development or modernist utopias. Governance of a place and the fulfillment of the intended outcomes of such governance are often highly divergent practices. Rarely in the Americas do we see nationalized health care systems that provide quality service or civil protection through policing that is not corrupt, biased, racist and constantly serving the interests of keeping the property of the rich and elite safe. The list could go on and on with examples of how nation-states do not provide sufficiently for all citizens but rather serve the interests of the upper classes to maintain wealth in its place. As Foucault (1991b, 103) notes, ‘the state, no more probably today than at any other time in its history, does not have this unity, this individuality, this rigorous functionality, nor, to speak frankly, this importance; maybe, after all, the state is no more than a composite reality and a mythicized abstraction whose importance is a lot more limited than many of us think.’

A weak theory framework provides an opportunity to open up the composite reality of the state and clarify its mythicized abstraction by eliminating hierarchies in the domain of concepts. Rather than privileging a concept such as racism, capitalism, the state or development, weak theory privileges thick descriptions of events, context and interactions (Gibson-Graham 2014; Wright 2015) as such hierarchies, in the sense that overarching concepts create a hierarchical relationship with the descriptions that create it, must be removed from both the definitions of concepts and our analysis of them. If modernism and high-modernism call for a homogenization of space and experience, anarchism lends itself to a diversification of spaces and experience.1 In avoiding hierarchy, which is one of the more essential points in anarchism, this avoidance must apply to concepts as well. Much scholarship has been done to explain a state. However, the definition and redefinition of the state not only reifies it and essentializes the imagined community of the nation-state but also accepts implicit hierarchies of concepts. If the state or modernity require hierarchical thinking in order to invoke them, within anarchist thought and scholarship we must reject those hierarchies and their constructs. Beyond simply deconstructing the state or modernity, we must see these institutions through a lens of decentralized weak theory. Within an anarchist narrative, modernity is a conglomerate multitude of practices, power structures and interests which sometimes work together, though often they laboriously do not. Work on explaining modernity, which is fraught with multiplicitous connections and interactions, creates a utopic or dis-topic image of what has been possible within the constructs that are practiced and
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experienced in as many ways as the liberations and oppressions that are lived by the populace that suffers them. Modernist thought looks for the unifying, variable-poor experiments and explanations of a phenomena (Scott 1998), while weak theory invites diversifying, variable-rich explorations of the multiplicitous possibilities that each situation presents and, as such, works to deconstruct the reality that is considered singular and true while replacing it with many possible worlds.

THE WEAK, DECOLONIAL STATE

This historical moment of the birth of History, this fatal rupture which should never have happened, this irrational event which we moderns call the birth of the State. In society’s fall into the voluntary submission of almost all people to a single person.

—Clastres, Archeology of Violence (2010)²

The practice (and later theoretical basis) of the nation-state came into existence with the American and French Revolutions in 1776 and 1789, respectively. The French Revolution in particular was transformative in that by removing the monarch, “[t]he sovereign had become the people” (Wallerstein 1992, 23). The idea that people could govern rather than a monarch (with a direct connection to God) democratized a political sphere that had once been possible only through inheritance or violent upheavals (ibid.). The justifications for the consolidation of the nation-state include the supposed need for a legal system, the protection of citizens within a territory, a national identity according to language, culture, mores, and so forth (Anderson 2006). However, many of these services, especially within territories that have known the long and destructive process of colonialism (post- and neo-), have never been provided with much quality or quantity.

Modernist state-craft associated with the creation of the current states that we encounter today is often said to having begun between the end of the fifteenth century and the end of the eighteenth century, depending on the nation-state in question and the mechanisms associated with its formation. For example, Illich (2009, 39) traces the construction of the empire of Spain to the work of Antonio de Nebrija in 1492 where his Gramática Castellana served to unite and homogenize the language of Spain, which up to that point was a territory of vernacular languages. Nebrija proposed to Queen Isabela that through unifying the language of Spain she would control the words and education of her people, building the pillar of her great nation. Books would be printed only in the language of the nation, while the vernacular languages in which fictions and alternate ideas were printed would be controlled. This argument is also made by Benedict Anderson in Imagined Communities (2006),³ where he traces the shift from the construction of religious commu-
nities through the reading of Latin, Arabic and other holy languages to the
construction of nationalism through the publication of nationalized (artificial)
languages such as English, French, and so on from Latin or Arabic, the
languages of institutionalized religions. For Anderson, the control of lan-
guage transforms not only the reader’s conception of who may share similar
ideas but also their shared concepts of time. Through language and contempo-
ranecy the nation-states were fortified and realized.

The consolidation of the nation-state truly came into being with indepen-
dence movements in the Americas when new countries were formed out of
Spanish, French and Portuguese colonialism. These movements, inspired pri-
marily by the Mexican War for Independence and in South America out of
the Bolivarian Revolutions (Anderson 2006), created a new sense of nation.
While these revolutions were marked with efforts to establish spaces of
autonomous governance from weakened colonial governments great dis-
tances away from the colonies, they were also marked by dominance of the
elites of those countries fighting for mechanisms of power through marked
political classes which never conceived of power-sharing within the newly
developed nations. For example, in the American Revolution, while fighting
for autonomy from England, the ‘Founding Fathers’ never had any intention
of allowing wealth or property rights to the underclasses; thus, John Adams
unabashedly negated the benefits of democracy to the people of the newly
formed United States of America:

If all were to be decided by a vote of the majority, the eight or nine millions
who have no property, would not think of usurping over the rights of the one
or two millions who have? . . . Debts would be abolished first; taxes laid heavy
on the rich, and not at all on the others; and at last a downright equal division
of everything would be demanded, and voted, and what would be the conse-
quence of this? The idle, the vicious the intemperate, would rush into the
utmost extravagance of debauchery. (Quoted in Graeber 2013, 54)

The co-emergence of the nation-state with modernism or scientism and
liberalism in conjunction with political-economic agents including capitalism
and communism has, in very general ways, guided the development of these
entities. Imperial nation-states have extended their concept of truth through-
out much of the world (at the end of World War II it is estimated that 85
percent of the land on earth was either a colonial or a post-colonial state
[Santos 2007, 12]) and later as development aid to nations that were consid-
ered impoverished and inadequate beginning with the period of decoloniza-
tion at the end of World War II through the present (Escobar 1995). Attempts
to explain how nation-states maintain their sovereignty include much high
quality scholarship on nationalism, patriotism, territoriality, governance, op-
pression and violence (see Anderson 2006; Arendt 1969; Chatterjee 2012;
Elden 2013; Foucault 1991a, 1991b). While these works are of great use in
creating a generalized strong theory of what a common state (where a common or general state is one that is located within the geographic and power centers such as Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, etc.) may enact in order to maintain its dominance, they do little to understand the practices of specific states and the unique conglomerate of experiences that a given group of citizens will live. Rather, these experiences are under-valued in the concept of state-craft and/or governance just as the individual trees are under-valued when one sees a forest. While there are no two forests that are alike, though they may share similar species of plants and animals, there are no two states alike, though they may share similar characteristics. The construction of knowledge outside of these centers of power, beyond the intellectual lines drawn by modernity, are valued as local knowledge and/or ethnographic anecdotes rather than as the actual knowledge of living within the experience of a given state (Mignolo 2009). The desire to construe the state as monolithic and general is a modernist project (strong theory) that occludes the multi-faceted nature of what is practiced in order to maintain a state. Within a weak theory approach, the state is a conglomerate of people and practices with multiplicitous power relationships within a given territory. A weak theory approach to understanding the myriad practices that are the state, following Mol’s praxiography of care around atherosclerosis (2002), could be investigated through multiple praxiographic projects. The praxis of enacting the state has the possibility of revealing all that is the abyss created by the state within a strong theory approach. As Viveiros de Castro (2010, 15) notes,

And if the State has always existed, as Deleuze and Guattari argue in their insightful commentary of Clastres, then primitive society also will always exist: as the immanent exterior of the State, as the force of anti-production permanently haunting the productive forces, and as a multiplicity that is non-interiorizable by the planetary mega-machines. ‘Primitive society,’ in short, is one of the conceptual embodiments of the thesis that another world is possible: that there is life beyond capitalism, as there is society outside of the State. There always was, and—for this we struggle—there always will be.

The notion that the state is multiple and that one of its characteristics is made of the lifeworlds that are the anti-image of the construction of the concept and practice visualizes the other side of the line in abyssal (border) thinking. States have never existed without their abyssal counterpart that is made of subjects in resistance the consolidation and exploitation of uneven power relations. If there were no counterpart to the state, no stateless space, then the state could not exist because it would be bordered by nothing. The ontological inception of the state requires the conceptual and practical abyss. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that which is not within the state; however, it is exactly this conceptual obfuscation that the state requires for it to be a universally
normalized concept and experience. Similar to capitalism, following the work of J. K. Gibson-Graham (1996; 2006), the capitalist economy was once believed to invade even the most private spheres of our lives; now within the diversified economy framework (Gibson-Graham and Roelvink 2011), capitalism has been limited in the spaces it is allowed to occupy. The concept of economy is no longer limited to only referring to capitalist behavior; rather, the range of economic practices are often a boundless continuum of interactions ranging from non-paid work, gifting, volunteering and sharing to the plethora of informal and formal work arrangements where money is exchanged (White and Williams 2014). This is the work that must be done with the state. The practice of governing and providing services to the people living in a given area also form a range of interactions stretching from complete autonomy to a mixture of use of state services and non-states services to entirely depending on agencies provided by a state government. This will be elaborated later in this chapter.

THE STATE ON THE GROUND

Over the past twenty years there has been movement towards autonomous (stateless) government in many parts of the Americas where social movements have taken up many of the services that were once provided by the state. This is evident in Chiapas, Mexico, where within the Zapatista Autonomous Zones transportation, health and education systems have functioned over almost twenty years. Similarly in El Alto, Bolivia, neighborhoods have joined together to provide many of the same services (Zibechi 2010), while the Unemployed Workers Movement in Argentina and the Landless Peasants Movement in Brazil have worked to achieve similar objectives, including access to land and non-oppressive work (Chatterson 2005). These are but few of the movements engaging in daily resistance to the state. Many anti-state movements never appear in publications but consist of daily practices that simultaneously build community, provide care, engage in multiple types of non-monied economic interactions, protect and educate. These practices initiate a collective development where the relationships are not concrete, prescribed becomings but instead something that becomes a co-constitutive anarchist self (Ince 2012, 1654). The co-constitution of the many selves that are part of collective development or collective community construction directly opposes the idea that the state is the only entity that may provide for its population. No longer do we find ourselves in a paternalistic relationship with the state where every action—be it love and marriage, birth, education, nutrition, sexuality and so on—must be condoned by a legal framework imposed upon us, where our oppositions run the risk of incarceration, violence, marginalization and even death. Collective community construction
steps away from dependence on the state (and the institution of religion) as the only mechanisms for service provision.\(^5\)

Thus, anarchist approaches to understanding and acting in society operate in a tension between an assertion of peoples’ agency to collectively self-manage their affairs on the one hand, and the everyday matrices of power that constrain autonomy, solidarity and equality on the other. (Springer et al. 2012, 1593)

The tension between realizing the agency to self-manage, autonomy, solidarity and equality and the limitations imposed by the institution (the ‘state’), the embodiment of the hierarchy (Ince 2012, 1651), often limit and force specific resistance techniques because one must act and think knowing that this same praxis is a threat to a unified conception of state-built dominance. Often anarchist resistance, then, while working towards autonomy, must be small scale. However, even at a small scale these practices amplify the landscape of multiple forms of governance. Autonomy in its most basic form is the ‘desire for freedom, self-organization and mutual-aid’ which is driven by wanting to overcome different forms of oppression and rejects participating in a system that reinforces the needs of the elite (Chatterton 2005, 545). This kind of autonomy manifests itself as collective self-management that critically works to eschew different forms of hierarchy (Ince 2012, 1653).

In Chiapas, Mexico, there is a wealth of experience around living in resistance to the state. Many books and articles have been written about the Zapatista movement and the incredible work that has been lived over that past twenty years in creating Autonomos Zones where health and education systems continue to grow to this day. While in many ways the movement itself is less potent and the members of the movement are fewer in number than at other times, there is a historical memory of the experience and process of resistance that continues to this day. While much has been written about the violence and oppression that was (and in much smaller quantities continues to be) exerted upon these communities, it is important to note that compared to similar social movements in Central America, the Zapatistas were not eliminated by the Mexican government. Rather, today many activists continue to live and resist the state both within these communities and beyond. There is a wealth of experience among activists that have lived in resistance over the past twenty years.

**DIVERSIFYING THE STATE: A DECOLONIAL APPROACH TO DISMANTLING THE STATE**

By admitting the existence of a universal process (modernity, capitalism, globalization) and of forces that, when all is said and done, underlie it (the forces of nature, the material, the technological, the economic), these ways of think-
Within resistance against the state, the decolonial perspective and epistemic disobedience are of primary importance when understanding key points to be resisted and observed within transformative activist politics and practice. For those who have always lived in the Third World, majority world, Global South, and so on, the fictitious groupings of peoples that share only one experience in common—massive, violent oppression during centuries by a large variety of techniques of cultural and physical dominance and exclusion from what is understood as truth, rationality and reason—create barriers and opportunities. To what end is a conception of one world versus another world beneficial? To whom? When we identify the state, how does that reproduce mechanisms of coloniality? In resistance to the construction of the state, how can we recognize and engage in a decolonial process? The material and theoretical consolidation of the state reifies the abyssal line that creates a certain nothingness for the spaces that are outside the state, especially when those spaces take place within the physical territory that supposedly pertains to state-led governance. In a very real way it often seems impossible to conceive of spaces that are not occupied by the state. However, similarly to capitalism within the Diverse Economies Framework (DEF), the state is not everywhere. While the physical territory that consists of state space may often appear to limit those physical possibilities that are possible on land and terrain, territory is a political technology that often quite successfully obfuscates the multitude of thought and practice that goes on within its borders (Elden 2010).

Not only does the state seem to occupy the most land, but it is also an entity that is entangled with the economy. Following Foucault (1991b) and Polanyi (2001), the state and the creation and maintenance of the economy are built together and upon each other, each one requiring the other to exist. However, J. K. Gibson-Graham and the Community Economies Collective (among many others) have done significant work to diversify the economy within the DEF over the past twenty years. Their work has created spaces where capitalism, once perceived as all-encompassing, all-consuming, omnipresent in all relationships, has been relegated to the actions and intentions that it actually enacts. In the spaces once thought to be solely within a capitalist framework they (we) have found people working voluntarily, sharing, gifting, and exchanging. These spaces are now occupied by new perspectives for living outside a constantly capitalist framework. In order to better understand the wide range of economic interactions at play at any time, we cannot expect to perform or privilege non-capitalist economic interactions without looking at the state’s role to maintain capitalism as the domi-
nant economic practice. The silence or abyss within which the majority of economic interactions are occurring that are not capitalist is evidence in itself of the state’s suppression of alternative economic processes. Beyond the villianization of socialism and the destruction of lives and land that the United States and its allies carried out with the goal of eliminating the ‘threat of communism’ during the Cold War, the process of eliminating competition for capitalism as an economic model is still at hand. If one is to take seriously the call to privilege and enact alternative economic praxis, then we must also examine the great diversity practiced to accomplish governing.

Within this vein, one may look at the state and modernity not as occupying all interactions and relationships but as existing simultaneously alongside myriad other ways of being. The state has come to mean many forms of oppression and social control, while the resistance to these forms of control can take any form, be they massive uprisings or the daily practice of not respecting do not walk signs (Scott 2012; Graeber 2013) or occupying public spaces with alternative ideas and/or practices. Is it still possible that the state is everywhere and anything that we do that is not directly compliant with a social norm is a resistance, or is there possibility and creativity? Furthermore, is any single nation-state identical to any other? Would it be desirable or even possible to imagine that the United States, Canada, Russia, France or Australia are the same entities, or that Mexico, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Chile are the same, or any other comparison of nation-states, be they imperial, post-colonial, global south or global north? In our definitions, experiences, resistances, ontologies and epistemologies, are these similar entities? I argue that they are not, though much scholarship within a modernist framework has been conducted to create these imaginaries. Within anarchist, semi-anarchist, and Marxist (among many other more mainstream forms of) scholarship, this effort is evident over and over again. However, the state is not a single entity acting with one mind toward one goal; it is made up of millions of people, most of which have grown within the same indoctrinations and at some point work towards the dictated goals of the state. However, there is always resistance and there are alternate ways of meeting needs that become necessary when the state is violent, absent, and oppressive (both physically and psychosocially).

While it may be incredibly difficult or even impossible at present to live beyond the state or to live entirely outside of capitalism, small scale quotidian resistance is very possible in many places. It is also difficult to understand exactly when we are acting outside of the state. One space that has much overlap is the practice of providing care. Care may take the form of visiting doctors, babysitting, psychological services (be they through friends talking with friends or through professionals), physical exercise and so forth. Many illnesses are often cured at home; children can be mostly cared for through organizing a community of people; psychological health is often a
group process; physical health through exercise can be organized both individually and among friends and family. However, there are often diseases that are dangerous enough that we need to seek expertise and technological solutions that cannot be provided for in the home. In seeking expert advice versus other forms of thought and experience, we are confronted by the erratic, uncontrollable nature of disease and its care and prevention, where decisions are not linear and the interests of experts in suggesting certain kinds of care are founded in myriad networks (Mol 2008).

In Chiapas there exists an independent health care system for basic care and prevention within the Zapatista communities. Mostly run by health promoters that train and learn together, community health clinics can often take care of many health issues, from illness to giving birth. However, there are moments when these autonomous resources are not enough, be that due to the need for expert knowledge or technology that is not available at the clinic. From there one may seek care at government-run hospitals (health care in Mexico is somewhat socialized) where long lines, high demand and lack of resources abound and you take your chances (many times the chances of getting better are pretty good). The other option is that if there is enough money available to pay for the cost of the services you need, you can go to a private physician or hospital. In both cases, we end up participating in state-run or state-regulated services to survive. However, this does not negate the value in working towards autonomy as far as possible and it does not make an activist less anarchist or less committed simply because they use state-provided services. What is significant is that there are multiple networks woven together in order to provide necessary care, and some of those networks function outside of the machinations of the state. Following the work of the Community Economies Collective, the work of the state is a summation of the practices that construct it, and these practices can be pieced apart.

The logic behind piecing apart capitalism is elaborated on the Community Economies Collective website (2015), ‘A representation of the ECONOMY as essentially CAPITALIST is dependent on the exclusion of many types of economic activities that transact, remunerate, appropriate and distribute and that do so according to multiple registers of value.’ Similar to capitalism, the representation of a single, modern, cohesive state excludes the many types of governance that each person, family, community, collectivity, enterprise, institution and place (which, of course, varies with scale) enacts with regard to decision-making practices, norms, mores, acts and institutions of care, justice, education, shelter, sustenance, and so on, according to the expectations around how common situations should and will be governed. It is not only within indigenous communities that alternative forms of justice and ways of being are happening; rather, each community, be it large or small, enacts a form of governance.
The DEF divides the economy into five mechanisms that make up the economy: transactions, labor, property, finance and enterprise. Within a diversified state we would see different mechanisms that together enact each state. These include forms of government, justice, networks of care, education, protection/security, land use, resource distribution, waste management and economy. Obviously this list could and should be expanded; however, it serves as a first proposal to begin diversifying the state primarily because these services are the most visible and incorporate most interactions that we have with the state. While the DEF may not explore the microcosms of the economy, it is a guide for deciding where to begin the practice of privileging certain economic interactions over others. For example, in an area where people may have little money but engage in sharing, mutual aid and gifting, we see a variety of economic practices which then can be formalized and expanded. The DEF assumes that these practices are already taking place but have been hidden from view or under-valued by the essentialization or strong theory of the capitalist economy. Within a weak economic theory, one aspect of the economy is capitalism and many other interactions make up the rest. Diversifying the state should take a similar approach where it assumes that multiple forms of governance and service provision are already happening and democracy or socialism are only two elements of a varied praxiscape (the terrain of practices emergent in a given context). Here I lay out a brief framework of possibility for diversifying the mechanisms that are often referred to as the monolithic state.

**Government and Justice**

Government, governance, governmentality and the capacity of every person and group to make decisions and live by them is a messy and multiplicitous process that is saturated with studies of power and hierarchy, and usually associated with heteronomy. Here I use the term governance along with justice to identify the policies and practices that a given entity across scales creates and administers as systems of norms and mores across populations. While recognizing that the term governance was originally brought into use by the World Bank in reference to the role of decision-making taken on by non-governmental organizations, here I will use the term to refer more to acts of agreement and decision-making that are not only or necessarily declared acts of autonomy, as in the case of self-government, but also more organic forms of governing that include local decision-making bodies and agreements among groups beyond the formal sector in order to look at informal governance. Governing can be practiced in many ways ranging from decentralized horizontal decision-making practices among groups to centralized organizations that have been selected to govern through fascist practices of control and dominance. Government can happen for a day or endure for
centuries. The practices involved in governing are wide and varied. At the state level some scholars recognize that the state is decentered from being the only organization permitted to elaborate norms in the form of laws to becoming part of many scales of diversified government practices. The concept of ‘governance without government’ (Rhodes 1996; Rosenau 1995) employs the idea that civil society (and corporations) plays a greater role in the decision-making practices that were once the terrain of the state. While Santos (2006) notes that in post-colonial settings there exists a legal pluralism where several systems of legal practice, decision-making and enforcement exist simultaneously with the existing state government, Foucault has written about governmentality (1991), which he refers to as the knowledge, practice, institutions and technical apparatuses of security that over time have exerted the complex form of power to govern by the state. Governmentality does not look at the myriad ways in which people that are subject to being governed by the state actually engage in governing themselves and each other in micro- and informal governances. Finally, within Actor Network Theory, government is a series of material and theoretical practices that enact a practice of governing. At the grassroots level, autonomous communities create and follow group-specific management of governing processes.

Justice, a system tightly interwoven with the enforcement of governance, is also highly diverse. Ranging in scale from the home and community to federal institutions such as the supreme court demonstrates the many kinds of systems of justice happening at any time. Informal and formalized systems of justice exist in many of the same mechanisms as governance. Esteva and Prakash (1998), as well as Zibechi (2010) and many others, including my own experience, note that in autonomous communities there exist local forms of justice to meet the needs of each community that designs their laws and punishments.

The plethora of systems of government and justice ranging from micro to macro scales—with some often seeming privileged as the only system, while others may transform lives with deep implications, though they are rarely recognized or mentioned—mostly function alongside or apart from the state. Greater research is necessary to understand what percent of our lives is spent within formal and informal systems of justice as well as state versus non-state forms of justice. These spaces present opportunities for resistance and creativity for creating other options in constructing lifeworlds.

**Networks of Care**

Care can take on many forms that are woven within many ontologies. Care may be one of the most diversified spaces where alternatives to the state flourish. As mentioned earlier, many groups of people in all different places are already engaging in non-state-based practices of providing care. While
participate rather than separating ourselves entirely from the state may not be possible or even desirable at this time, these alternatives are explicit and non-explicit resistances that are happening every day and can be incorporated into more formal ways of exerting autonomy. Networks of care can take the form of groups of parents that share childcare, nursing the sick, friends giving each other therapy, exercise groups, midwifery and more structured practices such as the Zapatista health care system. This system is made up of many autonomous local clinics and health promoters that are not trained as doctors but rather have received some health education and are able to take care of patients with most common ailments that do not require special treatment. When a patient requires more than a clinic can offer, they are taken to the larger clinics in the Caracoles, which are good government centers—all autonomous, exerting self-rule. In the Zapatista system of health care there is a balance between curing with herbs and practices from the local communities as well as using allopathic medicine such as antibiotics and aspirin. The system is extensive with many clinics throughout the Zapatistas’ extensive autonomous territory.

Education

Similar to networks of care, the practice of education is highly diverse, from home schooling to Zapatista health promoters to the pedagogy of the oppressed people educating themselves and each other in myriad ways. Within a diversified educational framework we can observe a great range of practice and possibility that moves apart from and alongside state institutions. Education is largely associated with state-craft in that it is a system of indoctrination for participation as citizens in a nation-state. As of the 2010 census in Mexico, 43 percent of youth between 15 and 19 years old did not go to school. However, this does not mean that they are not being educated in other ways in other processes. In Chiapas, the Zapatista Autonomous Education system has a plethora of elementary schools throughout the territory and secondary schools in the Caracoles. Children are educated about all of the major subjects, but this was done so in a specifically non-capitalist anti-institutional manner. Another example of large scale autonomous education comes from the Modragon Cooperative Corporation in Spain, where they have their own university for educating employees and their children. Furthermore, the education that many people all over the world receive in the home is and should be recognized as valuable and autonomous. While social reproduction through education at home may be in accordance with or critical of the state, it is incredibly important in meeting the needs of children to participate in the world we desire to create.
Protection/Security

Non-state systems of protection/security are often some of the most problematic in that we are constantly vulnerable to their violence. Clough (2012) notes that even within social movements there always runs the possibility of state infiltrators that put activists at risk. State violence upon its citizens is always present. This violence takes many forms, including poverty, marginalization, segregation and indoctrination favoring hateful divisions based on race, gender, class, age and many other categories and physical violence. Hewitt (2001) notes that in the twentieth century state governments killed around 170 million civilians (give or take 100 million people). In the twenty-first century we have also seen incredible state violence on citizens. In Mexico we have seen the devastating narco-wars (2000–present) (La Jornada 2012) in which at least 150,000 civilians were killed; in the last few months attacks on protesters in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, massacred forty-three students-teachers and on February 25, 2015, police in Acapulco injured over 100 teachers in a protest. It is important and essential that groups of people protect themselves from the violence that is permitted by police at different levels of government and by often disconnected oppressive agencies funded by local and federal governments. In the states of Guerrero and Michoacan communities have formed their own policing systems to protect themselves, while in Chiapas in Zapatista communities there are similar mechanisms of protection. It is important to consider how to stay safe while living in territories claimed by states.

Land Use, Resource Distribution and Economics

The diverse uses of land and its distribution among groups and individuals is an important point of research where geographers can greatly contribute to resisting the state. What are the diverse practices over a given terrain that manifest their own non-state mechanisms? How much land is occupied in these practices and how can we privilege these practices as geographers? Beyond simply reporting how the state has acted to oppress and configure the land to its advantage, a diverse state approach to analyzing land use would include participatory action research in constructing and supporting alternate spaces. How does the physical context of quotidian resistances (both small and large) impact the work that is being done?

Another important area to which anarchist geographers can contribute is analyzing resource distribution. What alternatives are already at play for sharing and distributing resources more equitably? How are communities selecting degrowth options? What happens with objects and abilities that are not in use but needed by others close to us? Resource distribution has been a point of research within the DEF. A great deal of research has been done in
the diversified economy, which I will not expand upon here. However, as a body of knowledge it incorporates and inspires the possibility of diversifying the state and all of its mechanisms.

Alternative forms of land use and resource distribution include very small initiatives where individuals are creating ecological homes, growing organic food in their gardens and living as consciously and independently as they may choose. In ascending scale, the next step up may be collective housing and sharing within that space libraries, tool shares, free play spaces for children (like a friends ludoteca in the state of Veracruz, Mexico, where neighborhood children can come and play in the space which is equipped with costumes, figurines and musical instruments), or our local network of solidarity housing. Then the next step up includes resisting genetically modified organisms in large crops, cooperatives, and social movements like the Landless Workers Movement in Brasil or the Zapatista Autonomous Zone in Chiapas. There are a plethora of things happening all around us at any time that are focused on autonomy.

CONCLUSION

Within anarchist geographies it is important to explore the possibilities of weak theory in order to decenter monolithic constructs such as the state and modernity. If we are to truly move beyond the imaginary of modernity, it must be undermined by not engaging in its own method of singular truths and strong theory. The Diversified State Framework is a proposal that provides opportunities to look at and engage in not essentializing the state as a first step. By engaging in a praxiography of how we reproduce the state and how resistances to the state are practiced, we begin to open up possibilities for alternative liberatory experiences. Many people around the world are already engaged in this option, but their practice is often obfuscated by abyssal thinking. By taking advantage of these spaces that exist beyond the centers of truth and reason, we can begin to privilege the practices that are not reifying the state and modernist thought. Anarchist geographers have a wide range of possibilities for creating and realizing not only research that deconstructs practices of domination but also research that practices liberations.

By engaging in a deeper examination of the state, we begin to see multiple systems, numerous interactions and practices that create the imaginary of a monolithic state that acts as a well-oiled flawless machine. As groups, individuals, communities and collectives, people practice care, education, decision-making and informal governance, diverse economic interactions, protection and many other activities that were once considered only the domain of the state and before that the realm of religion. How much do we practice that which is assumed to be the duty of the state on a daily basis? As
people living in areas that have been designated as pertaining to a state, how far are we from providing what we need for the people that are connected to us? In that which we are not able to provide, how many of those limits come from the governments that are supposed to meet those needs? As we live under the constant threat and evidence of violence that comes from these occupying bodies understood as states, how much of that violence is directed at people trying to meet the needs for services that are not provided by the state? At the time of writing this chapter, in Mexico we are passing the one- year anniversary of the massacre/disappearance of forty-three students who were killed in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, while collecting funds for an event. They were activists for improving education.

Finally, much work has been done in diversifying the economy to include a myriad of practices beyond capitalism. However, within this line of research there is little attention paid to the role of the state and practices of the entire range of governmentality and beyond that the practices of informal governance that accompanies alternative economic practices. If the economy is not a monolithic capitalist entity, then neither is the state a monolithic entity. Rather, informal governance is happening all around us all of the time; we are doing it ourselves, and it only needs to be pulled out of the abyss to become visible. By privileging the diversity of practices of caring, educating, protecting and exchanging that do not come from the state we can begin to see how each person and group actively practices autonomy on a daily basis as a start for embracing spaces free of domination. Our own recognition of our practices that enact worlds beyond the domination of the state will place one more brick in fortifying the path towards eschewing the domination of the state and opening the possibilities of a future that each person has contributed to and would like to be a part of.

NOTES

1. Anarchism is not alone in privileging horizontality; the Diverse Economies Framework, weak theory, some aspects of decoloniality, various currents in science and technology studies, among others, also strive to examine ideas beyond the lens of hierarchy.
2. Here Clastres refers to the thought of La Boetie.
3. Anderson may not have been aware of Illich’s work at the time of writing Imagined Communities, for he is nowhere mentioned in the bibliography and no reference to Nebrija is made in the text; however, Illich’s work in ‘Vernacular Values’ would have also supported Anderson’s chapter on the ‘Origins of National Consciousness in Imagined Communities.’
4. Here I use collective community construction to move beyond the development framework.
5. Following the astute analysis of Kropotkin (1897, 32): ‘The State cannot recognize a freely-formed union operating within itself; it only recognizes subjects. The State and its sister the Church arrogate to themselves alone the right to serve as the link between men. Consequently, the State must, perforce, wipe out cities based on the direct union between citizens. It must abolish all unions within the city, as well as the city itself, and wipe out all direct union
between the cities. For the federal principle it must substitute the principle of submission and discipline. Such is the stuff of the State, for without this principle it ceases to be State.’

6. For more information, see http://www.communityeconomies.org/Home/Key-Ideas.

REFERENCES


Chapter Five

Towards a Theory of ‘Commonization’

Nick Clare and Victoria Habermehl

This chapter focuses on anarchist spatial politics and radical praxis. Here we argue that a productive debate can be had between communization theory and anarchist geographies (broadly conceived). By bringing these different theories and approaches together, and focusing on the abolition of the value and commodity form, we hope to promote a theoretically engaged form of spatial praxis. In addition, in keeping with recent debates we wish to open and pluralize discussions (see Clough 2014; Gibson 2014; Springer 2014a, 2014c). Not only can anarchist geographies gain from engagement with communization theory (and vice versa), but they should also seek to build on their commonalities with areas such as autonomist Marxism (see Clough and Blumberg 2012; Ince 2014; Mudu 2012; Purcell 2012), in order to foster a more productive and holistic approach to radical, anti-capitalist geography.

To begin, a brief overview of communization theory will be provided. We argue that it contains a number of key insights despite its seemingly nebulous, stultifying, and ‘hermetic’ nature (see Noys 2011a; Derick Varn 2013a). But in tracing its contours, the underdeveloped spatialities of communization theory become apparent. This then leads into a discussion around anarchist approaches to space and territory. There is an immediate resonance with important ideas surrounding the commons, but we also engage with the inherent limitations of certain brands of ‘commonism.’ Therefore, the concept of ‘commonization’—an explicitly spatial brand of communization—will be developed as a means to help combat the respective weaknesses of communization and commonism. In so doing, this chapter will respond to criticisms of the commons found within the communization literature. Finally, contemporary examples of potentially commonizing struggles in Argentina are discussed, and, to conclude, we will argue that the lens of commoniza-
tion provides insights into how anarchist and communization theories can be productively combined.

COMMUNIZATION THEORY: A TALE OF TWO TENDENCIES

Communization theory is a broad church. While this breadth has led to productive debate, it also contributes to definitional difficulties. Crudely speaking, it is possible to separate communization theory into two main ‘tendencies,’ which we shall call analytic communization and prefigurative communization. The former adopts a rigorous critique of political economy, while the latter is more influenced by prefigurative and insurrectionary politics. Although both tendencies are far from homogeneous, the differences between them are striking. However, we acknowledge that this dichotomy is not perfect, and we do not wish to (re)produce unnecessary divides between different approaches to communization—particularly given the animosity from the analytic tendency towards the prefigurative. Instead, much like our intention to broaden and create a ‘messier’ anarchist geography, we believe there is more to be gained from engagement with rather than ownership of ideas (see Ince 2014) and argue that both tendencies can engage productively with each other. Therefore, communization theory is perhaps best understood as a ‘problematic’ as opposed to a fully formed and coherent theory (Noys 2011b). Accordingly, rather than providing a full overview of every facet of the theory/theories, this section will instead draw out key debates and highlight their main strengths and weaknesses, in order to demonstrate what anarchist geographies can gain from engaging with communization.

ANALYTIC COMMUNIZATION: TROPLOIN, THÉORIE COMMUNISTE, AND ENDNOTES

The emergence of communization theory can be traced back to discussions within the French ultra-left following the events of 1968. These critiques—exemplified by the debates between the groups Troploin and Théorie Communiste (TC)—focused on what were seen as the failings of the workers’ movement, particularly the councillorist and workerist currents (see Endnotes 2008, particularly chapter 1). While, as we shall see, communization theory has since taken a number of different turns, throughout this initial period work was grounded in rigorous historical analyses of twentieth-century revolutionary movements and struggles, in addition to the changing nature of capitalism. According to these groups, changes to the capital-labour class relation—the moving contradiction (see Bernes 2011; Endnotes 2010, chapter 5)—meant that affirmation of workers’ identity could no longer lead to the emergence of communism: The proletariat’s struggle as a class had be-
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come its own limit, and it was now truly a class against itself (Sic 2011, 6–7; R.S. 2011, 117; Woland 2011, 52). Therefore this ‘crisis in the class relation’ (Endnotes 2010, chapter 1) means that

the transition to communism is not something that happens after the revolution. Rather, the revolution as communication is itself the dissolution of capitalist social relations through communist measures taken by the proletariat, abolishing the enterprise form, the commodity form, exchange, money, wage labour and value, and destroying the state. Communication, then, is the immediate production of communism: the self-abolition of the proletariat through its abolition of capital and state. (Endnotes 2008, 209)

But while this opposition to a ‘transitional period’ was central to both groups (and in fact communization theory more generally), their analyses of the ‘historical production’ of the conditions for revolutionary movements differed. Troploin mapped on to a more traditional ultra-leftist discourse of an ‘ebb and flow of class struggle’ where communization was always latent, even if never realized (ibid.). But TC argued that the particular shifts in the capital-labour relation meant that the possibility of communication only emerged in the 1970s with the consolidation of real over formal subsumption (Endnotes 2008, chapter 7). The exact ‘periodization’ of the class relation is contested (see Endnotes 2011, chapter 6; Screamin’ Alice 2011; Woland 2011), but such rigorous, historical analysis of capitalism as a dynamic, contradictory totality underpins this tendency of communization theory, exemplified contemporarily by the journals Endnotes and Sic. So while the range of work found in these journals emphasizes the different currents and cultural specificities of analytic communization theory, they focus on themes such as specific working-class formations, the study and critique of historical trends, periods, and moments, and the value form. What is more, they all maintain the central belief that ‘proletarian self-affirmation can never beget proletarian self-negation and [therefore] negation of capital’ (Endnotes 2011, 146).

It is important, however, not to portray all analytic communization theory as merely historical in its analysis. While much focus has been placed on clearing/laying the ground for future analyses, recent work has considered ‘communication in the present tense’ (Théorie Communiste 2011) and provided analyses of, among other things, recent riots across Europe (Endnotes 2013, chapter 4; Rocamadur 2014; Woland 2014), the Occupy movement (Mansoor et al. 2012; Rust Bunny Collective 2014), and the Arab Spring (Endnotes 2013, chapters 1 and 2). It has also been used a framework within which to extend theorizations surrounding the roles of gender (Endnotes 2013, chapter 3; Gonzalez 2011) and race (Chen 2013) in capitalism, as well as important discussions around ‘surplus populations’ (Endnotes 2011, chapter 2).
However, as Toscano (2011) notes, such ‘value-theoretical rigour’ is both the ‘promise’ and the ‘limitation’ of this analytic tendency. While lauding this return to explicit discussion of class, revolution and the abolition of commodities/value, he ruefully remarks that such refinement of revolutionary theory seems to have made revolutionary practice ‘inconceivable.’ The analytic tendency, given the extent of real subsumption communization, cannot be done by halves (Endnotes 2010, 94–95); it has to exist at the level of the totality. Therefore, if there is ‘no “outside” or “line of flight”’ (Noys 2011b, 10), it is hard to see how change can happen at all—especially given this tendency’s animosity towards prefigurative politics (discussed below). These concerns are not helped by a reticence to discuss how to enact communism through communization. Responses to such questions refer to the abstract notion of carrying out ‘communising measures’ (de Mattis 2014; Toscano n.d.), but specifics are rarely spelled out, instead typically being defined tautologically as ‘those measures which communise.’ As such, there is a cyclical element to much of the work, as communization can only be brought about by itself: ‘[C]ommunisation is thus not a form of prefigurative revolutionary practice of the sort that diverse anarchisms aspire to be, since it does not have any positive existence prior to a revolutionary situation’ (Endnotes 2011, 28). So, as Toscano (2011) puts it, communization faces the problem of happening now and never.

Similarly, there also seems to be a tension regarding the role of the proletariat. Although communization theory importantly acknowledges that ‘every affirmation of the class of labour becomes, by necessity, an affirmation of capital’ (Bernes 2011, 158), the proletariat remains central to all theorization—after all, it is only they/we who can negate themselves/ourselves. But given the supposed crisis in the workers’ identity/class relation, it is difficult to know who/what the agent of revolutionary change can/will be (Brassier 2014; Noys 2011b, 14). Seemingly it has to, yet cannot, be the proletariat, something which belies a latent workerism, precisely that against which the ideas were initially formulated (Bernes 2011, 172; Toscano 2014). Similarly, concerns remain surrounding the lack of agency and subjectivity, making the tendency at times alarmingly disempowering (Cunningham 2009; Derick Varn 2013b; Noys 2011b). Finally, no real consideration is given to the spatial/territorial, with processes seemingly happening on the head of a pin. Interestingly, despite having many of its own problems, the prefigurative communization tendency has a much greater engagement with geographical ideas. Therefore, to help elaborate on some of the issues above, this current will now be discussed.
PREFIGURATIVE COMMUNIZATION:
TIQQUN AND THE INVISIBLE COMMITTEE

This second communization tendency is best associated with the short-lived French journal *Tiqqun* and the associated group the Invisible Committee, perhaps most famous for their links with the Tarnac 9 and the texts *The Coming Insurrection* (2009) and *The Call* (2004). Across these various texts a very different communization theory is elaborated, grounded in activities that ‘enact communism now, within capitalism’ (Noys 2011b, 9). Drawing from a range of anarchist, insurrectionary, and post-autonomist theories, these visions of prefigurative communizing politics rely on the creation of communes through the withdrawal from capitalist activity. These communes are areas where non-/anti-capitalist logics and social relations can flourish: ‘[A]s we apprehend it, the process of instituting communism can only take the form of a collection of acts of communisation, of making common such-and-such space, such-and-such-machine, such-and-such-knowledge’ (Invisible Committee 2004, 66). Communes therefore need to then be expanded and joined up, challenging state control through this creation of new and alternate territories (Invisible Committee 2009, 107–9). Underpinning all of this is the need to create new, anonymous subjectivities, or what Noys refers to as a ‘clandestine or “invisible” identity of the militant that escapes capitalist control and capture.’ This new and elusive revolutionary subject is therefore able to carry out spectacular forms of insurrection and subversion which can challenge and undermine the state and capital (2011b, 10). In unison, such communizing activities, carried out by groups of anonymous militants, can therefore bring about new forms of life and ways of being. Outside of France these ideas arguably found their most significant support in the 2009 wave of student protests that took place in California (Occupied California 2010).

