Feral Faun

Essays

The Anarchist Library

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The anarchist subculture: a critique

> "... the absence of imagination needs models; it swears by them and lives only through them."

It is easy to claim that there is no anarchist movement in North America.

This claim frees one from having to examine the nature of that movement and what one's role is in it. But a network of publications, bookstores, anarchist households, squats and correspondence connecting those with anti-statist perspectives most certainly does exist. It has crystallized into a subculture with its mores, rituals and symbols of "rebellion". But can a subculture create free individuals capable of making the lives they desire? The anarchist subculture certainly hasn't. I hope to explore why in this article.

The Anarchist subculture certainly does encompass apparently rebellious activity, historical exploration, social analysis (theory), creative play and explorations into self-liberation. But these do not exist as an integrated praxis aimed at understanding society and opening possibilities for us to create our lives for ourselves, but rather as social roles, occasionally overlapping, but mostly separate which function mainly to maintain themselves and the subculture which creates them and which they, in turn create.

Political correct militants dominate radical action in this subculture.

They deny the need for social analysis. After all, the issues have already been laid out by left liberals — feminism, gay lib, anti-racism, animal lib, ecology, socialism, opposition to war — add a dash of anti-statism and, by god, it's anarchism! Well, ain't it? To guarantee that no one can doubt their anarchist credentials, anarchist militants will be sure to shout the loudest at demonstrations, burn a few flags and be prepared to battle cops, fascists and RCPers wherever possible. What they won't do is analyze their activities or their role as militants to see if they are really an any way undermining society or if they are merely playing its loyal opposition, reinforcing it by reinforcing role within their role within its spectacle. Their refusal of analysis has allowed many of them to delude themselves into believing that they are part of a mass movement of rebellion which must be converted to anarchism. But no such mass movement exists on this continent, and the activities of the militants are mainly a letting off of steam in rituals of opposition that only reinforce their place in the anarchist subculture.

Anarchist historians are mostly professors, publishers and bookstore operators, interested in keeping information about anarchist history available. Most of these people are well-meaning, but they fail to apply critical analysis to their histories. The vast majority of anarchist historical material seems to serve a myth-making purpose, creating heroes, martyrs and models to imitate. But all of these models have failed in creating more than temporary anarchic situations. This should, at the very least, lead to a questioning of how and why they failed that goes beyond the simplistic claim that they were crushed by the authorities. The lack of such analysis has rendered anarchist history largely useless to present struggles against authority, turning it instead into the same thing for the anarchist subculture that mainstream history is for society at large, a myth that upholds the present order of things.

Certain anti-authoritarians theorists have intellectually attacked the most basic underpinnings of society in ways that reveal their role in our domestication.

The theorists' examination of these things has even led some of them to drop the label "anarchist," though their rejection of authority and connection to the subculture through their writings and their friendships continue their role within it. And for all the depth of their intellectual exploration, a certain level of work refusal, shoplifting and minor vandalism seems to be the sum of their practice. Because they do not explore practical ways of expressing rebellion against the totality of domination revealed by their critiques, these critiques lose their edge as radical theory and seem more like philosophy. No longer being a tool of active rebellion, their thought instead becomes a means of defining the intellectual edge of anarchic thought, a means by which to determine whether an idea is radical enough. In this way, the role of the intellectual is perpetuated in the anarchist subculture.

Creative play has also been specialized within the subculture. Forgetting the critique which calls for the supersession of art through spontaneous, creative, free play by everyone, mail artists, performance artists and "anti-artists" claim this category as their own, destroying spontaneity and freedom, and valorizing the activity as art. Many of the activities of these people — festivals, wild poetry readings, improvisational noise jam sessions and interactive theater — can be a lot of fun and are worth participating in on that level, but, placed within the framework as art, their subversive bite is dulled. In valorizing creativity, these artists have made it more important to "be creative" than to have fun, and have reduced their critique to the level of whether something can be utilized in creating art. The creative process is recuperated into a form of productive labor making works of art. Play is transformed into performance. Acts of detournement become spectacles in mail-art shows. Subversion is recuperated by society as art. Ignoring the fact that art is a social and cultural category, anarchic artists claim that art opposes culture, but their activities create for them the role of cultural workers within the anarchist subculture. When the situationists said that revolutionary praxis needed to become therapeutic, they had no idea that certain North American anarchists would find ways to wed this and a few other half-digested situationist ideas to new age psychotherapies — but, gee, those Yanks (and Canadians) sure are inventive, ain't they? New age therapies came into the anarchist subculture largely through feminist, gay lib and related movements. The reason given for practicing these therapies is self-discovery and self-liberation. But all psychotherapies — including those of humanist and "third force" psychologists — were developed to integrate people into society. When feminists, gay liberationists and similar groups began using therapeutic techniques, it helped integrate individuals into a common framework from which they would view the world and act on it. Anarcho-therapists have adapted such practices as meditation, play therapy, support and separate spaces. Meditation is really just a form of escape, without the physical damage of drinking or drugs. It eases the stresses of daily life, keeping them from being too much to bear.

It can, thus, be useful, but is not self-liberating. Play as therapy, like play as art, loses its subversive edge. Its parameters defined, it becomes a safe release, a letting off of steam, rather than a true breaking out with all the risks that involves. It does not not present a challenge to authority or the work ethic, because it is play safely ensconced in the framework of productive usefulness and brings out the chaotic energy that could otherwise challenge authority within a safely ordered framework.

Support group therapy is a particularly insidious form of self-deception. A group of people get together to talk about a common problem, burden or oppression they supposedly share. This practice immediately removes the problem from the realm of daily life, of individual relationships and particular circumstances, into the realm of "our common oppression" where it can be fit into an ideological framework. Support groups are formed with a particular purpose (otherwise, why form them?) which will shape the workings of the group, bias the conclusions drawn and mold the participants into the framework of the group ideology. The creation of separate spaces women's only, gay only, etc.) reinforces the worst tendencies of support group therapy, by guaranteeing that no outside element can penetrate. Anarchists blithely ignore the authoritarian and propertarian implications of this practice and its inherent bigotry, excusing them because it is the practice of an oppressed group. All of these therapeutic forms separate people from their daily life experience and place them in a separate

"therapeutic" realm where they can be readily integrated into a particular social and ideological framework. In the case of anarcho-therapists, it is the framework of the anarchist subculture and the role they play in it.

Most of the people I've met in the anarchist subculture are sincere people. They truly want to rebel against authority and destroy it. But they are products of society, trained to distrust themselves and their desires and to fear the unknown. Finding a subculture in place with roles to which they can adapt themselves, it is much easier to fall into the role or roles with which they feel most comfortable, secure in the knowledge that they are part of the rebel milieu, than to truly take the leap in the dark of living for themselves against society. And these "anarchist" roles plug into a social structure and a way of relating to the world at large that are equally essential to the anarchist subculture and which also need to be examined.

"Would it not be an anachronism to cultivate the taste for harbors, certitudes, systems?"

The structure of the anarchist subculture is largely centered around publishing projects, bookstores, collective living situations and radical activism. These projects and the methods of running them that reproduce the subculture create the methods of anarchist "outreach". What they create in many ways resembles an evangelical religious sect.

Most of the projects that make up the structure of the anarchist subculture are run collectively using a process of consensus decision making. A few are the projects of single individuals occasionally helped out by friends. (On the fringe of the subculture are numerous flyer projects almost all of which are individual projects.) I am putting off a thorough critique of consensus for a later article. For now, let it suffice to point out that the process of consensus does require the subjugation of the individual will to the will of the group as a whole and the subjugation of the immediate to the mediation of meetings and decision-making processes. It has an inherently conservative bent, becasue it creates policies that can only be changed if everyone agrees to it. It is an invisible authority to which individuals are subject, which limits the extent to which they question the project in which they are involved or the anarchist subculture.

A large number of anarchists live on their own or with lovers. But many see a collective living arrangement as better, sometimes for as simple a reason as easing everyone's financial burdens (the reason which involves the fewest illusions),

but more often to create a living support group situation, to participate more easily in a common project or to "put theory into practice". having already dealt with support groups, I will only add that living together in a support group will tend to exaggerate all of the insulatory and idealogical aspects of support group therapy. A collective living situation can certainly ease some of the aspects of sharing a common project, from the financial to the trick of getting people together to discuss the project. It can also increase the chances of the project becoming insulatory, feeding on itself, losing necessary critical input.

But it is those who claim to be "putting theory into practice" in these living situations who are practicing the highest level of self-deception.

Group living situations could possibly be a basis for exploring new ways of relating, but the semi-permanence of such situations tends toward the creation of social roles and structures, and new explorations are not what the households I know of are pursuing. The seperation between theory and practice implied by the phrase "putting theory into practice" is evident in the relative sameness of these living situations. Most anarchists believe that there are certain principles that should govern the way people inter-relate. In their living collectives, land trusts and squats, they attempt to live by their principles. Their living situations are not theoretico-practical explorations, but rather, the submission of individuals to a pre-conceived social structure. These principles are not put to the test in these situations, because the anarchist household is an insulatory situation, a kind of alternative reality in the midst of the world. With the exception of anarchist squats — which do, at least, present a challenge to the authority of landlords and property — these households relate to the world of external authorities in the same way everyone else does: paying their rent (or property tax) and bills, and working or collecting welfare. These households do little, if anything, toward undermining society, but they offer a structure for people to live in that maintains their feeling of rebelliousness and the subculture gives them a safe place to express this feeling.

The various publishing projects (including periodicals) and bookstores are the main sources of history, theory and information for the anarchist subculture. To some extent, these projects have to plug into the capitalist system and so rarely pretend to be inherently revolutionary. When they are group projects, they are usually run by consensus on the absurd assumption that there is something anarchistic about having to sit through long, boring meetings to work out the details of running a small business or producing a magazine or book. But the aspect of these projects that really bothers me is that they tend to become means of defining the framework of thought in the anarchist subculture rather than a provocation to discuss and explore the nature of alienation and domination and how to go about destroying them. To a large extent this lack of provocation is inherent in what is published. Most anarchist publications, whether books or periodicals, are uncritical reprints of old anarchist writings, uncritical histories, rehashing of leftist opinions with a bit of anti-statism thrown in or uncritical modernizations of out-dated anarchist ideas. Such writings reinforce certain standards and models of what it means to be an anarchist without questioning those models. Even those writings which do present a challenge rarely seem to evoke the sort of intelligent, critical discussion that could be part of a stimulating radical praxis. Rather, they are also often taken as a source of standards, models, ways of defining the parameters of revolt. This stems, in part, from the nature of the printed word, which seems to have a permanence that is not

compatible with the fluid, living nature of thought or discussion. Most readers have trouble seeing through the printed word to the fluidity of thought behind it. So they react as though dealing with something sacred — either worshipping it or desecrating it. Neither reaction pleases me, because both signify that the ideas have become reified, have become commodities in the marketplace of ideas — an image reinforced by the fact that these ideas are mostly found for sale in bookstores. Another aspect of anarchist publication is propaganda. This is the advertising side of anarchism — the proof that it is largely just a commodity in the marketplace of ideas. Most anarchist propaganda is an attempt to create an image of anarchism that is attractive to whomever the propaganda is aimed at. Thus, much of this literature seems to be aimed at easing people's minds, at proving that anarchy isn't so extreme, that it doesn't challenge people; it reassures them, showing them that they can continue to have secure, structured lives even after the anarchist revolution. Since most anarchist literature, including this sort, is bought or stolen by anarchists, I wonder if it isn't really an attempt at self-reassurrance, and reinforcement of the defining models of the subculture. The structures which make anti-authoritarian literature available could provide a network for challenging discussion aimed at creating and maintaining a truly rebellious praxis, but instead it creates a framework of models and structures for people to follow the "anarchist principles" to which so many blindly cling, which reinforce the anarchist subculture.

Radical activism is another aspect of the public image of the anarchist subculture, particularly the militant wing. It largely involves participation in leftist demonstration, though occasionally anarchists will organize their own demonstration on a particular issue. One motive behind much of this activism is to win people over to anarchism. To accomplish this, anarchists must separate themselves as a definable entity and make themselves attractive to those they are trying to convert. At present, most activism seems to be trying to attract youth and, particularly, punk youth.

So anarchists tend to be particularly loud and rowdy at demonstrations, portraying an image of defiance and showing that anarchists mean "serious business." Since other groups, like the R.C.P., also get rowdy and defiant, anarchist militants have to make the distinction clear by loudly denouncing these groups and even getting into fights with them — ya kinda have to wonder about these anarchist militants, if their actions are so similar to Maoist hacks that they have to consciously put out an effort to distinguish themselves. But evengelicalism isn't the only reason anarchists participate in these rituals of opposition. Many participate because it is the approprate anarchist thing to do. In their minds, "anarchist" is a role that involves a specific social activity. It is a subspecies of leftist that is rowdier and a bit more violent than most. This allows them to separate anarchy and rebellion from their daily lives. Questions like, "Does this activity help destroy domination, undermine the spectacle and create free life?" are irrelevent since anarchism is defined by participation in militant activities, not by rebellion against everything that stands in the way of our freedom to create for ourselves the lives we desire. As long as one is active in demonstrations in the right way, one is an anarchist, upholding the image and maintaining the anarchist subculture.

Though some of these structures — especially those dealing with publication — have potential for being part of a truly anarchic challenge to society, the anarchist subculture diverts their energy to maintain and reproduce itself. The

subculture offers us "harbors, certitudes, systems," tending to make us cautious, leading us to embrace the known rather than face the challenge of the unknown. So anarchists and anti-authoritarians, thinking themselves rebels, are in fact the ones who define the limits of revolt and so recuperate it. The anarchist subculture has undermined anarchy, turned it into another commodity on the idealogical marketplace and so made it into another category of society.

"The point is precisely to step aside, to diverge, abolutely, from the rule; to leap from the arena with hysterical verve; to elude forever the traps set along the way... Long live the Impossible!"

To leave a critique of the anarchist subculture at examination of some of its more important roles and structures is to miss its most important fault — that it is a subculture. Subcultures constitute a particular sort of social phenomenon with particular traits. If those traits were conductive to rebellion, if they moved people to act for themselves, then it might be possible to reform the anarchist subculture, but those traits in fact tend in the opposite direction. There have been so many rebel subcultures, so many bohemias, all of them recuperated. This clearly indicates that there is something inherent in subcultures that keeps them from presenting a real challenge to the society of which they are a part. Let me try to examine why.

In order for a subculture to exist, its parameters must be defined in a way that distinguishes it from other groups in society. Because a subculture is not an official or legal entity, these parameters need not be in any offical or readily definable form. Most often, they are underlying, inherent in the nature of the subculture, consisting of shared values, shared ideals, shared customs and shared systems of relating. This means that participation in a subculture requires a certain level of conformity.

This does not rule out disagreeements about the interpretation of those parameters — such disagreements can be very intense, since those involved will see themselves as upholders of the real values of the group. But the real threat to any subculture is any individual who refuses parameters.

Such a one is dangerous, amoral, a threat to all. What the parameters of a subculture really amount to is its system of morality. It provides a way to see itself as superior to society in general. It thus creates a method for relating to others through guilt and self-righteousness, two of authority's favorite weapons. The existence and maintainence of a subculture thus requires an internalized authority to maintain itself.

The creation of parameters will lead to an intolerance towords those perceived as irretrievably outside the parameters — especially if they are competitors on some level (e.g., the RCP, SWP and the like, to anarchists), but it also leads towards a toleration of everyone perceived as part of one's subculture. Due to the different interpretations of the parameters of the subculture, arguments and fights, sometimes even vicious ones, are possible, but there is still a certain unity that is recognized and tends to keep disagreements within a certain framework. Such tolerance is necessary to maintain the subculture. It also has the effect of reducing everything to a level of mundane mediocrity. Extremes are permitted only to the extent that they can be kept from presenting any real challenge to the subculture. Tact, caution and politeness are the order of the day in order to maintain the "unity within diversity" of the subculture. Conflictst tend to be ritualized and predictable. In the anarchist subculture in particular, there are rarely any face-to-face, honest and passionate conflicts.

Instead, face-to-face interactions are of the politeness and subcultural ritual, of tolerance, and so are, as often as not, boring. Learning to relate through ritual, through tact, through social masks, has left us ignorant of how to relate freely. But within these rituals of toleration a subculture cannot maintain itself, because like society at large, a subculture requires conformity, social harmony and the suppression of individual passions for its continued existence.

In relating to people outside, subcultures tend to opt for either a sort of separatism — minimalizing contact with the outside world — or evangelism — seeking to win people over to the perspective of the subculture. Since the anarchist subculture is decidely evangelistic, it is this that I will deal with. All evangelistic groups, from the Baptists to the R.C.P., from the Moonies to the anarchist subculture, are so because they are convinced that they have the answers to the essential problems of the world.

Convincing others of this becomes a major motive behind the actions of those within such subcultures. They act and speak so as to present an image of self-assurance as well as a kind of solidarity with those whom they wish to win over. Individuals within such subcultures do not live for themselves but for the ideal, the answer that they are so certain will cure all. They live, or try to live, up to a certain image, and so are conformists.

Because of the nature of subcultures, the anarchist subculture can only exist by removong anarchy and rebellion from the terrain of our present day lives and turning them into ideals with corresponding social roles. It will praise "spontaneity" while defining its content and, thereby, supressing it. Free expression of passion and desires are not encouraged, in fact, quite often the opposite. Within its own framework, the anarchist subculture is quite conservative, its own maintenance being its top priority. Every new exploration and experimentation is a threat to its existence and must be quickly defined, limited and recuperated by it. This explains both the absurd, defensive reactions of certain anarchists to more daring theoretical explorations, as well as the tendency for these explorations to remain in a realm of seperated theory without practice. A subculture is a place of security, for safety, for finding social roles and systems of relationships by which one can define one's self, not a place for free explorations and encountering the unknown.

The anarchist subculture, then, cannot be an expression of lived anarchy and rebellion, but can only be society's way of defining, limiting and recuperating them. As children of society, we are all well-versed in distrusting ourselves, in fearing the unknown, in prefering security to freedom. It is no surprise that we that we so easily fall into activities that create and maintain a subculture. But its long past time that we admit that this is just our way of fitting in to the society we claim to hate, of creating a niche for ourselves in its structure. For this subculture is not a real challenge to society; it is merely a loyal opposition whose rules — like all rules — are just a subset of the rules of society.

So the time has come to throw caution to the wind, to diverge absolutely, as the surrealists say, from all rules, to leap from the arena of the anarchist subculture — or to tear the arena down. Always there will be those demanding to know what we'll put in its place, but the point is precisely to put nothing in its place. The problem, the weakness of those of us who've claimed to oppose authority, has been our need to have an authority inside our heads, an answer, a way to keep ourselves in line. We have not trusted ourselves, and so at those moments when anarchy has actually broken forth, when authority has

temporarily broken down opening all possibilities, we have not dared to explore the unknown, to live our desires and passions. Instead we have channelled our rebellion into the mere image of rebellion, but which keep us safe from ever having to confront our real passions and desires.