At first glance the two currents of communization theory seem to have relatively little in common. In fact, such are the apparent differences that members of the analytic tendency have repeatedly distanced themselves from the prefigurative usage, claiming that in such usage the term is merely a ‘buzzword’ (e.g., Endnotes 2011). The extremely baroque and evocative writing style of prefigurative theorists such as *Tiqqun* is a world away from the more measured and rigorous approach found in the analytic communization theory of *Endnotes*, TC, and Sic. In addition, as opposed to the seemingly disempowering conclusions of the analytic tendency, texts coming from the prefigurative tendency such as *The Call* and *The Coming Insurrection* problematically find resistance and communization everywhere (cf. Cresswell 2002, 259)—while their examples of sharing and friendship are certainly necessary parts of communism, they are far from being sufficient in leading to an end of capitalism. As such, this prefigurative tendency is open to
criticisms of naivety and its unfortunate propensity to imply that ‘the desire to establish different relations [through communization] suffices to start producing them.’ Further, such work has a habit of ‘eating its own tail’ and providing tautological and cyclical definitions of communizing measures (de Mattis 2011, 61–64)—something arguably shared by both tendencies.

Prefigurative communization is therefore open to the same criticisms as ‘lifestyle anarchism’ (cf. Bookchin 1995; Davis 2010). Further, this more optimistic depiction can overlook one of the most important insights of communication theory itself: the need to challenge the value-form (Intosh 2012). This is a real problem given that far from challenging capitalism, some purportedly communizing measures can actually end up supporting it (de Mattis 2011), something discussed below in more detail with regard to the commons. In many ways, therefore, this prefigurative tendency is the opposite of the analytic. It has a wide-ranging, vague style which focuses very much on singularities and possibilities, as opposed to more narrow consideration of the totality. However, if rather than conceiving of communication as a singular theory, it is understood as a ‘problematic’ (see Derick Varn 2013b; Noys 2011b), it is possible to draw out some important points from both the analytic and the prefigurative perspectives. And while there are of course tensions and debates surrounding the specificities of communization, it is argued that it can play a role as an extremely powerful heuristic when conceived accordingly. As such, anarchist geographical ideas can not only productively engage with many of ideas of communization but also potentially complement them and their limitations.

There is much to be commended in the way in which communization theories have sought to recalibrate debates around the simultaneous importance and limitations of class. While many of the conclusions can at first seem paradoxical and disempowering (Brassier 2014), they consistently emphasize capitalism’s dialectical nature (see Endnotes 2010, chapter 5). In this sense, the work is underpinned by a ‘traditional,’ yet ‘innovative,’ discourse of class (Derick Varn 2013b), one that with further work could be compatible with anarcha-feminists/queer-anarchist conceptions of ‘class-struggle intersectionality’ (e.g., Shannon and Rogue 2009; Rogue and Volcano 2012) and further extend work on the role of social reproduction (e.g., Endnotes 2013, chapter 3; cf. Federici 2012). It is also deeply in opposition to any form of transitional period, emphasizing that ends and means must be commensurate. As discussed, in communization theory there is a difference in opinion regarding the efficacy and desirability of prefiguration, but the insistence that communism can only be reached through communization resonates with anarchist thought (Collective Action 2012)—even if certain proponents of communization dispute this (e.g., Endnotes 2008, chapter 1). But most important, as Toscano (2011, 98–99) notes, despite some of the issues discussed above,
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contemporary communist—and we argue anarchist—thought should engage with communization theory for a number of reasons:

To have forcefully emphasized and rigorously investigated two indispensable elements of communist theory—the character of capitalism as a system of abstract domination based on the value-form and the vision of communism as the revolutionary self-abolition of the proletariat—is a great credit to communization theory. That it has tried to think these elements in their unity, and to do so with an attention to the present possibilities of emancipation, as well as its historical trajectory, makes it a position worth engaging with for anyone preoccupied with the question of communism as a contemporary one.

By acknowledging the benefits of both analytical communization’s reflections on the value form and class structure and prefigurative communization’s engagements with enacting communism now, we wish to develop an insightful combination of communization and anarchism. This will be achieved by exploring how communization could be carried out, arguing that in order for communization theory to have any purchase it needs to properly consider its spatiality. This is something that we feel anarchist spatial approaches are particularly well placed to do.

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNIZATION SPATIALLY

The above section has engaged with some of the key debates of communization theory, demonstrating their breadth across the analytic and prefigurative communization tendencies. However, the focus of this chapter is not communization theory per se, in that we are not aiming to provide a complete exposition and critique of communization. Instead, we recognize the number of insightful and useful issues raised by communization theories—something even acknowledged by many of its critics (see Noys 2011a)—and engage with its powerful potential. We therefore wish to reflect on how communization might be enacted spatially. While much analysis from the analytic tendency has an explicit temporal focus—in terms of its historical analysis and insistence that communization cannot happen after the revolution, instead being woven into its very fabric—it is alarmingly aspatial. Given the tendency’s proclivity to abstracted, rigorous critique of political economy, as well as its reticence in providing practical examples of communization’s enaction, this is perhaps unsurprising. Nevertheless, to be anything more than a heuristic, communization has to take such considerations seriously because, as will be argued, hegemonic conceptions of space and territory are incompatible with the project, given that they (re)produce capitalism and the state, and underpin the commodity and value-form. On the other hand, as we shall see, while the prefigurative tendency touches much more on spatiality, it can fail
to provide the analytical rigour that is seen as communization’s strongest point.

Geographers (and some non-geographers) have long recognized that capitalism and anti-capitalist resistance are inherently spatial processes (e.g., Harvey 1982; Lefebvre 1991). However, as Soja (1971, 9) notes, ‘conventional Western perspectives on spatial organization are powerfully shaped by the concept of property, in which pieces of territory are viewed as “commodities” capable of being bought, sold, or exchanged at the market place.’ More recently, mainstream work on territory as a form of political space has emphasized its links to value and sovereignty (Elden 2010, 2013)—although, as discussed below, much important work challenged these ideas. Therefore, predominant spatial understandings are typically linked to the state, the commodity form, property, and exchange value, all of which are anathema to communization and anarchism. Accordingly, such spatialities are central to the (re)production of capitalism (Reyes and Kaufman 2011), often with seeming neutrality (Delaney 2005). Armed with such capitalist understandings of space and territory, communization would therefore be frustrated. Not only do these spatial relationships naturalize/normalize precisely those things communization is fighting against, but under such understandings space and territory are also commodities themselves, and in fact a necessary precondition for the emergence of capitalism. Accordingly, it is necessary to outline an alternative spatial understanding that is compatible with communization and, more generally, anarchist ideas.

Within the recent (re)turn to anarchist geographies, particular focus has been placed on radical understandings of space which emphasize how it can be created from the bottom up, in a non-hierarchical, horizontal manner (e.g., Barker and Pickrell 2012; Ince 2012; Newman 2011; Springer 2012, 2013, 2014b). Understanding space, and its relationship with (anti)capitalist social relations, is therefore crucial to any engagements with communization. In particular, it is possible to highlight these radical approaches towards space in the context of understandings of territory in Latin America which are grounded in communal use value, eschewing property, exchange value, and territory as a commodity (e.g., Porto-Gonçalves 2001; Surallés and Garcías Hierro 2005; Escobar 2008; Wainwright 2008; Hennessy 2012). As Zibechi puts it:

Latin American social movements . . . advance a new organization of geographic space, in which new practices and social relations emerge. . . . They see land as more than a means of production, thereby going beyond a narrow economist conception of it. Territory is the space in which to build a new social organization collectively, where new subjects take shape and materially and symbolically appropriate their space. (2012, 18–19)
Zibechi highlights the way in which prefigurative politics are enacted spatially to create radical territories—something which we will argue combines both the analytic and the prefigurative tendencies of communization. The ideas of ‘subaltern territory’ (see Stratta and Barrera 2009) that Zibechi mentions are in contrast to capitalistic spatial understandings, and it is only with the former theorization that ideas of communization could become enacted.

**Spatializing Anarchism and the Commons**

The radical understandings of space that have been briefly mentioned above find a resonance with spatial manifestations of ‘the commons’ (e.g., Caffentzis 2010; De Angelis 2007, 2010; Hoedemaekers et al. 2012; Midnight Notes Collective and Friends 2008; Neill et al. 1996; Roggero 2010) and how resistance can emerge from ‘cracks’ in capitalism (Holloway 2010). While autonomist Marxists have adopted these ideas most frequently, recent work has started to develop explicitly anarchist understandings of ‘the commons’ (e.g., Collective Autonomy Research Group 2014; Springer 2014b) and has even connected with earlier anarchist traditions (Shantz 2013; Springer 2013). However, while commons are a necessity for any form of (anarchist) communist society (Draper 2014; Linebaugh 2014), they are not inherently anti-capitalist (see De Angelis 2013, 2014; De Angelis and Harvie 2014), and it is therefore important to differentiate between different types of commons, and ensure that those developed are anti-capitalist (Caffentzis 2010; Roggero 2010).

Caffentzis and Federici define the anti-capitalist commons as ‘autonomous spaces from which to reclaim control over the conditions of our reproduction, and . . . bases from which to counter the processes of enclosure and increasingly disentangle our lives from the market and the state’ (2014, 101). However, even large, anti-state territories such as those controlled by the Zapatistas inevitably overlap and are in tension with capitalist territorial claims (Reyes and Kaufman 2011). Therefore, examples of anti-capitalist commons such as temporary autonomous zones need to be read with caution and through a class-sensitive lens if they are to realize any radical potential and not lapse into an insular form of ‘dropping out’ (Bookchin 1995). A critical understanding of space is therefore fundamental to class struggle/communization, and vice versa. Unfortunately, ideas of ‘commonism’ which emphasize the need to circulate struggle through the expansion of commons (see Dyer-Witheford 2006, 2007) do not always engage with these limitations, and they can fail to demonstrate how the commons can fundamentally challenge the value-form (see Neary and Winn 2012). As with the debates surrounding prefigurative communization, not engaging with value theory is therefore a fundamental problem in these analyses.
In addition, discussion around ‘the commons’ can be alarmingly backwards looking and parochial, invoking bucolic images of a halcyon, pre-enclosure Britain (Martel 2014), something that has led to criticism of the idea from an analytical communization standpoint (Williams 2011). However, in order to combine the commons with communization it is important to recognize work showing that the emergence of the commons was global and radical, with explicit links to (proto) class struggle (e.g., Linebaugh 2014; Roggero 2010). Crucially, then, it should not be a case of returning to the commons but instead creating them (Caffentzis and Federici 2014). The commons, like communization, are something to be produced, not reached. Therefore, we feel that communization requires not only a radical understanding of space but also the creation of the commons—it must be a form of communization.

Towards Commonization

As mentioned, most communization theory fails to properly engage with any form of space, let alone an anarchist/anti-capitalist approach. Therefore, following our engagement with the commons, we wish to develop a theory that engages with these spatialities in producing communization: communization. In so doing, following an understanding of ‘subaltern territory,’ we want to engage with the potential to explore and claim these spaces when producing communization. However, before doing this it is important to focus briefly on the attempts to spatialize/territorialize communization theory that can be found in some of the prefigurative tendency, demonstrating that, while it is important not to fall into the aforementioned trap of conflating desire/intention with outcome (de Mattis 2011), Galloway (2011, 247), it is wrong to assert that the above quote (and communization more generally) has nothing to do with a reimagining of space, as, although this alone is clearly not sufficient, as has been argued, it is necessary.

The Coming Insurrection, for example, has a section entitled ‘Create territories. Multiply zones of opacity’:

Today’s territory is the product of many centuries of police operations. People have been pushed out of their fields, then their streets, then their neighbourhoods, and finally from the hallways of their buildings, in the demented hope of containing all life between the four sweating walls of privacy. The territorial question isn’t the same for us as it is for the state. For us it’s not about possessing territory. Rather, it’s a matter of increasing the density of the commons, of circulation, and of solidarities to the point that the territory becomes unreadable, opaque to all authority. We don’t want to occupy the territory, we want to be the territory.

Every practice brings a territory into existence—a dealing territory, or a hunting territory; a territory of child’s play, of lovers, of a riot; a territory of
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farmers, ornithologists, or flaneurs. The rule is simple: The more territories there are superimposed on a given zone, the more circulation there is between them, the harder it will be for power to get a handle on them. Bistros, print shops, sports facilities, wastelands, second-hand book stalls, building rooftops, improvised street markets, kebab shops and garages can all easily be used for purposes other than their official ones if enough complicities come together in them. Local self-organization superimposes its own geography over the state cartography, scrambling and blurring it: it produces its own secession. (Invisible Committee 2009, 107–9)

The passage highlights that ‘[t]he territorial question isn’t the same for us as it is for the state,’ emphasizing how different spatial understandings are employed by different groups, and to different ends, and echoing Rancière’s ideas of ‘police’ as rigid control and striation of socio-spatial order (Rancière 2006, 2010; see also Stavrides 2010). This is seen elsewhere in the text where discussion of state response to unrest is centred on not only ‘police surveillance of . . . territory’ but also the need for it to be ‘partitioned into ever more restricted zones’ in order for it to be controlled and defused (Invisible Committee 2009, 27). Resistance therefore needs to ‘liberate territory from police occupation’ (ibid., 126). This reinforces the important idea that territory is not pre-given, instead constructed and contested, the exact nature of which is intimately linked to the type of politics that is being enacted. Radical territory’s dynamic and processual nature is demonstrated in the discussion of how ‘[e]very practice brings a territory into existence.’ Of course, such a claim can lead to the banality of territory and space. The important point is not simply that all things are territorial but also that there is a need to ask what types of territory and territorializing activities are compatible with communication.

However, the most interesting points are contained in the claims that struggle (and thus communization) is ‘not about possessing territory’ but instead ‘increasing the density of the communes’ to the point that we can ‘be the territory.’ With obvious allusions to autonomist Marxist ideas of (geographical) ‘circulation of struggle’ (see Cleaver 2004; Dyer-Witheford 2008; Marks 2012; Wright 2002), this quote reinforces the idea that, unlike state or capitalist understandings of territory, a sole focus on ownership of territory is problematic (Walia 2013). But beyond this, it also makes the important point that struggles are territorial in a number of ways. That is, struggles do not only take place in territory but also for, through, over, and because of territory. Territory both shapes and is shaped by struggle; it is both medium and agent (see Stavrides 2010). Or, as the Invisible Committee put it in typically romantic style, ‘[u]rban space is more than just the theatre of confrontation, it is also the means’ (2009, 58). These all demonstrate the necessity to engage with how and what is being produced in a space, and how this relates to communization.
Communization is incompatible with dominant spatial understandings, as space and territory become commodities themselves that plat a central role in the (re)production of capitalism. Processes of de-commodification that can start to challenge the value-form can therefore only take place in de-commodified spaces and territories. Communization must therefore be communization, with the production of new spaces and territories being an integral part of its process. But in order for communization to move beyond the level of an immanent, ultra-left critique—however powerful it may be—such de-commodified territories need to be created and maintained, something much more difficult in practice than theory. In order to develop this idea we now focus on Argentine struggles.

ARGENTINA: COMMONIZATION IN PRACTICE?

In the wake of its 2001 economic crisis Argentina has come to represent something of a ‘political laboratory’ for many on the left (Colectivo Situaciones 2002, 2014). With, among other things, hundreds of occupied and worker-run enterprises (Lavaca 2007), horizontally organized neighbourhood assemblies (Sitrin 2006), and the unemployed workers’ movements that emerged from the piqueteros (Chatterton 2005; MTD Solano and Colectivo Situaciones 2002). These projects have been motivated by a wide range of prefigurative, anti-state, and anti-capitalist resistance (Sitrin 2012). However, while undoubtedly inspiring and in many situations incredibly effective (Souza 2006), the question here is: What can these movements tell us about the possibilities of communization/commonization?

Unsurprisingly, given the scale and diversity of the resistance, much communization inspired writing has engaged with examples from Argentina. For instance, in The Coming Insurrection admiration is expressed towards the piqueteros because they ‘collectively extort a sort of local welfare conditioned by a few hours of work; [they] don’t clock their hours, [but] put their benefits in common and acquire clothing workshops, a bakery, putting in place the gardens that they need’ (2009, 103). These movements are seen to be perfect exemplars of ‘commune creators,’ carrying out ‘what is seen as the necessarily prefigurative politics of communization and communization.

However, not all of the reflections on these prefigurative projects identify them as examples of communization in practice. An example of these tensions is the occupied factory movement, which consistently came up against issues of co-optation and self-exploitation (Atzeni and Ghigliani 2007; Ranis 2005). From the analytic tendency Dauvé and Nescie have even argued that in many situations the occupation movement was not about transforming capitalism but instead ‘a means of survival’ (2008, 131). Further, while examples of self-management immediately face the limitations of organizing as a class
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against itself, similar concerns can be raised around the unemployed workers’ movements, where refusal to work still represents an affirmation of the workers’ identity (cf. Tronti 1980). However, after acknowledging the ‘extremely fragmentary responses’ of Argentine social movements with regard to the realization of communication, Théorie Communiste note that ‘the most interesting [of these responses] is without doubt . . . [their] territorial organisation’ (2011, 57). Therefore, it is these attempts at spatial-communization (commonization) that should be focused on.

Recent work has explored the way in which social movements, particularly in Buenos Aires’ urban periphery, have moved away from their identity as ‘unemployed workers,’ instead focusing on organizing territorially in their neighbourhoods (see Mason-Deese 2012). Although certain groups had long recognized the limitations of the piqueteros movement (MTD Solano and Colectivo Situaciones 2002), this territorial shift has become more common and is underpinned by the understandings of territory expressed above (see Stratta and Barrera 2009; Zibechi 2012). As said, for these groups territory is not simply something to be struggled over, but its re-creation and reimagining fundamentally underpins their activity—it is both medium and agent—leading to a rise in ‘territorial subjectivities.’

This important, morphogenetic relationship between territory and political struggle was emphasized in a conversation with one such group, the MTD Oscar Barrios (see Clare 2015). Their analysis of different types of territory and the role these types play in different political projects bears quoting at length:

> For us [subaltern] territory plays a central role in the construction of autoges-
> tive power at this particular juncture . . . [Neoliberal] territory is controlled by
> a certain type of power which is trying to impose a particular world view, but
> this is not imposed without resistance. Territorial disputes are not only related
> to injustices that stem from unemployment, housing, health, social resources,
> ecological deterioration, and so on, but these disputes are also to do with
> certain forms of social relations, values, and symbols.
>
> While the dominant neoliberal, capitalist territoriality is configured in a
> particular form of territory . . . alternative forms of territory have become a
> central terrain of political construction, and are increasingly significant and
> important spaces in the lives of much of the population, [and] different territo-
> rial constructions can help articulate new forms of the social, the political, the
> economic, and the cultural.
>
> These sorts of [subaltern] territorial organisations build, inhabit, found,
> [and] struggle over significant spaces . . . [Subaltern territories] are produced by
everyday class struggles, but they are complex spaces which are both
constructed by and help generate new identities, senses of belonging, and
distinctive forms of sociability grounded in autonomy and autogestión. Thus
as workers, the young, women, people of colour, the LGBTQ community, the
elderly, the marginalised, the excluded, indigenous people, migrants, etc. . . .
we are building a ‘territorial subject’ that is open and varied, and constructs itself through struggle against the [dominant] territorial system.

As discussed above, dominant neoliberal understandings of territory are therefore incompatible with anti-capitalist projects more broadly—let alone communization in particular. But, in addition to subaltern territorial politics being compatible with an anti-capitalist future, they can also help pave the way for rich, diverse and intersectional struggles, as mentioned in the quote above.

Of course, this does not mean that those involved with territorial struggles have somehow escaped the class relationship, simply that actions are no longer grounded solely in affirmation of the workers’ identity. Organizing in this neighbourhood fashion therefore meant that the focus was not building workers’ power but instead attending to people’s needs and requirements—something emphasized by Argentine movements’ understanding of the neighbourhood as the new factory (Mason-Deese 2012). Exchange value is jettisoned as production takes on a different meaning underpinned by communal use value, and therefore ‘the determinations of the proletariat as a class of this society (i.e. property, exchange, the division of labour, the relation between men and women . . .) . . . [are] effectively undermined by the way productive activities [are] undertaken [and it] is thus that the revolution as communisation becomes credible’ (Théorie Communiste 2011, 49).

This analysis from the analytic tendency therefore provides a spatial/territorial example which joins together rigorous value critique with prefigurative ends and means.

Reinforcing the need for an understanding of communization, such activities not only take place in but also help produce de-commodified territories (see Sitrin and Azzellini 2014)—although it is necessary to be cautious about the extent to which these territories can really be classed as ‘free territories.’ This spatial understanding can therefore underpin broader processes of de-commodification, such as those which Zibechi describes taking place across certain neighbourhood-run enterprises (2012, 253–57). These projects can be seen to be building collective resources, or commons, such as in the example of a community bakery in the neighbourhood of Barracas, through which Zibechi explores how these collective processes have also developed through processes creating de-alienated labour through a refusal to produce commodities: ‘[T]he duality of the commodity, as carrier of use value and exchange value has been—or rather, is being—deconstructed in favour of use value, or, products that are non-commodities’ (ibid., 254). Again, like the discussion from TC, this demonstrates serious engagement with the challenge of understanding rigorous value critiques in tandem with prefigurative action. Returning to the analytic tendency, Bernes’s (2013) work on anti-capitalist, ‘counter
logistics’ and communization provides opportunities to ‘scale up’ such de-commodification and communization.

For instance, one of the author’s research focuses on processes of neighbourhood de-commodification and territorial organizing, including terrains that have not traditionally been thought of as political in Argentina, such as neighbourhood struggles in Mercado Bonpland in Palermo, Buenos Aires (Habermehl 2015). This neighbourhood reclaimed retail market operates as a connection point for different projects of autogestión, from worker-reclaimed factories to small family producers and cooperatives, yet it also operates as a market in a wealthy barrio of Buenos Aires. The aim of this market is consequently to challenge the process of creating value, from production to exchange. The challenge of this is to address each stage of the production process in order to regain worker control. Yet in so doing the organization is grounded in the difficulties of everyday organizing, how to sustain oneself despite living within capitalism. Territorially the space has been reclaimed for the neighbourhood; yet who conceives themselves as (or is perceived to be) a neighbour is dependent on their organizational history, class, and political identities (Colectivo Situaciones 2002; Simbiosis Cultural 2011). Thus Mercado Bonpland highlights the need to connect the multiple neighbourhood approaches and tactics that bridge divides between politics of subsistence and de-commodification. As a neighbourhood market space reclaimed for autogestión, this demonstrates the possibilities in connecting multiple autogestive networks. These complexities highlight the potential in engaging in the production of de-commodified territories, while the everyday difficulties the market faces demonstrate how this is not a simple process. Nevertheless, the example of the Mercado Bonpland not only begins to demonstrate how the processes Zibechi describes in the paragraph above could begin to be ‘scaled up’ but also indicates that if communization’s potential can possibly be realized, it has to be alongside a wholesale re-imagining and re-enactment of territory. To phrase it simply, it must be understood as a form of communization.

These examples highlight the importance of these Argentine cases as examples of struggles which can begin to challenge the value-form, and attempt to side-step the limits of the class relation. To this end they can be seen as at the very least examples of communist/communizing measures (de Mattis 2014), if not ‘embryonic’ forms of communization (B.L. 2011, 160; Holloway 2012). But given the inherent and concurrent spatial element to these struggles (see Trigona 2014), they are better understood as examples of communization that can help produce a theoretically rigorous and engaged politics.
CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has helped create a ‘messier’ communization theory (Derick Varn 2013a) and contributed to debates surrounding the various currents/tendencies and their discontents (see Noys 2011a). However, instead of necessarily debating communization theory per se, we have tried to bring into contact analytic and prefigurative communization tendencies. Whilst not wanting to create an artificial divide, it is important to recognize the two predominant traits in communization theory and their respective strengths and weaknesses. So while the analytic tendency has an important value-theoretical rigour, it often lacks real world examples, and by the same token, although prefigurative communization theory is arguably closer linked to contemporary struggle, such important insights can drop out. In bringing analytic and prefigurative communization theory into dialogue, we aim to highlight the potential benefit of both approaches but show that they must be understood in specific spatio-socialized/territorialized contexts. It has been shown that anarchist spatial approaches are well suited to this and have been manifested in Latin American understandings of territory that share similarities with ideas of ‘the commons.’ It can therefore be understood as communization, where space and territory are de-commodified in order to facilitate the process of communization. While the insights afforded by anarchist geographies can complement work from communization theory, we also feel that anarchist geographies can productively engage with communization theory. The central tenets of analytical and prefigurative communization that were explored in earlier sections should underpin anarchist activity and theory, especially given the shared commitment to consistency between ends and means. This chapter is therefore also part of a move to broaden the focus of the welcome (re)turn to anarchist geographies (e.g., Clough 2014) and seek to enrich debates by moving them out of their comfort zones.

However, despite the final section giving some potential examples of communization in practice, this is very much a work on progress—it is a first step towards a theory of communization. Nevertheless, while admittedly rudimentary and nascent, we believe the ideas expressed here deserve further exploration, as do the activities of such communizing/commonizing social movements in Argentina and beyond. Therefore, more work needs to take place into the nature of radical approaches to space and territory, and the struggles that are associated with these. In particular, greater focus needs to be placed on issues surrounding the role of power immanent to alternative spaces and territories, the possibilities and limitations of a relational understanding of territory, and how this affects the ability to extend processes of communization. Whether or not communization can ever be anything more than a problematic is still up for debate, but understanding it through the form of communization is useful for both anarchist theory and practice.
Towards a Theory of ‘Communization’

REFERENCES


Towards a Theory of ‘Commonization’


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Chapter Six

‘Feuding Brothers’?

Left-Libertarians, Marxists and Socio-Spatial Research at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century

Marcelo Lopes de Souza

This is what we keep saying to our brothers—sometimes feuding brothers—the state socialists: ‘Watch your bosses and representatives! Like you, certainly, they are animated by the purest of intentions; they fervently want the abolition of private property and state tyranny, but the relationships, the new conditions gradually change them; their morality changes with their interests, and, still believing himself faithful to the cause of their constituents, they inevitably become infidels. Also, those in power, will use the instruments of power: military, moralists, magistrates, police and informers.’

—Reclus (1896, 10)

The epigraph above is a remark made by French geographer and anarchist Élisée Reclus at the end of the nineteenth century. Obviously, Reclus is benevolent towards Marxists, as the term ‘brothers’ (even if sometimes ‘feuding’ ones) shows. But he was never totally alone with this kind of benevolence. Certainly, as I already stressed in a previous text, Reclus’s words were proffered ‘long before anarchists were massively executed by “state socialists” during the civil war in Russia and later in Spain’ (Souza 2012c, 694). However, thereafter I immediately asked:

Nevertheless, and be that as it may, if it is evident that anarchists, neo-anarchists and autonomists should see each other as ‘brothers,’ why is it then so difficult for many Marxists and libertarians to conceive each other at least as ‘cousins,’ the errors and crimes of the past notwithstanding? After all, in spite of all the disagreements in relation to the means, there has always been a remarkable, though by no means total, convergence in terms of ends. In 1873,
Kropotkin went as far as to insist (slightly exaggerating, of course) that socialists of ‘the most varied shades’ shared a ‘rather complete agreement in their ideals’ (Kropotkin in Fleming 1988, 21). (Souza 2012c, 694)

Several thinkers and activists—on both sides, but as far as I know mainly on the (left-)libertarian¹ one—have pleaded for many decades for a better understanding between libertarians (anarchists, neo-anarchists and libertarian autonomists) and Marxists. Among the most prominent thinkers, we can mention names such as Karl Korsch and Daniel Guérin. More recently, Italian anarchist Chiara Bottici went as far as to literally propose a ‘marriage’ or ‘conubial’ between Marxism and anarchism (see Bottici 2013, 24). The very suggestion is as such highly problematic, but the reason she offers is bizarre:

In light of the difficulties encountered in promoting the realization of the freedom of equals on a larger scale, anarchists may easily fall into the individualist temptation and limit their fight to the realization of spaces of autonomy in small self-enclosed communities. . . For this possible degeneration, Marxism contains a powerful antidote. (Bottici 2013, 20–21)

Her thesis is based on an understandable but nonetheless mistaken and fallacious set of presuppositions—for instance, that Marxism could be the best ‘antidote’ against anarchism’s vulnerability in the face of individualist trends. It is understandable that Anglo-American (and especially U.S.-American) anarchism has been largely individualist (with several important exceptions such as Murray Bookchin and Noam Chomsky), considering the political culture of the United States and its historical evolution. Yet curiously enough, she is a European scholar, so that there is even less excuse for ignoring the ideas of the classical anarchists like Mikhail Bakunin, Élisée Reclus, Piotr Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta, as well as those of autonomist Cornelius Castoriadis, to mention a particularly relevant and contemporary example—all of them not even remotely culpable of an individualist bias.

The fact is that Marxism is and has always been a challenge for libertarians. Interestingly, Marxism has been weakened since the 1990s as never before, though its dilacerating theoretical flaws and political cul-de-sacs (e.g., concepts such as ‘socialist state’ and ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’) have been exposed by libertarians since the nineteenth century, and to some extent also by heterodox Marxists especially since the 1950s and 1960s. At the same time, the libertarian alternative is relevant and visible now as never before since the 1960s or even since the 1930s. (Incidentally, it is curious that precisely in a time of deep crisis of Marxism an anarchist such as Bottici advocates a ‘marriage’ between anarchism and Marxism, as if above all the first and not the latter would be in an almost desperate situation.)
Of course, it would be as wrong to deny the relevance and implications of the present-day resurgence of libertarian ideas and ideals as to exaggerate the contemporary role of libertarian thought and praxis. But the fact is that we can see around the globe many attempts to overcome authoritarianism and verticality—and, even if these experiences can be described (as I already did in Souza 2012b) as ‘hybrid’ or ‘syncretic,’ due to the heterogeneity of the political influences they have received (as examples such as German Autonomen, Mexican Zapatistas, a part of the Argentine piquetos, the Spanish Movimiento 15-M and many others demonstrate), at the end of the day they correspond to attempts to overcome not only Bolshevism’s explicit authoritarianism but also (even if only implicitly) Marxism’s typical statism and centralism at a more general level.\(^2\) Marxism-inspired ‘real socialism’ began to collapse at the end of the 1980s, and emancipatory social movements of a new type (at the same time radical and ‘hybrid’ in the aforementioned sense), such as Mexican Zapatistas, began to emerge a few years later. To be accurate, some of the representatives of a ‘second generation’ of the so-called ‘new social movements’ (the ‘first generation’ being that one which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s) existed already in the 1980s, such as German Autonomen; furthermore, libertarian traces and roots (often mixed with Marxist traces and roots) could be observed and regarded as a heritage from the 1960s and 1970s.\(^3\) However, Mexican Zapatistas, Argentine piquetos (I mean those piquetero organizations which have been consistently committed to autonomy and horizontality, of course), the movement against capitalist globalization and so on—all these expressions of a libertarian renaissance have developed since the 1990s. Hence we can see that there have been new radical social movements and protests since the 1990s, and the presence of a libertarian dimension is a common feature of many of them (the most important exceptions being the Brazilian sem-terra, basically influenced by a mixture of Marxism and progressive Catholic Church, and the ‘Arab Spring’). At the same time, several of the most important among them still present Marxist discursive or even practical elements (and I am not talking only about the sem-terra, but above all about those movements and organizations that show clear libertarian characteristics, such as a commitment to horizontality and self-management); that is precisely the reason why we can say they possess a more or less ‘hybrid’ nature.

Considering all this complexity, it is high time, therefore, to turn back to some old questions: What should we libertarians expect from a dialogue (and potential cooperation) with Marxists? Under what circumstances can dialogue (and perhaps cooperation) be possible? To what extent must libertarians be particularly cautious and critical (as well as self-critical) nowadays?

As I said in an earlier paper,
perhaps interestingly or surprisingly, I feel ethically closer to several heterodox Marxists (namely, council communists such as Anton Pannekoek and Karl Korsch, or some honest, coherent and brilliant academics like Edward P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, Herbert Marcuse and our late colleague, geographer Neil Smith) than to an ‘individualist anarchist’ such as Max Stirner. In light of this, and with expectation of some reciprocity, I just wish that our contemporary, heterodox Marxist ‘cousins’ could acknowledge that they have more in common with Élisée Reclus, Piotr Kropotkin, Murray Bookchin, Colin Ward or Noam Chomsky than with, say, Georgi Plekhanov, Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky or Ernest Mandel, etc. (Souza 2012c, 694)

There is enough evidence showing that it would be naïve to expect much reciprocity in this sense, at least on the part of most Marxists. In the remainder of this text, I will examine the various aspects of present-day ‘Marxist challenge’ (section 1), before I turn to some specific problems related to the difficult relationship between libertarian and Marxist socio-spatial researchers and activists (section 2 and concluding remarks). Though the problem represented by the relationships between libertarians and Marxists goes far beyond socio-spatial research (or scientific research altogether), as it is above all a matter of praxis, limitations in terms of space and opportunity make justifiable my decision of focusing particularly the questions and aspects more directly related to the possibility of a reconstruction of radical geography and socio-spatial research in general on the basis of a libertarian approach, clearly committed to autonomy and against heteronomy (Marxism’s heteronomous dimension included).

(1) FROM MARXISM’S RESILIENCE . . .

Marxism’s crisis since the 1990s cannot be ignored or denied. For libertarians, it represents a remarkable opportunity for a political-intellectual re-birth at a level never experienced again after the 1930s. Yet Marxism’s resilience should not be underestimated; in fact, the crisis of Karl Marx’s legacy has led to a partly irritating, partly embarrassing situation: While some Marxists have isolated themselves and lost almost every connection to reality (as in the case of certain Trotskyite activists who criticize everything that does not fit their old-fashioned conceptual and political standards), most academic Marxists have tried to adapt themselves to the new situation. How? There have been four basic reactions.

1. Melancholia

This kind of reaction is characterized by a form of deep cultural pessimism, and at the same time by generalized criticisms against the remaining left—other Marxists included. Libertarian or quasi-libertarian thought (especially
outside the axis Western Europe–United States) and praxis (radical social movements, protests, etc.) are often either underestimated or simply ignored. As Russell Jacoby said in his book *The End of Utopia*, ‘[a]part from a few diehards in stray capitals and campuses, intellectuals have become willy-nilly liberals’ (Jacoby 2000, 10), implying that almost all left-wing intellectuals have become complacent and devoid of any radicalism. It is not, of course, that critics such as Jacoby are totally wrong; remarks like ‘[t]oday socialists and leftists do not dream of a future qualitatively different from the present. . . . At best radicals and leftists envision a modified society with bigger pieces of pie for more customers’ (Jacoby 2000, 10) or ‘[a]t the fin de siècle, Marxism seeks an afterlife as a more perfect capitalism’ (Jacoby 2000, 23) are essentially correct. Even his provocative and ironic remark that ‘[c]ulture is sexy, economics is pedestrian’ these days (Jacoby 2000, 40) is productive. Obviously, it would be preposterous to suggest that socio-political optimism is a major feature of our age, as it was in the framework of nineteenth century’s ‘progress’ credulity; in fact, one cannot deny that our time is largely an ‘age of generalised conformism,’ to use Castoriadis’s words (Castoriadis 1990). At the same time, however, a statement like that about stray capitals and campuses reveals, from a Latin American viewpoint, some arrogant ignorance regarding the vitality of resistance and thinking outside the so-called ‘Global North.’ And an irony such as that about culture as a ‘sexy’ subject, notwithstanding its importance in the face of a concrete neglect of political economy, may suggest a revival of economism (one of Marxism’s most characteristic, problematic and enduring features, philosophically but also politically seen) as an antidote against culturalism.

2. Adoption of a Quasi-Bourgeois, ‘Left-Keynesian,’ Tacitly Reformist Discourse

This type of reaction is the most disturbing one—or at least it should be, and not only from a libertarian perspective but also from a Marxist point of view. Let me exemplify with the questions posed by David Harvey—admittedly one of the best-known Marxist scholars of the last three or four decades in the world—on a couple of occasions, beginning with the chapter called ‘What Is to Be Done? And Who the Hell Is Going to Do It?’ included in a book edited by Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse and Margit Mayer entitled *Cities for People, Not for Profit*. Departing from the essentially correct but nevertheless simplistic assumption according to which ‘throughout the world we are not in a revolutionary moment’ (Harvey 2012, 273), Harvey concludes—‘despite the fact that there is often a substantial conflict between Keynesian thinking and Marxian thinking’ (271)—that we are experiencing a ‘Keynesian moment’ nowadays. For him, this ‘Keynesian moment’ corresponds to a realistic reaction against neo-liberalism. On this basis, he develops an argu-
ment that ‘if we are in a Keynesian moment then we need to make use of it politically’ (271), or, in other words, ‘perhaps the best we can do right now is to redirect that Keynesianism in such a way that it benefits the mass of the people rather than continue to centralize capitalist state power’ (271). Despite this critical remark about centralization of state power, it soon becomes clear that for him not only Keynesianism but also state capitalism in its more explicit forms tends to appear as a lifeboat: ‘Since throughout the world we are not in a revolutionary moment—with possible exceptions in Latin America and China—we do not currently have the option of rejecting Keynesianism. The only option is to ask what kind of Keynesianism it should be, and to whose benefit should it be mobilized’ (273).

By the way, it was not the first time that David Harvey expressed an essentially positive opinion about some Latin American experiences (above all Venezuela and Brazil) and even about China. A similar view had been already presented by him two years before. In a lucid passage, he then remarked that ‘[w]hile there are some signs of recovery of both labor organizing and left politics (as opposed to the “third way” celebrated by New Labor in Britain under Tony Blair and disastrously copied by many social democratic parties in Europe) along with signs of the emergence of more radical political parties in different parts of the world, the exclusive reliance upon a vanguard of workers is now in question as is the ability of those leftist parties that gain some access to political power to have a substantive impact upon the development of capitalism and to cope with the troubled dynamics of crisis-prone accumulation’; however, immediately after that, he says that left political parties and labor unions are significant still, and their takeover of aspects of state power, as with the Workers’ Party in Brazil or the Bolivarian movement in Venezuela, has had a clear impact on left thinking, not only in Latin America. The complicated problem of how to interpret the role of the Communist Party in China, with its exclusive control over political power, and what its future policies might be about is not easily resolved either. (Harvey 2009, np)

In order to avoid an injustice, it is important to stress that Harvey is far from being alone with this kind of point of view. Perry Anderson’s balance-sheet of the Lula government published in 2011 under the title ‘Lula’s Brazil’ is not very different from this kind of evaluation, as the following words at the beginning of his text already suggest:

Contrary to a well-known English dictum, stoical if self-exonerating, all political lives do not end in failure. . . . Today, there is only one ruler in the world who can claim this achievement, the former worker who in January stepped down as president of Brazil, enjoying the approval of 80 per cent of its citi-
zens. By any criterion, Luiz Inácio da Silva is the most successful politician of his time. (Anderson 2011, np)

My response to Harvey’s optimism regarding Brazil was already delivered a few years ago—and the same criticism is valid in relation to Anderson’s piece—when I warned that ‘[m]istaking appearances for substance, [Harvey] assumes that Brazil’s government under Lula is a left-wing one (while it is in truth a populist government, based on a coalition of parties which ranges from centre-left to centre-right and which is led by a former left-wing party)’ (Souza 2010, 325). As I added then in a footnote, ‘Brazil’s economic and social policy under Lula [and since 2011 under Dilma Rousseff] has been a mixture of statism and neoliberal elements, in which features such as “fiscal responsibility,” the priority given to agribusiness and the absence of a true land reform are “tempered” by compensatory social policies’ (Souza 2010, 325, note 6).