The refusal of authority, the refusal of all constraints, must include the refusal of the anarchist subculture, for it is a form of authority. With this support gone, we are left with nothing — but ourselves. As transient, ever-changing, passionate individuals, we each become the only basis for creating our lives and opposing society as it strives to force our lives into its mold. Rebellion ceases to be a role and instead becomes our moment-by-moment refusal to let our lives be stolen from us. Anarchy ceases to be an ideal and becomes the havoc we wreck on authority, which undermines it and opens possibilities, new realms of exploration for us. To realize this, we have to cease to think as victims and begin to think as creators. The negative paranoia that permeates the way we relate to the world needs to be rejected so that we can accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses of society as we confront it in our daily lives and can intelligently undermine it. A positive paranoia — a recognition that society and the hell it puts us through are aberations and that the world is full of wonder and beauty, that within it all of our deepest desires and more can be easily realized — needs to be cultivated. Then we will dare to face the unknown, to relate to each other freely and passionately, avoiding mere toleration and accepting honest conflict. We will dare to oppose society from the strength of our own desires, dreams and lust for life. We'll refuse easy answers, systems and security for the prisons they are, preffering the freedom found in ecstatically exploring the unknown, the adventure of discovering the world of wonder that authority tries to deny us. What has been denied us, we must take, and we must take it not by conforming to a subculture, but by plunging head first into the unknown, by taking the risk of leaving behind all that has suppressed us no matter how comfortable and rebelling totally against society.

"Everything is always and automatically to be risked absolutely. One knows, at least, that the thread one finds in the labyrinth must lead elsewhere."

This piece originaly appeared in *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*

Steal back your life

Economy — the domination of survival over life — is essential for the maintenance of all other forms of domination. Without the threat of scarcity, it would be difficult to coerce people into obedience to the daily routine of work and pay. We were born into an economized world. The social institution of property has made scarcity a daily threat. Property, whether private or communal, seperates the individual from the world, creating a situation in which, rather than simply taking what one wants or needs, one is supposed to ask permission, a permission generally only granted in the form of economic exchange. In this way, different levels of poverty are guaranteed to everyone, even the rich, because under the rule of social property what one is not permitted to have far exceeds what one is permitted to have. The domination of survival over life is maintained.

Those of us who desire to create our lives as our own recognize that this domination, so essential to the maintainence of society, is an enemy we must

attack and destroy. With this understanding, theft and squatting can take on significance as part of an insurgent life project. Welfare scamming, eating at charity feeds, dumpster diving and begging may allow one to survive without a regular job, but they do not in any way attack the economy; they are within the economy. Theft and squatting are also often merely survival tactics. Squatters who demand the "right to a home" or try to legalize their squats, thieves who work their "jobs" like any other worker, only in order to accumulate more worthless commodities — these people have no interest in destroying the economy... they merely want a fair share of its goods. But those who squat and steal as part of an insurgeent life, do so in defiance of the logic of economic property. Refusing to accept the scarcity imposed by this logic or to bow to the demands of a world they did not create, such insurgents take what they desire without asking anyone's permission whenever the possibility arises. In this defiance of society's economic rule, one takes back the abundance of the world as one's own — and this is an act of insurrection. In order to maintain social control, the lives of individuals have to be stolen away. In their place, we received economic survival, the tedious existence of work and pay. We cannot buy our lives back, nor can we beg them back. Our lives will only be our own when we steal them back — and that means taking what we want without asking permission.

From Willfull Disobedience #2

Against Charity

In many cities in the United States, anarchists have organized "Food Not Bombs" feeds. The organizers of these projects will explain that food should be free, that no one should ever have to go hungry. Certainly a fine sentiment... and one to which the anarchists respond in much the same way as christians, hippies or left liberals — by starting a charity.

We will be told, however, that "Food Not Bombs" is different. The decision-making process used by the organizers is nonheirarchical. They recieve no government or corporate grants. In many cities, they serve their meals as an act of civil disobedience, risking arrest. Obviously, "Food Not Bombs" is not a large-scale charitable bureaucracy; in fact, it is often a very slip-shod effort... but it is a charity — and that is never questioned by its anarchist organizers.

Charities are a necessary part of any economic social system. The scarcity imposed by the economy creates a situation in which some people are unable to meet their most basic needs through the normal channels. Even in nations with highly developed social welfare programs, there are those who fall through the cracks in the system. Charities take up the slack where the state's welfare programs can't or won't help. Groups like "Food Not Bombs" are, thus a voluntary workforce helping to preserve the social order by reinforcing the dependence of the poor upon programs not of their own creation.

No matter how non-heirarchal the decision-making process used by the relationship is always authoritarian. The beneficiaries of a charity are at the mercy of the organizers of the program and so are not free to act on their own terms in this relationship. This can be seen in the humiliating way in which one must recieve charity. Charity feeds like "Food Not Bombs" require the beneficiaries to arrive at a time not of their choosing in order to stand in line to recieve food

not of their choosing (and usually poorly made) in quantities doled out by some volunteer who wants to make sure that everyone gets a fair share. Of course, it's better than going hungry, but the humiliaton is at least as great as that of waiting in line at the grocery store to pay for food one actually wants and can eat when one wants it. The numbness we develop to such humiliation — the numbness which is made evident by the case with which certain anarchists will opt to eat at charity feeds every day in order to avoid paying for food, as though there were no other options — shows the extent to which our society is permeated with such humiliating interactions. Still, one would think that anarchists would refuse such interactions as far as it lies within their power to do so and would seek to create interactions of a different sort in order to destroy the humiliation imposed by society. Instead, many create programs that reinforce this humiliation.

But what of the empathy one may feel for another who is suffering from a poverty one knows all too well; what of the desire to share food with others? Programs like "Food Not Bombs" do not express empathy, they express pity. Doling out food is not sharing; it is an impersonal, hierarchical relationship between social role "donor" and social role "beneficiary". Lack of imagination has led anarchists to deal with the question of hunger (which is an abstract question for most of them) in much the same way as christians and liberals, creating institutions which parallel those which already exist. As is to be expected when anarchists attempt to do an inherently authoritarian task, they do a piss-poor job... Why not leave charity work to those who have no illusions about it? Anarchists would do better to find ways of sharing individually if they are so moved, ways which encourage self-determination rather than dependence and affinity rather than pity.

There is nothing anarchist about "Food Not Bombs". Even the name is a demand being made to the authorities. This is why its organizers so frequently use civil disobedience — it is an attempt to appeal to the consciences of those in power, to get them to feed and house the poor. There is nothing in this program that encourages self-determination. There is nothing that would encourage the beneficiaries to refuse that role and begin to take what they want and need without following the rules. "Food Not Bombs", like every other charity, encourages its beneficiaries to remain passive recipients rather than becoming active creators of their own lives. Charity must be recognized for what it is: another aspect of the institutionalized humiliation inherent in our economized existence which must be destroyed so we can fully live.

The Bourgeois Roots of Anarcho Syndicalism

> *We favor the development of a worker's movement based on direct democracy, not just because it will be more effective in the present day fight against the employing class, but also because it foreshadows — and lays the basis for — a society of freedom and equality, without authoritarianism or exploitation.*
>
> From a flyer put out by the Workers Solidarity Alliance, an anarcho-syndicalist organization.

In the fourteenth or fifteenth century a social transformation began to take

place which reached its dramatic peak in the American War of Independence and the French Revolution. This period was the uprising of the bourgeoisie against the feudal system and the power of the Catholic Church. In place of feudalism, the economic system of capitalism and the political system of political democracy arose. Rather than allow a non-elected aristocracy or a king to rule, liberal democracy demands that "the people" rule through their representatives or their vote. Like the anarcho-syndicalists quoted above, the bourgeoisie wanted a "society of freedom and equality, without authoritarianism or exploitation." Leave out the parts about "workers" and "the employing class" and Thomas Paine might have written the quote.

Of course, the anarcho-syndicalists will tell us that they aren't using the words in the way the bourgeois revolutionaries did. I'd take them at their word if it weren't for the fact that anarcho-syndicalism reflects bourgeois ideology in much more significant ways than merely borrowing its terminology. The values upheld by anarcho-syndicalists do not significantly differ from those of the more radical of the bourgeois liberal theorists, and their project, upon examination, proves to be merely the extension of the liberal project.

As I've already said, the economic system that came to power with the bourgeoisie is capitalism. I won't go into a lengthy description of capitalism — suffice it to say that the defining quality of capitalism, as compared with other economic systems, is not the existence of capitalists but the production of excess capital allowing for continued economic expansion. Capitalism is a highly moral system — that is to say it requires values which take priority over individual needs, desires or greed in order to expand smoothly. These values which are essential to capitalist expansion are production and progress. Every technological advance is, thus, to be embraced unless it can be shown to be a threat to further expansion of capital. Essential to production and progress is work and so the bourgeois highly value work — and, contrary to the image painted by "radical" labour propagandists, it is not uncommon for capitalists to work many more hours than industrial workers, but it's organizational rather than productive work. Those who manage to avoid work are the moral scum of capitalist society — parasites off the working people.

Anarcho-syndicalists embrace every one of these capitalist values. Their goal is "the real human mastery of production." In spite of the high level of anthropological evidence to the contrary, they assume that primal people spent most of their time just striving to survive and that it is only thanks to the production of technology and its progress that we can live the wonderful lives we all do now, and enjoy all the lovely commodities — oops! Sorry, I'm waxing sarcastic! The syndicalists recognize a few specific technologies as threats to survival but see technology in general and progress in general as positive things. In light of this, it is no surprise that they rhapsodize over work, because without work there would be no production or progress. Like the bourgeoisie, they see those who avoid work as "parasites." (See Chaze Bufe's Listen Anarchist!) The only real problem they have with the capitalist system is who's in charge — they'd prefer the One Big Capitalist, the international union of working people, rather than various individuals, corporations and states to be in charge. But the basic structure would be the same. Like the bourgeoisie — and maybe even more than the bourgeoisie — the anarcho-syndicalists embrace the values essential to capitalism.

If production and progress are positive values, making work essential, then

social conformity is equally essential. I've already said that work avoidance is seen as parasitism. Any pleasure that cannot be commodified and so brought under the control of production is unethical. The vagabond, the tramp, the gypsy, the outlaw, any individual who makes no positive contribution to society is condemned as a failure or a criminal. Even the bohemian — the non-conforming artist, musician or poet — is suspect in bourgeois eyes — at least until a way is found to recuperate their renegade creative urges.

This same attitude towards those who don't fit into society is held by anarcho syndicalists. Chaz Bufe1s castigation of "marginals" in Listen Anarchist! makes this quite clear. The way the CNT constantly put down the anarchist outlaw Sabate (while continuing to take and use the money he gave them from his robberies) is truly disgusting. Throughout its history, anarcho-syndicalism has tried to quench the fire of unruly rebels, sometimes through persuasion and sometime through insult, to move anarchic rebels to conform and to accept society. Wherever anarchic rebellion went beyond the reforms the anarcho-syndicalist were calling, these supposed non-believers in law would be the first to cry, "Criminal! Terrorists!" Like the bourgeoisie, they want production to progress smoothly, and that requires social conformity.

Hand in hand with social conformity goes a love for social peace. It is true that the bourgeoisie has exploited wars between nations to expand capital, but this is always precarious since any violence can upset the smooth running of capitalism. Only violence instituted by the proper authorities with a rational and ethical basis has any place in bourgeois society. Personal conflicts are not only not to include physical violence but should be polite, dealt with through rational discussion, negotiation or due process. Certainly passions should not flare. The social peace is to be broken only under the most extreme of circumstances.

Anarcho-syndicalists also value social peace. From Luigi Fabbri1s Bourgeois Influences in Anarchism to Bufe's Listen Anarchist!, they try to warn anarchists away from violent verbal expression — ironically, trying to claim that this springs not from false conceptions of anarchism created by the bourgeois press — why they think people with courage and intelligence to rebel against authority would accept the word of the bourgeois press, I don't know. Like the bourgeoisie, the anarcho-syndicalists call on us to express our disagreements rationally, free of passion, in a peaceable way. Any active, violent expression of individual rebellion is considered irresponsible, counter-revolutionary and unethical by the anarcho syndicalists. The perpetrators are labeled, at best, as dupes and more often as common criminals and terrorists. In fact, outside of a "revolutionary situation," anarcho-syndicalists reject most form of illegal activity as counter-productive (but is that necessarily bad?). Only the uprising of the working class (the "proper authority" in anarcho-syndicalist theory) can justify violence — and that violence must be rational and ethical so as to keep the instruments of production intact and make as smooth of a transition as possible to anarcho-syndicalist production.

Anarcho-syndicalists also wish to create a rational, ethical society. They call on us to "attack irrationality... wherever and whenever it arises." The problem they see with the present society is that it is not rational or ethical enough. Since reason is the source of ethical behavior (in their view), it must prevail in all areas of life. Not our passions or desires, but our "rational self-interest" should be our guide, say the syndicalists, echoing the utilitarians. It is both more rational and more ethical if the producer controls the means of production, they proclaim,

blithely ignoring the question of whether it is possible for anyone to control the means of production in industrial society.

Both bourgeois liberal theorists and anarcho-syndicalists want a rational, ethical society based on freedom, equality and justice, guaranteeing human rights. Both want a smoothly running economy with high levels of production guaranteeing scientific and technological progress. Both require social peace and conformity to realize their projects. It is difficult not to think that their projects are the same. I see only two significant differences. The bourgeoisie sees the economy as an apolitical force that can progress efficiently and ethically in the form of private enterprise. The anarcho-syndicalists recognize the economy as a political force which must, therefor, be run democratically. The bourgeois liberals believe that representational democracy can create their ideal. Anarcho-syndicalists believe that democracy must be direct — though they never seem to ask us if we want to spend time directly voting on every social issue that comes up. The project of the anarcho-syndicalists is really just an extension of the project of the project of bourgeois liberalism — an attempt to push that project toward its logical conclusion.

This brings me to the final parallel between bourgeois liberalism and anarcho syndicalism, a parallel not of ideas, but of ignorance. Neither seems capable of recognizing the realities of the social system we live under. "The every day activity of slaves reproduces slavery" (Fredy Perlman). While talking about freedom and democracy, the bourgeois liberal and the anarcho-syndicalist both only see the human authorities that control them; they are blind to the social activities in which they participate which are the real source of their slavery. Thus, the bourgeois liberal is content to get rid of priests and kings, and the anarcho-syndicalist throws in presidents and bosses. But the factories remain intact, the stores remain intact (though the syndicalists may call them distribution centers), the family remains intact — the entire social system remains intact. If our daily activity has not significantly changed — and the anarcho-syndicalists give no indication of wanting to change it beyond adding the burden of managing the factories to that of managing the factories to that of working in them — then what difference does it make if there are no bosses? — We're still slaves! The "name-change does not exorcise the beast." But there is a reason why the bourgeois liberal nor the anarcho-syndicalist can see the slavery inherent in the social system. They do not see freedom as the ability of the unique individual to create her/his life as s/he chooses. They see it as the ability of the individual to become a fully and actively integrated part of a progressive, rational society. "Slavery is freedom" is not an aberration of Stalinist of fascist thinking; it is inherent in al perspectives which ascribe freedom to society rather than to the individual. The only way to guarantee the "freedom" of such societies is to suppress non-conformity and rebellion wherever they arise. The anarcho-syndicalists may talk of abolishing the state, but they will have to reproduce every one of its functions to guarantee the smooth running of their society. Anarcho-syndicalism does not make a radical break with the present society. It merely seeks to extend this society1s values so they dominate us more fully in our daily lives. All true rebels, the renegades, outlaws and wild free spirits could no more accept an anarcho-syndicalist society than the present one. We would have to continue raising hell, creating a radical break with society, because we don't want more control over our slavery — and that1s all the anarcho-syndicalists offer us — we want to throw off the chains and live our

lives to the full.

Insurgent Ferocity: The Playful Violence of Rebellion

> *"We don't just talk about violence; it is our element, our everyday fate... the conditions we are forced to live in... "*
>
> Os Cangacieros

Social control is impossible without violence. Society produces systems of rationaized violence to socialize individuals — to make them into useful resources for society, While some of these systems, such as the military, the plolice and the penal system can still be viewed separately due to the blatant harshness of their violence, for the most part these systems have become sointerconnected and so pervasive that they act as a single totality — the totality which is the society in which we live. This systemic violence exists mostly as a constant underlying threat — a subtle, even boring, everyday terrorism which incuces a fear of stepping out of line. The signs and orders from "superiors" which threaten us with punishment or poverty, the armed, uniformed thugs who are there to "protect and serve" (huh!?!), the barrage of headlines about wars, torture, serial killers and streeet gangs, all immerse us in an atmosphere of subtle, underlying, rationalized social violence which causes us to fear and repress our own violent passions. In light of the systematic social violence that surrounds us, it's no surprise that people are fooled into viewing all violence as a single, monolithic entity rather than as specific acts or ways of relating. The system of violnece produced by society does become a monolith which acts to perpetuate itself. In reaction to this monolithic system of violence, the "pathology of pacifism" develops. Unable to see beyond social catagories, the pacifist creates a false dichotomy, limiting the question of violence to the ethical/intellectual choice between as acceptance of violence as a monolithic system or the total rejection of violence. But this choice exists only in the realm of worthless abstactions, because in the world in which we actually live, pacifism and systematic violence depend upon each other. Pacifism is an ideaology which demands total social peace as its ultimate goal. But total social peace would require the complete suppression of the individual passions that create individual incidences of violence — and that would require total social control. Total social control is only possible through the use of the constant threat of the police, prison, therapy, social censure, scarcity or war. So the pacifist ideal requires a monolithic system of violence and reflects the social contradiction inherent in the necessity that authority strive to maintain peace in order to maintain a smoothly running social system, but can only do so by maintaining a rationalized system of violence. The rational system of violence not only perpetuates itself, but also evokes responses, often in the form of blind lashings out by enraged individuals, which the system then manipulates into justifications for its own continual existence, and occasionally in the form of consciously rebellios violence. The passionate violence that is supressed turns in on the one feeling it, becoming the the slow-killing, underlying violence of stress and anxiety. It is evident in the millions of little pinpricks of humiliation that pass bewteen people on the streets and in the public places of every city — looks of disgust and hostility