However, what is particularly astonishing and symptomatic is Harvey’s ambiguity—to say the least—regarding China. If the problem of how to interpret the role of the Communist Party in China is regarded as a ‘complicated’ one, how can the whole perverse legacy of ‘real socialism’ be critically analysed and constructively surpassed? And considering the whole set of his interpretations and conclusions, how can we talk about the possibility of a ‘revolution’ under these circumstances (or even regarding the Venezuelan case, which is surely more complex)? Against this background, it is no wonder that Harvey stresses that the ‘co-revolutionary theory earlier laid out would suggest that there is no way that an anti-capitalist social order can be constructed without seizing state power’ (Harvey 2009, np; emphasis added).

As far as China’s bureaucratic-authoritarian capitalism is concerned, the mention of a ‘revolutionary moment’ is already an affront against not only libertarians but also—as I have already pointed out in an earlier text (Souza 2012b, 328)—the memory and legacy of heterodox, creative and honest Marxists such as ‘council communists’ Anton Pannekoek and Karl Korsch. That is the reason why I said in my earlier text that this kind of Marxism is neither Marxism nor David Harvey at its/his best, but rather a fin-de-siècle or fatigued Marxism (Souza 2012b, 327). Be that as it may, it reveals the more or less reformist, state-centred and ‘pragmatic’ view espoused by many Marxists, probably (at least partly) as a consequence of insufficient confidence in emancipatory social movements.

3. Prophetic Updating

‘Prophetic updating’ (or ‘Marxism reloaded’) is Marxists’ attempt to revitalize Marx’s doctrine by means of trying to persuade us that capitalism’s contradictions and problems—for instance, the 2008 more-than-financial cri-
sis—justify Sartre’s famous assumption that Marxism would be ‘the impassable horizon of our time’ (implying that we supposedly cannot go beyond the theoretical and political limits established by Marxism, and that ‘historical materialism’ and the praxis inspired by it can perpetually regenerate themselves from inside, but cannot be surpassed from outside), as if neither Marxist(-Leninist) politics nor Marxian or Marxist philosophy have showed any problems or limits. In a slightly more modest fashion, Perry Anderson pontificated a few years before the fall of the Berlin Wall that ‘Marxism lies apart from all other variants of critical theory in its ability—or at least ambition—to compose a self-critical theory capable of explaining its own genesis and metamorphoses’ (Anderson 1983, 12); declining to admit the existence of any crisis of Marxism in a strict sense, for the British historian the term ‘crisis of Marxism’ was itself ‘always a misleading one,’ for what ‘was really at issue was the crisis of a certain Marxism, geographically confined to Latin Europe—essentially France, Italy and Spain’ (Anderson 1983, 28; emphasis added). Three decades later, as Russell Jacoby’s ‘melancholia’ testifies, it would be impossible even for the most renitent Marxists to deny that, instead of a situation in which Marxism is ‘conquering or consolidating new positions across a wide front outside’ Latin Europe (Anderson 1983, 28), Marxism has been actually reduced to little more than a fragmentary and vestigial existence worldwide. Nevertheless, the remaining Marxists surely still would subscribe at least to the essence of Perry Anderson’s diagnosis that,

> like any other such paradigm, it [historical materialism] will not be replaced so long as there is no superior candidate for comparable overall advance in knowledge. There is no sign of that yet, and we can therefore be confident that at least as much work will be done within Marxism tomorrow as it is today. (Anderson 1983, 105)

On the basis of this kind of arrogance and presumed self-sufficiency, libertarian criticisms have been ignored (for instance, the demolishing philosophical and political attacks conducted by Cornelius Castoriadis from the 1960s and especially the 1970s until his death in the 1990s) and, more recently, capitalism’s ‘more-than-financial’ crisis of 2008 has been interpreted as an evidence that Marxism has always been right (or, as Sartre would probably say again, ‘the impassable horizon of our time’). In the present conjuncture, even heterodox Marxists such as Antonio Negri have been put under suspicion or (in a more or less subtle way) despised sometimes, as Eric Hobsbawm did in his last book, How to Change the World, a work which sounds as an extremely self-referential apology not only of Marxism but also of a very conventional type of Marxist lineage. That becomes explicit, for instance, as Hobsbawm regrets Negri’s ‘frankly insufficient formation in Marxian literature’ (Hobsbawm 2011, 125), or as he induces his readers to
believe that ‘from the middle 1840s on it can no longer be said that Marx derived anything from the pre-Marxist tradition of socialism’ (Hobsbawm 2011, 47), or as he almost ignores the ideas of ‘council communists’ such as Pannekoek and Korsch.

4. Mimicry

‘Mimicry’ means, in this context, the borrowing of traditional libertarian principles and methods, such as self-management and autonomy, in order to ‘revitalize’ Marxism—whilst ‘forgetting’ to give the due credit or simply to pay any tribute at all to the ancient libertarian roots of those principles and methods. Interestingly, though libertarian ideas and practices have been selectively used as sources of inspiration by Marxists (Marx himself emulated the libertarian ethos for a short moment when he apparently abandoned the strategy of ‘seizing state power’ and praised the Commune of Paris,7 and Engels partly acknowledged later the role Proudhonians played in that context8), they have generally rejected or minimized convergences, at least in public. Considering the interest of several contemporary Marxists about principles, methods and strategies which have been typical of the libertarian galaxy—and not of ‘historical materialism’—it is curious that no less a person than Eric Hobsbawm, an erudite icon of British historiography, can produce several biased and oversimplified comments on anarchism in his last book. (Incidentally, regarding the above-mentioned interpretation that Marx did not derive anything from the pre-Marxist tradition of socialism from the middle of the 1840s onwards, it is interesting to see that an honest sociologist influenced by Marxism, Georges Gurvitch, gladly admitted that Proudhon anticipated a part of the surplus-value theory developed by Marx in Das Kapital [see Gurvitch 1980, 32].) This ‘political and intellectual autism’ is not compatible with the largely opportunistic pragmatism some prominent Marxists have showed these days. Symptomatically, some people have even proposed oxymoronic terms such as ‘autonomous/autonomist Marxism’ and ‘libertarian Marxism.’

As good examples of this sort of ‘mimicry,’ John Holloway, in his attempt to persuade his readers that it is possible to ‘change the world without taking power,’ ‘forgets’ to pay tribute to the ancient anarchist roots of this formula (Holloway 2005), while Antonio Negri does not explicitly or sufficiently recognize (for instance in his book on the ‘constituent power’ [Negri 2002]) the huge debt he has in relation to Socialisme ou Barbarie’s discussions about gestion ouvrière or to Castoriadis’s more sophisticated discussions during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s about the projet d’autonomie and the self-instituting society (developed by the Graeco-French philosopher from a clearly non-Marxist perspective). By the way, it is remarkable that the ‘autonomous Marxist’ Antonio Negri openly admitted, in the course of a talk
with Cesare Casarino, that ‘my assessment of the USSR is not entirely negative’ (Casarino and Negri 2008, 55), or that ‘[w]hile I was watching yesterday that bunch of buffoons who rule our world at the G8 in Genoa, I couldn’t help but think: “I wish the USSR was still around!”’ I know it’s cruel and absurd to say such a thing, and yet’ (Casarino and Negri 2008, 55). As far as Holloway is concerned, let us put it straight: Any attempt to incarnate the spirit of horizontality as if it would have been perfectly compatible with the century-old state-centrist character of Marxism, and without even mentioning the libertarian thought, is simply grotesque and nothing more than a counterfeit. Moreover, it is an outdated counterfeit since Holloway does not clearly advance beyond the oversimplified perspective typical of classical anarchists concerning the concept of ‘power.’ While classical anarchists typically reduced power to ‘state power’ or at least to domination—an oversimplification which has already received convincing reservations on the part of libertarians of the second half of the twentieth century such as neo-anarchist Murray Bookchin and especially autonomist Cornelius Castoriadis—it is very useful to differentiate between heteronomous and autonomous power (I will turn to this point later).

All these four reactions—‘melancholia’; ‘adoption of a quasi-bourgeois, left-Keynesian,’ tacitly reformist discourse’; ‘prophetic updating’; and ‘mimicry’—are understandable, though the last three of them are at the same time productive (especially the latter one) and opportunistic (idem). After all, Marxism wants and struggles to survive. Russell Jacoby’s melancholy is surely more honest, but it is politically almost a kind of capitulation, and Harvey’s ambiguous position is a mixture of almost complete capitulation and inability to criticize state capitalism and orthodoxy. In fact, the same inability to learn from the past can be observed in most cases of ‘prophetic updating.’ However, ‘mimicry’ is politically and ethically the most objectionable reaction and must be denounced by libertarians as a fraud, at least in those cases when no due credit is given to the libertarian roots of contributions to the development of concepts such as autogestion. That is not to say that Marxists cannot borrow anything from libertarians; of course, I do not have anything against Marxists recognizing that self-management, horizontality and decentralization are better than statecraft, verticality, ‘democratic centralism’ and ‘dictatorship of the proletariat.’ But they have at least to acknowledge their debt. If they do not give enough credit to libertarians’ historical achievements, then it is rather a matter of parasitism than of convergence.
'Feeding Brothers'?

(2) . . . TO LIBERTARIAN CRITICISM

Marxist thinkers can try to act as though libertarian thinkers do not exist—as they have actually done for generations—but they certainly cannot ignore contemporary social movements such as Mexican Zapatistas, Argentine piqueteros or Spanish 15-M, unless they want to pay the price of a complete socio-political irrelevance. These and several other important emancipatory movements are remarkably and at least partly organized according to libertarian principles: autogestion, horizontality, absence of rigid hierarchies. Zapatistas’ guiding principles such as ‘mandar obedeciendo’ [to lead by obeying], ‘caminando aprendemos’ [we learn while we walk] and ‘proponer y no imponer’ [to propose, not impose] correspond, in fact, to touchstones of libertarian wisdom. Sure, in some cases these movements and their organizations are actually ‘hybrid’ or ‘syncretic,’ as I already said in the Introduction, but even then who could dare to deny the presence of at least indirect libertarian influences? Taking these movements, their message and their praxis seriously and on the basis of intellectual and political honesty presupposes that one cannot arrogantly despise the libertarian thought and praxis they, to a large extent, embody.

After anarchists’ military defeat by Franco’s fascists (as well as by Stalinists) in Spain in the late 1930s, libertarian praxis experienced an eclipse which lasted until the 1990s. The May 68 movement was no more than a brief exception or, as Cornelius Castoriadis, Edgar Morin and Claude Lefort called it, a ‘breach’—la brèche. 13 After that, in the 1970s and 1980s, the so-called ‘new social movements’ were influenced by several different ideologies, including Marxism, while libertarian ideals and organizational principles were in retreat. The situation began to change in the 1990s. In this context, the theoretical and political crisis of Marxism, tremendously aggravated by the ultimate collapse of bureaucratic ‘socialism,’ has played a key role. The conditions for a ‘rebirth’ of libertarian ideas and strategies were all in place.

Thus, under the circumstances of the last two decades, libertarian authors have been sometimes consistently and sincerely (re)discovered—that is, not within the framework of neo-Marxist ‘mimicry,’ and no longer (or not necessarily) in the context of superficial and/or purely nostalgic celebration. From Élisée Reclus and Piotr Kropotkin (or Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin and Errico Malatesta) to Murray Bookchin and Cornelius Castoriadis, as well as to authors who can be at least considered as having been very close to the libertarian thinking during a part of their lives, such as Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the contributions made by non-Marxist critical theorists have been reappraised. In Latin America, thinkers have often emerged from praxis itself—for instance, Subcomandante Marcos (see

From this relative vantage point, libertarians can concede that a constructive dialogue with heterodox, non-Leninist Marxism is both intellectually and politically necessary. First of all, we would be better off just admitting that convergences between Marxism and libertarian thinking and praxis have been much more important than both sides have usually been prone to recognize. For instance, as far as political economy is concerned, Mikhail Bakunin borrowed substantially from Marx, and acknowledged it (the rivalry between him and Marx had other, political and even personal factors than disagreement at this level; frankly speaking, that was not necessarily a good thing for libertarians, as Marxism’s ‘economist’ assumptions have often been uncritically absorbed). Furthermore, it is undeniable that there have always been some Marxist intellectuals who challenged orthodoxy in a productive way, approaching themselves to libertarian positions: from Pannekoek’s and Korsch’s ‘council communism’ to Edward P. Thompson, Herbert Marcuse and others. Hence, it would be unjust to deny that the political and theoretical contributions made by many heterodox Marxists deserve respect and constitute relevant achievements in the history of anti-capitalist struggle. \textit{However, the libertarian particularities must be stressed.} At this moment, and for the first time in many decades, one does not have any reason to regard the libertarian lineage as a kind of chronic loser, at least in comparison with Marxism.

A major obstacle towards a constructive dialogue with Marxists is the persistence of ‘political and intellectual autism.’ Despite the differences between authors as diverse as Henri Lefebvre, Manuel Castells\footnote{Castells 1993} and David Harvey, all of them (as well as most of the other radical geographers, sociologists, ‘urban political economists,’ and so on) have shared some kind of (more or less ‘heterodox’) Marxism as an almost self-evident basis of radical thinking.\footnote{Castells 1993} From the 1970s onwards, almost all Marxist authors have usually given us the impression that from their perspective there has not existed any truly critical and relevant intelligent life outside Marxism.

Sure, the arrogance that there has not existed truly critical intelligent life outside Marxism has been often reinforced—\textit{it is a matter of honesty} to admit it—by anarchists’ frequent ‘anti-theoretical’ prejudices, to remember a criticism addressed by Castoriadis many decades ago (Castoriadis 1949, 8). ‘Theory’ is not synonymous with ‘superfluous blah-blah-blah,’ and if interest in science and erudition would have been incompatible with a libertarian approach \textit{to} the world and a libertarian attitude \textit{in} the world, how could we explain Reclus’s (or even Kropotkin’s) life and works? Be that as it may, neither the ‘anti-theoretical’ prejudices of ‘lifestyle’-anarchists (to remember Murray Bookchin’s expression\footnote{Bookchin 1997}) nor the ‘political and intellectual autism’ that is typical of Marxists are justified.
Let us turn to the broader political and theoretical question of divergences and convergences between libertarians and Marxists, aiming at a constructive dialogue. On which basis could such a dialogue flourish these days? From a libertarian viewpoint, we need first of all to go beyond the usual, today already largely consensual, criticisms against Leninism (and, it goes without saying, against Stalinism). Marxism’s problems go far beyond Leninism, in a similar way as capitalism’s problems do not circumscribe themselves to neoliberalism.

Building on an already existing political-philosophical ground in terms of discussion of radically democratic alternatives of thinking and praxis, libertarian ideas and practices have experienced, as I already said, a kind of ‘rebirth’ since the 1990s both in the academic world and especially among social movements, even if usually in a modified form when compared to classical anarchism. We must therefore develop non-authoritarian, radically democratic approaches and alternative strategies much further, in order to do justice to our time and to the praxis of several emancipatory social movements nowadays—as well as in order to avoid standing far behind these movements’ praxis. This recognition does not make a Marxist’s life easy, for this requirement is virtually incompatible with an enormous (actually the most typical) part of Marx’s legacy, as libertarians such as Castoriadis discussed in a detailed manner; this was also admitted even by a heterodox Marxist like Edward P. Thompson. However, that is not to say, of course, that everything in Marx’s legacy or in the history of Marxism has been intellectually inutile or dangerous from an emancipatory perspective. Even from a political point of view, the praxis derived from and at the same time inspiring of, say, ‘council communism’ is something that has produced several relevant (even if more or less limited) convergences, as Noam Chomsky acknowledged in his comments on Pannekoek’s book on workers’ councils (Chomsky 2003).

It is also important that heterodox, less authoritarian Marxists finally fully acknowledge the theoretical and strategic contributions that have been made by libertarians. As far as academic contributions are concerned, sociologists, geographers and others have shown an increasing though still insufficient interest for the ideas of thinkers such as Murray Bookchin, Noam Chomsky and Cornelius Castoriadis. And on the part of the social movements and forms of resistance, relevant contributions to a resurgence of libertarian thinking and praxis have been made both in the ‘Global North’ (we can mention here a large part of the ‘alter-globalization’/‘anti-globalization’ movement, of the Greek cycle of protests and of the Spanish 15-M movement, among others) and in the ‘Global South’ (Zapatistas in Mexico, a large part of the piqueteros in Argentina and a portion of the sem-teto movement in Brazil, among others), as I have stressed. After vivid and interesting debates in the late 1960s and early 1970s and an eclipse during the 1980s and
1990s, autogestion has become again a very important aspect of the praxis generated by many social movements in many countries at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Questions related to this re-emergence of interest in autogestion have been either directly or indirectly addressed by geographers in several papers and books published since the last decade (see, for instance, Chatterton 2005a and 2005b; Pickerill and Chatterton 2006; Souza 2006a, 2006b, 2012a, 2012b and 2012c).

In light of all this, a certain remark made in a relatively recent article by three Marxist urban theorists is particularly anachronistic, as it is symptomatic of many Marxists’ persistent ‘theoretical and political autism’: ‘[Henri] Lefebvre (2009 [1966]) himself grappled with an analogous problem in the 1960s and 1970s, when the Eurocommunist concept of autogestion—literally, “self-management,” but perhaps best translated as “grassroots democracy”—was being pervasively misappropriated by various interests to legitimate new forms of state bureaucratic planning’ (Brenner et al. 2009, 180). This particular remark is taken here not only as an instance of the way Marxists very often resolutely ignore libertarians but also as an illustration of the mistakes and injustices they do more often than not. The interpretation that autogestion was a ‘Eurocommunist concept’ is simply preposterous. The French word autogestion was introduced in the second half of the twentieth century as a translation of the Serbo-Croatian s amoupravlje; in fact, it corresponds to a traditional libertarian idea which was later distorted in the former Yugoslavia under Marshal Josip Broz Tito and thereafter, to some extent and for some time, usurped by a few communist parties in Western Europe.21

Henri Lefebvre himself, being a heterodox Marxist in many senses (though it would be interesting to bear in mind the fact that he remained as a member of the French Communist Party until 1958, when he was suspended from it after three decades of uninterrupted party membership), showed interest for autogestion as a political notion, and he even made a strong argument for what he eventually called autogestion généralisée, or ‘generalised self-management’ (Lefebvre 1983).22 It is true that he addressed pertinent criticisms related to the threat of an ideological co-optation of this notion, though apparently without having interest in paying any adequate tribute to the radical discussion on workers self-management which had been developed since the 1950s by members of the Socialisme ou Barbarie group in France—not to mention the ancient anarchistic roots of the consistent defence of horizontality.23

Furthermore, it is also disappointing that although Henri Lefebvre criticized the ‘planificacion autoritaria et centralisée’ (‘authoritarian and centralised planning’) typical of bureaucratic ‘socialism’ (see Lefebvre 1998, 77), showing some reservations even about Yugoslavia’s case (sometimes only in an implicit way, as we can see in Lefebvre 2009, 147–48), he nevertheless
insisted on using the term autogestion to describe the Yugoslavian experience. In the face of such a lenience, we can ask: Was Marshal Tito’s Yugoslavia at the end of the day not essentially similar to the pro-USSR countries of bureaucratic ‘socialism,’ a little less centralization notwithstanding? As Colin Ward rightly said in 1968, workers’ control in Yugoslavia was ‘workers’ control within those limits set by the Party, just as these experiments here [in the West] are workers’ control within the limits set by a capitalist market economy’ (Ward 1987, 19). Surely Lefebvre’s ambiguity gives testimony of the contradictions of a great neo-Marxist philosopher who was in several senses undoubtedly heterodox (see, for instance, the criticisms he addressed to structuralism and, of course, his insistence on the relevance of social space to the survival of capitalism) but nevertheless hesitated in abandoning such a crypto-Stalinist party as the PCF (French Communist Party).

Under the circumstances of an incomplete philosophical/theoretical and political objection against authoritarian socialism, how could we ‘promote alternative, radically democratic, socially just and sustainable forms of urbanism,’ as Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse and Margit Meyer ask in the aforementioned text (Brenner et al. 2009, 177)? It does not sound convincing. On which political-philosophical and ethical basis should the praxis take place? The authors coherently dismiss the ‘liberal-reformist’ approach as biased and ideological; however, although they apparently recognize that the radical academic milieu is not homogeneous, some crucial aspects of the really existing heterogeneity are in fact blatantly underestimated. I mean the deep insufficiencies of Marxism itself (and not only of ‘real socialism’), as were widely demonstrated and convincingly argued especially by Cornelius Castoriadis (see Castoriadis 1975, 1979, 1983, 1985a, 1985b, 1986a, 2005), and was sustained (in a less deep and partly less coherent fashion) already by Proudhon and Bakunin in the nineteenth century. That is the reason why the idea of a ‘synthesis’ or a (total) convergence between Marxists and libertarians (as envisaged or at least desired by Karl Korsch, Daniel Guérin and, more recently and in a much more superficial way, Chiara Bottici) is unrealistic and even dangerous, as it can lead to an underestimation of the mutual incompatibility of both sides as such. Each side, to be sure, can learn from the other, but unless Marxists acknowledge their debt to libertarians as often as they talk on self-management and the like, terms such as ‘autonomist Marxism’ must sound not only contradictory but also opportunistic. What is more, Marxists (even self-professed ‘autonomist Marxists’) usually do not criticize Marx’s legacy as strongly as it is necessary—and as (neo-)anarchists and Castoriadis did or have done. Expressions of ideological syncretism such as ‘workerism’ and other similar, Marxism-inspired approaches can damage truly libertarian efforts, since they could create the false impression that (neo-)anarchists and libertarian autonomists have been much less important and original as they have in fact been.
To begin with, from a libertarian viewpoint Marxists critically conceptualize the capitalist state (sometimes in a rudimentary form, as exemplified by Lenin, sometimes in a sophisticated and interesting way, as the example of Nicos Poulantzas illustrates), but they always had immense difficulties in criticizing the state apparatus as such and in abandoning the idea of a ‘socialist state’ as a kind of transitional moment between capitalism and ‘communism.’ Moreover—and this point is particularly relevant for socio-spatial research—there has typically been in Marxism, as a matter of fact, a general lack of deep criticism towards capitalist technologies (and spatiality, we should therefore add). Marxists have usually had difficulties in putting aside Marx’s assumption that socialism must be based on the materially advanced productive forces inherited from capitalism in order to avoid a mere ‘socialization of misery’ (in other words, Marx put things in such a way as to imply that those technologies inherited from capitalism were not only ‘neutral’ but actually positive in themselves). In fact, from this perspective socialism would basically provide a new framework in terms of production (and social) relations for these technologies—a problematic assumption that was turned into a caricature in the context of ‘bureaucratic socialism.’

Even academic Marxists (much more open-minded and sophisticated than their militant counterparts—especially in the context of ‘Western Marxism,’ even if often at the price of keeping themselves too distant from real social struggles) have typically had difficulties in criticizing capitalist technologies and spatiality in a more profound way. While they have of course denounced scandalous cases of environmental destruction and criticized explicit capitalist patterns and logics of urbanization (from social-spatial segregation to the generalized commodification of space to gentrification), as if they would fear that the only alternative to an often less critical ‘urbanophobia’ could be a kind of ‘urbanophobia,’ and the only alternative to capitalist technologies and urbanism would be reactionary agrarism and irrational primitivism. João Bernardo, undoubtedly one of the most brilliant heterodox Marxists of our time, impressively admitted that there have always been ‘two Marxisms’ since Marx himself: the ‘Marxism of productive forces’ (marxismo das forças produtivas) and the ‘Marxism of social relations of production’ (marxismo das relações sociais de produção). While the latter would represent Marxism’s truly creative side (and the only side really committed to class struggle as a creative force), the ‘Marxism of productive forces’ would correspond to an approach that, as João Bernardo says,

the system of corporate organisation, the management techniques, the discipline of labour and the machinery, although born and developed in capitalism, would be the basis on which it [capitalism] could be overcome, and would contain in germ the characteristics of the future mode of production [socialism]. . . . From this kind of thesis results the myth of the neutrality of technolo-
gy [inocência da máquina]. The technology could be a place of social struggles, but not that it was itself a constitutive element of the struggles. (Bernardo 2009, 409)

Unfortunately, even João Bernardo shows clear limits in his works, as when he demonstrates in a number of texts an uncritical ‘urbanophilic,’ productivist and economist bias, showing an exaggeratedly (though not entirely without reason) and hence contradictorily suspicious attitude towards alternative approaches to capitalist urbanization and technology, to the point of rather indiscriminate attacks against environmental concerns and ‘ecological’ thinkers and activists, as if they would all be more or less reactionary.25

The differences between libertarians and Marxists cannot be overcome by means of a ‘marriage.’ What an unhappy and tempestuous ‘marriage’ it would be, considering the deep differences in terms of personality! A dialogue, constructively and as much as possible comradely carried on (even if very often tense), is surely viable and perhaps even necessary (Souza 2012c, 694–95), and the same can be said about tactical cooperation (cautiously undertaken) sometimes. But that is probably the best we should envisage.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION: FOR A NEW (AND THIS TIME LIBERTARIAN) RADICAL TURN IN SOCIO-SPATIAL RESEARCH

To put it in simple terms, ‘socio-spatial research’ refers to that portion of the multidisciplinary field (with an occasional commitment to interdisciplinarity, sometimes even to transdisciplinarity or ‘a-disciplinarity’) of social sciences in which the spatial dimension of society (or spatiality) is seriously taken and considered, even if often only in a very incomplete way. Geography, urban sociology, spatial economics (urban and regional economics) and reflections on urban and regional planning are probably the most obvious and traditional ‘disciplinary’ contributors to this research field. To which extent have socio-spatial researchers paid attention to libertarian thought and praxis?

Since their modern academic institutionalization and consolidation between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the political-ideological contents of academic socio-spatial research have been predominantly conservative—a fact easy to understand, considering the nature of its institutional framework and ideological embeddedness. However, if in the second half of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century libertarians (more specifically, classical anarchists at that time) and Marxists alike were all typically excluded from university chairs,26 after World War II Marxism gradually began entering universities in the West, showing an increasing influence from philosophy to sociology to history and even economics (geography, adamantly conservative, was a clear exception until the late 1960s and early 1970s). In the 1970s, then, under the
external influence of a set of political phenomena, such as protests for civil rights and against the Vietnam War in the United States and students’ protests in Europe, the United States, Mexico and other countries, academic Marxism developed into a powerful, challenging force inside the academic environment: it was the ‘radical turn’ in sociology and geography. At last, in many circles and in certain countries, by the 1980s Marxism had become solidly established as part of university life, to the point of almost becoming a new mainstream in sociology and geography, and its influence in philosophy and even economics was also considerable.

As I already said in earlier works (Souza 2012a, 108; 2012c, 295; 2014, 5), sociology’s and geography’s ‘radical turn’ was in fact a Marxist turn rather than a radical turn in a broader sense. Not much attention was then devoted to libertarian authors and experiences, and apart from a few exceptions libertarians remained away from university departments and academic journals. Sure, Marxists had prepared themselves for that moment, not only intellectually but also politically and strategically. Especially after helping (be it directly or indirectly) reactionary forces to militarily defeat and repress anarchists (as in Spain during the civil war), Marxism, always very attractive for radicalized middle-class people (from which the members of the new ruling class of post-revolutionary Russia, called by Castoriadis bureaucratie, had been recruited), became an entrenched ideology in Western universities.

Let us have a look at some details, beginning with the Anglophone world. In the 1970s, apart from an issue of Antipode published in 1974 with a tribute paid to Kropotkin by Richard Peet (a Marxist geographer) and a text about anarchism written by Myrna Margulies Breitbart (at that time a very young researcher), as well as a paper by B. Galois on Kropotkin published in the same journal in 1976, the only major exception can be found in another issue of Antipode (published in 1978), edited by the same Myrna Breitbart, with several texts written by anarchists and dealing with anarchism and anarchist praxis (see, for instance, Breitbart 1978–1979a and 1978–1979b). Despite these contributions, however, it is undeniable that Antipode remained a predominantly Marxist journal in the following years, and so were other more or less radical journals during the 1970s and in the following decade. As we can see, those contributions were the exceptions that proved the rule. As far as books are concerned, the situation was by no means better: A book such as that written by geographer Gary Dunbar (to my knowledge not a libertarian himself) on Élisée Reclus’s life and work (Dunbar 1978) was an absolute rarity at that time. Outside the strict disciplinary field of geography, British urbanist Peter Hall (himself a geographer by training, and one with some anarchist sympathies) paid attention to Kropotkin, Scottish urban planner Patrick Geddes and even Reclus in his important book on the history of urban planning (Hall 1996). Another absolute rarity, to say the least.
As for France, a very significant country both for the history of the libertarian thought and for the history of geography (and of socio-spatial research at large), urbanist Françoise Choay gave attention to Kropotkin, Geddes and even Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in his anthology *L’urbanisme, utopies et réalités*, first published in 1965 (Choay 1979). Ironically, Élisée Reclus was neglected by her, but he would be ‘discovered’ by academia in the 1980s. The initiative of ‘rehabilitating’ Élisée Reclus was taken by a geographer interestingly positioned more or less close to Marxism, Yves Lacoste, as well as by one of Lacoste’s former students, Béatrice Giblin (hardly to be considered as a libertarian author in a strict sense as well). Both devoted several texts to Reclus (Lacoste 1981; Giblin 1976, 1981a, 1981b, 1982). This initiative did not remain a mere episode. A whole set of papers and books have been published on the great French geographer and anarchist since, and very often as tributes to him in France and/or by French scholars written both by geographers and by other social scientists (see, for instance, Sarrazin 1985; Chardak 1997; Bord et al. 2009; Pelletier 2009; Hiernaux 2011; Berdoulay 2011).

Nevertheless, it seems that in almost all cases in France as well as in the Anglo-Saxon world the treatment dispensed to anarchist (and more generally libertarian) thinkers and practices during the 1970s and 1980s (and to a large extent also later) could be considered as ‘museum-like,’ as I termed it in an earlier paper (Souza 2014, 109): While Marx and Engels were discussed by the radical geographers of that time bearing in mind their *contemporaneous* intellectual and political relevance, Kropotkin and Reclus were tacitly more or less regarded as ‘icons’ from the past—figures to be admired, as they could serve as examples of a non-bourgeois geography, but not to be taken too seriously in neither theoretical nor political terms. It is not difficult to conclude that Kropotkin’s and Reclus’s ideas have been regarded more as valuable ‘artefacts’ in a ‘museum’ of the radical thought than as conceptual/theoretical ‘weapons’ in an ‘arsenal.’

In many cases, however, not even this doubtful honour has been bestowed on Reclus and Kropotkin. In a chapter published in 1989 on ‘Political Economy and Human Geography,’ Richard Peet and Nigel Thrift mention Kropotkin twice in the first section (Reclus is not even mentioned), but in the remainder of the text he was completely forgotten. Though the authors say that ‘[t]he growing interest in Marxism was broadened to include a comprehension of social anarchism’ (Peet and Thrift 1989, 6), the paper itself exemplifies how cursorily libertarian authors and traditions were taken into account—if at all. Symptomatically, in a paper on ‘The Poverty of Radical Theory Today,’ published at the beginning of the last decade, Michael Storper addressed problems labelled by him the ‘false promises of Marxism’ and the ‘mirage of the cultural turn,’ making at the end a few suggestions aiming at the renewing of the radical agenda—but libertarian thought and praxis are totally absent from his field of vision (Storper 2001). Two years later, in a
chapter under the apparently comprehensive title ‘Socialist Geography,’ Scott Salmon and Andrew Herod (2003) claim to recognize that no single term (such as ‘radical,’ ‘socialist,’ ‘Marxist’ or ‘critical’) ‘can accurately capture the diversity of knowledge production on the geographic left’ (210), but such a statement sounds less convincing in light of some scandalous omissions: They only mention Kropotkin once (‘[a]s leftist geographers became more versed in social theory and began to read not just Marx but, among others, Weber, Durkheim, Kropotkin, Luxemburg, Sartre, Freud, Foucault, and Habermas, the radical project was both expanded and increasingly contested’ [211]), but they do not include him in the list of references, and neither Reclus nor contemporary libertarian geographers and non-geographers (Castoriadis, Bookchin) were even mentioned.

By all academic standards, this treatment is unfair and inappropriate. Every reliable and comprehensive account of the scientific and intellectual contributions to the understanding of ‘humankind’s adventure on Earth’ stressing the social transformation and production of space and the meaning of spatiality for human society and culture should give due credit to not few libertarian authors—not to mention practical, innovative experiences and processes of socio-spatial re-structuring and reorganization like those which took place in revolutionary Ukraine under the leadership of Nestor Makhno (known as Makhnovshchina 1917–1921), in Palestine (the first kibbutzim, largely inspired by anarchist ideas) and in Spain between 1936 and 1939, to mention only a few. The list of subjects explored by libertarian thinkers is very significant:

- **Territorial decentralization and economic-spatial deconcentration:** Among classical anarchists, Proudhon, with his reflection of the federative principle (principe fédératif), gave a first impulse to the issue of decentralization from a libertarian standpoint, a matter that was later also discussed by Bakunin and especially by Kropotkin. The latter greatly contributed to the analysis of the trends and possibilities regarding economic-spatial deconcentration as well; among the classical works, his book *Fields, Factories and Workshops* must obviously be remembered, alongside with Diego Abad de Santillán’s analyses and reflections on (or inspired by) Spain. 27
- **Cities and urbanization:** From the housing question to residential segregation to urban networks to urban planning, many important contributions have been made by libertarian thinkers since the nineteenth century. Élisée Reclus’s rich legacy includes a whole set of fine, partly pioneering analyses about various aspects of city life and urban problems (residential segregation, urban poverty, urban history and growth, and so on); the ‘housing question’ and other subjects were also discussed by Proudhon and Kropotkin. Among the classical authors, Patrick Geddes, incidentally a friend of Reclus’s (and influenced by him), is a further relevant thinker
whose contributions to urban planning (from his book Cities in Evolution to Tel-Aviv’s first master plan) must be underlined. Contemporary contributions range from Richard Sennett’s Uses of Disorder to Colin Ward’s essays, to Robert Goodman’s book After the Planners, to Murray Bookchin’s several seminal reflections on ‘urbanization without cities’ and ‘libertarian municipalism,’ among many others.28

- Environmental degradation and protection, ecological problems: From Reclus’s approach to environmental problems to Bookchin’s ‘social ecology’ and Castoriadis’s reflections on ‘ecology and autonomy’ and the role of technology, many relevant contributions have been offered by libertarian authors since the nineteenth century.29

- Agricultural problems, land reform, agricultural-industrial integration: Kropotkin’s The Industrial Village of the Future (2003) and Fields, Factories and Workshops (2002) can be regarded as the first contributions to a radical geography of agriculture, and his knowledge about general, economic aspects, as well as technical details, is truly impressive. Already Proudhon wrote on themes such as land rent and land reform, but among the classical contributions we cannot forget the several thinkers-activists who, inspired by the revolutionary process in Spain, investigated and reflected on subjects such as collectivization. A further case which provides plenty of highly interesting and thought-provoking materials is represented by the early kibbutzim, discussed by several libertarian authors from Martin Buber to James Horrox.30

Besides all this, several important contemporary or ‘emerging’ themes of direct or indirect interest for socio-spatial research have deserved attention on the part of outstanding libertarian (such as anthropologists Pierre Clastres and Harold Barclay) or quasi-libertarian (Foucault, De Certeau, Deleuze, Guattari) authors: ecology, technology and (de)centralization; power in non-Western and pre-capitalist societies; governmentality, public safety, socio-spatial control, biopolitics and geopolitics; spatiality of social movements and protests, insurgent spatial practices; transnational networks of activists; spatiality of gender and race/ethnicity from a queer, feminist, non-white perspective; precarization, ‘hyperprecariisation’ and new forms of class struggle and class identity, not to mention a very traditional concern among libertarian geographers since Reclus and Kropotkin: pedagogy.

Fortunately, libertarian practices and ideas can no longer be ignored today. Shortly after the time when Marxism-inspired ‘real socialism’ began to collapse at the end of the 1980s, new movements began to emerge. Things gradually began to change outside the academic world in the 1990s, when social movements such as Mexican Zapatistas forced even Marxists to turn their attention to a new (or rather renewed) style of social struggle, simultaneously decentralized, horizontal and very radical. The consequences of
these ‘practical’ changes could be felt sooner or later in the production of academic fields such as sociology and geography. It is by no means a coincidence that while discussions about ‘autonomy’ and related themes were totally uncommon in the 1980s and during the following decade (writing from a libertarian perspective was then a very solitary enterprise for a socio-spatial researcher, as I know from experience [Souza 1988, 1995]), works on decentralized, horizontal and self-management-oriented social movements and spatial practices began to proliferate since the beginning of the new century (see, for instance, Souza 2006a, 2006b; Chatterton 2005a and 2005b; Pickrell and Chatterton 2006; Vradis and Dalakoglou 2011). Characteristic of a much deserved (though late) acknowledgement, the journal *Antipode* finally devoted a whole issue to ‘anarchist geographies’ in 2012 (see, among other contributions to the issue, Breitbart 2012; Springer et al. 2012; Springer 2012; White and Williams 2012; Ince 2012; Barker and Pickrell 2012)—more than forty years after the publication of those ‘historic’ issues mentioned a few paragraphs above, back in the 1970s. There still are many gaps to be filled and many jobs to be done regarding a reappraisal of the role and relevance of libertarian thought and praxis in light of our contemporary challenges, struggles and movements. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that the academic landscape itself has become more heterogeneous—and more stimulating—mirroring the changes occurring outside it.

It would be naïve to expect that the next years can be something other than years of economic crisis, social unrest and, consequently, state repression worldwide; there is no shadow of doubt about it. However, they will also probably be years of creative struggle and new socio-political experiments. Within this framework, libertarian ideas, theories and praxis will certainly play a significant role, as they have in fact already played since the 1990s again. At this point, then, the key question to be posed is: How can socio-spatial research contribute to *understanding* (and sometimes perhaps to *inspiring* or at least *supporting*) these possible scenarios? As I already stressed in a previous work (Souza 2014, 112), answering this question is the most significant intellectual task socio-spatial researchers of libertarian conviction have to perform.

Ideally, Marxists would give libertarians due credit for idea(l)s such as horizontality, self-management and radical decentralization (as well as for criticisms against ‘socialist’ statecraft, ‘dictatorship of the proletariat,’ and so on); in turn, libertarians should show more interest in political economy (but without falling into the trap of Marxist economism, as Castoriadis brilliantly warned). Furthermore, libertarians of all sorts would do well to recognize classical anarchism’s shortcomings (‘naturalism,’ narrowness of its understanding of concepts such as ‘power,’ ‘law,’ ‘authority’ and ‘government’). Unfortunately, however, we do not live in an ideal world, and we will not live in one. Therefore, this kind of expectation is unrealistic, and such a
delusion can do libertarians a big harm in this moment of history, when they are potentially strong as never before since the 1930s. As products of the nineteenth century, classical anarchism and Marxism have become increasingly outdated since the second half of the twentieth century. As such they are condemned to be entirely replaced by new, more contemporary ‘paradigms’ (in spite of their likely survival as relevant sources of inspiration in years and perhaps decades to come, so that I am not contradictorily advocating any ‘museum-like’ approach). As politically vivid identities they have already vanished, in the sense that what remains of anarchism is (apart from some residual, small groups, organizations and individuals) no longer ‘pure’ classical anarchism. What remains of Marxism is (apart from some small political parties and a lasting influence on some social movement organizations) no longer typical, more or less orthodox Marxism, but a plethora of residual, academic-based heterodox Marxisms. In the context of sometimes free and direct, sometimes forced and indirect dialogue and exchange, convergences will perhaps be increasingly likely, as contemporary ‘hybrid’ movements already exemplify. This is probably inevitable, maybe even desirable. But one thing is certain: Opportunistic ‘mimicry’ is not the ethically/politically most fruitful way to achieve it.

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I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues and comrades Simon Springer and Richard White for their useful comments and criticisms and stylistic suggestions. The remaining faults are, of course, mine.