between strangers, and the verbal battle of wits exchanging guilt and blame between supposed friends. This is the subtlest and most total form of rationalised violence; everyone conforms out of fear of each others' disgust. This is the subtle form of violence practiced by pacifists. "I do not dream of a gentle revolution. My passion runs to the violence of suppersession, the ferocity of a life that renounces nothing." —Raoul Vaneigem Those of us who are fighting for the freedom to create our lives for ourselves need to reject both sides of the choice society offers between pacifism and systematic violence, because this choice is an attempt to socialize our rebellion. Instead we can create our own options, developing a playful and passionate chaos of action and relating which may express itself at times with intense and ferocious violence, at times with the gentlest tenderness, or whatever way our passions and whims move us in the particular moment. Both the rejection of violence and the systemization of violence are an attack on our passions and uniqueness. Violence is an aspect of animal interaction and observation of violence among animals belies several generalizations. Violence among animals does not fit into the the formula of social darwinism; there is no perpetual war of all against all. Rather at specific moments under particular circumstances, individual acts of violence flare up and then fade when the moments pass. There is no systematic violence in the wild, but, instead, momentary expressions of specific passions. This exposes one of the major fallacies of pacifist ideology. Violence, in itself, does not perpetuate violence. The social system of rationalized violence, of which pacifism is an integral part, perpetuates itself as a system. Against the system of violence, a non-systematized, passionate, playful violence is the appropriate response. Violent play is very common among animals and children. Chasing, wrestling and pouncing upon a playmate, breaking, smashing and tearing apart things are all aspects of play that is free of rules. The conscious insurgent plays this way as well, but with real targets and with the intention of causing real damage. The targets of this ferocious play in the present society would mainly be institutions, commodities, social roles and cultural icons, but the human representatives of these institutions can also be targets — especially where they present an immediate threat to anyone's freedom to create their life as they desire. Rebellion has never been merely a matter of self-defense. In itself, self-defense is probably best achieved by accepting the status quo of its reform. Rebellion is the aggressive, dangerous, playful attack by free-spirited individuals against society. Refusing a system of violence, refusing an organized, militarized form of armed struggle, allows the violence of insurgents to retain a high level of invisibility. It cannot be readily understood by the authorities and brought under their control. Its insurgent nature may even go undetected by the authorities as it eats away at the foundations of social control. From the rationalized perspective of authority, this playful violence will often appear utterly random, but actually is in harmony with the desires of the insurgent. This playful violence of rebellion kills "inadvertently as (one) strides out happily without looking back." The plauful violence of insurgence has no room for regret. Regret weakens the force of blows and makes us cautious and timid. But regret only comes in when violence is dealt with as a moral question, and for insurgents who are fighting for the freedom to live their desires, morality is just another form of social control. Wherever rebel violence has manifested playfully, regret seems absurd. In riots (other than police riots) and spontaneous uprisings — as well as in small-scale vandalism — a festive attitude seems to be evident. There is an intense joy, even

euphoria, in the release of violent passions that have been pent up for so long. Bashing in the skull of society as we experience it on a daily basis is an intense pleasure, and one to be savored, not repudiated in shame, guilt or regret. Some may object that such an attitude could cause our violence to get out of hand, but an excess of insurgent violence is not something that we need to fear. As we break down our repression and begin to free our passions, certainly our gestures, our actions and our entire way of being are bound to become increasingly expansive and all we do we will seem to do to excess. our generosity will seem excessive and our violence will seem excessive. Unrepressed, expansive individuals squander in all things. Riots and insurrections have failed to get beyond temporary release, not because of excess, but becasue people hold themselves back. People have not trusted their passions. They have feared the expansiveness, the squandering excess of their own dreams and desires. So they have given up or turned their fight over to new authorities, new systemizers of violence. But how can insurgent violence ever be truly excessive when there is no institution of social control, no aspect of authority, no icon of culture that should not be smashed to powder — and that geefully? If what we want is a world in which each of us can create our own lives free of constraints, relating with each other as we desire rather than in accordance with socially defined roles, we have to recognize that, at times, violence will flare and that there is nothing wrong with that. Fullness of the passions includes full and expansive expressions of hatred and rage — and these are vilent emotions. Thogh this violence can be used tactically it will not be systematic. Though it can be intelligent, it willn ot be rationalized. And under no circumstances is it self-perpetuating, because it is individual and temporary, spending itself fully in its free, passionate expression. Neither moralistic non-violence nor the systematic violence of military struggle can break down authority since both require some form of authority. Only the expansive and passionate violence of insurgent individuals playing alone or with each other has any chance of destroying this society...

> "Forward everyone!
> And with arms and hearts,
> Speech and pen, Dagger and rifle,
> Irony and blasphemy,
> Theft, poisoning and fire,
> Let us make... war on society."
> *Dejaque*

Fear of Conflict

> "Trully it is not a failing in you that you stiffen yourself against me and assert your distinctness or peculiarity: you need not give way or renounce yourself" — Max Stirner

Whenever more than a few anarchists get together, there are arguments. This is no surprise, since the word "anarchist" is used to describe a broad range of often contradictory ideas and practices. The only common denominator is the desire to be rid of authority, and anarchists do not even agree on what authority

is, let alone the question of what methods are appropriate for eliminating it. These questions raise many others, and so arguments are inevitable.

The arguments do not bother me. What bothers me is the focus on trying to come to an agreement. It is assumed that "because we are all anarchists", we must all really want the same thing; our apparent conflicts must merely be misunderstandings which we can talk out, finding a common ground. When someone refuses to talk things out and insists on maintaining their distinctness, they are considered dogmatic. This insistence on finding a common ground may be one of the most significant sources of the endless dialogue that so frequently takes place of acting to create our lives on our own terms. This attempt to find a common ground involves a denial very real conflicts.

One strategy frequently used to deny conflict is to claim that an argument is merely a disagreeement over words and their meanings. As if the words one uses and how one chooses to use them have no connection to one's ideas, dreams and desires. I am convinced that there are very few arguments that are merely about words and their meanings. These few could be easily resolved if the individuals involved would clearly and precisely explain what they mean. When individuals cannot even come to an agreement about what words to use and how to use them, it indicates that their dreams, desires and ways of thinking are so far apart that even within a single language, they cannot find a common tongue. The attempt to reduce such an immense chasm to mere semantics is an attempt to deny a very real conflict and the singularity of the individuals involved.

The denial of conflict and of the singularity of individuals may reflect a fetish for unity that stems from residual leftism or collectivism. Unity has always been highly valued by the left. Since most anarchists, despite their attempts to seperate themselves from the left, are merely anti-state leftists, they are convinced that only a united front can destroy this society which perpetually forces us into unities not of our choosing, and that we must, therefore, overcome our differences and join together to support the "common cause". But when we give give ourselves to the "common cause", we are forced to accept the lowest common denominator of understanding and struggle. The unities that are created in this way are false unities which thrive only by suppressing the unique desires and passions of the individuals involved, tranforming them into a mass. Such unities are no different from the forming of labor that keeps a factory functioning or the unity of social consensus which keeps the authorities in power and people in line. Mass unity, because it is based on the reduction of the individual to a unit in a generality, can never be a basis for the destruction of authority, only for its support in one form or another. Since we want to destroy authority, we must start from a different basis.

For me, that basis is myself — my life with all of its passions and dreams, its desires, projects and encounters. From this basis, I make "common cause" with no one, but may frequently encounter individuals with whom I have an affinity. It may well be that your desires and passions, your dreams and projects coincide with mine. Accompanied by an insistence upon realizing these in opposition to every form of authority, such affinity is a basis for a genuine unity between singular, insurgent individuals which lasts only as long as these individuals desire. Certainly, the desire for the destruction of authority and society can move us to strive for an insurrectional unity that becomes large-scale, but never as a mass movement; instead it would need to be a coinciding of affinities between individuals who insist on making their lives their own. This sort of insurrec-

tion cannot come about through a reduction of our ideas to a lowest common denominator with which everyone can agree, but only through the recognition of the singularity of each individual, a recognition which embraces the actual conflicts that exist between individuals, regardless of how ferocious they may be, as part of the amazing wealth of interactions that the world has to offer us once we rid ourselves of the social system which has stolen our lives and our interactions from us.

From Willfull Disobedience #2

"Feral Revolution"

When I was a very young child, my life was filled with intense pleasure and a vital energy that caused me to feel what I experienced to the full. I was the center of this marvelous, playful existence and felt no need to rely on anything but my own living experience to fulfill me.

I felt intensely, I experienced intensely, my life was a festival of passion and pleasure. My disappointments and sorrows were also intense. I was born a free, wild being in the midst of a society based upon domestication. There was no way that I could escape being domesticated myself. Civilization will not tolerate what is wild in its midst. But I never forgot the intensity that life could be. I never forgot the vital energy that had surged through me. My existence since I first began to notice that this vitality was being drained away has been a warfare between the needs of civilized survival and the need to break loose and experience the full intensity of life unbound.

I want to experience this vital energy again. I want to know the free-spirited wildness of my unrepressed desires realizing themselves in festive play. I want to smash down every wall that stands between me and the intense, passionate life of untamed freedom that I want. The sum of these walls is everything we call civilization, everything that comes between us and the direct, participatory experience of the wild world. Around us has grown a web of domination, a web of mediation that limits our experience, defining the boundaries of acceptable production and consumption.