NOTES

1. Though I use the prefix ‘left’ in the title of this chapter, in the remainder of this text I will put the term ‘left’ aside, for the reasons explained in my short chapter “‘Libertarian’, Libertaire, Libertario . . . Conceptual Construction and Cultural Diversity (and Vice Versa)” (see this volume). Therefore, it is implicit that ‘libertarian’ is always to be understood as ‘left-libertarian.’

2. In some cases, the movement, taken as a whole, is not only ‘hybrid’ or ‘syncretic’ but also heterogeneous, as the piqueteros and the 15-M perfectly illustrate. There are several piquetero organizations, and their political nature range from an essentially libertarian standpoint to Peronism; as for the Spanish 15-M movement, libertarian practices sometimes co-exist with more or less reformist demands.

3. The German Autonomen (from the 1980s onwards) and the previous phenomenon of the Italian autonomia operaia (in the 1970s) can be characterized as the result of an ‘interspecific cross’ (whose coherency is debatable) of two traditionally opposed strains of radical thought and praxis: Marxism and anarchism (on the Autonomen and, in an introductory way, also on Italian autonomia, which actually comprised several organizations and served as a source of inspiration for the Autonomen, see Katsiaficas 2006). The Autonomen were already declining in the 1990s, but at that same time the movement of the autonomos was emerging in Spain. (According to Carlos Taibo, an outstanding Spanish libertarian and scholar—interviewed by
me in Madrid in December 2013—however, the Spanish autónomos, unlike their Italian and German counterparts, have been rather circumscribed to a more or less intellectual milieu. For him, their presence in the 15-M movement has been in practical terms negligible. Nevertheless, in spite of some differences in comparison with the German and Italian experiences, Taibo’s opinion seems to be at least a little bit exaggerated. Be that as it may, for the purposes of the present discussion all these experiences present strong ideological similarities despite their possible practical dissimilarities.

4. Certainly, the majority of the intellectuals who are working (and sometimes also cooperating with emancipatory social movements) in those ‘stray capitals and campuses’ certainly do not publish regularly in English, and even less in French or German. However, should linguistic ignorance (often worsened by ethnocentrism) on the part of scholars based in the ‘Global North’ play such a decisive role as a parameter of their judgment about the geographical distribution of creativity and relevance of political and intellectual life in the world?


6. That is not to deny the importance of the contributions of Marxist intellectuals, past (such as György Lukács, Anton Pannekoek, Karl Korsch, José Carlos Mariátegui, the Frankfurter School, Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, Karel Kosík, Raymond Williams, Ruy Mauro Marini, Edward Palmer Thompson, Henri Lefebvre and many others) or contemporary (for instance, David Harvey, István Mészáros, Immanuel Wallerstein, João Bernardo, Russell Jacoby and Robert Kurz). However, their limits and the fundamental incompleteness of their contribution should not be overlooked as well. To mention only a few of Marxism’s problems (from a libertarian viewpoint): the interrelated problems of rationalism, economism, technical fetishism, and productivism (Castoriadis 1975, 1978a, 1978b); the dilemma of trying to build a just society (and finally ‘communism’) by means of a ‘socialist state’ and a ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’; the rigidity of the concept of ‘proletariat’ itself (Castoriadis 1983) and the related teleology (‘historical role of the proletariat,’ subordinated role of the peasants, dismissal of the lumpenproletarians,’ etc.).

7. A few years later, no traces of this ‘quasi-libertarian moment’ expressed by the pamphlet The Civil War in France (published a few weeks after the fall of the Commune)—during which Marx said that ‘the working class cannot simply lay hold of ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes’ (Marx 2014a)—could be found in Marx’s Critique of the Gotha Programme of 1875, in which ideas such as ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ and ‘socialism’ as a period of transition from capitalism to ‘communism’ (during which the state machinery still exists, now under ‘proletarian’ control) are advocated (see Marx 2014b).

8. It was in an introductory piece to The Civil War in France (on the twentieth anniversary of the Commune); Engels then admitted that ‘[what is still more wonderful] is the correctness of so much that was actually done by the Commune, composed as it was of Blanquists and Proudhonists. Naturally, the Proudhonists were chiefly responsible for the economic decrees of the Commune, both for their praiseworthy and their unpraiseworthy aspects’ (Engels 2014).

9. Interestingly, Negri nevertheless occasionally, rather indirectly and almost ‘accidentally’ acknowledged part of his debt to Socialisme et Barbarie and Castoriadis, as for instance when he was provoked by Cesare Casarino in the course of the interview; he then admitted that Socialisme ou Barbarie became his ‘daily bread’ (Casarino and Negri 2008, 54).

10. However, Holloway was by no means the first Marxist to attempt to absorb libertarian principles without giving the due credit to libertarians; philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1983, 1991, 1998, 2009) made a similar attempt as early as the 1960s and 1970s regarding the idea of autogestion.

11. It suffices to read Russell Jacoby’s The End of Utopia to feel the deep pessimism that reigns among most Marxists, at least in the Global North. In Latin America, a different social basis still provides food for some illusions, as well as for some of the best libertarian (or at least partly libertarian) counter-examples and challenges.

12. And vice versa. Interestingly, libertarians (especially classical anarchists) have criticized Marxists primarily for political and ethical reasons, often neglecting that Marxism’s philosophical-theoretical and politico-economical foundations are more problematic than some libertarians seem to believe (it suffices to think on Bakunin’s approach to political economy, largely influenced by Marx, to have a good example of Marxism’s influence on libertarian thinking,
but even more contemporary thinkers such as Noam Chomsky or even Murray Bookchin did not pay sufficient attention to this point. As far as this is concerned, Castoriadís’s contributions are of inestimable value (see, for instance, Castoriadís 1978a and 1978b).

14. Incidentally, both Marcos and Zibechi have their origin in Marxism, but have gradually evolved to strongly libertarian positions.
15. I mean Castells’s works of the 1970s, the time when he wrote La question urbaine from an Althusserian perspective. He gradually abandoned Marxism thereafter, as it is already clear in his book The City and the Grassroots (see Castells 1983).
16. It is a plain matter of justice to recognize that critical thinking and theory in a broader sense go beyond the Frankfurt School and Marxism itself. How could Marxists name non-Marxist, libertarian intellectuals such as Élisée Reclus, Piotr Kropotkin, Cornelius Castoriadís, Murray Bookchin, Colin Ward, Noam Chomsky and many others if not as critical? However, symptomatic of the shift from the cultural to the political that has affected the work of Chomsky (1992), Brenner (2009) implicitly circumscribes ‘urban critical theory’ to Marxist contributions to urban studies. As far as critical urban theory is concerned, is it justifiable that Murray Bookchin’s books on cities and citizenship (Bookchin 1974 and 1992), Élisée Reclus’ brilliant essay ‘The Evolution of Cities’ (Reclus 1895) and Colin Ward’s reflections on housing and squatting (Ward 1983, not to mention the discussions on cities and urban problems contained in L’Homme et la Terre (Reclus 1905–1908, Tome V, Chapter II), are simply ignored, as they usually are? (I mention here only intellectuals who were or, as in Chomsky’s case, are based in Europe or in the United States by virtue of the fact that there is no plausible linguistic excuse on the part of western European and U.S. American scholars for ignoring their contributions.) Last, but not least, I am not suggesting that Marxism shall be forgotten (in the way that many have tried to ‘surpass’ it from a more or less conservative, ‘post-Marxist,’ simplistically culturalist approach since the 1980s and 1990s), as many Marxists apparently do in relation to anarchism, neo-anarchism, and so on. It is fair to admit that the works of many Marxist thinkers should be viewed as an important part of the intellectual patrimony of the left, and consequently valued in an adequate way also by libertarians. The same view is valid in relation to Marx’s works themselves since they are not reducible to their ‘authoritarian’ (and economistic and teleological) dimension, as undeniable as it can be.
18. As far as Latin America is concerned, see Colectivo Situaciones (2002); Di Marco et al. (2003); Svampa and Pereyra (2004); Rebón and Saavedra (2006); Zibechi (2003, 2007, 2008).
19. But not of the sem-terra, whose organizations are usually structured according to vertical, more or less Leninist patterns.
20. Through the French translation the word became widespread in the 1960s and 1970s. Unfortunately, the English expression ‘(workers’) self-management’ is not as precise or powerful as autogestion (or its equivalents in other Romance languages).
21. Even the French Communist Party, which until recently sharply rejected autogestion—viewing in it nothing more than an “amalgam of ideas inspired by reformism and anarchist utopias”—begins to use this term (Leduc 1989, 147–48).
22. See also the essay published in 1966 in which Lefebvre deals with autogestion’s theoretical problems (Lefebvre 2009) or his book L’irruption: de Nanterre au sommet, written after the events of May 1968 and republished thirty years later (Lefebvre 1998).
23. He reduces the libertarian contribution to this debate to Proudhon’s thought, whose ambiguities he stressed (see Lefebvre 2009, 142–43).
25. Moreover, for him ‘all contestatory movements which do not affect the labour force exploitation as the fundamental problem are simply—regardless their declared intentions—reinforcing capitalism’s adaptation capacity’ (Bernardo 2009, 490). Sure, the fragmentation of agendas and movements is one of the major obstacles contemporary emancipatory struggles have to face; all kinds of oppression must be intellectually and politically connected to each other in the framework of an integrated praxis, as they are concretely integrated (and very often reinforce each other) in reality. However, Bernardo’s assumption practically condemns struggles not directly related to the oppression of the working class as such irrelevant, if not to the category of reactionary movements. In other words, struggles against racism, gender oppres-
sion and so on would be as such always suspicious or even damaging, as long as they are not clearly subordinated (both ideologically and practically) to the dynamics and demands of class struggle in a strict sense.

26. As far as anarchists’ case is concerned, it is symptomatic that two great scientists such as Élisée Reclus and Piotr Kropotkin never got a real opportunity to enter the academic field, at least not without severe restrictions. Reclus, sentenced in 1872 to perpetual banishment from France because of his revolutionary activities during the Comunne of Paris, was excluded from French universities during his lifetime, and only in 1894 he had the opportunity to teach at the Université nouvelle de Bruxelles after a previous invitation to teach at the Université libre de Bruxelles had been suspended for political reasons; as for Kropotkin, according to Roger N. Baldwin, ‘[h]e was offered the chair of geography at Cambridge University, but with the offer went a pretty plain intimation that the university would expect him to cease his anarchist activities while in their service. Kropotkin of course declined the offer’ (Baldwin 2002, 25). However, these problems with universities did not imply that Reclus’s and Kropotkin’s merits were not acknowledged by the scientific community, on the contrary. For instance, Reclus received two gold medals (from the Paris Geographical Society, in 1892, and from the Royal Geographical Society, two years later), and Kropotkin’s ‘distinction as a geographer was also recognized by his election to the British Royal Geographical Society, an honor he declined because of his hostility to any association with a “royal” organization’ (Baldwin 2002, 22).


28. See especially Reclus (1895 and 1905–1908, vol. 5, chapter II); as for the other contributions, see Proudhon (1979), Kropotkin (2004), Geddes (2012), Goodman (1971), Sennett (1970), and Bookchin (1974, 1992, 1995a and 2007). Among the recent contributions, Jeff Ferrell’s book Tearing Down the Streets (2001) is also worth mentioning, and my own book A prisão e a ágora (The Prison and the Agora), though inaccessible to most Anglophone readers, can also be mentioned as an example (Souza 2006a).


30. See, on Spain, among many other contributions, Leval (1972), Garcia-Ramón (1978), and Breibart (1978–1979b). On the kibbutzim, see Horrox (2009) as well as Martin Buber’s inspired and inspiring final chapter, ‘Epilogue: An Experiment That Did Not Fail’ (Buber 1996).

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Chapter Seven

The Citizen and the Nomad

Bookchin and Bey on Space and Temporality

Benjamin J. Pauli

It is well known that Murray Bookchin’s work took a decidedly combative turn in the late 1980s and 1990s as he began to confront currents within the green and anarchist movements that he believed were exerting an insidious influence. Among the antagonists Bookchin courted during this period, Hakim Bey was singled out for an especially generous serving of his ire. In his 1995 polemic ‘Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm,’ Bookchin labelled Bey’s influential book *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchism, Poetic Terrorism* ‘[o]ne of the most unsavory examples of lifestyle anarchism.’ By ‘lifestyle anarchism’ Bookchin meant a ‘bourgeois form of anarchism,’ a revival of the individualist anarchism that had flourished within the European avant-garde in the early twentieth century. In contrast to ‘social’ anarchism’s communitarian emphasis, lifestyle anarchism as Bookchin depicted it was focused squarely on the primacy of the individual ego. As a form of ‘decadent personalism,’ it prioritized individual autonomy and self-realization over social transformation. Accordingly, lifestyle anarchists rejected collective struggle and the idea of revolution in favor of what Bookchin described as ‘polymorphous concepts of resistance.’ These amounted to little more than ‘trendy posturings’ wholly incapable of generating ‘serious organizations, a radical politics, a committed social movement, theoretical coherence, and programmatic relevance.’ Encouraging little more than individual transgression, lifestyle anarchism had the effect of turning the term ‘anarchy’ into something that was ‘naughty, rebellious, insouciant, but deliciously safe.’

Bey, Bookchin maintained, pushed the worst tendencies of lifestyle anarchism to their extremes. His *T.A.Z.* was infused with a particularly uncom-
promising form of egoism inspired by Max Stirner, who had stressed the need to protect the sovereign, individual ego from not only the coercive incursions of the state but also subordination to social obligations and political programmes of any kind. For Bey, as for Stirner, this meant it was necessary to abandon traditional conceptions of revolutionary social change, which had all-too-often been used to justify the immolation of individuals in the name of a higher cause. Bey urged his audience to give up not just waiting for but also wanting the mythical ‘revolution.’ What he offered in place of the revolutionary myth, however, were not concrete and constructive proposals but, Bookchin charged, vague invitations to aesthetic rebellion. The parodic antics that so impressed Bey amounted, from Bookchin’s perspective, to mere play-acting, a simulation of revolt ‘conspicuously powerless in its capacity to leave any imprint on the individual’s personality, subjectivity, and even self-formation, still less on shaping events and reality.’

And in addition to rendering anarchism programmatically incoherent, Bey was determined to render it theoretically incoherent, ejecting its Enlightenment rationalism in favour of an intentionally perplexing mélange of heterodox spirituality, postmodern jargon, and esoteric satire. In short, in Bey’s hands anarchism was being steered away from ‘all meaningful social activism and a steadfast commitment to lasting and creative projects’ and dissolving into ‘kicks, postmodernist nihilism, and a dizzying Nietzschean sense of elitist superiority.’

Bey acknowledged Bookchin’s critique of his work in the preface to the second edition of T.A.Z., but he has never responded to him at length, despite the fact that Bookchin’s essay remains ‘the most sustained and scathing attack to date on the TAZ [temporary autonomous zone].’ Bookchin’s take-down of Bey has, however, elicited commentary from other quarters, usually in the context of a broader consideration of the distinction between social and lifestyle anarchism. The most significant example is Bob Black’s extended defence of Bey against Bookchin’s attack in Anarchy after Leftism (1997), where Black argues that far from being a solipsistic egoist, Bey ‘assume[s] as axiomatic the need for a social matrix for individual efflorescence,’ and promotes not an ‘apolitical’ but an ‘anti-political’ perspective.

Rather than rehashing the somewhat semantic quarrel over ‘social’ anarchism and ‘lifestyle’ anarchism, in this article I recast the Bookchin-Bey debate as a debate about space and temporality. Conceptions of space and its relationship to time are central, I will argue, to the work of both Bookchin and Bey and help to determine the political positions that they respectively stake out. The concept for which Bey is best known, and the concept that Bookchin is most concerned with critiquing, is the aforementioned idea of the ‘temporary autonomous zone’ (or ‘TAZ’), an ephemeral space in which the rules governing the surrounding society are disregarded and alternate ways of living can flourish. Bookchin’s objections to Bey (and to ‘lifestyle
anarchism’ more generally) often invoke space and temporality: he expressed his worry, for example, that anarchists were withdrawing from ‘the social domain that formed the principal arena of earlier anarchists,’ in favor of ‘episodic adventures that eschew any organizational commitment and intellectual coherence.’ 17 In proposing new ‘arenas’ of fleeting duration for anarchist activity, Bey brought together space and time in a manner that Bookchin saw as inimical to his own political project.

In what follows, I will begin by examining the way in which notions of space and temporality factor into Bookchin’s own work. This requires assessing Bookchin’s attempt to revive the city as an ideal of spatial configuration and the ‘political’ as a space of communal self-determination. Bookchin, I will argue, makes durability a virtue of social and political space, in the belief that carving out a defined, stable social and political space is a prerequisite for individual political activity, the establishment of communal identity, and the achievement of cumulative social change. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that the form of political subjectivity to which Bookchin’s conceptions of space and temporality give rise is the ‘citizen,’ a figure whose political agency is enhanced—indeed, enabled—by being anchored in a durable social and political space. The political activity of Bookchin’s citizen is itself ‘durable,’ aiming at building up a shared social world over time. The kind of political praxis that arises out of Bookchin’s conceptualizations of space, temporality, and political subjectivity is what he calls ‘libertarian municipalism,’ a programme for the piecemeal democratization of local government and the gradual consolidation of popular power outside state auspices.

In the next part of the article, I will consider the use that Hakim Bey makes of the concepts of space and temporality. In contrast to Bookchin, Bey’s notion of the TAZ makes ephemerality a virtue of space. The form of political subjectivity the TAZ lends itself to is the ‘nomad,’ a figure without a stable location in space, whose activity is intentionally diffuse and transitory, aiming at disruption and ‘insurrection’ rather than ‘revolution.’ By looking beyond the essays that appear in T.A.Z. at Bey’s broader body of work, however, I will show that the TAZ must be situated against the other spatial concepts that Bey invokes—concepts that include the ‘Periodic Autonomous Zone,’ the ‘Permanent Autonomous Zone,’ and the ‘NoGoZone.’ Putting the TAZ into this perspective yields a more complex view of space and temporality than the one typically attributed to Bey. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that Bey’s fondness for insurrection as a means of capturing space must be qualified by placing it within the larger trajectory of his writings, particularly his increasing interest in rehabilitating the idea of revolution.

The Bookchin-Bey debate, although compromised by vitriol and ungenerous readings on both sides, highlights some of the most pressing issues facing twenty-first-century radicals. It is as imperative now as it was two
decades ago to decide whether to work within existing social and political spaces or create new ones, whether to attempt to construct durable revolutionary institutions when there is so much yet to be undone, and whether to build social identities around municipal spaces or some other level of social organization. The writings of Bookchin and Bey are of great theoretical utility in their delineation of these kinds of spatial and temporal possibilities. But we should not make the mistake sometimes committed by the interlocutors in the Bookchin-Bey debate of positing these possibilities as dichotomous or mutually exclusive. Thus, while others have tried to build a bridge over the ‘unbridgeable chasm’ Bookchin posits between social anarchism and lifestyle anarchism,18 I will close by suggesting ways of bridging Bookchin’s and Bey’s ideas about space and temporality.

BOOKCHIN AND THE DURABILITY OF SPACE

The starting point for Bookchin’s thinking about space is his belief that capitalism has ‘reduced society’ to a ‘structureless void.’19 On the level of physical organization, this is evident in the unchecked growth of the modern city. Increasingly, most of the urban entities described as ‘cities’ are in fact unworthy of the appellation altogether—they have evolved into the negation of the city, the ‘megalopolis,’ whose ‘vast stretches of mortar, brick, wood, and glass . . . often extend beyond the physical horizon of the individual and, in a very real sense, beyond his or her psychic horizon.’20 The stretching of urban space has been accompanied by the loss of definition within that space. Today’s ‘immense urban agglomerations’ are ‘steadily losing any distinctive form and quality.’21 Cities have become cancers, rotting on the inside while their extremities progressively devour the countryside and subject it to the social and organizational logic of ‘anonymity, homogenization, and institutional gigantism.’22 Most troubling of all is that the dynamics driving this growth are thought to be beyond human control. As a consequence, the only check on the ‘limitless expansion’ of the city is its tendency to undermine the conditions of its own existence through sheer overextension.23

For Bookchin, the rise of the megalopolis represents the death of the classical ideal of the city. Beginning with his 1974 book, The Limits of the City, he sought to develop a portrait of ‘what the city was once like at its best’—not as an antiquarian enterprise but as a means of recovering ‘high standards of urbanism’ that could be used to critique ‘the modern metropolis and the society that fosters its growth.’24 Bookchin draws his examples of the city at its best predominantly from the ancient Greek polis and the medieval commune. His historical narrative of the emergence of the polis is meant to capture the process by which urban space developed into an autonomous realm embodying values distinct from those characteristic of purely agrarian
societies. Originally, Bookchin explains, urban space was an outgrowth of rural life, shaped by agrarian relations and limited by agrarian economies. What is significant about the Greek *poleis* that emerged in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE is that they freed urban life from this subordinate position, turning it into ‘an end in itself.’

One important effect of this development was the formation of social relationships that transcended the biological ties typical of societies organized around kinship. The substitution of territoriality for blood as the premise of social organization helped to establish the principle that propinquity—the sharing of a certain defined space—was more important than common ancestry in setting the terms of human association. This facilitated a tendency towards inclusiveness that had not existed in the earliest human groupings. The city, Bookchin argues, changed ‘an ethnic folk into a body of secular citizens,’ and helped to ensure that ‘the notion of a shared *humanitas* replaced the exclusivity of the clan and tribe.’ The city, therefore, played an instrumental role in humankind’s progression beyond brute animality: it represents the ‘destiny’ of the human species rather than a mere ‘environment.’

Besides offering a uniquely human basis for consociation, the city provided a medium through which human beings could consciously shape their social environment. The configuration of the *polis* was not left up to ‘blind and demoniacal social forces’ but was rather ‘a consciously crafted structure, the product of purposeful, insightful, and thoughtful efforts to achieve clearly perceived goals.’ The earliest cities had been limited in geographical and institutional scale primarily by their dependence upon hard-won agricultural surpluses, but with the increased autonomy of cities, limit and moderation became self-imposed principles rather than externally imposed necessities. The goals of the precapitalist city ‘planner,’ Bookchin claims, ‘were defined not merely by functional considerations, but by canons of balance, harmony, and beauty derived from cosmological or philosophical speculations.’

Even on a purely functional level, however, the layout of the city was a reflection of the new values made possible by urban space, for it allowed human beings to exert rational control over social life. The *polis* was structured so as to make possible a high degree of political participation. Firstly, it was sized to human scale. As Aristotle recognized, restricting the city to a modest size ‘allows for individual control over the affairs of the community and the exercise of individual human powers in the social realm. . . . Hence the *polis* must be large enough to meet its material needs and achieve self-sufficiency, but small enough to be taken in at one view.’ It must, in other words, be designed to accommodate the ‘amateur’ by ensuring ‘economic, cultural, and institutional comprehensibility.’ Only within a framework of interaction accessible to the ordinary citizen would human beings ‘be able to
realize their humanity, that is to say, to actualize their potentialities for rational judgement." The *polis* also offered ample structural opportunities for direct human contact—most important, in the form of the *agora*. The *agora* ‘provided the indispensable physical space for turning citizenship from a periodic institutional ritual into a living, everyday practice." The *agora* was a stable venue for regular face-to-face interaction and for the debating and discussing of matters of public concern. In the *polis*, life was ‘to be lived not in the home but in the *agora* . . . where matters of state become subjects of personal talk.’

Bringing together the personal and political is, Bookchin believes, one of the most important functions of urban space. Cities foster the development of individuals no less than the human species as a whole. As the individual’s ‘most intimate social environment,’ the city represents ‘the most direct arena in which the individual can act as a truly social being and from which he or she can attain the most immediate social solutions to the broader problems that beleaguer the privatized self." Participation in shared social rule is integral, Bookchin maintains, to the formation of a sense of selfhood. By supplying the individual with ‘a daily gymnastic in the making of individuality,’ it encourages the cultivation of ‘personal competence, intelligence, moral probity, and social commitment.’ Without the empowerment offered by action within a shared social space, the self is shorn of its ‘connotations of personal fortitude and moral probity’ and reduced to the ‘ego.’ The modern ego, Bookchin argues, is especially unsuitable as a fount of political agency. It has been progressively ‘desiccated by the aridity of the social sphere and made vulnerable to a variety of destructive social forces, becoming ‘fit material for mass culture, stereotyped responses, and a preoccupation with trivia.’ The essential role of the city for Bookchin, then, is to provide a ‘public arena’ not just for collective self-determination but also for the socially mediated realization of individual potential.

It must be stressed that Bookchin sees the proper arrangement of urban space as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the establishment of a vibrant city life. The fallacy that had plagued early city planners like Ebenezer Howard was the belief that the ills of the modern city could be rectified through spatial reorganization alone. Social blueprints like Howard’s ‘Garden City”—a design for a small town of 32,000 people, accessibly arranged in a series of concentric rings connected by radial boulevards and surrounded by open countryside—can offer visionary, thought-provoking, and even useful models of social space, but as plans for the fundamental reorientation of society, they are hollow at the core. In order to revolutionize social life, Bookchin insists, not only social space but also social relations have to be transformed. Howard had failed to confront the capitalist dynamics that were at work within social space, in the belief that social problems could be solved through technical innovation alone. This fostered ‘the myth that structural
design is equitable with social rationality. Just as the vacuous social space of the modern megalopolis is an outgrowth of capitalism, the social space of the future, Bookchin argues, must be an outgrowth of rational and equitable social relations at the heart of society. The contours of the city’s physical outline and its social institutions must flow out of ‘the nuclear relations between people’ rather than being imposed from the outside by an ingenious planner.

Despite his warnings against treating spatial reorganization as a panacea, Bookchin’s claims about the unique characteristics of urban space and its role in facilitating the actualization of human potential are central to his thinking about the city. It is within urban space that a political space—Bookchin describes it variously as a ‘world,’ a ‘realm,’ a ‘body’ and a ‘sphere’—can appear that is distinct from both state and society. The city is thus ‘the historic source and principal arena of any authentic politics’—it is the container without which political space evaporates into nothingness.

Because Bookchin envisions politics as an ongoing, collaborative activity in which citizens continuously oversee public affairs, it is dependent upon space that is stable and durable. Although Bookchin does not explicitly address the question of the temporality of space, his writings on the city are full of implicit assumptions that durability is a desirable characteristic of urban space and the political space that inhabits it. With the help of another modern thinker who found inspiration in the ancient polis—Hannah Arendt—it is possible, I believe, to bring these assumptions to the surface and to tease out the temporal implications of Bookchin’s ideas about space. There are many reasons to believe that Bookchin’s and Arendt’s conceptions of the polis are fundamentally similar. Like Bookchin, Arendt believes that public space has undergone severe attrition in the modern world. This is due in large part, she argues, to the expansion of the ‘social,’ a concept which encompasses the economic dynamics that Bookchin worries are colonizing the political realm. Political action, Arendt laments, has been supplanted by economic ‘behavior’ that is governed not by free agency but by material imperatives.

Arendt believes that action—a concept connoting the use of uniquely human capabilities for free agency—is dependent upon an arena for its exercise, consisting of what she calls a ‘world in common’ and a ‘space of appearance.’ Any possible social life, she maintains, is predicated, firstly, on a shared ‘world of things’ which, ‘like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time.’ Arendt makes durability an explicit condition of this ‘world.’ The world of things ‘depends entirely on permanence. If the world is to contain a public space, it cannot be erected for one generation and planned for the living only; it must transcend the life-span of mortal men.’ The world of things is built up through the human activity of work, which Arendt distinguishes from labor on the basis of its ability to produce things
that are enduring. The things created by work ‘have the function of stabilizing human life,’ enabling individual subjects to establish consistent relations with a common, objective world, and thereby allowing for the formulation of lasting identities.\textsuperscript{53} Work helps to give shape to the physical and institutional locale of political action, and therefore has an important role to play in creating the conditions for politics. But the ‘public space’ of politics, the space of appearance, is not identifiable with any particular location: ‘it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be.’\textsuperscript{54}

For Arendt, as for Bookchin, then, the ‘space’ in which human action takes place has both a material and an immaterial component. What is most important for our purposes, however, is that this space—the public space, especially—is exceedingly fragile. The establishment of public space takes place against a backdrop of the ever-present threat of futility. Human action is always potentially futile because it is always potentially ephemeral, at risk of evaporating with the end of each human life. Overcoming human futility requires the existence of a durable public space through which action can take on a degree of permanence—an artificial ‘shelter of humanity,’\textsuperscript{55} to use Bookchin’s phrase, in which people’s ‘most essential and meaningful social relations’ can be preserved.\textsuperscript{56} In order for public space to be enduring, it must be perpetually reconstituted through human action. The polis ‘was intended to enable men to do permanently . . . what otherwise had been possible only as an extraordinary and infrequent enterprise for which they had to leave their households.’\textsuperscript{57}

The durability of the polis, according to Arendt, was what allowed human beings to exercise their innate faculty of ‘natality,’ which she defines as the ‘capacity of beginning something anew.’\textsuperscript{58} The ability to begin anew is the premise of all human action and the foundation of human freedom. But action, as Arendt understands it, is only possible when carried out in common, which means that the human potential for freedom can only be realized within the context of public space: As she puts it, public space is the space ‘where freedom can appear.’\textsuperscript{59} Bookchin’s way of making a similar point is to distinguish between ‘freedom’ and ‘autonomy.’ While autonomy—the lifestyle anarchist’s supreme value—is an ideal tailored to the isolated, sovereign ego, freedom ‘dialectically interweaves the individual with the collective.’\textsuperscript{60} Freedom, for both Arendt and Bookchin, is an inherently social phenomenon dependent upon the existence of a robust, sturdy public space as a venue in which it can take on substance.

The kind of political subjectivity best suited to the model of politics envisioned by Arendt and Bookchin is the citizen. Political agency, they assume, is only possible when there is a stable, durable space within which to act. This presumes that political actors inherit a common material world,
made to last and shaped to facilitate interaction and the expression of collective agency. It also presumes membership in a community of individuals who make use of a common space of appearance. It presumes, in other words, a collectivity of figures who are anchored in space, in terms of both geography and political identity. Furthermore, because the citizen operates within a durable public space, his activity is cumulative—he is able, to use Bookchin’s term, to undertake projects that are ‘lasting.’

In his later work, Bookchin turns his attention towards devising a mode of political praxis that can reclaim and expand public space on behalf of the city and the citizen. ‘Libertarian municipalism’ is the strategy he proposes for democratizing municipal institutions and reinvigorating the public sphere on a local level. Some of the activities Bookchin suggests libertarian municipalists engage in are straightforwardly consistent with anarchist principles, including the development of interconnections among citizens within civil society and the use of extralegal action to assert popular sovereignty when necessary. What is heretical about Bookchin’s proposals is that he advocates working within established channels of power, whenever possible, by running as candidates for local office. The platforms adopted by such candidates would centre on the expansion of popular involvement in decision-making through the institution of face-to-face assemblies. At first, getting into office as a libertarian municipalist would, of course, be unlikely, and early on electoral activity would ‘primarily be a form of educational activity.’ But in the meantime, assemblies could be formed without official sanction that would nevertheless exercise ‘enormous moral power,’ creating ‘in embryonic form the institutions that can give power to a people generally.’ Assuming it eventually became possible to win electoral victories, “the goal of such a practice would be to alter city and town charters where possible to enlarge civic democracy and to establish grass-roots structures.” Even republican systems of government, Bookchin argues, contain democratic institutions that can be opened up ‘to the widest public participation possible.’ These democratic institutions can be restructured so as to be guided by the most inclusive possible input from the community and administered by recallable, rotatable delegates with strict mandates. Eventually, Bookchin hopes, policy-making would be strictly the business of popular assemblies. Guided by the collective will of these assemblies, municipalities would bring the most significant aspects of social life under democratic control.

The democratization of municipalities, Bookchin argues, would restore the practice of ‘politics’ in the ancient sense of the term—politics not as statecraft but as the self-management of social life by a body of citizens. ‘Political power’ would mean, as it once did, the power of the people, rather than the power of bureaucrats and representatives over the people. The municipality is the starting point for this notion of politics, for it is the ‘authentic unit of political life,’ the ‘basis for political freedom’ and, by extension, for
‘individual freedom.’ Bookchin realizes that municipalities are, in the real world, still deeply divided in many respects, including class, giving the idea of concerted action by the ‘people’ an implausible ring. But there is a growing possibility that the ‘entirely new transclass issues’ that emerged out of the 1960s can provide a new basis for unity across traditional dividing lines. ‘Transclass’ issues include issues concerning ‘environment, growth, transportation, cultural degradation, and the quality of urban life in general.’ Regardless of class background, every citizen has reason to be concerned with ‘the massive dangers of thermonuclear war, growing state authoritarianism, and ultimately global ecological breakdown.’ It is possible, claims Bookchin hopefully, to detect ‘an emerging general social interest over old particularistic interests.’ That social interest, he believes, makes it desirable to premise organization on geographical demarcation, rather than fragmenting it along class, gender, or racial lines.

In large cities, putting power back into the hands of the people would have to begin on a small scale, with blocks, neighbourhoods, groups of neighbourhoods, and eventually local government as a whole. Bookchin compares this creeping ‘municipalization’ to the tactics of early Fabian socialism, before Fabianism threw in its lot with the national state. Eventually, he hopes, systems of local government would be taken over by one by one. These municipalities would then confederate with each other, both for the purpose of cooperation and interchange (which would mitigate the threat of parochialism) and in order to form a bulwark of resistance to higher levels of governmental power that might try to put an end to the effective secession of these smaller political units.

Bookchin’s proposed network of ‘increasingly independent and confederated municipalities’ would ‘emerge in flat opposition to the centralized nation-state.’ The goal of libertarian municipalism is to extend ‘local citizen-oriented power at the expense and ultimately the removal of the nation-state by village, town, and city confederations.’ This is a vision of revolution through the accretion of power at the local level rather than the seizure of power at the level of the nation-state. Although Bookchin maintains that at some point in the future, the tensions between these two loci of power would probably erupt into outright struggle, long gone is the mindset of imminent millennial expectation typical of earlier revolutionary anarchists. According to Bookchin’s model of political change, any large-scale showdown between free municipalities and the state would come only at the end of a long, sustained process, the success of which would be determined primarily by the arduous and persistent work of organizers and activists. Bookchin’s temporal elongation of the concept of revolution makes the establishment of durable public spaces especially important, because such spaces have to accommodate the painstakingly slow process he envisions—a process that advances unevenly and incrementally through small triumphs, half-victories
and resets. Generations could pass before a network of democratic municipalities is strong enough to make a serious bid for political autonomy. And although a military confrontation with the nation-state is a possibility, ideally the latter would eventually be hollowed out so thoroughly of legitimacy and the capacity for coercion that it would collapse on its own, leaving an aggregation of decentralized polities—a ‘commune of communes.’

**BEY AND THE EPHEMERALITY OF SPACE**

Bookchin’s strategy of libertarian municipalism calls for the capture of small spaces which are then expanded through gradual accretion. It combines an idealistic model of direct democracy with an approach to local politics which, by anarchist standards, is eminently practical. Although Bookchin fails to acknowledge the parallel, his political outlook shares at least one fundamental assumption with that of his nemesis, Hakim Bey. Like Bookchin, Bey seeks to move beyond the traditional revolutionary script of a large-scale seizure of social space, shifting attention to the kinds of objectives that are feasible within small spaces. Where Bey differs from Bookchin, at least *prima facie*, is in his rejection of the idea that the realization of freedom is dependent upon the *eventual* transformation of space on a large scale. Bey argues in *T.A.Z.* that because the revolutionaries of past eras believed the establishment of freedom to be dependent upon a massive overhaul of the social totality, they were continually postponing liberation into an indefinite future when their ambitions would finally be realized. This put a potentially insurmountable distance between the freedom-desiring subject and the realization of freedom in space and time. What is needed, he claims, is a form of political *praxis* that not only enables people to act within social conditions as given but also generates opportunities to experience freedom in the here and now.

With characteristic humour, Bey labels the present historical era ‘too-late capitalism.’ The most notable feature of contemporary capitalist societies, from his perspective, is the saturation of social space by a virtually ubiquitous ‘Spectacle’ that wraps human existence in a fog of distorting mediations. Sustained by captains of consciousness like the media, advertisers, and political propagandists, the Spectacle substitutes the representation of freedom for its actuality. It renders popular opposition to the status quo harmless through ‘recuperation,’ the incorporation of subversive currents into the logic of the Spectacle itself. Protest is turned into entertainment, symbols of radical struggle are commoditized, and it becomes increasingly difficult to tell where ‘revolution’ ends and farce begins. Bey argues that the only way to break free from the Spectacle’s grip is to establish temporal and spatial *immediacy*. From the individual’s point of view, the most immediate
space is the subjective space encompassed by the ego, and, like his muse, Max Stirner, Bey envisions the establishment of sovereignty over this space as a form of resistance. To attain sovereignty, however, the ego must do more than block out the manipulative influences of the Spectacle. It must also banish from its territory the ‘Spooks’—Stirner’s term for abstractions like ‘humanity’ or ‘revolution’ or ‘society’—that require the sacrifice of the individual to any supposedly higher cause.\textsuperscript{72} Rendered autonomous from both altruistic obligations of this kind and the insidious incursions of the Spectacle, the ego is the most accessible space of refuge from the forces that threaten to compromise individual freedom.

Bey conceives of this refuge, however, as a base of operations rather than a self-sufficient hermitage. Beyond the boundaries of the ego, it is possible to ‘seize a few instants, a few square feet of reality over which to impose our absolute will.’\textsuperscript{73} The ‘seizure’ of a small piece of ‘reality’ is accomplished in the form of the ‘temporary autonomous zone’ (TAZ). The TAZ comes about through an uprisings rather than a revolution, emerging spontaneously and unpredictably—an uprising ‘which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination).’\textsuperscript{74} Within this modest, but sovereign, space, it is possible to establish a ‘living utopia’ where radically unorthodox lifestyles can flourish.\textsuperscript{75} The key to the TAZ’s efficacy, however, is precisely its temporariness. An uprising, Bey writes, ‘is like a “peak experience” as opposed to the standard of “ordinary” consciousness and experience. Like festivals, uprisings cannot happen every day—otherwise they would not be “nonordinary.”’ The TAZ’s impact, then, is heightened by its being compressed into small periods of time as well as small spaces. Its limited duration also helps to place it beyond the grasp of the state: The TAZ quickly ‘dissolves itself, to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, before the State can crush it.’ Bey envisions the TAZ as a colourful explosion of social activity that continuously slips out of the grasp of the powers-that-be because it evaporates as quickly as it appears. The TAZ preserves its subversive potential precisely by manifesting itself in a sporadic and ephemeral manner.

Because of its ephemeral nature, the TAZ is inhospitable to the kind of ‘lasting’ political projects that Bookchin envisions. TAZs represent not the permanent reconfiguration of space that Arendt associates with ‘work’ but ‘successful raids on consensus reality, breakthroughs into more intense and more abundant life.’ Trying to extend the TAZ beyond its natural life span will inevitably deplete it of its vitality; permanence, Bey suggests, is a sign of ‘death.’ In Immediatism, he ridicules the notion that the construction of stable institutions within stable spaces is the proper means of bringing about radical change. Even after the ‘revolution’ foretold in radical lore, Bey maintains, ‘we would still continue to drift.’\textsuperscript{76} Thus, what the TAZ strives to create is not enduring, ‘dead’ space but ‘a liquid space of celebration and
risk.’ 77 Whatever order arises within space liberated from the Spectacle and the State by the TAZ must not be hitched to a dreary revolutionary agenda but instead ‘imagined and produced directly and spontaneously in sheer “existential freedom” for our own celebratory purposes.’ 78

The political subject that corresponds to the ephemeral space of the TAZ is the nomad, a figure without any fixed position in space. 79 Unlike Bookchin’s spatially rooted citizen, the nomad drifts from space to space, peak experience to peak experience, refusing to settle down, perpetually assessing (through what Bey terms ‘psychotopology’) the gaps and weak points in the power structure where flurries of autonomous activity can take place. 80 The upside of this ambulatory orientation is that the nomad is able to elude the clutches of the political and cultural authorities, operating at the margins and in the shadows, cloaking himself in invisibility whenever the State and the Spectacle turn their gaze his way. If Bookchin and Arendt conceptualize politics as a ‘space of appearance,’ Bey stresses the need for spaces of disappearance, momentary hiding places that (if not literally invisible) are at least untranslatable into the language and logic of the status quo. Thus, if Bookchin’s citizen is the hedgehog, diligently and ploddingly building up a shared social world, Bey’s nomad is the fox, darting this way and that, appearing and disappearing with gleeful unpredictability and perpetually outwitting his enemies.