Domesticating authority takes many forms, some of which are difficult to recognize. Government, capital and religion are some of the more obvious faces of authority. But technology, work, language with its conceptual limits, the ingrained habits of etiquette and propriety — these too are domesticating authorities which transform us from wild, playful, unruly animals into tamed, bored, unhappy producers and consumers. These things work in us insidiously, limiting our imaginations, usurping our desires, suppressing our lived experience. And it is the world created by these authorities, the civilized world, in which we live. If my dream of a life filled with intense pleasure and wild adventure is to be realized, the world must be radically transformed, civilization must fall before expanding wilderness, authority must fall before the energy of our wild freedom. There must be — for want of a better word — a revolution.

But a revolution that can break down civilization and restore the vital energy of untamed desire cannot be like any revolution of the past. All revolutions to date have centered around power, its use and redistribution. They have not sought to eradicate the social institutions that domesticate; at best they have

only sought to eradicate the power relationships within those institutions. So revolutionaries of the past have aimed their attacks at the centers of power seeking to overthrow it. Focused on power, they were blind to the insidious forces of domination that encompass our daily existence and so, when successful at overthrowing the powers that be, they ended up re-creating them. To avoid this, we need to focus not on power, but on our desire to go wild, to experience life to the full, to know intense pleasure and wild adventure. As we attempt to realize this desire, we confront the real forces of domination, the forces that we face every moment of every day. These forces have no single center that can be overthrown. They are a web that binds us. So rather than trying to overthrow the powers that be, we want to undermine domination as we confront it every day, helping the already collapsing civilization to break down more quickly and as it falls, the centers of power will fall with it. Previous revolutionaries have only explored the well-mapped territories of power. I want to explore and adventure in the unmapped, and unmappable, territories of wild freedom. The revolution that can create the world I want has to be a feral revolution.

There can be no programs or organizations for feral revolution, because wildness cannot spring from a program or organization. Wildness springs from the freeing of our instincts and desires, from the spontaneous expression of our passions. Each of us has experienced the processes of domestication, and this experience can give us the knowledge we need to undermine civilization and transform our lives. Our distrust of our own experience is probably what keeps us from rebelling as freely and actively as we'd like. We're afraid of fucking up, we're afraid of our own ignorance. But this distrust and fear have been instilled in us by authority. It keeps us from really growing and learning. It makes us easy targets for any authority that is ready to fill us. To set up "revolutionary" programs is to play on this fear and distrust, to reinforce the need to be told what to do. No attempt to go feral can be successful when based on such programs. We need to learn to trust and act upon our own feelings and experiences, if we are ever to be free.

So I offer no programs. What I will share is some thoughts on ways to explore. Since we all have been domesticated, part of the revolutionary process is a process of personal transformation. We have been conditioned not to trust ourselves, not to feel completely, not to experience life intensely. We have been conditioned to accept the humiliation of work and pay as inescapable, to relate to things as resources to be used, to feel the need to prove ourselves by producing. We have been conditioned to expect disappointment, to see it as normal, not to question it. We have been conditioned to accept the tedium of civilized survival rather than breaking free and really living. We need to explore ways of breaking down this conditioning, of getting as free of our domestication as we can now. Let's try to get so free of this conditioning that it ceases to control us and becomes nothing more than a role we use when necessary for survival in the midst of civilization as we strive to undermine it.

In a very general way, we know what we want. We want to live as wild, free beings in a world of wild, free beings. The humiliation of having to follow rules, of having to sell our lives away to buy survival, of seeing our usurped desires transformed into abstractions and images in order to sell us commodities fills us with rage. How long will we put up with this misery? We want to make this world into a place where our desires can be immediately realized, not just

sporadically, but normally. We want to re-eroticize our lives. We want to live not in a dead world of resources, but in a living world of free wild lovers. We need to start exploring the extent to which we are capable of living these dreams in the present without isolating ourselves. This will give us a clearer understanding of the domination of civilization over our lives, an understanding which will allow us to fight domestication more intensely and so expand the extent to which we can live wildly.

Attempting to live as wildly as possible now will also help break down our social conditioning. This will spark a wild prankishness in us which will take aim at all that would tame it, undermining civilization and creating new ways of living and sharing with each other. These explorations will expose the limits of civilization's domination and will show its inherent opposition to freedom. We will discover possibilities we have never before imagined... vast expanses of wild freedom. Projects, ranging from sabotage and pranks that expose or undermine the dominant society, to the expansion of wilderness, to festivals and orgies and general free sharing, can point to amazing possibilities.

Feral revolution is an adventure. It is the daring exploration of going wild. It takes us into unknown territories for which no maps exist. We can only come to know these territories if we dare to explore them actively. We must dare to destroy whatever destroys our wildness and to act on our instincts and desires. We must dare to trust in ourselves, our experiences and our passions. Then we will not let ourselves be chained or penned in. We will not allow ourselves to be tamed. Our feral energy will rip civilization to shreds and create a life of wild freedom and intense pleasure.

in Demolition Derby #1, 1988, p. 30

The Liberation of Motion Through Space

Time is a system of measurement, which is to say, a ruler, and authority. There is a reason why, during many insurrections, clocks have been smashed and calendars burned. There was a semi-conscious recognition on the part of the insurgents that these devices represented the authority against which they rebelled as much as did the kings or presidents, the cops or soldiers. But it never took long for new clocks and calendars to be created, because inside the heads of the insurgents the concept of time still ruled.

Time is a social construction which is used to measure motion through space in order to control it and bind it to a social context. Whether it be the motions of the sun, moon, stars and planets across the skies, the motions of individuals over the terrains they wander, or the motions of events across the artifices know as days, weeks, months and years, time is the means by which these motions are bound to social utility. The destruction of time is essential to the liberation of individuals from the social context, to the liberation of individuals as conscious, autonomous creators of their own lives.

The revolt against time is nothing if it is not a revolt against the domination of time in one's daily life. It calls for a transformation of the ways in which one moves through the spaces one encounters. Time dominates our motion through space by means of "necessary" destinations, schedules and appointments. As long as the social context which produced time as a means of social control continues to exist, it is doubtful that any of us will be able to completely eradicate

destinations, schedules or appointments from our lives. But on examination of how these modes of interaction affect the ways one moves through space could help one create a more conscious motion. The most notable effect of having to get somewhere (destination), especially when one has to be there by a certain time (schedule/appointment), is a lack of awareness of the terrain over which one is moving. Such motion tends to be a sort of sleep-walking from which the individual creates nothing, since the destination and the schedule pre-exist the journey and define it. One is only conscious of here surroundings and how they are affecting her to the minimal extent necessary to get where she is going. I don't deny that many of the environments through which one may move, especially in an urban setting, can be disturbingly ugly, making such unconsciousness aesthetically appealing, but this lack of consciousness causes one to miss many chances for subversion and play that might otherwise be created.

Subverting one's motion through space, making it one's own, freed from the bondage to time, is a matter of creating this motion as nomadic motion rather than self-transportation. Nomadic motion makes a playful (though often serious) exploration of the terrain over which one is passing the essential aspect of the journey. The wanderer interacts with the places through which she passes, consciously changing and being changed by them. Destination, even when it exists, is of little importance, since it too will be a place though which one passes. As this form of motion through space becomes one's usual way, it may enhance one's wits, allowing one to become less and less dependent upon destinations, appointments, schedules and the other fetters that enforce the rule of time over our motions. Part of this enhancement of the nomad's wits within the present time dominated context is learning to create ways to play around time, subverting it and using it against itself to enhance one's free wandering.

A radically different way of experiencing living occurs when we are consciously creating time for ourselves. Due to the limits of a language developed within this time-dominated social context, this way of experiencing life is often spoken of in temporal terms as well, but as a subjective "time", as in: "The time when I was climbing Mount Hood..." But I'd rather not refer to this as subjective "time" since it has no shared purpose with social time. I prefer to call it "nomadic experience". Within nomadic experience, the peaks, the valleys and the plateaus are not created in steady, measurable cycles. They are passionate interactions of the sort which may make one moment an eternity and the next several weeks a mere eye-blink. On this passionate journey, the sun still rises and sets, the moon still waxes and wanes, plants still flower and bear fruit and wither, but not as measurable cycles. Instead, one experiences these events in terms of one's passionate and creative interactions with them. Without any destination to define one's motion through space, linear time becomes meaningless as well. Nomadic experience is outside of time, not in a mystical sense, but in the recognition that time is the mystification of motion through space and, like all mystifications, usurps our ability to create ourselves.

A conscious, playful, exploratory creation of our own motions through space, of our own interactions with the places we pass through, is the necessary practice of the revolt against time — nothing less than creating events and their language. Until we begin to transform ourselves into nomadic creators of this sort in the way we live our lives, every smashed clock and every burned calendar will simply be replaced, because time will continue to dominate the way we live.

Beyond Earth First! Toward a feral revolution of desire

Last year, Fifth Estate published a critique of Deep Ecology which included criticisms of certain people who use the slogan "Earth First!". This has led to a fairly intense dialogue. As I have read this dialogue it has become clear to me that most people—including those who call themselves EF!ers-aren't really sure what EF! is.

A number of letters and one article (" 'Live Wild or Die'—The Other Earth First!," Fifth Estate, Vol.23, #3) attempted to show that EF! was not monolithic, that it was a movement rather than an organization. Yet the writers of these pieces spoke of "what EF! actually does" and, in the article, of EF!'s "split personality"—as though EF! were indeed a single entity, a monolithic organization. To clear this up, it is necessary to figure out just what EF! is.

There is an EF! that is an organization. This is what Mikal called the "centralized personality" of Earth First! in his FE article. This EF! consists of the editorial staff of the national paper and the "stars" of EF! They create a major portion of the public image of what EF! is all about. And their recent right-wing Malthusian ravings have not helped that image one bit.