As one of a generation of refugees from the wreckage of Sixties-era radicalism, Bey readily admits that his endorsement of the miniscule insurrections of the TAZ is, in some sense, an expression of political despair. But is it a politics of ‘futility,’ in Arendt’s sense of the term? Bookchin believes so, arguing that the TAZ is not powerful enough to leave a lasting mark either on society or on the individuals participating in it. Bey himself effectively concedes that the immediate effects of the TAZ on a social level are negligible, and even admits that the TAZ ‘must necessarily lack some of the advantages of a freedom which experiences duration and a more-or-less fixed locale.’ 81 But with respect to the TAZ’s effects on the individual, he and Bookchin simply disagree. Bey believes that the immersive experiences offered by TAZs cannot help but have a lingering impact on individual sensibilities, even though the TAZs themselves may vanish. This is the sense in which Bey does envision something durable emerging out of the TAZ. The durable effects of the TAZ are found not at the institutional level emphasized by Bookchin but at the individual level, for an individual’s peak experiences, Bey claims, can ‘give shape and meaning to the entirety of a life.’ Even after the TAZ disappears, ‘things have changed, shifts and integrations have occurred—a difference is made.’ 82

In acknowledging the limitations of the TAZ when compared with forms of freedom that are spatially grounded and temporally extended, and in stressing the lasting effects the TAZ has on individual sensibilities, Bey hints
that his position does not represent an unalloyed and unconditional embrace of ephemerality. Indeed, Bey’s admission of the connection between the TAZ and post-1960s political pessimism reveals an important feature of his thought that escaped Bookchin: The ephemerality of the TAZ is premised not so much on the glorification of spatial dislocation and transiency in the abstract as on an assessment of the possibilities present within ‘our own particular historical situation.’ In fact, Bey claims that his concept of the TAZ is merely an attempt to capture practices that are already extant. With no centralized revolutionary movement to join, and with mainstream political institutions locked up by elites, people are already creating spaces not unlike the TAZ as outlets for their social and political energies. Whatever the likelihood that such activities will result in large-scale change, Bey realizes that their impact can be amplified by imbuing them with greater self-consciousness and coherence, and this is arguably his objective in T.A.Z.

Furthermore, as is evident from his other writings, Bey is interested in more than just small-scale, temporary autonomous zones. He has speculated that out of the TAZ ‘might start to emerge less temporary, if not permanent, crystallizations of spontaneous form.’ In a number of articles postdating T.A.Z., Bey develops a typology of autonomous zones that extend beyond the spatial and temporal dimensions of the TAZ. One possibility is regularly recurring ‘Periodic Autonomy Zones.’ The periodic migration to spaces outside of quotidian existence is, as Bey points out, a long-established practice. There are ancient human traditions of biannual journeys between two different locales, one of which serves as a space of respite and release: ‘Twice a year you get up and move, travel, change your life and even your diet—a taste of nomadic freedom. But always the same two places. One place is typically more heimlich than the other—the village, the hearth; while the other place is typically wilder than the first, and this one might be called the place of Desire, of Summer.’ Often figured as opportunities to fling off the restraints of Culture in favour of the uninhibited freedom of Nature, such retreats have taken a variety of forms historically, from the picnic to the nudist camp to the summer vacation. Bey argues that even something as seemingly banal as the modern Summer Camp ‘is worth defending, or rather, worth re-organizing’ so as to emphasize its aspects of ‘erotic subversiveness,’ of ‘wildness and laxness of super-ego,’ of at least ‘a month or two of relative freedom.’ Bey does not see the Periodic Autonomy Zone merely as an occasional invitation to individualistic epicureanism, however. He suggests the possibility of developing communities within these spaces which, though convened only periodically, are stable over time, united not just by shared transgressions but also by sustained group organization.

In another essay, Bey considers the possibility of ‘Permanent Autonomous Zones’ (PAZs). ‘Certain cracks in the Babylonian Monolith,’ he writes, ‘appear so vacant that whole groups can move into them and settle down. . . .
“Villages,” “communes,” “communities,” even “arcologies” and “biospheres” (or other utopian-city forms) are being experimented with and implemented.’ Some of the emerging PAZs Bey identifies are not spatial in a geographic sense: He applies the term, for example, to ‘weird’ religions, rebel art movements, and secret societies, consisting of individuals who inhabit a kind of figurative ‘space’ that ties together their shared way of life. Bey suggests that the ideal arrangement, though, is to establish spaces that are not only long lasting but also physically concrete. Carving out a space analogous to ‘a nice anarchist monastery,’ he opines, might actually be preferable to ‘the gypsy-RV way of life.’ This is not to say that the benefits of the more transient TAZ and the more lasting PAZ are irreconcilable, however. On the one hand, establishing more durable spaces allows for ‘the long-drawn-out intensification of the joys—and risks—of the TAZ.’ On the other hand, the PAZ, to avoid degenerating into ‘dead’ space, can ‘renew and refresh itself periodically with the “festival” aspect of the TAZ.’

The likelihood that more enduring autonomous zones like the PAZ will take shape is bolstered, Bey believes, by capitalism’s incidental creation of ‘NoGoZones’ (NGZs), areas that have effectively fallen off the radar of the economic and political powers-that-be. Because capitalism, according to Bey, will not ‘undergo sudden implosion’ but will rather ‘disintegrate or deliquesce,’ pockets of space outside of elite control will progressively appear. These pockets are the result of the ‘social triage’ the state is forced to practice as it withdraws social services and even the infrastructure of law and order from areas that have been rendered unviable by the operation of market forces. The progressive sacrifice of such areas will take substantial portions of the country off of the ‘map,’ allowing people with unconventional values and lifestyles to nestle into them unnoticed. What these modern-day frontiersmen and women will establish within these spaces is a kind of ‘positive chaos’ comprising a ‘living mutating (drifting) situational praxis or nomadic bricolage of social models.’ While this may sound haphazard, Bey in fact envisions a considerable amount of coordinated activity holding the NGZ together, not least an ‘alternative communications system,’ an alternative economy consisting of ‘black’ work, service, production and exchange, and even a ‘Peoples’ Militia.’ The task in the NGZ is not so much to irrupt transiently into the constantly shifting ‘cracks’ within the capitalist system as it is to stake a durable claim to the space opened up by the operation of that system. The kind of societies that develop within NGZs may be punctuated throughout by individualistic effervescence of various kinds, but Bey clearly believes that they will have to establish some measure of stability in their relationships and institutions. Condemned by Bookchin for his supposed obsession with the isolated ego, Bey goes so far as to propose that the NGZ may ‘represent . . . the rebirth of the possibility of the social’ and suggests beginning to construct an alternative social infrastructure even in ‘pre-NGZ
areas,’ ‘preparing the kernel of the new social [sic] within the (rotting) shell of the old.’

Although Bey seems to believe that NGZs have the potential to harbour fully functional alternate societies, he insists that it is foolish to try to establish political autonomy in an NGZ on the model of a secessionist state. This puts him directly at odds with the model of social change envisioned by Bookchin, in which confederated municipalities accumulate the power necessary to mount a political challenge to the sovereignty of the nation-state. Bey writes that there will be ‘no Republic of the South Bronx or Free State of Western Wisconsin—no Libertarian enclaves or anarchist liberated zones, no Ecotopia, no New Afrika, etc., etc. The spectacle (even in its last gasp) will ruthlessly destroy anyone who threatens its monopoly of spectacular authority.’ In the later writings that appear in *Millennium*, however, Bey’s position shifts much closer to that of Bookchin. Inspired by the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, Bey expresses sympathy for the idea that a large autonomous zone might be able to break officially with the nation-state. Invoking the millenarian language typical of an older, revolutionary anarchism, he even imagines that the ‘coalescence’ of Permanent Autonomous Zones could ‘make up the form of the “millennium.”’ What this suggests is that there may be a route after all, through the creation of durable, interconnected political spaces, to the revolutionary change that Bookchin desires.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Foregrounding the concepts of space and temporality yields a new perspective on the Bookchin-Bey debate, offering grounds for comparison at least as useful—if not more so—than the social anarchism/lifestyle anarchism dichotomy introduced by Bookchin. As might be expected, some important differences emerge from such a comparison. Bookchin highlights opportunities for expanding popular sovereignty within the public space and institutions already in existence, rather than subverting or circumventing them, as the various autonomous zones posited by Bey attempt to do. For Bookchin, revolutionary energies are to be funnelled primarily into constructing durable institutions that are responsive to popular control, whereas Bey lends credibility to a wide range of activities that do not adopt durability—or institutional reform—as their explicit objective. Finally, Bookchin is firmly attached to the idea that the municipality is the most appropriate venue of human action, maintaining that a particular configuration of urban space is necessary for the human species to flourish. Bey, by contrast, tends to imagine human flourishing taking place on more intimate scales, within groups bound together by affinity rather than an idealized notion of shared ‘citizenship.’
Despite these disagreements, however, we have also identified a number of reasons why the positions adopted by Bookchin and Bey are not as far apart as they appear at first glance. Firstly, Bey is not as enamoured of ephemerality as Bookchin would have us believe. Even the ephemeral experiences offered by the TAZ will have lasting effects, Bey claims, on individual character. Beyond the individual level, he is keenly interested in the possibility of establishing more durable spaces that allow for the temporal extension, or even the ‘permanence,’ of the TAZ. Furthermore, despite his special affection for small spaces that serve to concentrate spontaneous group activity, Bey is intrigued by the idea of occupying larger spaces able to accommodate a wide range of coordinated, more or less stable, social relations. Finally, Bey’s work evidences a gradual shift from the episodic TAZ towards the kind of revolutionary ambitions with which Bookchin had never been willing to part.

These points of overlap raise the possibility of a synthesis of Bookchin’s and Bey’s respective insights. While this possibility can only be suggested here, a potential starting point is the concept of ‘nomad citizenship,’ as theorized by Eugene Holland. Holland writes that when power (of the State or the Spectacle) is viewed as monolithic, the natural impulse is ‘to avoid, circumvent, or subvert rather than take it; in this view, micropolitical action (as insurrection rather than revolution) [is] to be temporary by design.’ The contrary assumption made by what Holland calls ‘affirmative nomadology’ is that power is not in fact monolithic and that therefore a ‘complex and varied’ strategy is called for. Political praxis, from this perspective, must consist at least in part of attempts to bring definition to durable spaces, focusing on ‘the organization of the social field, the type of division of labor, and the composition of social relations.’ Holland points out that even the most famous expositors of the idea of the ‘nomad,’ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, advocated retaining at least ‘a small plot of land at all times’ upon which to carry out sustained social experimentation.

Invoking Bey’s language, Holland recommends that we ‘make at least some autonomous zones long lasting.’ This way, if ‘a given stratum appears particularly propitious as an alternative to dominant forms of social organization,’ we can strive to make it self-catalyzing and sustainable. Not permanent revolution but permanent insurrection, insurrection that lasts: a guerilla operation that does not engage directly with the State or with capital but that instead constitutes this or that specific stratum as a durable and enduring (which is still not to say permanent) nomadic alternative. Intensify connections and conjunctions on any propitious strata so that each stratum passes the tipping point into sustenance and so that different strata converge to catalyze one another. For affirmative nomadology, the imperative is not only to struggle against capitalism and the State but also, and more important, to struggle for a pervasive nomad-
ism by developing, supporting, enhancing, expanding, and, where possible, conjoining the actually existing alternatives to them. Not just fight power-over to take it—presumably with the best intention of eventually having it wither away—but also, and even more, develop immanent power-with, on small as well as large scales, as the crucial alternative to power-over.90

This formulation of Holland’s affirmative nomadology would seem to leave room both for Bey’s more fluid spatial constellations and for Bookchin’s insistence that it is necessary to build lasting structures of power that allow for the efficacious exercise of popular sovereignty and that can be mobilized to defend municipalities against the hostility of the nation-state when that becomes necessary. One implication of Holland’s argument, however, is that no single arena of human association should have a monopoly on ‘citizenship.’ Instead of simply substituting the municipality for the nation-state, it must be accepted that in the modern world the citizen’s affiliations, responsibilities, and affinities will be divided among a variety of social spheres. This does not, I would like to suggest, preclude our according the city pride of place in our affective identities, but it does require us to go beyond Bookchin’s sometimes myopic municipalism, searching for ways in which political agency can be expressed in public spaces both large and small.

As we have seen, Bookchin’s and Bey’s perspectives on space and temporality are not separated by an ‘unbridgeable chasm.’ Holland is correct to argue that what is called for under contemporary political conditions is an eclectic approach that eschews rigid dichotomies. There is reason to believe that political agency should not be as firmly anchored to municipal space as Bookchin would advocate, but there is also reason to place value on the durable institutions that social spaces like municipalities are able to sustain. The contemporary political subject will at certain times find it useful to adopt an approach rooted in the needs of her local community of residence; at other times, it will be advisable to channel her activity into the interstices of the existing order, gesturing through utopian experimentation towards radical social alternatives.

NOTES

1. The author would like to thank Marcelo Lopes de Souza, Richard White, and Vivian Kao for their comments.
2. Pseudonym of Peter Lamborn Wilson, co-founder of the Autonomedia publishing house and Semiotext(e).
4. Bookchin, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism, 22.
5. Bookchin, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism, 2.
7. Bookchin, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism, 18.
8. Bookchin, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism, 3.
16. I prefer the term ‘temporality’ to the term ‘time’ here because I intend to discuss not the phenomenon of time itself but temporality as a quality of space. I use the term in a generic sense rather than in the more specific and technical sense in which it is used in the phenomenological tradition of Husserl and others.
23. As Bookchin points out, ‘limitless expansion is itself a limit, a self-devouring process’ (*The Limits of the City*, 89).
37. Bookchin, *Toward an Ecological Society*, 120.
42. Bookchin, *Toward an Ecological Society*, 152.
44. Bookchin, *From Urbanization to Cities*, 47.
47. Bookchin, *From Urbanization to Cities*, 62.
49. While Bookchin cites the work of Arendt favourably a number of times in his account of the *polis*, in his private notes on *The Human Condition* he describes the book as a ‘bizarre
mixture of insight and pure rubbish.’ Bookchin’s main objection seems to be Arendt’s hypo-statization of theory rather than her ideal of politics and political space per se. Box 13, Tarn-i
tment Collection, New York University.
50. It should be said that the ‘social’ is a notoriously ambiguous concept in Arendt’s thought. See, for example, Hannah Fenichel Pitkin, The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt’s Concept of the Social (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
52. Arendt, The Human Condition, 55.
53. Arendt, The Human Condition, 137.
55. Bookchin, The Limits of the City, 61.
56. Bookchin, The Limits of the City, 124.
60. Bookchin, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism, 12.
61. Bookchin, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism, 25.
63. Bookchin, From Urbanization to Cities, 231.
64. Bookchin, From Urbanization to Cities, 9.
65. Bookchin, From Urbanization to Cities, 12.
66. Bookchin, From Urbanization to Cities, 222.
68. Bookchin, From Urbanization to Cities, 233.
69. Bookchin, From Urbanization to Cities, 10.
70. Bookchin, From Urbanization to Cities, 1.
71. An important source of inspiration for this argument is Guy Debord, The Society of the Spectacle (London: Rebel Press, 2006).
77. Bey, Immediatism, 4.
78. The appearance of Bey’s work during the era of cyberpunk and his own musings on the internet helped to give rise to the idea that his argument about the TAZ applies especially—or even primarily—to virtual space, or ‘cyberspace.’ Bey, however, has sought to correct this impression retrospectively, insisting that he had something more concrete in mind. In his introduction to the second edition of T.A.Z., Bey bewailed the fact that the remnants of the left were retreating into ‘a ghost-world where a few thousand “hits” pass for political action and “virtual community” takes the place of human presence.’ In contrast to the characterless abstraction of virtual space, ‘the TAZ,’ he writes, ‘must exist in geographical odorous tactile tasty physical space . . . otherwise it’s no more than a blueprint or a dream.’ Elsewhere he writes, ‘fuck “cyberspace”—I’d rather live in New Jersey!’ (See ‘NoGoZone,’ available from http://hermetic.com/bey/nogozone.html.)
79. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the nomad is not distinguished by being uncoupled from space, but rather by the fact that he inhabits ‘smooth space’ as opposed to ‘striated space.’
82. Bey, T.A.Z., 100 (emphasis in original).
83. Bey, T.A.Z., 100.
84. Interview with Versluis, 154.
85. All quotes on the Periodic Autonomous Zone are from ‘The Periodic Autonomous Zone,’ available from http://hermetic.com/bey/periodic.html.
86. For recent examples of anarchist activity within the quasi-NGZ of Detroit, see Mark Binelli, Detroit City Is the Place to Be: The Afterlife of an American Metropolis (New York: Picador, 2012).
87. All quotes on the NoGoZone are from ‘NoGoZone,’ available from http://hermetic.com/bey/nogozone.html.
90. Holland, Nomad Citizenship, 97–98.

REFERENCES

Chapter Eight

Swimming Against the Current

Towards an Anti-Colonial Anarchism
in British Columbia, Canada

Vanessa Sloan Morgan

WHITE WATERS IN NARROW PASSES

Two problems emerge when we try and apply the nation-to-nation framework—for example to the 17th-century Haudenosaunee Two-Row Wampum Treaty—to the power relations we face today. First, they assume a moral equivalency between the colonizer and the colonized that simply doesn’t exist. And second, they assume the legitimacy of the ship—of the state’s economic, legal and political institutions that have destroyed the river and eroded the riverbank. Under such conditions, ‘recognizing’ the legitimacy of the colonial ship’s right of travel is an impossibility and we need to start orienting our struggles toward a different goal. (Coulthard 2015)

The Two-Row Wampum Belt, Guswentha, or Kaswhenta (or the Tawagonshi Agreement of 1613) depicts two ships travelling down the same river, as Coulthard explains above. Although every aspect of the belt has deeply engrained cultural and political meanings—the colour of the beads used, the number of beads, the ceremonies that surrounded the agreement—an extremely simplified interpretation of this covenant is one of mutual respect, including respect for autonomy. Negotiated and exchanged between Dutch and Haudenosaunee peoples in the seventeenth century, it outlines an agreement and a relationship. Involved in this relationship was the need for renewal. The agreement was thus renewed in accordance with Haudenosaunee protocols. After all, the agreement applied to Haudenosaunee lands—lands which the Dutch and settlers after them were visitors to. Scholars and acti-
vists alike often point to the Two-Row Wampum as an idealized form of Indigenous-settler relations\(^1\) (see Cairns 2000; Turner 2006). Respect for cultural, political, and economic autonomy, a relationship where neither ship will steer the other or cross the other’s path, where both ships are travelling down two different sides of the same river. As Coulthard explains above, however, the river as depicted on the belt is no more. Processes of colonialism have destroyed the river, eroding its banks to make way for the capitalist freighter—one transporting the state, settlers, and a gross sense of authority. The power differential between these two ships is so great that the relationship originally intended can no longer be implemented in the current environment, on the river as it is now.

The following pages will cast off from Coulthard’s fiercely accurate description of Indigenous-settler relations with the state that has forcefully been built upon Indigenous lands—Canada. Indigenous-state relations have, however, been deeply analyzed and scrutinized by community leaders, scholars, and activists since Canada’s inception (see Alfred 2005; Asch 1997; Borrows 2002; Coulthard 2014; Daschuk 2013; Tully 2001b; Youngblood Henderson, Benson & Findlay 2000). Although accounts from these thinkers have greatly influenced my own thoughts, I wish to explore the culturally hegemonic, relationally ontological form of settler colonialism that is at the core of Indigenous-settler relations. The contentious comprehensive land claims (CLC), or modern treaty, process in British Columbia (BC) will be used as a case study for this exploration. Founded upon the assertion that colonialism, and therefore capitalism, remains at the centre of socio-spatial state institutions, focus upon the comprehensive land claims process demonstrates the manifestation of hierarchical Indigenous-settler relations and settler relations to place. A factor motivating this writing is the desire to contribute to the theoretical and enacted forms of anti-colonialism and anarchic work responding to the current forms of violence, exploitation, and oppression that emerge from these contexts.

Following the case study, a discussion of anti-colonial and anarchic theory will unfold both generally and in relation to the discipline of geography’s anti-colonial (Johnson, Cant, Howitt & Peters 2007) and anarchist (Springer 2013) arms. Here it is necessary for anarchist theory and anti-colonial anarchism to be criticized in light of recent trends that have emerged in relation to settler colonialism. To this end, I draw from anarchist-communist thought primarily, specifically Peter Kropotkin’s development of mutual aid and, at a more subversive level, the transformative potential of education (Kropotkin [1885] 1978), and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon’s critique of property (Proudhon 1970). It is my belief that, especially for settlers seeking to confront settler colonialism, there are many complements between anarchic and anti-colonial thought and praxis—similarities if for no clearer reason than much of the foundational work of anarchist thinkers were struggling for land, albeit in
ontologically and culturally varied capacities, in response to capital driven structures. Thus, the latter part of this chapter will highlight the synergies, as I am coming to see them, inherent within these two modes of thinking. First, however, I must offer a few words on limitations and positionality.

**IN THE SPIRIT OF TRANSPARENCY: LIMITATIONS AND POSITIONALITY**

This chapter in no way comprehensively or concretely addresses all of the issues unearthed here. Quite the opposite is so. Rather, this chapter intends to further engage two conversations—conversations that have been ongoing for decades, even centuries, despite having their distinct genealogical histories, cultures, and processes. Anarchism and anti-colonialism are rooted across the globe, responding to different, yet overlapping, struggles against grossly violent authorities. This work attempts to fan the flames, whether that of the eighth fire (Simpson 2008) or anarchist dissent (Blunt & Willis 2000b), and contribute to these emerging discussions. These conversations are already under way, often labeled ‘anarcho-Indigenism’ (see Alfred 2010; Alfred, Day & Coulthard 2007, 2014; Day 2001; Lasky 2011; Lewis 2012). You will notice that I have referred to the point of inquiry here as ‘anti-colonialism’ rather than ‘anarcho-Indigenism.’ This reference is intentional. As a white settler of known Irish, Scottish, and English origin, I am in no way positioned to propose ‘anarcho-Indigenism’ as a sole-authored paper. What I am positioned to do is to make a critical inquiry into the structures that, albeit multiscalar and complex, have led to the need for me to take such a position by not proposing an ‘anarcho-Indigenism’ singularly. After all, respect for autonomy, even before colonialism or my ancestors washed upon the shores of Turtle Island/North America, was a necessity. A second limitation with the use of ‘anti-colonial’ is that I am employing it specifically within the context, the histories, and the present of so-called ‘Canada.’ By its very nature, anti-colonialism is a re-articulation and an analysis of global processes of imperialism and colonialism (Simpson 2008); these processes were distinctively place-based. By limiting the focus of this term, I hope to further highlight potential synergies between my narrow presentation of anti-colonial and anarchist theories.

Lastly, my intent here is to offer fuel for those exploring alternative ways of thought and being in relation to land based struggles in settler colonial contexts. Recent anarchist tendencies to misappropriate and/or skew Indigenous resistance, cultures, and spiritualities in the name of anarchism is a pattern of concern—it is also reminiscent of colonial tendencies to universalize Eurocentric thought and ontology. Due additionally to my settler status, my focus will here be on settlers, on the state, on colonialism in its settler
colonial form—on the structures of power that have brought me to where I am today. I do not touch upon how Indigenous peoples are using the structures that have resulted from these processes, such as English colonial law, to further their own agendas (see Borrows 2010; Turner 2006). My lack of engagement here is in no way intended to overlook or diminish this resilience and resistance. Instead, my critical intention is to provide another string to pull, sort of speak, with which to unravel the nuances of settler positioning and associated social spatial structures; over-emphasis on self-reflexivity can admittedly re-privilege settlers in these contexts (Smith 2013). Through taking this approach, I do not mean to shift focus but to direct the work to come by demonstrating, as Pickerill and Chatterton correctly disclaim, that ‘individual and collective aspects [of autonomy] are highly interrelated’ (2006, 4). Perhaps it is no coincidence that as I write this I am sitting, and residing, on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territories. It was just south from where I am that the Two-Row Wampum was negotiated and renewed. It is just north of me, however, that Canada’s parliament buildings lie on unceded and untretreated Algonquin/Anishinaabe lands. It is right below my feet, though, that the patriarch of ‘Canada’ was birthed and bred, along with his idea of confederation. It is in response to these conditions—to these places—that I begin.

BUILDING WALLS

[His] ideas never seemed to be able to go in a straight line; they had to walk around this and avoid that, and then they ended up smack against a wall. There were walls all around his thoughts, and he seemed utterly unaware of them, though he was perpetually hiding behind them. (Le Guin 1974, 17)

Our thoughts are constrained by walls. Those providing the brick—those who benefit from these very constraints—often structure institutions and societies in the likeness of these confines. An associated ontology from which to understand the world builds the foundation. For my own thinking, these walls around us are perhaps no better described than in the quote above. The anarchist protagonist in Le Guin’s classic novel The Dispossessed (1974) comments on the limitations in his capitalist-comrade’s ideas likening his constraint to smacking up against a wall. What better way to define intellectual and even insurgent limitations than the metaphor of an impenetrable structure, one meant to withstand invasion, define limits, and keep undesirables out? The wall is a structure that is, after all, built most often by humans themselves, designed by their own constraints, fear, and social ignorance. What could be so valuable that one would construct a wall to prevent invasion? Is it fear of theft, which would imply ownership and worth, both of which are defined by walls? Is it ignorance of difference that causes retreat
behind walls? Of course, walls exist in their physical form, too (see Gordon & Grietzer 2013); however, what catalyzes the creation of a wall and the ontology that maintains it is, arguably, an idea.

SETTLER STATES

Our social institutions are founded on certain ideas; as long as the latter are generally believed, the institutions built on them are safe. Government remains strong because people think political authority and legal compulsion necessary. Capitalism will continue as long as such an economic system is considered adequate and just. (Berkman 1929, 4)

As Berkman illuminates, social institutions, such as the nation-state, were once only ideas; they remain intact due to a continued, even unquestioned, belief in their necessity. ‘Canada’ was once only an idea. This idea was enacted, in part, by Enlightenment ideology; the mindset that flowed from these ideas, and subsequent practices, catalyzed colonial processes in ‘the New World.’ The implantation of settlers on Indigenous territories within this frame of thought was seen as inevitable. Locke’s theory of property, one which would become paramount in capitalist models of production (Arneil 1996), served to justify Indigenous dispossession and transform Indigenous lands into settler property and, later, the Canadian state. At the root of this ideology, however, was the universalism of colonialism. Through the unquestionable superiority of the Empire, including the naturalization and a-politicization of the colonial legal system, ‘power gained its strength from its arbitrariness’ (Mitchell 2002, 54). Despite the pervasion of colonialism, colonial means and processes varied; Blackwell reminds us that ‘all historical forms of property have specific topologies; as a result, these abstract forms prefigure each individual property’s spatial manifestation’ (2014, 52). Thus, colonialism in Canada was exemplified not by a single event but through a longstanding process—a colonial process whereby ‘settler colonizers come to stay’ (Wolfe 2006, 388).

Through the permanent resettlement of land and entailed dispossession of Indigenous peoples, human territoriosity becomes settler colonialism’s ‘irreducible essence’ (Wolfe 2013, 1). Land seizure becomes integral to the settler colonial identity. Distinct political orders accompany incoming settlers and, with them, a well-defined end goal of sovereignty and territorial acquisition (Veracini 2013). Viewed within the context of Canada, not only was the land base assertively/soverignly settled following the erosion of imperial authority, but a predominantly white, Canadian settler identity was also rooted within the landscape (Woons 2013)—an identity that is a defining facet in building and maintaining settler subjectivities. A distinctive mentality prevails within settler societies since continued occupation is largely at-
tributed to the need for the exploitation of resources through the ongoing enactment of state jurisdiction. Moufawad-Paul refers to this mentality as a ‘subliminated colonialism,’ whereby ‘colonial hegemony has been pushed under the surface of the structural and super-structural phenomena of the colonial countries’ (2013, 195). Barker describes this mindset as a ‘colonial mentality’ (2006), a term also employed by a number of settler colonial and anti-colonial writers (Asch 2014; Coulthard 2014; Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014). Adjoining this mentality, this ontology, and subsequent identity, is a bounded territoriality.

Although territoriality has existed in various forms prior to Canada being granted dominion, the formal establishment of the state saw sovereignty become synonymous with territory, and bordering being paralleled to boundedness. This institutionally backed conception of identity is of great significance when compared to the de facto status of the Canadian state, and thus Canadian identity; ‘although identity is the most prominent product of bordering practices,’ Ince professes, ‘it can also be a facet of spatial strategy in political organization’ (2012, 1650). Viewed as a process of defining identity, settler colonialism upholds a curious conundrum. Although Indigenous peoples are seen as an impediment to the autonomy and hegemony of settler society, framed as a distinctly ‘Native’ Other, settlers depend on their Indigenous Other to support a juxtaposed identity (Wolfe 2006). Juxtaposition is here rooted in a frontier mentality that dually evokes liberal notions of multiculturalism and whiteness (Morgensen 2011; Smith 2010). Indeed, as Razack states, ‘[r]acial hierarchies come into existence through patriarchy and capitalism, each system of domination mutually constituting the other’ (2002, 6). Processes of mutual constitution extend beyond the social to encompass, as one can imagine in a settler colonial context, the acquisition of land—the creation of territory.

Settler colonial studies have become prevalent over the past half-decade, intent on investigating the transformation of land into territory. This realm of study has even succeeded in producing a journal dedicated to its interrogation.5 Despite the potential for settler colonialism to build on emerging analyses of colonial processes, including definitions for and of territory/territoriality, it has come under scrutiny; as Snelgrove, Dhamoon and Corntassel rightfully inquire:

What good is it to analyze settler colonialism if that analysis does not shed light on sites of contradiction and weakness, the conditions for its reproduction, or the spaces and practices of resistance to it? What is the purpose of deploying ‘settler’ without attention to its utility, to what it alludes to or eludes from? What good is solidarity if it cannot attend to the literal (and stolen) ground on which people stand and come together upon? (2014, 27)
In response to this critique, how Indigenous-settler relations continue to support the state will be offered. A detailed focus on British Columbia will be provided here in order to further contextualize this discussion.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA AND THE INDIAN LAND QUESTION**

Although the negotiation of treaties had a prominent history in outlining Indigenous-settler relations prior to Canada’s sovereignty (e.g., Peace and Friendship Treaties [1725–1779]; Robinson Treaties [1850]), historic treaties signed after dominion sought specifically to extinguish Aboriginal title and to legally enable colonial possession by way of English common law (Miller 2009). This condition—the necessity of treaties—was itself outlined by the British Crown in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The province of BC, however, was left as a distinct jurisdictional space, with only a fraction of Indigenous territories falling under treaty: fourteen Douglas Purchase treaties encompassing some Coast Salish and Kwakwaka’wakw territories on Vancouver Island (1850–1854); and Treaty 8, encompassing some Dene territories in northeastern BC (1899).

The reason that BC was omitted from the historic treaty process is contested (Tennant 1990). Common sentiment for this omission is that the Eurocentric mindset of the time subhumanized First Nations, stating that they did not constitute a sufficient level of social organization to warrant the necessity for treaty negotiation prior to land cessation (Asch 2002). A desire by paternalistic colonial authorities during the nineteenth century to gain access to lands for settlement and valuable resources such as gold, fish, and timber made this dismissal all too convenient. Nevertheless, the ‘Indian Land Question,’ a question initially concerning how to acquire First Nations territories and how to subsequently manage First Nations peoples, persisted (Day & Sadik 2002; Egan 2011). In response to this question, and with the implementation of the Indian Act in 1876, a reserve system that saw the dispossession and displacement of First Nations without consent was established throughout BC, specifically, and Canada, broadly (Harris 2002). Following the Calder decision (*Calder v. BC* 1973), the Land Question was thrust into the public realm. Public discourse surrounding the Land Question and Aboriginal title was exacerbated in 1982 with the entrenchment of Section 35 in the Canadian Constitution (Borrows 1998). Recognizing and affirming the existence and *sui generis*, or distinctive nature, of Aboriginal rights, the insertion of Section 35 legally bound the state’s fiduciary responsibility to uphold distinctive treaty rights (Borrows & Rotman 1997; Youngblood Henderson 2002)—rights that are distinct from notions of equality embedded within liberal Canadian consciousness (Paine 1999). At this time, the majority of BC remained untreated. The decision in *Delgamuukw* (*Delgamuukw v.*
BC 1997) further legitimated the existence of Aboriginal title, causing many
First Nations in BC to place additional pressure on settler governments to
address outstanding claims to title (Culhane 1998). Furthermore, the 2014
Tsilhqot’in decision (Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia 2014) designat-
ed a 1,750-kilometre squared area of Tsilhqot’in territory titled lands. Due in
part to litigation proceedings accelerating, pressure upon the state to resolve
the Land Question has evolved.

The evolution of the Land Question in BC brought associated conversations
into mainstream politics (Cardinal 1999). Adjoining the increased publicity of issues regarding Aboriginal title were settler sentiments on Indigenous-settler relations and claims to territory. With a number of First Nations
deciding to enter modern treaty negotiations with provincial and federal
governments, the liberal provincial government aggravated Indigenous-settler relations firstly by distributing a contentiously worded referendum seek-
ing to gather information on settler perspectives concerning treaty negotia-
tions (Rossiter & Wood 2005). Indigenous-settler relations were secondly
aggravated by provincial parties through the liberal government’s rapid
about-face on the topic of treaties (Egan 2012); the BC Premier of the time,
most notably, transformed himself from an avid skeptic about treaties during
the beginning of his term (2001) to the most stringent supporter of negotia-
tions by 2005. A vaguely defined ‘new relationship’ was proposed between
Indigenous and settler peoples in BC by the provincial government shortly
after the premier’s about face. What this new relationship would look like,
however, or how it would be achieved was never publically elaborated upon
beyond narratives dependent upon ‘certainty’ over land dictated within state
structures.

Despite token provincial support for the mending of fractured Indigenous-settler relations in BC, the contentious CLC process—framed as the process
that would spearhead restorative relationships through answering the Indian
Land Question—was, and remains, highly contentious and problematic.8
Media sources tend to perpetuate this controversy while (re)producing social
stereotypes and neglecting the historical and legal rootedness of Aboriginal
title (Harding 2006; Szuchewycz 2000). Studies exploring settler perceptions
of modern treaties reveal ill-informed acuities of Indigenous-settler relations
or altogether ignorance of the existence of modern treaty negotiations, point-
ing to a social and physical privileging that unquestionably and rightfully
locates settlers on Indigenous territories in BC (Sloan Morgan & Castleden
2014a). This location, however, is silenced in social institutions, enacted, in
part, through territoriality on both state and personal scales. The judicial
system, for instance, continues to uphold the universalizing and apolitical
supremacy of colonial law. Key among these assertions are what, in his
analysis of judicial narrative in Delgamuukw (1997), McCrossan sees as
‘judicial projection of a spatial shadow across the land—a spreading vision
of emptiness divorced from the reality of continued interactions with those spaces—ultimately eclipsing and consuming Indigenous claims to ownership and jurisdiction through a narrative of territorial depopulation’ (2015, 26). Land that is not populated or utilized actively for resource exploitation is still relegated as empty—as terra nullius—within the institutions of the settler state. Capital gain and state jurisdiction thus remain intimately intertwined in settler colonial Canada—a narrative that permeates settler colonists’ rightful claims to territory.

DEFENDING WALLS: TERRITORIALITY, AUTHORITY, AND JURISDICTION

European colonialism, understood as the contemporary expression of the spread of civilization and reason, established the abstract forms of law, in relation to which particular histories of the right of property could be written. (Mitchell 2002, 56)

How state territory is interacted with by citizens, and thus partially upheld, has been molded by property—a relationship with land that was established, as Mitchell highlights, by an abstract but particular form of law. How territory and property is related to in settler colonial contexts is extremely telling of the colonial mentality that saw its creation. Human territoriality is one way that this relationship—between settlers and land—can be investigated. After all, this relationship is necessarily hegemonic in settler colonialism, feeding into the colonial mentality and sublimating its culturally inscribed processes that excuse, or invisibilize, Indigenous dispossession. By investigating how territory is upheld through social relation and institutions, the normalized authority supporting the violence and injustice necessary for territory’s continued existence can be revealed, a call that Painter conveys while rethinking the concept as a whole: ‘territory should be examined not as an actual space, but as the powerful, metaphysical effect of practices that make such spaces appear to exist’ (2010, 1116).

Human territoriality is constructed, enacted, and intimately tied to human relations to land. Theoretically, it is a means of analyzing how people organize themselves in space and, through this organization, how place is inscribed (Agniew 1994). This production of space in settler colonial constructs, even prior to territoriality, mirrors what Pasternak frames not as stagnant ‘space’ but as ‘produced by the political status gained through spatial divisions of the world into nation states, or by the imperial drawing and re-drawing of regional boundaries’ (2014, 147; see Massey 2005). Taking this view, an inseparable imperative of human territoriality is the influence and control of people and resources in space by way of socially and physically enacted manipulations. Human territoriality is thus perceived here in its
political-institutional form (Painter 2010), with spatial strategies used to affect human behavior through the assertion of power (Agnew 2005). Despite its multi-facetted scales of operation, the practice of human territoriality invariably involves the creation and employment of a common construct: a border. Whether state defining or a line drawn in theory to inhibit the movement of a child, a spatial differentiation is involved in territoriality. When discussing the ability for territoriality to define membership in a group by way of location, Sack relegates how practice and imbedded social and cultural interpretation of territoriality is a direct result of influence and power being used as tools for control of spatial, and in turn social, relations; he concludes this thought by conceding that ‘territoriality is the primary spatial form power takes’ (1986, 26).

Although diverse and able to operate on various scales, in addition to the necessity for an identifiable border, human territoriality involves three interrelated attributes. Firstly, it must involve classification of an area. Secondly, it must contain a form of communication. And thirdly, it must attempt to enforce control over access to the area and to things within it, or to things outside of it, by restraining those within (Sack 1986, 21–22). As such, these three synergistic criteria will be used to sketch the specific socio-historically constructed territoriality of human-land relations in BC. Formally classified as a territorial area of Canada when it joined the Confederation in 1871, confederation legally bounded BC within a larger state structure. Decision-making and legal authority was thereby bestowed to provincial bodies by physically and politically classifying the landmass. Additional to this seemingly obvious byproduct of territorial definition was the classification of lands within the province itself. Crown lands were designated for and distributed to settler residents despite Indigenous nations not entering treaty negotiations.

In order to gain access to these territories for sale, to secure the exploitation of resources, and in an attempt to manage First Nations, the government of Canada designated the reserve system in the nineteenth century (Miller 2009). The reserve system attempted to sever Indigenous ties to land, forcefully imposing sedentary lifestyles through relocation to morsels of land outside of traditional territories that were subject to the legally binding policy instated through the Indian Act (Harris 1997). This bounding of space was also necessary to gain access to land. Settlers were able to purchase land once it was dispossessed of Indigenous inhabitants. The legitimation of this exchange between the state and settlers was upheld by the laws extended through provincial and state designation as a self-governing entity, upheld by common law principles of land ownership (Blomley 2003). Within this regard, settlers’ acts of purchasing lands legitimated their claims to, albeit untreated and unceded, Indigenous territories; this process of classification has been ongoing since confederation and is integral to upholding the legiti-
macy of the state and province as assertively rightful inheritors of their respectively situated territories. Human territoriality takes place and is expressed by actors through diverse measures beyond the deed.