There is another Earth First!—however that EF! is not a movement. The real movement is an anti-authoritarian, anti-industrial-civilization, pro-wilderness movement, and people of Fifth Estate are as much a part of that movement as anyone else who chooses to use the slogan "Earth First!" To claim that a slogan creates a separate movement with an inside and an outside defined by the use of the slogan is a mystification. As Mikal said in his article, the defining quality of a movement is that it moves. Everyone who is active in any way in opposing civilization and striving to expand wildness is participating in that movement and needs to criticize any part of that movement that is stifling the liberation of wildness.

So what do I think Earth First! is? It is a slogan around which some people rally. Just what this slogan means and why people need it as a rallying point needs to be examined.

"Earth First!," the slogan is a simple, two word proclamation of biocentrism. Biocentrism is an ideology, an attempt to claim that we can act from a basis other than our own needs, desires and experiences. We cannot put earth first. When we claim to do so, we are only putting our concept of the earth first. Robert Anton Wilson and Timothy Leary have both claimed to have connected with the consciousness of the universe and have used this claim to justify their vision of paradise as a horrendous, sterile techno-topia, saying that is the "natural course of evolution." I share a vision similar to many EF!ers, but their claim to know the earth's will is false consciousness, ideology, and all ideology is a threat to wildness.

Why do people so distrust their own instincts and desires that they have to create false consciousness to justify themselves? Why do they need to claim that they are doing what they are doing because they put "Earth First!"? Civilization, with its need to suppress whatever is wild, has taught us to distrust our instincts and desires. It needs to do this in order to channel our wild energies into the domesticated activities of work and commodity consumption—the activities that are destroying wildness everywhere. So the best thing we can

do for wilderness is to let our own wildness break free by trusting and acting on our own instincts and desires. To be trapped in the ideology of a slogan is to chain our radical consciousness and to stifle our movement.

By equating the slogan with a movement, speaking of the movement as a monolithic being that acts on its own, defining participation in the movement in terms of use of the slogan rather than people's activities, the image of EF! as an organization is created whether such an organization actually exists or not. The Tucson crew reinforces this image by creating a visible bureaucracy, but even without them — the image would exist because EF! is spoken of in organizational terms even by those who claim it is not one. So an image has been created which the media can use to create a good guy / bad guy scenario. And thanks to Foreman, Abbey and other EF! stars, the image of a monolithic organization of crackpot, racist eco-terrorists is becoming dominant. Give the press a name and claim that it represents a single movement and they will see an organization there. And when even those who claim that Earth First! is not a monolithic organization speak of it in monolithic, organizational terms, can anything else be expected?

To summarize my thoughts:

1. The slogan, "Earth First!" needs to be left behind because it reflects false consciousness. We always act from our own needs, desires and experiences. When we recognize that in terms of our radical activity, we free that activity from any ideological constraints.

2. The slogan needs to be left behind because it has created an image that allows the media to manipulate the public's conception of those who act in the slogan's name.

3. The slogan needs to be left behind because it is associated with the redneck, macho, racist posturings of Abbey, Foreman and others.

4. The slogan needs to be left behind because it creates the image of a movement whose only basis is the use of that slogan, creating an insider/outsider dichotomy that allows "insiders" to write off the criticisms of "outsiders" without giving them much thought.

5. It needs to be recognized that the actual movement, of which those who use the slogan, "EF!" are part, is a movement to save what is wild from civilization. Many of us who have criticized the ideology that has been associated with EF! are active participants in that movement, so our criticisms are not those of outsiders.

6. It needs to be recognized that "Earth First!" is merely a slogan, a rallying cry. It does nothing concrete. Individual people, acting separately or together, are the ones doing things of actual significance. In order to avoid the image of being a monolithic organization, we have to be careful to make this clear.

We need to go beyond the false consciousness of the idea, Earth First! and recognize that only by setting our own wild instincts and desires free can wilderness be saved. Ours is a revolution of desire, a feral revolution. We do not do it for anything supposedly greater than ourselves; we do it for ourselves. So, come on, anarchic adventurers, let's go wild!

First published in Live Wild or Die #1 February 1988, reprinted in *Anarchy: A Journal Of Desire Armed* #19, May-July 1989.

The Last Word

"When you launch information you become information yourself."
—Adilkno

Yes, it is possible to be possessed... not by demons, spirits, or other alleged supernatural entities. No, what possesses us, undermining any attempt at autonomous self-creation, is identity. This thing with no life of its own rides us to our deaths as though we were underfed, abused horses in the clutches of some hobgoblin.

In the game of insurgence—a lived guerilla war game—it is strategically necessary to use identities and roles. Unfortunately, the context of social relationships gives these roles and identities the power to define the individual who attempts to use them. So I, Feral Faun, became... an anarchist... a writer... a Stirner-influenced, post-situationist, anti-civilization theorist... if not in my own eyes, at least in the eyes of most people who've read my writings.

I took on these identities only semi-consciously, with little awareness of the pitfalls I would encounter. They did not become tools I could use to create interactions with others which integrated practice, analysis, and passion into a game of conscious insurgence and lay aside when they ceased to be useful. Rather, these identities became armors glued onto me which prevented the possibility of real interactions... replacing them with the absurd relationships of the identified in which individuals do not revel in each other's uniqueness, but rather find comfort in some shallow image of similarity. In such relationships, passion, intensity, love, amazement, cruelty, and real critical interaction have no place. The game of conscious insurgence gets replaced by a game of simulated rage and ritualized protest over all the appropriate issues—that is, the game of anarchist activism.

Well, I'm tired... tired of being ridden by the hobgoblin of identity, tired of half-assed interactions where no one really teaches anyone, tired of the simulated rage and ritualized reactivism which tries to pass itself off as insurgence, tired of social contexts which are always boxes which isolate me by naming me, tired of being information to people rather than flesh and blood and desire and passion and intensity. By the time you read this, Feral Faun will no longer be... this is the last word.

From "Anarchy: A Journal Of Desire Armed" #42, Fall 1995

Some Not Completely Aimless Meanderings

from "The Iconoclast's Hammer"column in *Anarchy Magazine*

It's time to think about writing another column. There are a lot of topics worth examining—topics to which I have given a lot of thought and which are fundamental to understanding and opposing authority. But I have no desire to put energy into examining these topics right now. There are times when I know

exactly why I'm writing. I get a real pleasure out of making my explorations coherent enough to express them to others. I look forward to the possibility of stimulating and challenging discourse... But at the moment, this isn't the case. Not I don't want to express myself coherently or be involved in challenging discourse. But, at the moment, I'm not convinced that my recent writings are doing that for me.

Recently, I was at an anarchist gathering in Long Beach, California. There was much that could be criticized about the gathering, but I got involved in several intelligent, humorous and challenging discussions-even in the context of workshops! Due to a lack of p.c. and process fetishists, it seemed much easier to get to the heart of what was being discussed, and most people did not take offense at passionate expressions of differences. But, around this same time, I learned that articles I had written were being thoroughly misunderstood. I came across responses to my pieces which described my writings as 'Marxist', 'economistic' or 'moralistic'. This reminded me of the time when a reviewer described two pamphlets I'd written as attempts to "create a new religion" when I was trying to reclaim for myself what religion usurps and places in the realm of the 'spiritual'. Although much of this misinterpretation of my writings can be attributed to projections of some people's ideological blind-spots, it is still frustrating to see my attempts to express an explicitly amoral, anti-economistic critique being interpreted as the opposite.

Language often frustrates me. Every language that exists in the civilized world developed within the context of authoritarian relationships. Those of us who wish to challenge such relationships and express the possibility of free relating outside the context of authority can't help but twist, contort and play with the language we use. In a sense, we create a new language, a language which we hope expresses the possibilities the old language tends to suppress. This is bound to lead to some misunderstandings. I know that most of the readers of my writings are either anarchists or anarchist sympathizers. I also know, from extensive interaction with anarchists, that most anarchists 'think' and talk in the terms of discourse created by society, by the system of relationships and roles that is authority. They are anarchists because they hate the government, the state, all bosses and hierarchy, but they haven't conceived of the possibility that authority may run much deeper than this—that it may be the entire system of relationships and values that is society as we know it, a system into which we were all integrated to one extent or another... and that it may be the very language which we've been taught to use to speak... about everything. So I guess I shouldn't be surprised that my attempts to twist this language against itself, into a language that can express rebellion and the possibility of real life, a language that is my own, should be misinterpreted. It's probably far more surprising that anyone else ever understands what I write, even partially. But I'll try to clarify things a bit more by reiterating things I've said a million times as plainly as possible, which is to say, now I'm really gonna rant...

There are people who are anarchists in the sense of being believers in anarchism. Their anarchism consists of a moral and/or social system which they wish to create and expand into a worldwide system of relationships. This ideal forces them to morally oppose those aspects of this society which are in contradiction to their values. I am not an anarchist in this sense and have not been since 1981. But we've all heard of pianists, cellists and guitarists — so why not be an anarchist in this sense, one who plays anarchy? Let me explain. The

simplest definition of anarchy is "no authority." Where there is no authority, a myriad of possibilities that cannot exist under authority suddenly open up. If authority is the entire system of relationships that produces, reproduces and is society, then to "play anarchy" is to create situations in which this system breaks down and to extend such situations as far as circumstances allow so that possibilities outside of structures of authority can be discovered and played with. I want to do this for no other reason than that it gives great pleasure and expands my life.