The communicative form of human territoriality within BC takes place on multiple scales and within multiple realms of human interaction. From government-issued identification, provincially authorized services, enforcement of taxation, to toponyms, the power bestowed by the province and the state is constantly conveyed. From this power extends the ability for settlers to prescribe to the identity, the rights, and the responsibilities extended from government entities. Mainstream media again plays an important role in conveying these discourses. Issues surrounding the Land Question are decontextualized and restricted to monetary value, terminology is employed that diminishes Indigenous claims to territory, and Indigenous and settler rights and interests are juxtaposed as oppositional (Sloan Morgan & Castleden 2014b). The communicative messages provided by the media influence the formation of consumers’—that is, settlers’—perceptions (Herman & Chomsky 2002); in this case, settler relationships to land are further dominated by exploitation and capital gain, whereby framing the Land Question in oppositional terms reinforces settlers’ sense of territoriality by threatening their perceived ownership of land. Indeed, physically and legally barring access to lands and resources is a key facet of human territoriality, and a tool used by and for the state to uphold jurisdiction (Razack 2002).

Control over access to lands and environmentally produced goods within BC are enforced primarily through laws extended by various levels of governance. All of which gain legal legitimacy in part vis-à-vis legally bounded state systems that are reproduced in social realms and enacted on a territorial basis. The universalism of colonialism, a-politicality of colonial law, and ontology of superiority is integral to maintaining these operations. The reserve system and subsequent restraint of those inside reserves—status Indians—is an obvious form of enforced control over territory and subjects (Harris 2002). Federal authorities bestow this power. Control of access to resources, such as timbers, is granted to the provincial government, whereas mining and oil and gas are negotiated on an ad hoc basis between provincial and federal bodies (McCreary & Milligan 2013). Combining these levels of ascendency with outstanding claims of Aboriginal title transforms the BC landscape into a complex and convoluted patchwork in terms of human legal standing by way of relations to land. Within this murkiness, however, exists the ability for settlers to possess ownership over territories. Enabling settlers to purchase lands, as discussed above, legitimates their unquestionable claims to untreated and unceded lands. This practice not only upholds colonial tenets by disregarding the Land Question but also further restrains those seeking to interrogate the socio-historical structures that control and continue to subvert Indigenous peoples; individually, privately held lands are exempt
from future land claims negotiations (Egan & Place 2013). Through asserting human territoriality by way of land ownership, settlers establish boundaries within borders and, in doing so, perpetuate privatized notions of human-land relations, thereby preventing access to those outside these boundaries. It is exactly this process—of creating boundaries within borders—that the comprehensive land claims (CLC) process relies upon to address the Land Question.

COMPREHENSIVE LAND CLAIMS

[T]he way we make sense of political relations is so deeply ingrained in us that it would be very hard to embark on a different way were we [sic] at the beginning and prepared to approach the nation-to-nation relationship we have been offered with the utmost goodwill and a complete openness to learn from our partners. (Asch 2014, 133)

When viewed in light of the continued existence of Aboriginal title in BC (e.g., Calder v. BC 1973; Delgamuukw v. BC 1997; Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia 2014), uncertainty is overshadowing the province’s mantra of extraction (Woolford 2005). As Asch suggests above, however, changes to the business as usual approach underlying political relationships are difficult due to their deep engraining in institutional structures—indeed, they underlie the entire legal premise on which the Canadian state and its settler citizens depend. Conditions necessary to secure rights to, and rights to remove, resources, however, can no longer assume the sole jurisdiction of federal or provincial governments. In fact, First Nations in BC have tremendous influence over the physical removal of goods, resources, and, by extension, the economy; as demonstrated by Blomley, First Nations have the ability to ‘shut the province down’ through simple direct actions, such as blockades (Blomley 1996; see also Manuel & Derrickson 2015). Recognizing this vulnerability and legal ambiguity, the CLC process was initiated in 1973 by the federal government to once and for all solve the Land Question not only in BC but also throughout all untreated territories in Canada. The CLC negotiation process was catalyzed by the instrumental ruling in Calder that acknowledged the existence of Aboriginal title and led to the insertion of Section 35 in the 1982 Constitution that affirmed Aboriginal rights and treaty rights (see Department of Justice Canada [1982] 2012). Given the primarily untreated and unceded nature of BC, and that over thirty distinct First Nations cultural groups exist within the province (or 203 federally defined First Nations), a BC-specific process for modern treaty negotiation was launched in 1993. Labeled the British Columbia Treaty Commission (BCTC), this independent tri-partite body outlined a six-stage framework for negotiation; the sixth, final stage is implementation (McKee 2009).
Aboriginal rights and Aboriginal title exist in the eyes of colonial law due to state recognition of First Nations temporally prior positioning on the land before settlers arrived (Asch 2014). The implementation of modern treaties, however, transforms Indigenous title into property; in exchange, some *sui generis* rights are extinguished. Parallels exist between Proudhon’s nineteenth-century critique of the deed and the principle of government granted property, as illuminated above, and the spirit behind CLCs. Due to changes in Aboriginal rights and extinguishment of title, critics of the CLC process have labeled negotiation tables ‘termination tables’ (Diabo 2014), pointing to the incompatible nature of colonially inscribed, Eurocentric concepts of property with First Nations diverse culturally based political and governance systems (Sterritt, Marsden, Galois, Grant & Overstall 1998; Thom 2008). Treaties are thus viewed by some as ‘certificates of conquest,’ where rights are taken rather than granted (Roth 2002, 151). The negotiation process itself has been heavily criticized for being an unjust extension of colonialism (Woolford 2005); failing to provide certainty vis-à-vis compromising Aboriginal rights (Blackburn 2005); neglecting to reconcile centuries of mistrust (Penikett, 2006); relying on the ‘optics of intention’ (Wood & Rossiter 2011, 411), which overlooks historical dispossession and ignores meaningful redress for past injustices (Rossiter & Wood 2005); and perpetuating the ‘Indian problem’ industry (Irbacher-Fox 2009). If First Nations do decide to negotiate treaties, the process of negotiation and implementation has been criticized for forcing Indigenous peoples to adopt formalized and bureaucratized colonial negotiating mechanisms (Manuel & Derrickson 2015), therefore furthering inherent incongruence with Indigenous worldviews (Tully 2001a).

Despite the highly disputed nature of treaties, nearly a third of First Nations in BC have entered the CLC negotiation process (Curry, Donker & Krehbiel 2014). For First Nations who do reach stage six, up to 8 percent of traditional territory is transferred to First Nations from the Crown in fee simple form. During the negotiation process, however, the unquestioned legitimacy of the state remains, where historical injustices are muted, and traditional territories are created into property, to be *gifted*, never returned, by the state (Woolford 2011). First Nations become relatively self-governing, with the long-standing, federally inscribed Indian Act replaced by laws made by and for the signatory First Nation. State bound regulations, however, are too employed, with financial constraints, such as full taxation, often implemented. From an anarchic and anti-colonial perspective, the entire process of CLCs falls victim to the state’s politics of recognition (Coulthard 2014),
whereby state-sanctioned terms define, ensure, and propel negotiations, while state jurisdiction dictates Indigenous territory. Entering the CLC process does provide a more predictable outcome than litigation. The route of the courts is scrutinized too, with settler and state territoriality at its core; ‘guiding narrative presented by judicial actors,’ McCrossan states, ‘is one in which Indigenous laws, sovereignty, and jurisdiction over land must always yield to the territorial interests and perpetual presence of the larger setter society’ (2015, 21). With that said, scholars, Indigenous leaders, and activists alike are looking back to the original spirit of historical treaty negotiations—negotiations that were based upon relations to each other as well as to land, rather than to defining a person’s right to a narrowly defined construction of property (Egan & Place 2013). The intent of these treaties is being renewed not necessarily for redefinition of Indigenous-state relations but to respond to contemporary Indigenous-settler relations and the respective and distinct conditions.

**REDEFINING INDIGENOUS-SETTLER RELATIONS**

We want to build a house with the White Man. The treaty is our foundation. The comprehensive claim was to be one of the walls. But all the government wants to do is destroy our house and remake us in their image. (George Kurszewski in Asch 2014, 132)

Drawing from over thirty years of analysis of Indigenous-state relations in Canada, anthropologist Michael Asch, in his most recent work that revisits the spirit and intent of Treaty 4, concedes, ‘Returning to the promises we made in the treaties gives us a purchase on where to begin now. Doing so will transform what our constitution frames as Indigenous “rights” into Settler “obligations”’ (Asch 2014, 149). Indigenous and settler scholars, activists, and land defenders, such as Idle No More, Defenders of the Land, and the Indigenous Nationhood Movement, look increasingly to historic treaties to provide guidance for Indigenous-settler relations. Moving forward from the now infamous declaration of Chief Justice Antonio Lamar that ‘we are all here to stay’ (Delgamuukw v. BC 1997; see Asch 2014), co-existence is seen as no longer able to operate as the state-centric processes. Calling upon settlers to ‘unsettle’ themselves (Regan 2010) arguably involves moving away from state and capital dependence, or nothing less than an entire re-structuring of the social, political, and cultural landscape.

When post-confederation, or the Numbered Treaties (1871–1921), were entered into, the universality of colonialism permeated negotiations. Most treaties were negotiated, however, in good faith, with principles and promises of mutual respect and respect for autonomy—that which is also beaded in the Two Row Wampum—at their core, a premise central to Asch’s quote
that opens this section. When the CLC process began, as George Kurszewski’s words witness, this spirit of co-habitation was carried forward by Indigenous nations. What has been shown is that the river is no longer big enough for both parties. With the shores eroded, there is no room for sharing the rough waters. The walls of the settler state have dammed it, eroding the shores. When trapped in the quickly rising water, it is difficult to see beyond the confines looming above. What is possible, perhaps tangible, is reimagining Indigenous-settler relations stemming from historic treaty negotiations independent from state actors; those based upon respect, reciprocity, and autonomy, rather than state-centric notions of capital and exploitation; those which Johnson et al. see as a potential to ‘shift . . . social engagement’ concerning Indigenous involvement in state-sanctioned land claims ‘away from legalities, towards people and relationships’ (2007, 119).

Asch’s principle of sharing the land, of linking, which he explicates from his in depth analysis of written and verbal Treaty 4 testimonial, reveals an agreement not unlike mutual aid: of species’ natural tendency to exist cooperatively, rather than competitively (Kropotkin 1972). Treaties of Peace and Friendship and the Two Row Wampum depended upon co-operation, not competition. As Asch points out, competition in the harsh environments that settlers found themselves, in addition to the basic human need to reproduce with genetic diversity, was not a foreign concept to Indigenous peoples prior to colonialism. In fact, as Asch accurately describes in the latter half of his book, these necessities were foundational to Indigenous understandings of co-existence (that of brethren), to autonomy (that of family), and to relationships (that of survival). Indeed, scholars and community leaders have long pointed to the relational dynamic paramount to early negotiations (e.g., Miller 2009). A distinct shift post-confederation moved these negotiations from, as Harris states in retelling the importance of mutual aid, ‘a relationship based on trade [to] one based on land’ (Harris 2004, 169). It is from this view that mutual aid can contribute significantly to settlers re-envisioning Indigenous-settler relations in light of historic agreements. Challenging ontological relations to, and thus actual positioning on, land in settler colonial contexts inherently involved Indigenous-settler relations when viewed from the anarchist perspective of mutual aid. Returning to the original intent of pre-confederation treaties, opportunities for cooperation and dependence upon the state for reconciliation is thus diminished. Personal obligation, including the need for a historical understanding of treaties, emerges (Day & Lewis 2013). The potential to revisit agreements made in the spirit of peace and friendship to counteract the authoritative stronghold of the CLC process provides an alternative, prefigurative way forward. Although it is vital for Indigenous peoples themselves to redefine what such a relationship could look like, drawing from mutual aid, settlers can move beyond state-flowing forms of territoriality to inform relations to land, floating above the wall of
the state to re-envision alternatives. Key here, however, is the need for a critical lens on Eurocentrism at the core of colonial and settler colonial ideologies.

ON RE-COLONIZING ANARCHISM

Unnamed anarchist from Europe [interviewer]: Particularly in Canada, the term ‘First Nations’ is frequently used to describe Indigenous societies. This tends to confuse radical Europeans who consider all references to ‘nations’ as necessarily conservative. Can you shed some light on the Indigenous usage of the term?

Taiake Alfred from Kahnawá:ke in the Mohawk Nation [interviewee]: Europeans should not transpose their experience with nationhood on others. I myself do not think the term accurately describes our people—only our own languages and words can do that—but it is useful in a sense; it conveys an equality of status in theory between our societies and that of the colonizer. And it reiterates the fact of our prior occupancy of this continent. (Alfred 2010)

The languages that we speak build walls. The English language, for instance, is noun-based, territorial and possessive by nature. Behind this language, however, is a distinct relational ontology—one that is exemplified by the interview exerted above. Sharing a language does not imply consensus or commonality. In this case, although Alfred does not agree in full with the term ‘First Nations,’ he does differentiate First Nation and Indigenous Nationhood from European, Westphalian conceptions of nation. He dually describes why, from his perspective as a member of the Mohawk Nation from Kahnawá:ke, this terminology resists Eurocentric impositions of governance but also responds to colonial power-imbalances. Social movements, especially in North America, often fall carelessly into colonial traps of Eurocentric thought, ontological objectivism, and colonial universalism, as exemplified above.¹¹ On the surface, though, it is clear why anarchist movements and anarchic theory may be attracted to anti-colonial struggles.

Opposition to the state and to capitalism, to domination and to oppression, are at the core of anarchist and autonomous movements; they are also at the core of anti-colonial struggles that see the state, and by mutual extension the capitalist system, as de-legitimate institutions of authority that Other and colonize by way of white supremacist notions of cultural hegemony (see Fanon 1967; Smith 2006). Anarchist movements, however, often fail to account for the multiple layers of power that are at play, both contemporarily and historically. As Barker (2012) critically contends, many of the Occupy sites, for example, recolonized by uncritically occupying already occupied lands. Settler privileges, especially white settler privileges, of autonomous organizers within these movements upheld hegemonic/colonial territoriality.
Romanticized for stewardship and place-based relations to land, Indigenous peoples have even been idolized as the ‘original’ anarchist societies (Barker & Pickerill 2012). Indigenous Nationhood Movements actively seek to rebuild nation-to-nation relations with settlers by re-empowering Indigenous self-determination and traditional governments (Indigenous Nationhood Movement 2015). Nation-to-nation, though, cannot be taken in its settler colonial form; indeed, this assumption concerning a homogenous form of government was, and is, at the core of colonialism: ‘modern government . . . the European believed, was based upon principles true in every country. Its strengths lay in its universalism’ (Mitchell 2002, 54). Just as Ince (2012) warns us that territoriality and bordering have purpose in anarchic thought and praxis when not conflated with states, respecting Indigenous Nationhood as a culturally, politically and spiritually distinct movement propelled by and for Indigenous peoples is integral. Reasons for and tactics in support of these movements may vary; however, they inevitably overlap in many offensives with anarchist agendas against dominant authorities. The need for geographies of differences to hold true are here; yet they are often overlooked.

Recent activist-based criticisms of anti-colonial anarchism challenged settlers to ‘consider how the pursuit of an anti-colonial consciousness can also allow settler moves to innocence’ (Awakening the Horse People 2014). Criticizing anti-colonial anarchism for its short sighted end goal, one activist critiques of an anti-colonial anarchism state that ‘there is no guarantee that the settler has learned any more about who he is, or where he, comes from’ once this consciousness is ‘achieved.’ Decolonization instead is identified as the more appropriate way for ‘the settler to become something more—to heal Indigenous identity, story, and spirit and deconstruct the very source of colonizing thought’ (Awakening the Horse People 2014; emphasis added). Obvious aversion to such patriarchal language and the focus upon the settler in a homogeneous form aside, the framing of anti-colonial and anarchic struggles here misconstrue an anti-colonial anarchism’s rejection of finality, affinity for process, and necessity of cooperation. Confronting oppression in all its forms, including that of gender normative roles enforced through patriarchal power structures, is key to an anti-colonial anarchism (Lasky 2011). The focus from the struggle for land-based autonomy to how the settler can move beyond other settlers, to a place of assumed moral superiority, is itself a key characteristic of the race to innocence (Fellows & Razack 1997). Complexities of settler identity are furthermore muted in such an interpretation, including that of settlers of colour, and experiences with colonialism in different contexts, thus flattening and denying geographically and experientially different realities of oppression, authority, and social institutions (Phung 2011). When looking at these caricatures of anti-colonial anarchism, it is no wonder that misappropriation and miscommunication between Indigenous and settler activists permeates many struggles (Walia 2013). Due, in part, to
decolonization being offered as a viable alternative to anti-colonial anarchism, one must ask: Can you decolonize that which is the embodiment of colonialism: settlers? With Eurocentric understandings of an anti-colonial anarchism at the core of many activist-oriented renditions of such thinking, activists and scholars alike have heeded words of advice to those amidst struggles against colonial forces in settler colonial contexts. As stated by Walia when discussing autonomy and cross-cultural, colonially stemming struggles:

Non-natives must recognize our own role in perpetuating colonialism within our solidarity efforts. We can actively counter this by . . . discussing the nuanced issues of solidarity, leadership, strategy and analysis—not in abstraction, but within our real and informed and sustained relationships with Indigenous peoples. (2012)

By respecting difference, even spatializing autonomy, settler peoples would do well to not transplant, to settle, their perceptions of autonomy, solidarity, leadership, and strategy onto Indigenous movements. Alternatively in settler colonial contexts, anarchist struggles against colonial authority, and thus capitalistic systems, invariably require respectful engagement with Indigenous movements. This is integral if the re-colonizing tendencies of anarchist movements that are oftentimes primarily driven by European-settlers are to be prevented. Anarchist actors, especially when operating in settler colonial spaces, must understand the nuances of place-specific histories and colonial processes. As Lasky suggests, there is ‘potential for directly relating to each other and changing our relationships with each other in ways that withdraw consent from “the system” and re-creates alternatives that empower our collective personhoods now’ (2011, np). As Alfred mentions, however, Eurocentric tendencies have oftentimes perpetuated colonial relations of power. As a result, the very structures of oppression that anarchic thought starkly opposes, but also stemmed from, creep into relational geographies.

TOWARDS AN ANARCHIC ANTI-COLONIALISM

As far as anarchists go, if your philosophy can help you to appreciate the justice of this vision and allow you to live humbly as a guest according to Indigenous North American laws, then you are welcome to my continent of the future! (Alfred 2010)

The impetus for this exploration has been twofold. Firstly, it stems in part through a disciplinary curiosity, particularly the discipline of geography’s ongoing calls to ‘decolonize’ (Indigenous Peoples Specialty Group [IPSG] of the Association of American Geographers [AAG] 2010; Johnson et al. 2007;
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Shaw, Herman & Dobbs 2006)—a call that I have come to see as ripe for potential dialogues with anarchic geographies. Secondly, it stems from uniquely parallel, yet different, insurgencies at the core of anarchist and anti-colonial thought and praxis, one that Alfred touches upon in the interview excerpt above.

Geography: Can the Colonizing Be Decolonized?

The teaching of geography must thus pursue a treble aim: it must awaken in our children the taste for natural science altogether; it must teach them that all men [sic] are brethren, whatever be their nationality; and it must teach them to respect the ‘lower races.’ (Kropotkin [1885] 1978, 8)

The discipline of geography’s longstanding co-dependent relationship with imperialism, specifically that of the Empire, is in no way discreet. The discipline’s founding relationship with Empire has entrenched a Eurocentric ontology within the discipline that informs integral concepts, such as space and time (Howitt & Suchet-Pearson 2006). For decades, geographers have worked extensively to reveal the discipline’s intimate, violent, land-grabbing history (Godlewska & Smith 1994). Indeed, Kropotkin’s words written in the nineteenth century and provided above reveal a sharp critique of the discipline’s roots in Empire; Kropotkin was also, however, adamant and optimistic on geography’s ability to push beyond racist undertones and act as a potentially transformative field. Introductory texts today even highlight geography’s violent history, with its involvement in imperialism and colonialism being partially attributed to the paternalistic and Eurocentric sentiments that remain today (Knox, Marston, Imort & Nash 2013, 16); anarchic geographies in these texts, however, remain muted (cf. Blunt & Willis 2000a). Despite geographers being two influential thinkers of anarchist theory—Élisée Réclus and Peter Kropotkin—Marxist traditions were more popular amongst critical and radical geography at its inception (Peake & Sheppard 2014). Indeed, the historic rivalry of these two political leanings runs deep, arguably to the core, of each philosophy and associated social movements, and well beyond the discipline of geography (see Bottici 2013; van der Walt & Schmidt 2009).

The discipline of geography is, however, ripe with ideological confrontation. Even the tools of geography, such as the survey, the map, and the grid, have been accredited with (largely Indigenous) dispossession, wielded to create property and to exploit resources for capital gain. Imperial and adjoining ideological expansion has spread unilateral forms of authority worldwide, leading to legally sanctioned and culturally excusable acts of violence (Blomley 2003; Hogg 2002). Geographic strategies, such as counter-mapping (Louis, Johnson & Pramono 2012), combat these conventionally coloni-
al practices and authoritative strongholds, with scholars arguing that geography must ‘resign its role in the service of “Western” imperialism’ if it wishes to ‘advance politically’ (Shaw et al. 2006, 272); Shaw et al. continue, stating that to decolonize geography the discipline must ‘deconstruct the discursive edifice that has resulted from the confluence of “Western” knowledge-building and empire-building, and an undermining of the hegemonic forces that keep it in place’ (2006, 273). Johnson et al. take an explicitly activist-based approach by encouraging collaborative based research with the hope that ‘geographers and geography may become more than an occasional agent in Indigenous communities’ struggles’ (2007, 119). Geographers have indeed begun to take up these initiatives.

With focus on investigating the ‘production of space,’ geographers are positioned to investigate the construction and enacting of variable power structures. Key among these investigative goals is the ability to interrogate intersecting facets of settler colonialism, those which Snelgrove et al. (2014) criticized earlier for being under-explored, and which McCrossan sees as ‘territorial commitments’ that are ‘manifested through the representation of different spatial organizations’ (2015, 20). Examples into associated levels of analysis include the explications of property (Blomley 2014), resource extraction (Preston 2013), and state jurisdiction (Pasternak 2014), within settler colonial contexts. In the same vein, anarchic and autonomous geographers are rallying for a human geography that responds to current conditions and consequences of authority and power (Pickerill & Chatterton 2006). When viewed within settler colonial contexts, responding to the ‘here’ and ‘now,’ the local conditions and place-based-ness that anarchic and anti-colonial practices respond to (Lasky 2011) and separating struggles against imperialism, colonialism, even for decolonization, are arguably impossible. Despite this, or perhaps in light of, this defeatist note, I tend to (relatively) agree with Kropotkin ([1885] 1978) that geography can be wielded transformatively. Tackling ‘wicked problems,’ such as ongoing colonial processes and their influences on Indigenous-settler relations, often requires more fluid approaches. The need for unbounded thinking holds especially true when the discipline itself—in this case, geography—has contributed greatly to the deep-seated roots of the matter: colonialism. Geography, as it has been suggested, has a deep history with anarchic traditions (e.g., Clark & Martin 2013), which are by their very nature unbounded yet based on boundedness and responsive. I, for one, see an opportunity to critically expand and even contribute to calls to decolonize geography by way of engaging anarchic with anti-colonial geographies. Indeed, geography has much to contribute to studies of Indigenous-settler relations, anarchic, and anti-colonialism; the reverse can also be said. Much work is still to be done to clearly, constructively, and respectfully make these links.
Returning to the River: Anarchic Anti-Colonialism

The weakening of the ideas which support the evil and oppressive present-day conditions means the ultimate breakdown of government and capitalism. (Berkman 1929, 4)

The second push for this chapter stems from overlaps between anti-colonial literature and anarchic geographies. Much like anarchism, anti-colonialism, and decolonization for that matter, is a process—a means of reshaping relations with land and to one another, with the overarching end goal of respect for autonomy. A project such as this would involve challenging ideas that have come to support, as Berkman suggests, the very institutions that support current conditions. Unlike anarchism, culture is explicitly at the core of anti-colonial struggles. Anti-colonialism seeks to reject imperialism in all of its forms; however, it also locates the role of racism and gender-based violence inherent, and indeed dependent, upon the white supremacist state. This overarching rejection of domination and oppressive patriarchal structures is at the core of anarchic thought too; Eurocentrism, however, often muddies these intersects when buried in settler-colonial contexts. In geography, anarchism has often been placed on the backburner due to its utopic vision (Clough & Blumberg 2012). Anarchic geographies too are intent upon moving towards an anti-authoritarian world, with relationality and spatiality integral to the processes of direct democracy and decentralization (Ince 2012). Anti-colonialism is not without its own fallacies. Settlers, who are very much the embodiment of colonial processes, frequently utilize this term unquestionably and uncritically to describe methodologies and approaches to inquiry—a tendency demonstrated through criticism of anti-colonial anarchism as presented above. The same can be said about decolonization, but, as Tuck and Yang remind us, ‘decolonization is not a metaphor’ (2012).

Anti-colonialism has preoccupied the majority of this chapter, with no adequate mention of decolonization. Due in part to its process dependent vision, my focus here has attempted to recognize insurgent steps that can unravel Indigenous-settler and colonially created relations, whether that be on an interpersonal or on a structural and institutional basis. Anarchic geographies, much like anti-colonialism, are a process of re-imagining, prefiguration, action, and reflection, to land and to one another. When one is rooted in the mindset that has bred colonialism through, for instance, gender roles (Morgensen 2010), relations to land (Simpson 2004), and social institutions (Mihesuah & Wilson 2004), unraveling the implications of ‘colonization’ can be lost, overlooked, even unidentifiable. Employing an anarchic anti-colonial perspective, one critically attuned to the Eurocentric tendencies to co-opt and deductively view Indigenous stands for Nationhood, presents exciting opportunities to engage more deeply with state- and capital-sanctioned
institutions. Such respect for autonomy, for difference, would ensure that ‘in traveling the same rivers together,’ as Day suggests, ‘Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples [are] aware of their shared reliance upon the land and upon each other. But, in refraining from attempts to steer the other’s vessel, each acknowledges the other’s right to maintain its particularity and difference’ (2005, 194). Linking back to Coulthard’s words that opened this chapter, responsibility and respect for autonomy are therefore key to salvaging the intent of the Two Row Wampum. In returning to the river, anarchic geographies can thus contribute not only to re-imagining Indigenous-settler relations but also to spatializing the politics and tactics of settler colonial rejection.

NOTES

1. The term ‘Indigenous’ will be used here in lieu of the federal government’s designated term: Aboriginal. Indigenous is used to acknowledge identities that stem from the distinctive cultures, political, and legal systems of the original peoples of what has become Canada (Alfred & Corntassel 2005). At its core, this term encompasses a temporally prior principle of the relationship between original peoples and the land when viewed in relation, or prior to, colonial processes (Alfred & Corntassel 2005). The term ‘setler’ thus reflects people of various backgrounds whose physical positioning are dependent upon the displacement of Indigenous peoples from their territories within current settler colonial contexts (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014). ‘Indigenous’ and ‘setler’ identities are extremely diverse and varied. Throughout this chapter ‘First Nation’ will be used where appropriate.


3. For the past four generations, my maternal family has resided on Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations traditional territories in Victoria, BC. My first known ancestors to arrive on Coast Salish territories emigrated from the fields of Cork County in Ireland to the Coal Mines of what would become Nanaimo, British Columbia, in the mid-nineteenth century—or six generations ago. The arrival and settlement of my ancestors contributed to the displacement of the Snuneymuxw peoples—those whose name was Anglicized to label the city and whose traditional territories still host Nanaimo. Snuneymuxw were one of the fourteen First Nations on Vancouver Island who signed the Douglas Purchase treaties, their treaty being signed in 1854. Snuneymuxw First Nation have rallied to have their historic treaty rights recognized by the Canadian Government, which, despite having a fiduciary responsibility to do so under Section 35(1) of the Constitution (Department of Justice Canada [1982] 2012), continues to neglect the sui generis nature of treaty rights. These struggles are highlighted in R. v. White and Bob (1965) and in 2013 during the Canada visit of James Anaya, the United Nation’s Special Rapporteur (McKenna 2013).

4. Sara Ahmed likens institutional barriers to walls, demonstrating the prejudice and restraints built into colonial structures. Her work on this topic, and the subsequent metaphor, has greatly informed my own thinking (Ahmed 2012).

5. Settler Colonial Studies is an annually released, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to works investigating the historical and social forces of settler colonialism.

6. The legally designated term ‘Aboriginal’ will be employed when referring to Aboriginal rights and title. Defined by the federal government in 1982 to refer to people of Inuit, First Nations, or Métis decent, this term flows from the state, with recognizing sui generis rights and title being necessary due to state claim over Indigenous territories.
7. Colonial authorities employed the common law notion of terra nullius, or empty land. This legal designation asserted that since First Nations in BC were not using the land in a manner thought adequate by colonial bodies—by harvesting domesticated crops or establishing permanent settlement on their territories, for instance—the land was ‘empty’ and able to be seized legally under common law (Asch 2002).

8. See Alfred 2000; Blackburn 2005; Borrows 2001; Coulthard 2014; Egan 2012; Manuel & Derrickson 2015; Tully 2001a, for critiques of the modern treaty process.

9. Indian status is a legal designation extended and created by the federal government to identify and define those of Indigenous ancestry. The rights and constraints associated with this legal identity are embedded within the Indian Act. Not all people of Indigenous ancestry, however, choose or are able to claim Indian status.

10. Section 92 of the British North America Act (1867) outlines the rights, responsibilities, and jurisdiction of provincial governments; Section 91 outlines the rights and responsibilities of the federal government. Non-renewable resources and shared jurisdictions are outlined in Sections 93–95 (Department of Justice Canada [1867] 2015).

11. See Adam Lewis (2015) and Chris Dixon (2014) for more on this topic.

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Vanessa Sloan Morgan


Chapter Nine

Anarchy, Space, and Indigenous Resistance

Developing Anti-Colonial and Decolonizing Commitments in Anarchist Theory and Practice

Adam Gary Lewis

This chapter resides at the intersection of several important moments of resistance. It comes first from an anarchist standpoint that seeks a future without oppression and domination that is already being prefigured now. It also seeks to acknowledge and pay particular attention to the settler colonial histories that narrate the lands that we are on, and the contexts in which we struggle to create a brighter future. Finally, this chapter interacts with the continuous, but also expanding, Indigenous resurgence movements across Canada and the United States and the attempts to formulate Indigenous futures outside the state and capitalism. Overall, this chapter might be understood as a moment of productive intersection that challenges anarchism to attend to the settler colonial realities at play within our theory and practice, so that anarchism can foster a greater potential for resistance to all forms of oppression and domination, and prefigure alternative futures.

My main contention here is that without attention to the histories of settler colonialism, and enduring Indigenous resistance, anarchism is overlooking a foundational structure of oppression and domination (and privilege for anarchist settlers) while also pushing aside engagement with some of the people who know most about living outside and confronting the state and capital. Anarchism needs to develop a critique of settler colonialism (and, more specifically, relationships to land, place and context), so we can more effectively fight where we are, but also so our methods of resistance and hopes for the future don’t come at the expense of others who were resisting long before
us. A specific framework for decolonization within anarchism is perhaps far off and not possible as a set of easily followed blueprints, but I hope that this chapter adds to at least this discussion and opens up space for further engagements within anarchism.

First, I situate anarchist attitudes towards resisting all forms of oppression and domination and prefiguration, and anarchist geography, which takes up these two elements, as part of its continually developing potential. From here I turn to an examination of recent work within settler colonial studies to suggest some of the ways that settler colonial contexts/identities might be understood, as well as some cautions to engaging this productive, but also not entirely comprehensive, theoretical field.

I then problematize anarchist conceptions of autonomy and the construction of alternatives to capitalism and the state by contextualizing them within these understandings of settler colonialism, and suggest some possibilities for consideration within anarchist geographies. I do this in part by examining the emergence and criticisms of the anarchistically inspired Occupy movement. Finally, I turn to the contributions from recent writings on Indigenous resurgence and decolonization, that might (or, more correctly, must) be engaged in order for anarchists to begin thinking about decolonization, to imagine new relations and, most important, to begin to find potential routes outside the state, capitalism, and all forms of oppression and domination, to a brighter, more just, future. Through this work I aim to contribute to continued efforts to develop a decolonizing current within contemporary anarchist movements, and suggest anarchist geography as one of the most fruitful locations to begin moving forward.

I come to this discussion as someone who self-defines as an anarchist settler/occupier who continues to benefit from the dispossession and theft of Indigenous lands. Part of my Scottish and Welsh family history dates to settlement in the late 1700s in the area around Woodstock, Ontario, Canada, close to where I currently reside in Kitchener (Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and Attawandaron lands). I live on contested territory where treaties and agreements have been broken to make way for settler colonial settlement. My very presence on this land is part of a long history of settler colonialism, and while stating such a fact won’t make it go away and does little to imagine a new set of relations, it is a grounding that is essential and cannot be forgotten. We cannot forget the histories that we, ourselves, carry—to do so is to forget what settler colonialism dispossesses for my benefit, and will continue to do so unless resistance is expanded and new relations formed.
ANARCHISM: GENERAL COMMITMENTS
AND GEOGRAPHIC POSSIBILITIES

Anarchism has long held a commitment to resist all forms of oppression and domination, more than just the state and capitalism, and often wearing such a commitment as a badge of pride when compared to other perspectives (Milstein 2010, 39). This, in part, is what makes anarchism unique, and what makes anarchism such an attractive position to think about creating a free and just future society. From the emergence of a wide ranging anti-globalization movement in the 1990s (Graeber 2002; Graeber and Grubacic 2004) to the more recent Occupy Movement (Bray 2013; Aragorn! 2012) anarchists have been at the forefront of contributions to a variety of movements. This arises, in part, because anarchism has moved away from the much more crass class-centric perspective that it has been historically known for, despite recent restatements of this focus (see van der Walt and Schmidt 2009).

Anarchism is also probably well known and significant for its commitment to prefiguration (Gordon 2008). Prefiguration aims to enact the possibilities of a future society here and now, to ‘build a new world in the shell of the old,’ as the old IWW (International Workers of the World) saying goes, and is at the heart of anarchism. In part, anarchists want to see the means justify the ends, and by doing so we must begin to live anarchism here and now, to actively put in place the alternatives that we hope to see on a much broader scale in the future.

Cindy Milstein (2010, 68) argues that anarchism’s prefigurative element must be enacted here and now, rather than waiting for some single rupture or capital ‘R’ Revolutionary moment. This prefigurative element is actualized via voluntary association and direct action, as a ‘dual strategy of confrontation to delegitimise the system’ as well as ‘grassroots alternative-building from below’ (Gordon 2008, 18). Anarchist forms of prefiguration might be, then, reflective of a sentiment borrowed from the Zapatistas: as a movement and possible future where ‘many worlds fit’ and there are no predetermined blueprints for how society will be structured (Milstein 2010, 93; see also Amster 2012, 149).

Prefiguration might be enacted in a variety of spaces, and necessarily in all spaces where anarchists seek change. Shannon, Nocella II and Asimakopoulous (2012, 12), as well as Albert (2012), argue that part of this prefigurative element must also involve specific and renewed thinking about anarchist alternatives to capitalism and economic relations and how these alternatives are linked with broadly defined political and social spheres. Further, they also suggest a need to move beyond European histories and seek a wider view for alternatives and inspiration—a point that resonates with my project and discussion here. If anarchism indeed seeks a wide sweeping transforma-
tion of society away from oppression and domination, all spheres of existence need to be considered as up for radical forms of transformation.

These collective forms of construction call for what might be termed ‘infrastructures of resistance’ or ‘transfer cultures,’ which are the ‘rudimentary infrastructure’ for ‘an alternative future in the present’ (Shantz 2010, 154). They are necessary so ‘people can sustain radical social change both before, during and after insurrectionary periods’ (Shantz 2010, 172), as a base from which to both imagine alternatives and launch moments of contestation and so people will be ready, will know how to act, and will have networks and supports in place. Specifically, Shantz (2010, 156) argues that transfer cultures aim to prevent the rise of a vanguardist leadership that might capitalize on moments of unpreparedness to assert themselves. Prefiguration, therefore, focuses explicitly on the ways and means to create a new society and relationships in the future by building here and now in the present autonomous communities.

ANARCHIST GEOGRAPHY: IMAGINING THE SPATIALITY OF RESISTANCE

Anarchist geography is nearly as old as anarchism itself, with key theorists of anarchist geography being Élisée Reclus and Peter Kropotkin, who were key figures in anarchism more generally. Their work in geography provides a key impetus for generating a specific anarchist perspective on geography and stands, following Ince (2010, 282), as the ‘only great era of anarchist geography.’ As Simon Springer (2012, 2013, 2014) has argued, it is only more recently that anarchist geography has been more specifically developed within English theoretical spaces, after a significant lull in theoretical activity. In particular, two recent issues in ACME (Clough and Blumberg 2012) and Antipode (Springer et al. 2012) have brought the discussion to the fore and raised a diverse number of issues and possibilities for anarchist geography. It is my contention in this chapter that anarchist geography might present a crucial and important point of engagement with the realities of settler colonial contexts and their necessary consideration within anarchism broadly.

Recent work in anarchist geography foregrounds the two key anarchist elements that I discussed above—resistance to all forms of oppression/domination and prefiguration (see, for example, Clough and Blumberg 2012, 337)—but also adds a necessary consideration of the spatial element in understanding and formulating anarchist approaches to resistance and alternatives. Anarchist geography imagines multiple spatialities, in contrast to the one-dimensional narrow view represented by the centralized state, and intervenes within geography itself with such a challenge (Springer 2012, 1617; 2014). Anarchist geography disrupts geographic thinking that takes the state
as a given, or assumes that it will be the agent of change, as is often the case in Marxist/other radical geographies. Anarchist geography, itself, is already a challenge to the dominant trends in geography and emphasizes the need for voluntarily associated individuals and collectives to seek their own future forms of relating without the overbearing domination of the state (Springer 2014). Anarchist geography, following Ince (2010, 282), seeks to go beyond a narrow view of geography as being cartography or environment but, akin to human geography, to look at the ‘cultural, social, economic and political environs,’ with a particular emphasis on place and space.

Anarchist geographies might also be understood as the ‘theoretical terrain in which anarchism has been established as a political philosophy, as opposed to the geographies of anarchism that represent anarchism in its actually existing practice’ (emphasis in original, Springer 2013, 47). This chapter, therefore, deals more so with the former, although anarchism in actually existent practice is a primary concern for the future, given anarchism’s prefigurative element.

With a basic outline of some of the key elements of anarchism and anarchist geography specifically, I now look at some of the failings of being against all forms of oppression and domination, and argue for the understanding of settler colonialism as a necessarily ‘strategically central’ consideration. While by themselves both anarchism and anarchist geography create the allure of intersectionality and may suggest a critique and resistance to colonialism, when settler colonialism underwrites the very context of resistance and anarchist possibility, the engagements need to be much more intentional.

In his recent book Red Skin, White Masks Glen Coulthard suggests some of the implications for resistance to capitalism (and by extension the state) in the present moment. He argues that an over-emphasis on capitalism (and the state) often leaves aside the colonial underpinnings of such forms of oppression and domination. There is a crucial analysis of settler-colonialism missing. He suggests that

by shifting our analytical frame to the colonial relation we might occupy a better angle from which to both anticipate and interrogate practices of settler-state dispossession justified under otherwise egalitarian principles and espoused with so-called ‘progressive’ political agendas in mind. (Coulthard 2014, 12)

Anarchism certainly at times falls into this ‘progressive’ set of political agendas where colonization is relegated to the background. This point has also been underscored by Andrea Smith (2005) and Leanne Simpson (2011). I have seen this personally when discussions of colonization and anarchism have come up and participants revert to arguments that seek to frame coloni-
zation in terms of class struggle, rather than remaining open to the idea that colonization itself is what is the backdrop and underwriter of other forms of domination in this context.

As I have argued (Lewis 2015), it is useful to draw from the work of the late Joel Olson (2009) in order to see settler colonialism not as the system of oppression that takes precedence over all others, but as a foundational aspect to the context in which we struggle. Olson (2009) argues that in the United States, white supremacy and the division between black and white under capitalism is the fundamental context that must be considered for effective struggle. He argues that white supremacy needs to be seen as ‘strategically central’ to all struggles that occur in the United States, and specifically within anarchist movements.

White supremacy is still clearly a central force dictating the requirements and possibilities for resistance, and the idea of strategic centrality provides a conceptual frame for looking to the particular context in which one seeks to resist. Olson does not quite go far enough, though, and misses the settler colonial structuring of relations in the United States as well as in Canada. As Leanne Simpson (2011, 31) argues, ‘western-based social movement theory has failed to recognize the broader contextualizations of resistance within Indigenous thought, while also ignoring the contestation of colonialism as a starting point.’ In this sense, if we want to talk about strategic centrality, it is settler colonization that paves the way for, and allows continuation of, the U.S. and Canadian states. This is the very reason that anarchists need to pay particular attention to continuing structures of settler colonialism here and now. The destruction of settler colonialism is necessary for the destruction of capitalism and the state, and for moving forward toward a free society (see, for example, Coulthard 2014; Saed 2013). I now turn briefly to recent work in the field of settler colonial studies, to add clarity to the term settler and detail some of the main issues within such theoretical work, but primarily as a key point for anarchist engagement with issues of colonization and land.

SETTLER COLONIALISM

Although there has been discussion of settler colonialism well near since the beginning of colonial invasions themselves, it is only more recently that the field of settler colonial studies has been constructed as such. This begins in part with Patrick Wolfe’s important work Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology (1999) and the subsequent expansion of the Settler Colonial Studies Journal. I argue that settler colonialism might be most productively understood as a structure, following Patrick Wolfe (1999), connected to capitalism and the state that continues to underline the context of struggle within North America.
First and foremost, as Wolfe (1999, 2) argues in a now widely quoted passage, ‘[s]ettler colonies were (are) premised on the elimination of native societies. The split tensing reflects a determinate feature of settler colonization. The colonizers come to stay—invasion is a structure not an event.’ Settler colonialism is primarily predicated on the destruction of Indigenous populations to make way for settler populations and secure access to land. Settlers aim to create ‘a new colonial society on the expropriated landbase,’ with the explicit intention to stay (Wolfe 2006, 388).

Settlers, following Mar and Edmonds, are those who went, and go, to new lands to appropriate them and to establish new and improved replicas of the societies they left. As a result Indigenous peoples have found an ever-decreasing space for themselves in settler colonies as changing demographics enabled ever more extensive dispossession. Settlers, in the end, tended not to assimilate into Indigenous societies, but rather emigrated to replace them. (2010, 2)

Even those who come later still participate in the displacement and replacement of Indigenous peoples.

In opposition to the inherently transient nature of settlers, Alfred and Corntassel (2005, 597) suggest the following understanding of Indigenous peoples:

The communities, clans, nations and tribes we call Indigenous peoples are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe and other centers of empire. It is this place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossession and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples of the world.8

It is crucial to distinguish between definitions of settler and Indigenous, and take them as significant, to recognize that ‘colonialism is a narrative in which the Settler’s power is the fundamental reference and assumption, inherently limiting Indigenous freedom and imposing a view of the world that is but an outcome or perspective on that power’ (Alfred and Corntassel 2005, 601).

Land, and access to territory, is the foremost interest of settler colonialism, with which settlers cannot gain access without the removal of Indigenous peoples. As Patrick Wolfe argues, although race and white supremacy are intimately bound up with the settler colonial project, it is land and territory that really structure settler colonialism’s fundamental desire of elimination of Indigenous communities (2006, 388).9 In comparison to enslaved peoples, Wolfe argues, ‘whose reproduction augmented their owners’ wealth, Indige-
rous people obstructed settlers’ access to land’ and so had to be removed and prevented from reproducing. The structural view of settler colonialism is crucial, as it confirms that specific forms of invasion and dispossession are not singular or isolated events but endemic to the very core of settler colonialism. This allows for a view of settler colonialism that cannot be relegated to the past, but rather continues to guide the operation of settler states into the present.

Settler colonialism, of course, must be distinguished from other forms of colonialism where settlers might come to set up colonies for the purposes of labour and resource exploitation/extraction from native communities, but then return to their home country. As Lorenzo Veracini suggests, the extractive colonial setting is indicative of a directive to the native population of ‘you, work for me,’ while settler colonialism insists ‘you, go away.’ ‘This is why,’ Veracini argues, ‘colonialism is not settler colonialism: both colonisers and settler colonisers move across space, and both establish their ascendancy in specific locales. While significant, the similarities end there’ (2011, 1).

Settler colonialism must be understood for its specificity in the contexts in which it resides:

[S]ettler colonialism constitutes a circumstance where the colonising effort is exercised from within the bounds of a settler colonising political entity, colonialism is driven by an expanding metropole that remains permanently distinct from it. And again: as settlers, by definition, stay, in specific contradistinction, colonial sojourners—administrators, missionaries, military personnel, entrepreneurs, and adventurers—return. (Veracini 2010, 6)

The impacts of settler colonialism are wide ranging and a detailed review is beyond the scope of my discussion here. However, as Mar and Edmonds (2010, 2) explain below in detail,10 and in specific relation to geographies of settler colonialism, the scars of settler colonialism on the land are widely apparent:

In geopolitical terms, the impact of settler colonialism is starkly visible in the landscapes it produces: the symmetrically surveyed divisions of land; fences, roads, power lines, dams and mines; the vast mono-cultural expanses of single-cropped fields; carved and preserved national forest, and marine and wilderness parks; the expansive and gridded cities; and the socially coded areas of human habitation and trespass that are bordered, policed and defended. Land and the organised spaces on it, in other words, narrate the stories of colonisation.

Settler colonialism’s structure of invasion and dispossession thus carries a wide range of direct impacts.

A significant part of settler colonialism is the idea that settlers themselves are seeking both to break away from the authority or sovereignty of their
previous colonial metropolises (e.g., settlers in what is now known as Canada seeking to become independent from Britain) and to create their own sovereign spaces. Settlers see themselves as founders of the societies they create, but they also interpret their actions as part of an ‘inherent sovereign claim that travels with them’ and is ‘autonomous from the colonising metropole’ (Veracini 2010, 53). There is, then, a ‘regenerative’ aspect of settler colonialism where settlers imagine themselves creating anew in a ‘new’ land: ‘As [settlers] move towards what amounts to a representation of their world, as they transform the land into their image, they settle another place without really moving’ (Veracini 2010, 98).

In this sense, settlers can use a variety of justifications or myths (Regan 2010) for their colonial projects where they see themselves as continuing prior forms of sovereignty, bringing it with them, and forging a specific break from the colonial home country. This creates a sovereignty that seeks to subsume all others under the settler paradigm. This might be done by first imagining that there are no Indigenous peoples whose lands and lives they are taking over. This is the classic settler strategy of asserting terra nullius, an ‘empty land’ that is free from moral considerations.

On one hand, this suggests that Indigenous peoples do not exist at all; on the other, it suggests an Indigenous presence that exists but can be disregarded/disposed of at will due to a lesser humanity where Europeans are civilized and Indigenous peoples uncivilized and subhuman. Settler colonialism conceives of Indigenous peoples and their lands as wild, chaotic and lacking order and thus in need of domestication and control, whether by the decimation of landbases, the destruction of cultures or the assimilation/removal of populations. Further, the liberal democratic traditions of settlers, à la John Locke, promote enclosure and domestication of land for the purposes of creating social relations based on private property. Since Indigenous peoples do not mirror European private property relations, and appeared to not be ‘using’ the land, it was the right of settlers to take such ‘idle’ land and put it to use (Sherman 2010).

Settlers can also recast what the term ‘Indigenous’ signifies, to assert that their own projects are about escaping violence in their homelands—they become an indigenous displaced. Settlers then don’t have violence of their own, and are only seeking to return to a previous existence without violence, which results in various anxieties and psychopathologies, as Veracini argues, and demands creating a settler polity represented in an idealic, non-violent way (Veracini 2010, 77). This arises as some settler colonial states portray themselves as less/non-violent compared to settler colonial neighbours. This is commonly asserted by the ‘benevolent’ Canadian state against the ‘violent’ settlement of the U.S. state, what Paulette Regan (2010) refers to as the peacekeeping myth.
These ‘peaceful’ myths of the settler polity also cast violence directed against Indigenous peoples (when it can’t be invisibilized) as a ‘defensive battle ensuring the continued survival of the settler community and never as founding violence per se’ (Veracini 2010, 78). This renders Indigenous peoples as nomadic, encroaching on settler sovereignty that must be defended, and ‘unsettled’ in comparison to the ‘indigenous’ settlers (79). In both cases, settler colonialism seeks to wrap itself in particular myths and fantasies in order to cover up its inherent violence.

So settler colonialism seeks primarily the removal, displacement and/or elimination of Indigenous communities, whichever precipitates access to land and the possibilities for expansion. Settler colonialism is inherently about violence against Indigenous communities, and continues to structure the relations in settler contexts to this day. Restating Wolfe above, settler colonialism is a structure, and it does not end with a specific event or point of contact; it continues insofar as settlers seek to maintain their sovereignties against Indigenous peoples’ continued existence and refusal to be ‘transferred out.’

A key element of settler colonialism is with regard to identity categories that are created. As Wolfe (1999, 3) argues, given attempts at the assimilation of Indigenous peoples and the displacement of settler identities, ‘positional is not just central to the issues—it is the issue.’ Identity is what determines our positionality in relation to settler colonialism. It dictates how we engage with the structure, how it affects our lives and the privileges and benefits that we might gain from it. This point speaks to the necessity of interrogating what implications the term settler has for anarchism, anarchist geography and settler decolonization more broadly.

As per Mar and Edmonds’ (2010, 2) definition of settler highlighted above, settlers are those who have travelled to other lands with the aim of displacing Indigenous peoples in order to secure land for themselves to recreate the societies that they left. They create the new settler society in their image. This is counter to Indigenous relations to land, following Alfred and Corntassel (2005, 597), who above noted the Indigenous connection rooted in place.

This understanding takes a long view of settler colonialism and specifically marks the relationship between Indigenous nations and the earliest settlers. Settler migration was directly linked to dispossession and Indigenous displacement.

The concept of Indigeneity suggested here might serve as a marker for what settlers are not: they are not Indigenous to the particular lands they inhabit, although they might be indigenous to somewhere else and have their own relationships to land. This is but one definition, but it is important for marking both resistance to colonization and connection to land.
There are two primary ways that identity is understood in the literature on settler colonialism. The first view, which comes through most in settler colonial studies, suggests three categories of identity: Indigenous peoples, settlers and ‘exogenous others.’ Veracini (2010, 17–18) suggests other immigrants fall into the ‘exogenous others’ category because they do not come seeking to establish their own politically sovereign order, but as a result of a myriad of other factors (not the least of which could be due to slavery or forced migration). Further, though such ‘exogenous others’ do often buy into and benefit from settler colonialism, they are still compared, like Indigenous peoples, to the normativity of the settler subject. As Alfred and Corn tessal (2005, 601) argue, settler colonialism limits Indigenous freedom by using settlers as the key point of reference for its power and domination. This view, I believe, is significantly important to mark the differences between historical initial settlers and later migrants.

Secondly, there are those who understand the settler colonial dynamic through the binary of Indigenous and settler, where settlers are understood to be all non-Indigenous peoples, with a great deal of complexity/hierarchy/stratification within the non-Indigenous/settler category (see, for example, Lawrence and Dua 2005; Amadahy and Lawrence 2010; Wolfe 2013). Lawrence and Dua (2005, 133) suggest that the primary reason ‘exogenous others’ ought to be understood as settlers is due to the fact, which Veracini acknowledges, that they are invited to participate in the settler colonial project, against Indigenous peoples. Zainab Amadahy and Bonita Lawrence suggest a specific framing of people of colour as settlers, with specific emphasis on slave-descendant peoples: ‘The reality then is that Black peoples have not been quintessential “settlers” in the White supremacist nature of the word; nevertheless, they have, as free people, been involved in some form of settlement process’ (Amadahy and Lawrence 2010, 107). This framing can be seen to apply to refugees, and others who might arrive not always of their own free will, as non-Indigenous peoples who participate in, and benefit from, the dispossession of Indigenous peoples. All settlers occupy a position in the settler colonial order, even despite many having come later (Bell 2014, 7). The difficulty with this view, however, is that it masks the enduring realities of white supremacy that are closely tied to settler colonialism. A binarist approach takes a white settler subject primarily and papers over the important factors affecting migration. Settlers come to create societies in their own image and control such societies as the reference point to which all later migrants are measured.

Anticipating and responding to the criticism of this perspective as erecting some sort of homogenizing binary, Patrick Wolfe points specifically to the structural relationship within settler colonialism. It is not whether immigration/settlement is a result of voluntary action but implicated in settler colonial structures. It is not an ‘effect of the will,’ as the historical relation of
settler colonialism precedes more recent settlers, and migration of peoples does not ‘alter the structural fact that their presence, however involuntary, was [and is] part of the process of Native dispossession’ (Wolfe 2013, 263). Even so, the specific nature of white supremacy, which bolsters settler power, needs to be specifically acknowledged. A settler-Indigenous binary makes this particularly difficult.

Further, it is not a simple question of settlers simply being immigrants: ‘Immigrants are beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies of the lands they migrate to. Settlers become the law, supplanting Indigenous laws and epistemologies. Therefore settler nations are not immigrant nations’ (Tuck and Yang 2012, 6–7). Despite any previous treaties between different settlers and Indigenous peoples, as well as other migrants, the general relation is unequivocally one of settler domination. Given this reality, Tuck and Yang (2012) advocate for a settler-native-slave triad definition of settler colonialism, marking slavery as a key founding logic of the settler state, particularly in the United States (echoing Olson 2009).

The binarist approach should also be challenged from the standpoint of re-entrenching division between peoples and between movements. This is always a concern, given the ways that oppression and domination push peoples apart from and into conflict with one another for the benefit of the state and capitalism. This worry should not go unnoticed. But in this case perhaps there is something more at stake. For example, one of the key means of ‘transfer’/dispossession/removal of Indigenous peoples has been through the regulation of identity where a specific bar is set in order to determine ‘authentic’ Indigeneity, usually at the hands of the state. In Canada this has occurred through successive variations of the Indian Act that has attempted to legislate Indigenous peoples out of existence by narrowing the terms of official Indian Status and band membership. Thus, one of the key means of resisting assimilation for Indigenous communities has been to revitalize and affirm identity. In this sense, following Wolfe (2013, 266), to homogenize Indigenous and settler into a single category would only further attempts at Indigenous assimilation, and remove the specificity of Indigenous sovereignty, which continues to stand in opposition to imposed settler sovereignties.

The binarist approach carries the danger of ‘flatten[ing] differences between non-Indigenous peoples’ and only being used in a performative sense (Corey Snelgrove in Snelgrove et al. 2014, 16). The potential for the use of the term settler might therefore depend on what context it is used in. As Jeff Comtassell suggests, it might be most productively used in a disruptive sense in settler contexts, where settlers are most resistant to it (in Snelgrove et al. 2014, 16).

Overall, advocating a binarist approach to identity in settler colonial locales carries with it a number of concerns. It is necessary to mark the specific divisions of settler colonialism—with Indigenous peoples (as the main bul-
work against the completion of colonial settlement), exogenous others or migrants (as latecomers who participate in settler colonialism but are themselves measured against a white settler norm) and settlers. The initial marking between settler and Indigenous identities can point directly to the structural relationship of settler colonialism. It also makes a certain polemical statement about the process of invasion and focuses on the settler ‘as a crucial site for the investigation of colonial power at work’ (Johnson and Lawson 2000, cited in Faragher 2014, 186).

A binary can be initially disruptive, but it also needs to be more specific. We need to take up the continued task of challenging white supremacy within the non-Indigenous side of things. This requires an understanding of the complexities of settler identity, highlighted above, and specifically relationships between white settler and Black slave-descendent populations.

And because no option will be perfect, we also need to work towards improving our understandings. This might include, as Jeff Corntassel suggests (in Snelgrove et al. 2014, 17), seeking out terms that are based in Indigenous languages and thought, to further contextualize relationships and histories in particular contexts, and also looking at terms that capture the possible positive changes in the settler-Indigenous relationship.

Anarchists, and anarchist geographers, in settler colonial contexts would do well to look to the importance of the complexities of settler colonialism and identity in terms of where we situate ourselves, how we identify our complicity, and then what we might do to reimagine a new future set of relations. Settler colonialism is the foundation of the oppressive and dominating terrain that we seek to create alternatives inside/against. Without attention to settler colonialism and the benefits accrued by settlers at the expense of Indigenous communities, we are likely to replicate processes of colonization, assimilation and exclusion ourselves.

But is examining settler colonialism enough? There are several theorists (Snelgrove et al. 2014; Byrd 2014; Macoun and Strakosch 2013) who have expressed reservations about the new found popularity of settler colonial studies. These cautions point to the dangers of reifying settler colonialism as an inevitable structure, over-focusing on the settler side of things, lack of engagements with Indigenous theory, resistance and resurgence (or agency in general), and having little to say on decolonization and other possible responses to settler colonialism. As Macoun and Strakosch (2013, 435) argue, ‘The particular challenge of SCT’s [settler colonial theory’s] analysis is that it does not give an account of such a transformed future [beyond settler colonialism], or the conditions for settler colonialism’s demise.’

This is particularly clear in Veracini’s work when he suggests that there is ‘no intuitive narrative of settler colonial decolonization, and that narrative gap contributes crucially to the invisibility of anti-colonial struggles in settler colonial contexts (2010, 105). This is in part because, unlike colonialism
more generally, where settlers return and sovereignty is negotiated ‘between polities,’ in settler colonialism, where settlers are entrenched and unlikely to leave, ‘sovereignty needs to be negotiated within a polity’ (Veracini 2010, 105). Despite this, Veracini (2010, 105) does imagine three possible responses to settler colonialism: (a) settlers leave and go back to their countries of initial departure; (b) various processes of Indigenous-settler reconciliation take place; or (c) settlers deny any need for reforming/destroying settler colonialism at all. Given that (a) and (c) seem either impossible or a continuation of the colonial status quo, (b) appears as the only real option, which means negotiation within the settler polity.

Negotiation within the settler polity carries the danger of assuming the continuation of the state, which itself is directly linked with settler colonialism. The suggestion of negotiation within the polity often accepts a particularly reformist orientation (with recognition as a common strategy; Coulthard 2014) to somehow make the settler colonial state more ‘inclusive’ of Indigenous peoples within liberal multiculturalism. Even if this could occur on a nation-to-nation basis, it would still structure Indigenous communities inside the settler state proper. As Glen Coulthard (2014, 41) argues, ‘colonial powers will only recognize the collective rights and identities of Indigenous peoples insofar as this recognition does not throw into question the background legal, political, and economic framework of the colonial relationship itself.’ Recognition is only permitted when the structure of settler colonialism itself is left intact.

There could be other forms of reconciliation imagined, as this is something that I hope a decolonial turn within anarchism might be interested in. This requires a fundamental reshaping of the idea of settler community with a direct intention away from the state. In fact it would likely involve many more communities, rooted in local contexts and settings, with reconciliation and new relations being built between the micro-level communities with specific Indigenous nations. This is, in many ways, perhaps one of the key goals of decolonization. The trick with settler colonial theory is that there is little analysis of the state itself, which I think leaves settler colonial theory, most especially Veracini, open to an unacknowledged continuation of the state.

Thus, as the main alternative highlighted by settler colonial theory, it does little to ultimately break one of the most settler colonial structures—the state itself. Here then is one glaring inadequacy of settler colonial theory with regard to decolonization. Never mind that it does not even ask Indigenous nations how they might want to see settler colonialism altered/destroyed (doing such requires turning to and engaging Indigenous theory and practice directly, which I turn to below) but would keep the state, and perhaps even capitalism or other forms of oppression, intact. Indigenous nations need to revitalize and resurge on their own terms, with their autonomy supported and
respected. Settler colonial theory’s views on decolonization thus carry the danger of replicating a liberal form of reconciliation within the state container. This is perhaps an extremely pessimistic and narrow view of settler colonial theory, but without direct acknowledgment of the relationship between the state and the need to dismantle states and imagine different ways of organizing settler communities, this danger appears very real. In this sense, while settler colonial theory gives us a better view of the settler side of things, it does little to imagine its end, and it does little to affirm or support Indigenous resurgence and Indigenous futures on Indigenous terms. Each of these above cautions seems well founded, and in part speaks to the overwhelming participation of settler theorists in settler colonial studies, although there have been Indigenous contributors as well. Settler colonial studies is, in many ways, a (white) settler enterprise, although it does present the possibility of bettering—understanding our settler selves and the dynamics and histories that structure our position vis-à-vis Indigenous communities (Macoun and Strakosch 2013). In this sense, Snelgrove et al. (2014, 7) argue that settler colonial studies might be better understood as a ‘distinct emerging field of study (rather than a site of struggle already critiqued by Indigenous peoples).’ Indigenous communities have been existing and continue to resist settler colonialism—they don’t need a new field of study to understand its complexities. They have lived and encountered it first hand.

**OCCUPY, THE ‘COMMONS’ AND SETTLER COLONIALISM**

Having looked at the general contributions of settler colonial theory, this section forms the main intervention sought in this chapter. Below I look briefly at the anarchist commitment to resist all forms of oppression and domination, and then turn more specifically to anarchist desires to create autonomous and prefigurative futures. My overall contention is that without a concerted analysis of settler colonialism, and in dialogue with Indigenous resurgence movements, anarchist prefiguration does little more than reinscribe structures of settler colonialism.

I look first at the recent Occupy movements as one example that might be understood as a parable for anarchist aims of creating autonomous and prefigurative spaces. I look briefly at Occupy’s aim of reclaiming the commons for the 99 percent, to shed light on the dangerous tendency of recolonization that exists within such perspectives. I end by suggesting a turn towards Indigenous resurgence and the possibilities of decolonization.

While hardly an explicitly anarchist movement, the various chapters, encampments and sites of resistance under the Occupy banner have been understood as having a specifically anarchist character, more so in terms of anarchism in practice rather than in name (see, for example, Bray 2013; Grae-
The anarchist influence in Occupy, according to Graeber (2011), stems from a refusal of participation in existing political institutions, refusal to accept the legitimacy of the current order, refusing hierarchical forms of organization and doing politics and towards consensus-based prefigurative politics. This doesn’t, of course, mean that any and all Occupy projects lived up to these aspirations. There is, though, a pretty clear infusion of anarchist sensibilities in the aims and means of Occupy. It is this reason that Occupy, and moreover the critiques of Occupy, can be useful for considering resistance to all forms of oppression and domination, and prefiguration within anarchism itself.

Soon after Occupy began to spread through both Canada and the United States, there was a wide ranging critique of its aims and practices. There were many detractors who derided the movement as hopelessly utopian or lacking in a specific program of alternatives, often coming from hostile places such as the mainstream media or right wing/liberal political commentators. There were also many criticisms that came from within left-based social movements themselves. The most potent and significant of these was of Occupy’s relationship to land, occupation, colonization and Indigenous communities.

The substance of the Indigenous criticism of Occupy might be represented by the words of Anishinaabe writer John Paul Montano (2011):

I had hoped mention would be made of the indigenous nation whose land that is. I had hoped that you would address the centuries-long history that we indigenous peoples of this continent have endured being subject to the countless ‘-isms’ of do-gooders claiming to be building a ‘more just society,’ a ‘better world,’ a ‘land of freedom’ on top of our indigenous societies, on our indigenous lands, while destroying and/or ignoring our ways of life. I had hoped that you would acknowledge that, since you are settlers on indigenous land, you need and want our indigenous consent to your building anything on our land—never mind an entire society (emphasis in original).

Montano captures the general failed hopes of Indigenous communities: that Occupy might actually take stock of the context and history of the lands and peoples who call these areas home. This perspective was echoed widely (see Yee 2011) and became a point of discussion at many Occupy encampments themselves, with some moving in the direction of ‘decolonize the 99%,’ or deOccupy and so forth (on this point, see Kilibarda 2012).

Further, part of the issue with Occupy, and its 99 percent versus 1 percent messaging, is the assumption that Indigenous communities would share the concerns of the movement and readily accept being lumped into the wide-ranging 99 percent (Barker 2012). In reality, the Occupy movement alienated Indigenous communities through a lack of analysis of settler colonialism (or by collapsing colonialism into broad opposition to capitalism; Grande 2013,
settler discourses commons
now for Occupy.
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370), through the use of ‘occupy’ on lands that are already occupied by settlers at the expense of Indigenous communities, and by disregarding Indigenous histories of resistance that have themselves used the tactic of reoccupation to assert rights, access to land and connection to territory (Barker 2012, 3).

Adam Barker (2012, 4) argues that the politics of Occupy did little more than ‘co-opt the power of place’ at the expense of Indigenous communities, as a reinscription of settler colonialism, while also refusing to recognize the specific differences in settler and Indigenous interactions within systems of oppression and domination. Settlers, as part of their privilege in settler colonialism, can ignore the structures of invasion that continue to bolster access to Indigenous lands. Occupy in this sense was but ‘another settler colonial dynamic participating in the transfer of land and space to the hands of the settler colonial majority’ (Barker 2012, 7). Sandy Grande (2013, 370) argues further that Occupy resulted only in a politics that continues to seek to absorb Indigenous peoples into a liberal project of general inclusion—an ‘accumulation of the primitive’—that echoes settler colonial attempts at assimilation and removing the specificity of Indigeneity.

Grande (2013, 371) goes further in suggesting that Occupy’s ‘demand-free platform and collectivist politics . . . inherits a liberal philosophy that not only neuters the formation of substantive alternatives to the status quo but, more significantly, fails to disrupt liberalism’s justifications for the settler state’ and forecloses any substantive engagement with issues of race and colonization with appeals to a broad ‘inclusive, pluralistic space’ (373). The failure to take up an analysis of these histories, dynamics and structures, Grande ultimately concludes, ‘inheres the logic of elimination’ (375), which is foundational to settler colonialism.

The similarities of the practices and criticisms of Occupy and movements that seek to reclaim some sort of generic and accessible ‘commons’ for the broadly oppressed (or 99 percent) are striking. For example, Sharma and Wright (2008–2009) advocate returning to a global commons that erases the specificity of Indigeneity in favour of a ‘neutral’ interpretation of free actors. Ben Maddison (2010, 43) notes issues of these sorts within radical commons discourses (dating back to the anarchistic Diggers of the late 1600) where there are ‘efforts to subsume the differences between subaltern colonizers and the indigenous colonized by calling them all “commoners.”’ This is precisely what has also occurred in both Sharma and Wright’s work and Occupy. Indigenous practices and relationships of commons were targeted for eradication under settler colonialism to make way for settlement and are now pushed aside in a continual settler fashion to make way for ‘radical’ commons projects. The foundational framings of Occupy/radical commons discourses then reinscribe terra nullius, which invisibilizes and maintains settler colonialism.
It seems quite clear that anarchism shares similar forms of prefiguration as Occupy and radical commons discourses. This is part of a reflection of anarchism’s influence on Occupy, which also didn’t present an anti-colonial and decolonizing example with which to take up when considering relations to land and Indigenous communities. Importantly, anarchists do point out that when seeking alternatives the desire to destroy all forms of oppression and domination won’t simply end with the creation of prefigurative alternatives, and a degree of unceasing vigilance will be required to ensure that oppression and domination are not reinscribed even within anarchist alternatives (Amster 2012, 18).

Even despite such vigilance, the case of the Occupy movement suggests that a generic opposition to all forms of oppression and domination, and seeking a broad-based unity within alternative struggles for the future that is open and inclusive (as anarchist projects aim to be) can do little to take stock of the structural realities of settler colonialism without very specific attention, and direct engagements, with Indigenous communities.

Anarchist prefiguration, if it follows an occupational logic similar to that of Occupy, will be a form of anarchist *terra nullius*. The situation might appear as follows: To break out of the bonds of the state and capitalism, anarchists begin agitating in their own communities—building alternatives in the present, whether radical community spaces, libraries, alternative health care centres, mutual aid societies, collective kitchens and so forth. As their power grows, the state will certainly retaliate, as history suggests, and such spaces will be defended. As the support for such spaces mounts, they grow, proliferate, expand, and begin to create spaces that are outside the reach of the state. Here building inside the state shifts to being outside, and spaces of autonomy are born.

This process will obviously be much more complex, with much more struggle likely to take place, but the narrative is characteristic of anarchism. The implication here is that such anarchist accounts are often decontextualized and separated from history as sanitized future visions. Surely such visions should actually reflect the possibilities and desires of those who find themselves in such spaces of resistance, as not all struggles are the same in all places. But the greater implication here is the replication of *terra nullius*. An anarchist vision free of Indigeneity, free from consideration of settler colonial histories, is likely to replicate processes of settler colonial settlement and Indigenous displacement in favour of a homogenized alternative commons. Some may object to this caricature, but I have yet to see concerted attention within anarchism that goes beyond such a general vision. Anarchists want to argue that we are not utopic, in part because prefiguration
allows (in fact, requires) us to build here and now. But we can’t wrap our heads around the colonial implications that often surround such desires or reconcile our desires for autonomous futures with Indigenous alternatives that already exist, and have existed, for quite some time (Saed 2013, 3).

On the other hand, there is some explicit mention of colonialism within anarchist geography, as a specific problematic that needs consideration in Springer (2012, 1618), and as something that anarchists have inherited from the forefathers Reclus and Kropotkin.

Anarchist geography is, of course, ahead in some sense compared to other geographic perspectives because of its critique and refusal to narrow the geographic imagination within the terms of the nation-state as the inherent form (on this point generally, see Biolsi 2005). This is one of anarchist geography’s strengths that I think might make way for a careful consideration of Indigenous struggles and alternatives on their own terms. If anarchism and anarchist geography are at fault for a lack of consideration of Indigenous struggles, they are at least ahead of those Marxists who would insist on a need to rectify Indigenous struggles within a state socialism. Springer (2012) also points to some of the implications of Marxism, specifically Marxist geographies, with regard to colonialism and Indigenous struggles, and suggests that Marxist discussions of primitive accumulation, although shedding light on the process of dispossession in Indigenous communities, are taken as an inherent and necessary phase that must occur in the long chain of epochs before arriving at socialism and the withering away of the state.

Springer (2012, 1613), however, suggests that the state within radical geography ‘must be understood as a smaller-scale replica of the colonial state’ with the few dominating the many, and with the enforcement of a singular homogeneous identity. I take Springer’s point here, but it suggests, even if by a slight of language, that the contemporary state itself is not colonial, which adds to the invisibilization of settler colonialism in the context of anarchist geography. I don’t think this is his intention, but the danger of such a phrasing, when making a point that radical geography needs to itself further engage the state, seems to push colonialism out of view. Springer argues further that radical geography, because of its lack of critique of the state, has been unable to create a specifically anti-colonial perspective. He then goes on to discuss the construction of anarchist alternatives, but without discussion of the colonial implications of such prefigurative approaches. What we are left with, in part, is a view that condemns radical geography broadly for a lack of anti-colonial analysis via a lack of critique of the state but doesn’t take up its own advice for anti-colonial analysis with regards to a prefigurative anarchist future. This shows both the potential of anarchist geography for looking at settler colonialism and the failure of doing so to date.
Further, if, on the flip side following Clough and Blumberg (2012), anarchist geographers ‘contend that geography cannot be tangential in understanding the development of anarchist perspectives’ where geography ‘is precisely what shapes the place-based diversity of anarchist approaches’ (340, emphasis mine), then what of analyses of settler colonialism? If anarchist geography does present the opportunity to inject analysis of the ‘spatiality upon which governance is premised’ (Springer 2012, 1618), then there needs to be a specific anarchist turn towards analysing settler colonialism as a fundamental structure that is strategically central to the contexts of resistance in which we find ourselves. If anarchist perspectives and alternatives are understood as place-based, what are the grand implications for failing to engage with settler colonialism and Indigenous struggles for autonomy? The implication, as has been argued, is at worst creating a specifically anarchist terra nullius, or at least writing Indigenous peoples out of histories of struggles and examples of alternatives to state. In this sense, there is a need for a much greater decolonial turn in anarchist geography, and anarchism writ large, given our location in the structural context of settler colonialism. One way of moving forward, then, might be to engage with Indigenous communities, Indigenous understandings of land and place, and Indigenous resurgence specifically, on its own terms.

CONCLUSION: INDIGENOUS RESURGENCE AND SETTLER DECOLONIZATION

One of the key ways forward for anarchist geography, and for settler colonial studies as well, is (re)engagement with Indigenous understandings of space, resurgence, and decolonization, to give a better sense of the context of struggle that we are within, as well as to see some possible ways forward for anarchist decolonization and settler unsettling. The work of Indigenous authors Leanne Simpson (2011), Taiaiake Alfred (2005) and Glen Coulthard (2014), who put forth contextualized forms of Indigenous resurgence that take land as a fundamental set of relationships that is central to daily life, survival and resistance, might be more widely engaged by anarchists. We can critique the state, capital and colonialism all we want (and we must), but we also need to imagine new forms of relations and ways of organizing. Anarchists conceive this through the lens of prefiguration, but they also need to add a specific analysis of settler colonialism.

Anarchism meshes well with Indigenous theorists mentioned here in many ways, as each considers Indigenous futures as needing to exist outside both the state and capitalism. Alfred suggests that his project of resurgence in Wasase (2005, 45) has much in common with anarchism. He suggests
as a starting point, conceptualizing anarcho-indigenism. Why? And why this term? Conveyance of the indigenous warrior ethic will require its codification in some form—a creed and an ethical framework for thinking through challenges. To take root in people’s minds the new ethic will have to capture the spirit of a warrior in battle and bring it to politics. How might this spirit be described in contemporary terms related to political thought and movement? The two elements that come to my mind are indigenous, evoking cultural and spiritual rootedness in this land and the Onkwehonwe21 struggle for justice and freedom, and the political philosophy and movement that is fundamentally anti-institutional, radically democratic, and committed to taking action to force change: anarchism (emphasis in original).

Alfred’s project, then, shares some similarities with anarchism, specifically seeking autonomous alternatives outside the state and capitalism, like anarchist conceptions of prefiguration. Of course the primary difference is that Alfred is coming to this from the standpoint of a revitalizing and resurgent Indigenous cultural grounding which has an intimate understanding of settler colonialism.

Simpson (2011, 87) suggests that Indigenous resurgence includes ‘disruption of the capitalist industrial complex and the colonial gender system . . . within settler nations by challenging the very foundation of the nation-state and its relationships to the land and Indigenous nations.’ Resistance allows for the creation of self-determining and autonomous Indigenous spaces that allow for resurgence and a return to ‘nonhierarchical, non-authoritarian and non-coercive’ relationships and ways of organizing society (Simpson 2011, 53). The resonance with anarchism here is clear. Though given that Indigenous lifeways predate significantly the idea of anarchism in name, it might be better to say that anarchism has a resonance with these central Indigenous ideas.

‘Stated bluntly,’ Glen Coulthard (2014, 13) argues,

the theory and practice of Indigenous anticolonialism, including Indigenous anticapitalism, is best understood as a struggle primarily inspired by and oriented around the question of land—a struggle not only for land in the material sense, but also deeply informed by what the land as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominating and nonexploitative terms (emphasis in original).

This is the ‘place-based foundation of decolonial thought and practice’ within Indigenous communities. To this end, he suggests that ‘Indigenous resurgence is at its core a prefigurative politics—the methods of decolonization prefigure its aims (159). In conclusion, Coulthard (2014, 165–79) suggests five theses for resurgence and decolonization—namely, (a) the necessity of direct action for resistance; (b) the need to destroy capitalism for Indigenous
communities to thrive and promote self-sufficiency; (c) recognizing the process of settler colonialism, and seeking Indigenous sovereignty, in the city; (d) the importance of gender justice within decolonization; and, finally, (e) imagining alternatives beyond the state.

Given the resonance of anarchism with the perspectives on Indigenous resistance highlighted here, and the settler colonial realities highlighted above, anarchism needs to begin to engage with Indigenous theorists like Alfred, Coulthard and Simpson. And on their terms. As much as these forms of Indigenous resurgence sound like anarchism, we cannot seek to extract Indigenous perspectives into our own anarchist terms or perform the settler colonial act of assimilation by declaring Indigenous resurgence as an anarchist project. We can, however, engage with such work, disrupt our own limited perspectives within anarchism, and begin to consider what it might look like to follow the lead of those at the forefront of anti-capitalist, anti-state and anti-colonial resistance.

One disruptive contribution that anarchism might consider is understandings of land. Some anarchists already have taken up problematizing relations of land (Ince 2012), although a specific analysis of settler colonialism is still significantly absent. Anthony Ince (2012, 1646) suggests that an anarchist understanding of territory might seek to break the association of territory-state in geography broadly, but also ‘recast territory as a tool of political praxis produced and contested chiefly through relations’ (emphasis in original) towards political and prefigurative aims. This has profound implications for geography as a discipline, but it also suggests that there are already some general conceptual tools being built within anarchism to reconsider relations to territory and land. What remains, and what is missing from Ince’s account and anarchism generally, is how this relates to Indigenous understandings. If anarchists want to imagine a new set of territorial and land-based relations, this must be done on Indigenous terms, as we are settler visitors to this land. We can seek autonomy all we want, but without accountability to Indigenous communities and the land, we are little more than new harbingers of settler colonialism.

Turning to Indigenous understandings of place, one of the important considerations for settlers is to first recognize, but then also break out of, the assumptions inherent in what Seawright (2014, 555) calls ‘settlement epistemologies’ that ‘curate conceptions of place’ via ‘domination through systems of white supremacy, settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and anthropocentrism.’ A disruption of settler epistemologies can, in part, come via Indigenous pedagogies of land and decolonization, and specifically land-based forms of education that are rooted in Indigenous histories of place and knowledge (Wildcat, MacDonald, Irlbacher-Fox and Coulthard 2014). Following Simpson (2014), land might be seen as both ‘context and process’—where we stand, but also how we come to know. Land itself is the pedagogy
in Indigenous understandings. It is a grounded perspective that is premised on connection rather than disconnection, which is a function of settler identity.

As Simpson argues, ‘[Indigenous peoples] cannot just think, write or imagine our way to a decolonized future. Answers on how to re-build and how to resurge are therefore derived from a web of consensual relationships that is infused with movement (kinetic) through lived experience and embodiment’ (Simpson 2014, 16).22 Settlers might consider what this could mean in our own contexts, and as we seek to imagine new relations with land and Indigenous communities. We need to formulate our own new ways of living in connection to the land and in conversation with Indigenous understandings. This might start with imagining and then cultivating reciprocal relationships with local Indigenous communities, supporting Indigenous efforts at resurgence on their own terms, interrogating how settler privilege reinscribes settler colonial dynamics and structures our relations to Indigenous communities, taking up settler unsettling/decolonization as a responsibility in settler communities, recognizing that the path towards a new future will be difficult and challenging and that ‘co-existence’ on Indigenous lands also requires ‘co-resistance’ (Irlbacher-Fox 2014) against all forms of oppression and domination, and also specifically settler colonialism.

As I have argued here, anarchism and anarchist geography need to attend to the structural realities of settler colonialism. Doing so means looking at how we phrase our opposition to all forms of oppression and domination and our creative aims at prefiguration, and how these relate to the strategic centrality of settler colonialism in our particular contexts. The danger of not doing so, as per the example of Occupy, where we seek to create autonomous alternatives without attention to their settler colonial implications, does little more than contribute to an anarchist terra nullius that invisibilizes Indigenous resistance, resurgence and the necessity of engaging Indigenous communities resisting capitalism and the state here and now. There is no way forward within anarchism but to begin to look at what settler decolonization and unsettling might involve in settler contexts. Anarchist geography is particularly well suited to take the lead on some of this work, having already a focus on spatial constructions of oppression and domination and also the possibilities of resistance. We must commit ourselves to the task at hand in earnest, and in ‘co-existence’ and ‘co-resistance’ with Indigenous communities.

As cited in Wolfe (1999, 1), ‘to get in the way [of settler colonialism] all the native has to do is stay home.’ For decolonization, Indigenous communities ‘just’ need to revitalize, recover and resurge lifeways and connections to land. For settlers, this is a less straightforward task. We need to reimagine the whole of ourselves, the very fabric of our societies, and the very assumptions that they are built on. If we ‘stay home’ in places, both physical and theoretical, that we currently inhabit, we do nothing more than maintain
structures of settler colonialism. What we must do is reframe these spaces, seek new foundations for relating and understanding, with the understanding that this necessary work will be for the long haul and always incomplete.

Decolonization for settlers might be understood as a ‘tangible unknown’ (Sium, Desai and Ritskes 2012), as possible, without a clear set of roadmaps, but clearly needing to centre Indigenous understandings and relations to land. Like the Zapatista saying where every time we take one step toward utopia, it takes two more steps ahead, with the point being to keep walking, the same might be said for settler decolonization. The point must be for us to keep going, keep moving, without seeking a specific endpoint or finalized destination. Foregrounding the immediacy for a need to promote Indigenous resurgence in terms that resonate with anarchists, Coulthard (2014, 173) argues, ‘For Indigenous nations to live, capitalism must die. And for capitalism to die, we must actively participate in the construction [and support] of Indigenous alternatives to it.’ Anarchism and anarchist geography need to take up an analysis of settler colonialism, or else we will find ourselves on the opposite side of Indigenous resistance and resurgence.

NOTES

1. Thanks and appreciation to Marcelo Lopes de Souza and Richard White for their comments on this chapter. Thanks are also due to Ravi de Costa, Lesley Wood and J.J. McMurtry, who provided comments and suggestions on much of what appears here as I was developing this chapter.

2. I come to this work as an anarchist in the settler colonial state of Canada. In this chapter I confine my comments to the U.S./Canada settler colonial context, although there are a number of differences in history and relations with Indigenous communities between the two. There may also be elements that carry resonance for anti-colonial and decolonizing struggles more broadly. I hope this chapter may prove useful for all those who might desire to see new relations and a world without oppression and domination. Further, as a result of my focus and my own limitations, this chapter is confined to English-speaking sources and examples, as well as the predominantly white/Euro-American anarchist movement and realm of theoretical work. This replicates what Marcelo Lopes de Souza (2012, 322) has called a ‘gray space of theory’ where non-English and non-Euro American sources are not acknowledged or seen to exist. Terminology itself, he argues further, also presents conceptual issues as well—for example, where the term anarchism might not be employed in reference to anti-state and anti-capitalist politics, but where libertarian might be employed more often.

3. We might also briefly consider what is most often called ‘lifestyle politics.’ Despite the enduring debate as to the necessity of such politics (see Bookchin 1995), Portwood-Stacer argues that lifestyle politics have a place alongside other forms of anarchist resistance as they ‘reconfigure’ ‘everyday life … into an ongoing struggle against domination’ (Portwood-Stacer 2013, 2). I don’t take up such politics in this chapter explicitly, but it is important to think about what prefigurative personal projects and orientations towards decolonization might look like for anarchists.

4. There are, of course, a number of engagements with anarchism and geography since the writings of Reclus and Kropotkin in the late nineteenth century or with Colin Ward in the 1970s. While this is an important history, and there may be much to gain from a thorough examination, this chapter looks at more recent developments at the forefront of anarchist geography today. See Springer (2013; also Cook and Norcup 2012) for a much more thorough genealogy.
5. Harsha Walia (2013, 46) makes a similar point in noting the lack of attention to Indigenous dispossession and questions of land in anti-capitalism struggles broadly.

6. For a detailed genealogy of the concept, see Veracini (2013), who suggests four key phases of conceptual development.

7. As I suggested above (note 1) my context of examination is North America. While settler colonial studies, and the term settler colonialism, might be applied in more various contexts, the theorists and discussion that I take up here are firmly within the collection of states linked primarily to British imperialism (Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa). Israel stands as an exception of sorts, with a much earlier point of settler colonial instigation, while the other states mentioned generally see the process of settler colonial construction occur in the 1600s. This isn’t to say that settler colonialism does exist in other times or locations, and in fact this might be one possible expansion of settler colonial theory, but the settler colonial theory I examine is relatively narrowly defined.

8. For an example of definitions of Indigenous, see Sium, Desai and Ritskes (2012, VI).


10. Lorenzo Veracini, for example (2010, 34–50), has highlighted twenty-six different forms of settler colonial ‘transfer’ that all share the same underlying logic insofar as ‘all these strategies aim to manipulate the population economy by discursively or practically emptying the indigenous sector of the population systems (or sections of it), they share a transferist rationale’ (34).

11. It was this relationship that Sherman suggests also began the disconnection of settler societies from their own lands and the natural world (2010, 117).

12. For one example of this, see Sharma and Wright (2008–2009), who argue that affirming a settler/Indigenous binary is to take up a ‘neo-racist’ politics of exclusion, and instead advocate for moving towards a cosmopolitan ‘global commons’ where we can all get along. This view eschews both a binary and a more complex set of relations in favour of a generic ‘commons’ view. I turn to this question of ‘commons’ specifically later in this chapter. On Sharma and Wright, see Wolfe (2013, 265).

13. For a detailed examination of this reality, especially in terms of different effects on urban versus reserve Indigenous populations, see Lawrence (2004).

14. As a white settler, it would be easy for me to advocate subsuming difference within the settler ‘side’ of the binary into one category. This can be a dangerous move. I think this could be done as a means of disrupting complicity with settler colonialism, given the ‘strategic centrality’ of settler colonialism to our particular context, but again should not be taken as a push to disassociate from broader challenges to white supremacy and fostering an intersectional politics of resistance.

15. For a general critique of this phrasing, see Ciccariello-Maher (2011) and Olson (2009).

16. I should note that there are those beginning to consider the settler colonial implications of anarchism, with work on anarcha-Indigenism (Day 2003, 2008; Lasky 2011; Lewis 2012a), Barker’s work in general (2010, and with Pickerill (2012), my own contributions (Lewis 2012a, 2012b) or within anti-authoritarianism in general (Walia 2013). There is a conversation that is continually building; it has not, however, been a general consideration within anarchism.

17. While both Reclus and Kropotkin certainly agitated for resistance to the state, which was and continues to be colonial, I am not convinced that agitation was all that explicitly anti-colonial. Kropotkin, for example, has little to say about colonization in his major works, and the same could be said about Reclus. While anarchist politics and values do suggest solidarity with colonized peoples and resistance to colonialism, I think there is a danger in suggesting that this amounts to a historical anarchist anti-colonialism.

18. Walia’s (2013) notion of border imperialism as a way to maintain settler colonial statist regimes is also surely at play here within Marxism.


Adam Gary Lewis

21. Alfred (2005, 288) defines Onkwehonwe in the Mohawk language as “‘the original people’ . . . referring to the First Peoples of North America.”

22. For some other examples of this kind of Indigenous land as pedagogy in practice, see Alfred (2014) and Ballantyne (2014).

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Chapter Ten

Celebrating the Invasive

The Hidden Pleasures and Political Promise of the Unwanted

Nick Garside

I can’t recall if my interest in oddities or my interest in anti-authoritarian politics came first, but recently commonalities between these interests have become more evident. I have been fascinated by different kinds of invasives for quite some time. My primary interest has been in the way feral animals, feral children and other ‘out of the ordinary’ characters such as jesters, fools and nomads are responded to and dealt with when they venture into an unsuspecting community. This, perhaps not that peculiar, dual interest has led me into the strange world of ecological restoration, conservation science and many other disciplines intent on protecting some fictitious purity of the collective. It has also led me to consider the political promise of embracing a disruptive approach to political agency.

In nearly all cases referring to feral or invasive animals that I examined, there was a common theme that meant feral animals, aliens and non-natives were judged as unnatural (and thus unwelcome) outsiders and, as such, a disturbance to be dealt with by whatever means necessary. The overriding justification for this categorization and action was always related to what I continue to see as an odd commitment to sustainability and conservation, not necessarily of anything in particular, but of everything in general (although most cases were admittedly related to a threat to a particular region, the conservationist gaze and authority meant that the specificity of the case was only significant as a place upon which the context-free foundation of the conservationist gaze could be imposed). Anything unfortunate enough to be objectified as an invasive was unquestionably vilified and the plans for eradi-
cation seemed the only reasonable response regardless of the context, the past, or the future. How could anyone not want to save the integrity of the ecological/social/cultural community?

In this chapter I begin by reviewing a few examples of society’s response to feral animals, both human and non-human. During this review I hint at the political promise of consciously taking on the identity of a feral agent along democratic terrain. Once I have given the brief overview, I move on to describe in slightly more detail the kind of temporary political moments a feral citizen can create once the attributes of being feral are embraced and recognized as at least potentially politically useful and democratically disruptive.

STORIES

It is well known that humans rely on many different stories to help us try to understand, but as the diversity of stories suggests, each story is limited by the simple fact that it is part of a broader social imaginary or set of norms that is necessarily limited by the desired outcome, normative core, and specific methodology (to name a few of the most obvious limits). Not to mention the fact that as a collective species we are diverse, but we—like all other animals—see, feel, taste, experience in a particular manner unlike any other species. As Susan Bickford (1996, 24) explains, ‘we cannot hear but as ourselves, against the backdrop of who we are.’

A common problem amongst the celebrants of place lies in the fact that the intent of most of the stories they tell is to offer a more accurate or truthful representation of ‘the place’ they are celebrating. The driving force seems to be the desire to uncover the secrets of nature so we can finally know how to co-evolve and flourish with the environment we share. As long as the knowledge is not intended to help us better dominate nature—that is, as long as it is being proposed by those who want to improve upon the current parasitic relationship—it is very hard to criticize the intent. Like when conservationists justify the eradication of an invasive or non-native species, it seems common sensical that the strategy is a good one. Perhaps it is, but to make these statements we have to make judgement calls, and judgement calls are embedded in broader stories which lead to those unfortunate enough to be burdened with the label of ‘invasive’ or ‘feral’ destined to be judged as the villain in each and every one of the stories told (conservationists being the heroes).

As the anthropogenic label suggests, these non-native newcomers are only ever going to be viewed as problems to ‘deal with.’ And in the subsequent management plan, which necessarily comes into action once an invasive is defined—because this is how the story goes—they are typically con-
structured as enemy number one. This is due to the fact that regardless of whether the proposal is from the periphery like those offered by radical environmental theorists or from the centre like those put forth by most conservation/preservation scientists and restoration ecologists, the shared default setting is that sustainability, conservation and tension-free relations are inherently good things and as such disruption and disturbance of ‘the place’ is bad.

What I wish to argue is that the uncritical celebration of harmony and sustainability ought to be up for debate. Sustainability for its own sake is no better than efficiency for its own sake. We need to ask deeper and earlier political questions such as what are we sustaining and why are we sustaining it. And the way these questions can be asked is by becoming precisely what the unquestioned default settings are made to exclude—feral, invasive, out of place.

Social ecologist Murray Bookchin rightly and consistently challenged environmental ethicists for failing to focus on the societal structures that led to the domination of non-human nature by humans and the domination of humans by humans, but he, too, defaulted into an ecologically inspired and truth inspired notion of harmony to legitimize his position. Not only does so-called natural harmony perpetuate human arrogance by assuming that the relationship is harmonious if ‘we’ believe it to be so, but it also obscures the key moral and political question of ‘why?’

Why should humans try to live in a respectful or harmonious or, I would add, perhaps at times disruptive relationship with more-than-human others? The answer to any of these questions is not because it is natural; it is because it is just or it is what we believe we ought to do. A terrific example of such an argument made well before its time can be found in Errico Malatesta’s (1965 [1931]) letter to ‘Pietro (Peter) Kropotkin—Recollections and Criticisms of an Old Friend.’ In this letter Malatesta suggested, among other things, that Kropotkin—who had a materialist philosophy and struggled to find truth in nature to justify anarchism as the natural way of human association—was far too passionate to be an accurate or at all objective observer. ‘Kropotkin was an eminently systematic personality,’ argued Malatesta, ‘and he wanted to explain everything with one principle, and reduce everything to unity and often, did so’ (261). Furthermore, he became so popular that criticism of him or his ideas became unpopular, a condition which Malatesta rightly argued arrested the development of anarchism. Parallels of this type of ‘hero worship’ are found throughout the environmental movement, particularly with regards to Arne Naess and Murray Bookchin, as are parallels between the passionate observer of science and the so-called objective truth of ecology.

The most amazing part of Malatesta’s letter, however, came when he suggested that
[o]ne could have pointed out that whatever are the conclusions that can be drawn from contemporary science, it was a fact that if new discoveries were to destroy present scientific beliefs, he [Kropotkin] would have remained an anarchist in spite of science. (263)

Namely, Kropotkin would have remained an anarchist regardless of whether or not scientific facts dictated that he should be or not. Is this not true of most anarchists and radical ecologists? Would we not argue for a non-dominating relationship with nature regardless of whether it was natural or not? Would we not see the wanton destruction of non-human nature as undesirable regardless of whether or not it was regarded as natural?

Neil Evernden (1992, 15) begins his book *The Social Creation of Nature* by highlighting such a dilemma. He suggests in the chapter ‘The Social Use of Nature’ that relying on nature as the ground for an argument could lead to at least three ‘forms of the action proper to human beings, all apparently justified by the insights of ecology,’ the worst of which would be our ‘natural’ role as a ‘global budworm’:

We can live ‘in harmony’ with nature, which to some is clearly the ‘natural’ thing to do; or we can expand our domain by direct competition with other species, which certainly seems (at least since Darwin) a ‘natural’ enough thing to do; or we can endorse the overexploitation of nature in certain knowledge that through our destruction we are doing nature’s work, just as we are ‘naturally’ meant to do. Proponents of the first two possibilities would no doubt be united in rejecting the third, if in nothing else. But the point is not that the ‘budworm’ scenario deserves serious consideration, but rather that nature justifies nothing or anything.

When it comes to invasives or ferals, the animal is typically seen as *out of place* and thus disruptive. It also, as I mentioned previously, tends to be viewed or described as a problem that must be ‘dealt with’ in order to maintain the health and balance of the community. In this kind of managerial discourse, the moment an animal is defined as feral, it loses any sense of intrinsic value. The animal is, almost without exception, dealt with as invasive, a pest, a disturbance. Eradication is an unquestioned necessity. As the animals fail to fit into a determined taxonomy, and fail to act according to what others in their species naturally do, they get categorized as a threat to the/their environment. Considering the cultural and environmentalist focus on wildlife management, conservation plans, and restoration ecology, it is not surprising that well-trained specialists would conclude that eradication or management of such animals is the only *reasonable* option.

A few examples of the language used to vilify these unfortunate creatures offer a good indication of just how frightening their presence is to experts such as conservation biologists. From the Missouri Department of Conser-
Feral, free-roaming hogs degrade wildlife habitat, compete directly with native wildlife for food, and can pose a threat to humans and domestic livestock through the spread of disease. . . . Some of these hogs have escaped from captivity. However, some have been intentionally released on public lands for hunting purposes, although it is illegal to do so. These hogs pose a very real threat, and if left unchecked, their numbers can expand rapidly. You can help.

The suggested way to help deal with the problem is to shoot as many as you can, as the specific section on ‘Hunting Feral Hogs’ explains: ‘Feral hogs are not native to Missouri, and can be taken in any number at any time. Before shooting, however, be certain the hog is feral and is not escaped livestock.’

The management and control of feral cats is slightly less blatantly violent due to the fact that many cats are ‘domestic.’ Nevertheless, they remain defined as ‘problem species’ and are usually considered pests or invasives. In fact, when it comes to felines, if one wishes, one can take an online course: ‘Trap-Neuter-Return: Managing Feral Cat Colonies.’ The online outline of the course claims:

This course will provide you with an answer—trap/neuter/return, or TNR as it’s popularly known—is the only method proven to be both humane and effective in controlling feral cat populations. Whether your focus is on the cats who’ve taken up residence in your backyard or on the ferals throughout your city, TNR can stop the cats from reproducing and eliminate much of the nuisance behavior often associated with ferals.

Or one might turn to Animal Rights Canada’s website (http://www.animalrightscanada.com/feral/web) for the more compassionate approach. On this site we are informed that ‘feral cats deserve our compassion and protection. Cats, whether feral or domestic, deserve the right to be recognized as a unique and important species and to be treated as equal members of the animal kingdom.’ However, when it comes to what to do with the increasing population of feral cats, Animal Rights Canada unequivocally agrees with the trap-neuter-return policy, suggesting the cats can be a part of the animal kingdom only if they behave appropriately and do not overpopulate it. They get to act like well-behaved reformers but not undisciplined radicals—they can have a part in the story, but only if they perform their role appropriately. These are just a few examples of the many management/eradication strategies that tackle the feral animal problem.

As the above few examples attest, the presence of feral animals stimulates responses and disrupts perceived norms in the community visited. So, if feral is to be claimed as a worthy approach to citizenship, it is due to its potential
to cause problems and disrupt perceived norms and comforts of whatever community is entered. Once attached to political agency and introduced as part of a wandering political epistemology, the disruptive promise of being feral can become a radically democratic way of participating in modern democracy. So the use of the term *feral* rather than *wild* is purposeful. I do not believe *feral* and *wild* to be synonymous terms. Rather, I consider *feral* a border or boundary term that describes a creature that is neither wild nor domestic, and at times both wild and domestic—never conforming to either simplistic classification. As such, one who is feral is invasive.

The use of *feral* as opposed to *wild* is additionally significant, as part of what makes feral creatures persistently disruptive is their perpetual lack of home and their constant desire, if not need, to wander. Feral citizens do not stick around the disrupted community to rebuild it. They disrupt it, change it, challenge its norms, and then move on. From a democratic perspective the idea is to encourage self-reflection—not to guide it, just to help create the conditions that will foster change. Acts of feral citizenship are not intended to entice followers; they are intended to help create political moments that can reinvigorate political debate and reinvigorate the political sphere as a space of antagonism, critique, opposition and plurality.

Moreover, ‘wild’ has a kind of saviour character attached to it due to its constructed personality as human culture’s opposite. Examples can be found in the attempts at re-wilding and in well-known quotes such as Thoreau’s ‘in wilderness is the preservation of the earth’; Abbey’s ‘Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit’ and Walt Disney’s ‘I don’t like formal gardens. I like wild nature. It’s just the wilderness instinct in me, I guess.’ Along with the saviour complex, these all suggest a prescribed direction that the interlocutor is to follow, a sort of lost past that must be re-found. Ferals do not prescribe anything and they are not interested in people following them to some ideal place. The intent is creating political moments in places that already exist along democratic terrain. Do not follow, just pay attention and politicize where you are. As mentioned earlier, part of what makes the feral identity unique is the absence of home, so there is no place to go to, nowhere to entice people to come to. The lack of home is not viewed as a burden but rather an opportunity to embrace the freedom of not being tied down to a home or a responsibility imposed by needing to fit some external category of normal. By home I mean a comfortable place to return to and speak more authoritatively from once the travels are complete. The feral citizen is a perpetual wanderer; s/he wants places to visit, not followers.

Ferals are literally nowhere at home, either in the taxonomy categories we create for them or in the temporary habitat they create for themselves. So, given the burden that comes along with embracing this sort of political agency, it is important that the activity performed is a chosen one; it is equally important that the activity be attached to one’s identity as a political actor or
citizen. This is at least partially because no one is ever only a citizen, and no one should ever be or think they need to be only disruptive.

I should also mention that the reason I attach the metaphor to citizenship is partly because I think we need to re-prioritize and revalue the informal political sphere, I believe it is through civic discourse and civic action that the democratic terrain is rebuilt, and I believe a revitalized democratic terrain holds the greatest promise for a disruptive and tension-filled future. Also, as Bookchin and many others have long argued, it is the citizen that renders the political sphere a living reality.

The conscious activities of wandering ferals could very easily devolve into nihilistic destruction without recognition of the primacy of the political and the importance of critical interrogation and disruption as a specifically political act. Second, as Bickford (1996, 186) has pointed out, ‘no one can be actively engaged in the tension of citizenship all the time, or even most of the time, and politics is not the whole of human existence.’ Thus, feral subjectivity and methodology as part of citizenship is a conscious/temporary choice utilized by those committed to expanding the public sphere and revitalizing the democratic tradition. Feral citizenship is not a type of political agency for nomadic peoples; it is an approach to political agency intent on encouraging and celebrating disruptive, nomadic agents of politics. But before I elaborate on this, it is worth pausing for a moment to look at the disruption associated with the discovery of feral children.

FERAL CHILDREN

Victor made Itard as much as Itard, Victor. Genie made Curtiss as much as, or perhaps rather more than, Curtiss affected Genie. (Leiber 1997, 326)⁶

The discovery of feral children tends to result in much more excitement than does the discovery of feral animals, but, like feral animals, their particular situation and history are considered less relevant than how they will or can affect the norms of present society. The particularity of the child—be it Wild Peter of Hanover, Victor of Aveyron, the wolf children Amala and Kamala, abused and isolated Genie, or Ivan Mishukov, who was recently found living with a pack of wild dogs⁷—is rarely considered relevant outside the issue of how that particularity renders the child different from the human norm. This reductive objectification is the only way isolated and feral children could possibly be lumped together.⁸

Of course, the disruption caused by the discovery of feral children is less physical than it is theoretical, but to suggest that this fact makes it any less disturbing would be a grave misreading. In fact, the mere presence of feral children, most of whom cannot talk and some of whom look and act quite
unlike ‘typical’ humans, has, without fail, challenged the comfortable and exclusionary way humanity has defined itself as a species.

Feral children are frequently as objectified as their non-human counterparts, but they tend first to be pitied as needy children. Because of the human/inhuman ambiguity they create, they become objects with potentially fascinating secrets to tell. What they lack in human faculties, they are presumed to gain in extraordinary and distinct attributes; the trick or goal of the observer and/or scientist is to find out how to tease the secrets out of a non-communicative subject. Feral children represent the unwilling embodiment of the forbidden experiment, the possibility of bringing a child up in isolation to observe what, if any, language or other human attributes develop when humans are in a ‘pure state of nature.’

Justin Leiber (1997, 330) explains that ‘the question which burns in the minds of those concerned with wild/isolated children’ is the one that will lead the child to answer the question ‘exactly what it was like for you to be a wild/natural child (emphases in original).’ Once it is recognized that the child is incapable of revealing this secret, the interest in the child tends to wane. Throughout all stages of the research, the desires of society or the community (as embodied in the researcher) consistently outweigh the needs of the child/object of observation.

Feral children are situated in particular times and particular spaces; too are they rendered valuable through particular expertise and disciplines. Victor of Aveyron, for example, entered French society at the same time as Rousseau’s noble savage was the main topic of discussion within the French salons. In fact, the training of Victor was at least partially undertaken so he could be displayed to Madame Recamier and her important crowd, who wished to observe an actual ‘noble savage.’ Certain of his actions when he was introduced, including his quite reasonable desire to go and play in the field rather than sit at the table with France’s stuffy elites, were quickly translated into a ‘real’ challenge to Rousseau’s ideas of a pre-social noble savage. But Victor was never considered a unique and worthy ‘other.’ Once his usefulness to the researchers ran out—he stopped showing improvement and making Itard (his scientist trainer/saviour) proud—he was left to Madame Guérin’s care and no longer considered useful to science or society. As he was ‘human,’ he could not be eradicated, but he was certainly not free to do much more than survive.

There are anywhere from fifty to one hundred documented cases of feral children. While it is hard to draw firm conclusions, it is fair to say that few feral children have fared a whole lot better than Victor. Genie’s case is perhaps most tragic, as ‘several doctorally trained, high income, professionals’ managed to earn ‘substantial professional incomes and expected to substantially magnify their careers by working with a money-less individual from a penniless mother and abusive poverty, who was allowed to slip back
into abuse and comparative poverty after the grant money ran out’ (Leiber 1997, 340). What happened to Genie is a prime example of how much society needs the disruption brought on by disruptive actors who have no interest in being saved or ‘cared for’ but have a genuine interest in retaining their status and continuing their purposely disruptive ways. As Steeves (2003, 230) points out, ‘it is without question that when we study feral children we inevitably learn more about ourselves than our subject.’ Perhaps feral citizens can once again help us to learn a little more about ourselves.

SELF-REFLEXIVITY

Whether mythical or real, the stories of nearly human animals and nearly animal humans ‘challenge the boundaries of our communities in many ways, forcing us to ask questions of our collective identity and the ways in which we experience ourselves in the world’ (Steeves 2003, 231). ‘What is clear,’ Steeves (244) continues, ‘is that the comfortable fiction of a human/animal dichotomy and the notion of a strict definition for “human” and “animal” are threatened by feral children.’ Feral children, not by any fault of their own, embody a challenge to those who believe they have ‘got it right’ when it comes to defining what counts as human. Humans are distinct from other animals, but so, too, are we similar; it is the similarities that most bother scientists, and it is the apparent similarities that have driven many of them to attempt to come up with a definitive answer to what makes humans distinct, unlike other animals.

For those who agree with the argument that disruption and critical interrogation are essential to a healthy democracy, the disruption and disturbance latent within the metaphor of ‘feral’ can be seen as a useful political qualifier for a democratically informed citizenship. To paraphrase Steeves, my hope is that the very existence of feral citizens will be an obstinate threat to our understanding of what it means to be a citizen. A feral citizen is politically homeless and does not fit in any representable category, but this is not viewed as a problem; rather, homelessness and non-representability are necessary and welcome conditions for the radically democratic activities of feral citizens. As individual border creatures with no homes to return to, feral citizens wander the democratic terrain with the intent and desire to explore, encourage, and understand the diversity, tension and often hidden solidarity or potential solidarity that litters democratic culture. This adventurous approach to politics is another of the pleasurable parts referred to in the title of the chapter; it is also the part that keeps the focus of the feral citizen as much on micro as on so-called macro issues, as there are far more interesting side trails than there are main routes.
FERALS AND THE PURE STATE OF NATURE

The idea of a ‘pure state of nature’ is a curious one. We know that in Victor’s case the pure state of nature was considered a solitary state due to the prominence of Rousseau and his belief in a pre-social noble savage, and we know that if the association of feral and isolated children with each other is at all justifiable, it is because feral and isolated children both lacked human contact. Yet, as Steeves (2003, 245) correctly suggests, one thing we find from examining feral children is that ‘humanity is in some respect the result of specific treatment within one’s community. To have human experiences, one must be attended to as human. To develop human intentionality one must be treated as if he or she already possessed such intentional structures. Being human is being treated by humans as human.’ The same can be said for citizens who are presently treated as ‘taxpayers,’ ‘stakeholders,’ ‘constituents’ and ‘property owners.’ As citizens are addressed as these identities, these identities are being internalized and referred to for legitimacy and the right to speak within political discourse.

Without going too far back into the classic nature/nurture debate, it seems apparent that human individuality is relational and each human being attains her/his individuality within, not against, the surrounding community. It is thus possible to take another unintended political lesson from the examination of isolated and feral children. If isolation is the prime retardant that keeps human children from developing toward being fully human, it may also be true that isolation, whether theoretical or physical, continues to be a direct hindrance to the potential of humans to be more than one more adaptive species getting used to the cage they must live in.

As politics and the public sphere require interactive communication and action amongst diverse actors, their expansion and valuation seem a logical response to these particular lessons. If there is a reasonable conclusion to draw from the above, it is that human potential and human growth require active engagement with others. The search for knowledge about human nature from a child in a pure state of nature is futile, as the distinctness of a child lies not in the presence, but in the lack, of autonomous purity. The absence of human interaction does not give us a state of nature; it gives us a state of isolation, sorrow and need—a state ironically close to the condition we face in neoliberal times with the war on public space and the privatization of all that was once public.

A human ‘pure state of a nature’ is a construct that allows the ghost of presumed human homogeneity to resurface, and resurface it has. The attainment of something like Rawls’ original position remains a desire for numerous liberal theorists and the disembodied, rationalist, and unsullied voice of the public participant remains a regulatory requirement for citizen activity within much of deliberative democracy’s procedural focus. For many demo-
cratic theorists, the attainment of something like a pure state of politics is a lot like the pure state of nature that enticed the researchers of feral children.

Theorists searching for a pure politics or a pure political agent fail to realize the degree to which plurality and difference are constitutive of the democratic condition. They also, like those struggling to define what humanity is, fail to acknowledge that any definition of humanity is particular, often sexist, and almost always racist. Steeves (2003) and Newton (2002), in their discussion of cases of feral children, outline some of the racist and sexist biases that reappear when the category ‘human’ is disturbed by the presence of a feral child. Rather than go over the many examples, it is fair simply to accept the obvious truth that whenever humanity is described it fails to include all humans. The presence of feral children re-introduces the failure of any definition and forces a reconsideration of how we define humanity. Any definition rests ‘on a multitude of unarticulated assumptions’ (Steeves 2003, 233), most of which are entirely unjustifiable and thus in need of being challenged and constantly revisited.

Wandering feral citizens are embodied political agents who create political space and challenge fixed knowledge through their methodology. Ferals, as we have learned, cannot help but disrupt comfortable and closed definitions; thus, when ferals become political creatures, they are almost by default radically democratic. When feral animals enter environments, or when feral children are discovered, they represent a threat to the tidiness that has helped define the community. While they may have no intention of enticing others to become feral, they do intend to create political moments in order to discuss public concerns and relations with those who are passively adapting to their domestic space.

Feral citizenship includes a passionate desire to extend politics and democratic culture back into those communities that exist only as a result of democratic culture in the first place. The intention is that by re-politicizing spaces, and then rambling on, communities will themselves open up to the political sphere and begin to recognize the significance of also contributing to the tension-filled sphere of the democratic public sphere.

ACTS OF FERAL CITIZENSHIP

In the remainder of this chapter I am going to argue that if we are to move beyond what I see as the ‘conservation/preservation inspired’ default of harmony and tension-free relations, it will be as a result of (or at least I do not think it will happen without) the revitalization of the public sphere or the playground of opinion. This is because even though the political sphere is always under threat and the formal institutions that make up current actually existing democracies are more akin to a conservation biologist’s greatest
success story in keeping invasives out, there is always the potential for wild-ness in the informal political sphere.

What I mean by informal is the sphere of activity free from the structural constraints required for institutionalizing rational decision-making. According to Habermas (1996) the informal or weak public sphere is essential for the act of creating public opinion, as it is the only place for unrestricted communication, but it is also subject to the problems of unequally distributed social power, structural violence, and systematically distorted communication. I see the latter not as a problem to deal with but as an inevitability that can only be addressed through the continuous return to, and expansion of, the informal sphere.

As suggested earlier, my proposed way of contributing to this political project is to use a disruptive methodology to help create political moments that will expand the public sphere and re-prioritize the political. I call these acts of feral citizenship. The point of these acts is to assist in the creation of the conditions whereby exceptional acts can be performed.

By the nature of their critical and disruptive methodology, feral citizens create short-lived micro-political moments that allow relations to re-develop in the context of political debate and opinion formation. On an individual basis, feral citizens are constantly changing political creatures wandering the democratic terrain with the intent and desire to explore and understand the diversity, tension and hidden solidarity that litters democratic culture. This is, once again, the pleasurable part in the title of this chapter. The excursions are not intended to make the feral citizen more of an expert, or more capable of speaking truthfully as a representative of others. In fact, there is no focussed intent at all. However, the more wandering, the more visiting, the more observing the occupants along democratic terrain, the more likelihood there is that feral citizens (or, for that matter, any citizen) will retain the commitment to anti-authoritarianism and plurality.

But feral citizens are not mere observers. Accompanying and encouraging observation and the need to consistently learn to listen and understand the political terrain is the desire to expand the political sphere, politicize relations between the state and social groups, and encourage social movement activists to realize their dependence on democratic culture. Thus, along with being observers who are never entirely passive, feral citizens are also storytellers and actors.

While intricately related and while all informing each other, three political characteristics\(^\text{22}\) are separately essential to feral citizenship. Typically, when performing in public, political actors focus on the need to persuade others of the value of their particular need or concept of the good life. Feral citizens know they do not have the answer to democracy’s many paradoxes and tensions, so, along with being interested in expanding the public sphere
and revitalizing democratic culture, they are perpetual learners who perform as observers and active listeners as well as storytellers and actors.

The identity as spectator or observer renders the feral citizen a constant learner, always searching out more and more of the mysterious and wonderfully diverse world. The search, however, does not make the feral citizen more of an expert or more capable of speaking truthfully or speaking as a representative of others; what it does is make the citizen far more aware of the limitation of all political theory and practice, and far more aware of her or his permanent amateur or apprentice status. Thus, as an active listener who is reliant on a plurality of places to visit and learn from, a feral citizen will never threaten the diversity that constitutes modern pluralist democracies. What feral citizens will do is respond to the learned diversity by sharing stories about the diversity that exists, creating more opportunities for the diversity to be valued, and defending the intrinsic value of a pluralist society.

It is as a teller of stories that the defence of diversity first becomes political. When feral citizens wander and observe, they also engage, and it is at this point that the understanding of the irreducible need for plurality becomes most important as it guides the democratically inspired storytelling. Lastly, the identity as an actor allows the feral citizen either to perform as a part of the play ‘taking place’ in the specific political moment or to create a new political moment that encourages others to perform and defend their positions. As an actor, the feral citizen focuses on enticing others to speak and defend their beliefs in a public forum. The feral citizen critically engages with these others not to destroy their beliefs or to get them to give up on their own activities but to realize the situational context, the political promise, and the inevitable limit to all particular activities. The end result is, ideally, the shared realization that democracy is something worth protecting and the subsequent expansion of conversation and activity that addresses such a consensus.

The distinctness of the particular kind of moment created by acts of feral citizenship is that these three characters (spectator, actor, storyteller) are never fixed. In each political moment, all participants, whether the initial actors, spectators or storytellers, have the opportunity to take on all three roles.

If we look at the roots of democracy, we can actually find support for this kind of disruptive activity. Mainstream definitions of democracy now tend to focus primarily on procedural aspects of democracy or the grammar of democracy, which excludes the ethical foundation of freedom, equality and social justice or the priority of justice over the good, as we do not know what the good life is and no longer have common foundations or meta-narratives to guide us. There is, however, one definition of democracy that not only makes room for disruption but actually points to it as a central component of any healthy political sphere.
I have counted on this quote for many years, and while I am always looking for a suitable replacement, I have yet to find one that sums up the disruptive promise of democracy better than the one offered by Anthony Arblaster (1987) in the book titled _Democracy_, written for the Minnesota Press Concepts in Social Thought Series (so it’s not an obscure text; in fact, it’s one that is described online as a favourite text for students embarking on the study of democracy).

The first thing Arblaster argues is that democracy is ‘not only a contestable concept, but also a “critical” concept.’ Thus, democracy is ‘a norm or ideal by which reality is tested and found wanting.’ He then goes on to explain that given this recognition we can assume that ‘there will always be some further extension or growth of democracy to be undertaken.’ Which is, he continues, ‘not to say that a perfect democracy is in the end attainable, any more than is perfect freedom or perfect justice.’ ‘It is rather,’ and this is the key point, to say ‘that the ideal is always likely to function as a corrective to complacency rather than a prop to it’ (1987, 6).\(^2\)

This kind of approach to democracy as a political terrain for persistent critique and engagement is, of course, not the true or correct story of democracy. It is simply a definition that suits my version of democracy and satisfies my desire for legitimizing disruption as an act of citizenship. Michael Saward (2003, 4) has argued that ‘to evoke democracy can at the same time be to attempt to fix a (favourable) meaning to it.’ I fully admit to doing this. And I also admit to evoking democracy as a way of finding lessons within the management plans of conservationists and restoration ecologists who are dealing with the invasion of alien species within their managed communities. So I am under no illusion that what I call acts of feral citizenship will be viewed as welcome additions to the democratic terrain. But as disruption is what I am interested in, and as disruption is a main component of feral citizenship, such a response is expected.

So to conclude, disruptive acts of feral citizenship are one kind of citizenship activity done by citizens intent on trespassing, visiting and disrupting communities. The acts are not intended to replace other kinds of citizenship activity but to add to them, nor is the intent to destroy the community being visited. The intent is to politicize and, through the politicization, re-create and remind all participants of the irreducible need for democracy, the primacy of the political, and the consistent need for active engagement with others.

NOTES

1. Remarkably, it is assumed that purposeful eradication of the species by humans is more ‘natural’ than an environment’s adapting to the introduction of the new ‘invasive’ species.
2. This section of the chapter borrows heavily from my book _Democratic Ideals and Politicization of Nature_ (2013).
3. Of course, livestock are also not native to Missouri, but they are controlled and com-
modified and thus acceptable.
4. There are numerous other examples, including a website for the Australian Department
of Environment and Heritage (http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/ferals/) which de-
defines feral animals as mainly domestic animals gone wild and lists nine feral animals as
invasive species, each with its own un-natural history and eradication plan.
5. I elaborate on the significance of wandering in my book Democric Ideals and the
6. In the case of Genie and Curtiss, the self-interest of Curtiss led Genie’s mother to sue
him for ‘supposedly slanderous exaggerations of the abuse Genie had suffered and for explo-
ing Genie for personal advancement’ (Leiber 1997, 326), something I imagine would be very
difficult for the researcher to resist.
7. For an interesting overview of these and other cases, see Michael Newton’s (2002)
gives a convincing argument against lumping the two together. It also uncovers and argues
against the anthropocentrism that obscures respect for the non-human animals who care for
feral children.
9. Along with actual cases, there are fascinating histories of human/animal relations that go
as far back as Remus and Romulus all the way to Mowgli and the racially charged Tarzan,
(white) king of the jungle. There are also the equally fascinating examples of hybrid creatures
like Bigfoot, Yeti, Sasquatch, and Mono Grande, all of which disturb and disrupt notions of
what it is that distinguishes humans from non-humans. It is the disruptive influence that is most
relevant to feral citizenship.
10. Isolation is defined as absence from human contact, and the distinction between being
brought up by animals and being isolated is completely ignored.
11. This hints at the conservative nature of normalized and institutionalized knowledge and
is why it is particularly important that the feral descriptor is chosen: Accompanying such a
choice is a great deal of pressure and suspicion, and the identity is neither for everyone nor
permanent.
12. Itard’s housekeeper who cared for Victor and took him on pleasurable walks in the
Garden and showed him the affection and love he craved (Newton 2002, 117).
13. The reason I include Genie in this section is because of the way she was ‘used’ by those
with the opportunity to study her and the fact that her habits made her appear to also breach the
human/non-human boundary.
‘leads to a more complex understanding of the state of nature than is suggested when the wild
child and the man of nature are placed in strict opposition to one another.’ It also crosses the
comforting line that has been drawn between human and non-human animals.
15. The Swedish taxonomist Linnaeus was so frustrated with where to fit in feral children
that he actually ‘separated them on the pre-Darwinian biological tree as Homo ferus’ (Steeves
2003, 244).
16. Yousef (2001, 256), who focuses on the eighteenth-century interest in feral children,
explains that ‘speculation regarding the significance of wild children for the study of human
nature involved not only natural historians but also, and more important with regard to the
question of education, epistemologists for whom the mind of the wild child could be seen as a
real instance of purely hypothetical models of mental development.’ The discovery of a feral
child has always brought early excitement and endless speculation over the potential secrets
this child could reveal.
17. As fascinating as many cases of feral children are, there is no intent to suggest they are
not tragic cases of abuse.
18. Equally curious is the focus on authenticity when it comes to feral children. There
appears to be a real desire to disprove the truthfulness of the feral child’s past, but the specific-
ity of the past matters little in relation to the knowledge that can be attained from the lack of
communicable language and human interaction.
19. Along with Rousseau, there were other interests and writings in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that made the stirring around Victor the feral child of Aveyron even greater than in other cases. Primitivism was in vogue, the subject of fictions by radical novelists such as Robert Bage (1720–1801), whose book *Hermesprong* (1796) depicted a hero who had been brought up among American Indians before returning to the drawing rooms of England. William Wordsworth (1770–1850) and Samuel Taylor Colderidge (1772–1834) had only just published their *Lyric Ballads* (1798) in which the insights of children, savages and idiots were treated with revolutionary interests and respect (Newton 2002, 107).

20. Castoriadis (1997, 331) is not alone when he argues that ‘in truth, man is a mad animal, totally unfit for life, a species that would have disappeared as soon as it emerged if it had not proven itself capable, at the collective level, of another creation: society in the strict sense, that is, institutions embodying social imaginary significations.’

21. It should be noted that Rousseau’s noble savage was carefully placed in a fertile and lush environment; abundance meant he did not need to consider the needs of survival, he could consider other endeavours.

22. These three characteristics are inspired by Hannah Arendt’s idea that political performances require three different groups of participants: actors, participants and storytellers.

23. There are numerous public realm theorists who share Arblaster’s clear distinction between democratic procedures and democratic ethics, including Cornelius Castoriadis, Hannah Arendt, Chantal Mouffe and even, to slightly lesser degree, Jürgen Habermas. I chose Arblaster, as it is distinct, clear and not intended as part of a broader platform or political intent.

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