Several years ago, a friend of mine, who was not well-read in radical theory, but who knew she was fed up with the rules and moralities anarchists tended to make for themselves, said to me: "I'm not an anarchist! I'm a me-ist!" Kind of sad that, even among those who claim to oppose authority, it seems necessary to make an 'ism' out of living, doing and rebelling for oneself. But with all the moralistic drivel that passes itself off as anarchism, it is necessary to keep on harping on the fact that for me this ain't a question of 'good' and 'evil', 'right' and 'wrong', 'justice' and 'injustice' — though I may chose to play with some of these concepts if it pleases me; it's a matter of how I want to live... Even freedom is of value to me only because the fewer restrictions there are on me as I pursue the possibilities I want to pursue, the fuller and more wonderful my life can be. If my egoism is expansive, it is because your pleasure gives me pleasure — not because I'm an altruist.

But what about greed, selfishness and wealth? One of the most banal falsifications of moral anarchists is their attempt to explain the economic realities of capital in terms of individual "moral failings." The only problem with greed as it exists in this society is that it isn't greedy enough! The capitalist, the corporate executive and the power monger merely take a huge chunk of the impoverished reality offered by society, and mete out smaller portions of the same to everyone else. In the process, they lose themselves by becoming nothing more than their roles and destroy the wealth they could enjoy by making it into resources and capital. Their 'greed' is much more the desperate addictive need of those who know they have become nothing — the need to make everything into nothing. I am pissed off at them, not because they are greedy, but because the limited and impoverished nature of their greed is destroying the world of real wealth for which I am greedy. You see, I want the universe to be mine. I want to encompass everything, every passion, every desire, every being into myself — I have a boundless greed! But no economy can make this possible. In economic systems, things can only be owned as property. Property means limited ownership of limited things. What is one's property is always far less than what is not one's property, so property always means poverty. Wealth can only exist where there is no property and where no economic relationships exist — where I can make everything my own and you can make everything your own — and included in what I make my own is your pleasure in making everything your own. In economic systems, greed is small, petty and contractive and generosity appears to be altruistic. But beyond economic relationships, greed is expansive and wants to have and enjoy the other's enjoyment, and generosity is the greatest form of selfishness as your pleasure becomes my pleasure.

So my writing, like everything I do, is an attempt to express an expansive selfishness — to get something I want I haven't the least interest in winning people over to the cause of anarchy, nor of winning other anarchists over to my opinions. What I'm interested in is participating in a challenging discourse that

can be part of a radical practice that challenges society in its totality by creating an expansive, anti-economic selfishness. I am arrogant enough to say that such a discourse requires a certain minimal understanding to be truly challenging and that I'm not the least bit interested in wasting time arguing with those without that understanding. These meanderings touch on some of these matters. I'll be using this column to expand on this in the future.

From "Anarchy: A Journal Of Desire Armed" #36, Spring 1993

Paneroticism: The Dance of Life

Chaos is a dance, a flowing dance of life, and this dance is erotic. Civilization hates chaos and, therefore, also hates Eros. Even in supposedly sexually free times, civilization represses the erotic. It teaches that orgasms are events that happen only in a few small parts of our bodies and only through the correct manipulation of those parts. It squeezes Eros into the armor of Mars, making sex into a competitive, achievement-centered job rather than joyful, innocent play.

Yet even in the midst of such repression, Eros refuses to accept this mold. His joyful, dancing form breaks through Mars' armor here and there. As blinded as we are by our civilized existence, the dance of life keeps seeping into our awareness in little ways. We look at a sunset, stand in the midst of the forest, climb on a mountain, hear a bird song, walk barefoot on a beach, and we start to feel a certain elation, a sense of awe and joy. It is the beginning of an orgasm of the entire body, one not limited to civilization's so-called "erogenous zones", but civilization never lets the feeling fulfill itself. Otherwise, we'd realize that everything that is not a product of civilization is alive and joyfully erotic.

But a few of us are slowly awakening from the anesthesia of civilization. We are becoming aware that every stone, every tree, every river, every animal, every being in the universe is not only just as alive, but at present is more alive than we who are civilized beings. This awareness is not just intellectual. It can't be or civilization will just turn into another academic theory. We are feeling it. We have heard the love-songs of rivers and mountains and have seen the dances of trees. We no longer want to use them as dead things, since they are very much alive. We want to be their lovers, to join in their beautiful, erotic dance. It scares us. The death-dance of civilization freezes every cell, every muscle within us. We know we will be clumsy dancers and clumsy lovers. We will be fools. But our freedom lies in our foolishness. If we can be fools, we have begun to break civilizations chains, we have begun to lose our need to achieve. With no need to achieve, we have time to learn the dance of life; we have time to become lovers of trees and rocks and rivers. Or, more accurately, time cease to exist for us; the dance becomes our lives as we learn to love all that lives. And unless we learn to dance the dance of life, all our resistance to civilization will be useless. Since it will still govern within us, we will just re-create it.

So let's dance the dance of life. Let's dance clumsily without shame, for which of us civilized people isn't clumsy? Let's make love to rivers, to trees, to mountains with our eyes, our toes, our hands, our ears. Let every part of our bodies awaken to the erotic ecstasy of life's dance. We'll fly. We'll dance. We'll heal. We'll find that our imaginations are strong , that they are part of the erotic dance that can create the world we desire.

From the pamphlet, "Rants, Essays and Polemics of Feral Faun" (Chaotic Endeavors, 1987) reprinted in Green Anarchy #10 (Fall 2002)

Drifting away from the sacred: Thoughts inspired by reading Peter Lamborn Wilson's The Sacred Drift

My feelings when I read Peter Lamborn Wilson is that he wishes to live very much as I do, yet he looks to thc realm of spirituality as a means to achieve this. To me, it is evident that this is another false path to autonomous self-creation—precisely because it is a path... and one that has been tried so often its failure should be self-evident.

The surrealists called for divergence from all known paths, yet their project proved to be absurd because they sought the marvelous in a passive way outside of any "spiritual" context. Nineteenth century materialism made the mistake of killing god without reclaiming what god had stolen from human beings and from the world. This left a wasteland. The surrealist attempt to use a kind of materialistic mysticism to reclaim this was bound to fail, in part because of its passivity and in part because of its reliance on the Freudian "unconscious" as the realm from which the marvelous would spring.

The "unconscious" realm. like the "spiritual" realm, is a social creation which relegates aspects of our lives which would best be left open and accessible to a "hidden", "other" realm... But Freud never even considered claiming what had been relegated to the "spiritual" for the "unconscious." When Jung did so, he did it merely by equating the "spiritual" with his highly questionable construct, the "collective unconscious"—thus, reclaiming nothing.

The surrealists had no use for Jung's extension of religion's existence. But they also never recognized the banality of the Freudian unconscious—the marvelous is not there except on rare occasions by accident. The marvelous will only become an everyday reality when we reclaim for our everyday lives that aspect of living that has been relegated to nonquotidian realms... This reclamation involves the active creation of marvelous, passionate intensities—not mere passive waiting.

It is the individual's capability for active, conscious, empassioned creation which was usurped to create the realm of the "spiritual" and was, thus, relegated to virtual non-existence. With the creation of gods all creative power was taken from the individual and invested in these invented beings—and their earthly representations. The marvelous was turned into a gift from elsewhere.

The development of god coincides with the development of social control. God is, in fact, very much like society: neither one exists in itself—god exists only in the belief of the religious, and society exists only in the activities of social individuals. Yet god and society enforce the activities which continue their reproduction. The difference is that god exists only in the realm of belief—or ideas—whereas society exists in the realm of material interactions and so creates relationships which coerce even those who oppose social control into reproducing social control.

Capitalism has exposed the material basis of social interactions at the same

time as it has created material social mechanisms to motivate people to continue social reproduction. In other words, god and the spiritual are no longer necessary mystifications to enforce social reproduction. But the social mechanisms created by capitalism do not and cannot transform individuals into the conscious, autonomous creators of their own lives and interactions. Rather individuals are transformed into cogs in the mechanisms. God and spirituality remain as a solace (Marx's "opiate"), an escape and a facet of one's social identity (i.e., an ideological commodity). Stealing back the creative energy from the "spiritual realm" now is equivalent to taking back the power to consciously create one's life and interactions from society. But it is essential that we not forget that this war against society includes an attack upon the citadel of spirituality.

Recent revivals of mysticism, paganism and shamanism among certain radicals may be misguided attempts at reclaiming their lives, but they appear to me to be a retreat in to a fantasy realm in the face of seemingly overwhelming social forces. These revivals indicate the continued lack of confidence of those involved in their ability to create their own lives, their own monuments, their own interactions. It may also indicate a fear of the unknown—a preference for models, for paths, for systems of guidance—because in a world of autonomous creators, or unique free individuals, there arc no guarantees; nothing is certain; all of the maps. definitions and paradigms disintegrate... Such a world is a world of terror and of wonder. For the courageous, mostly the latter.

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Whither now? Some thoughts on creating anarchy

> "Any society that you build will have its limits. And outside the limits of any society the unruly and heroic tramps will wander with their wild and virgin thoughts... planning ever new and dreadful outbursts of rebellion." —Renzo Novatore

I feel that there is no possible society in which I would fit, that whatever society was like, I would be a rebel. At times, this fills me with the joy of the "unruly and heroic tramps" of whom Renzo Navatore speaks, but often it leaves me feeling quite lonely and isolated.

I live in a "society" now—in a situation in which social roles are used to reproduce social relationships. Would the way that we relate when we are free of character armor and social roles still be social relationships? I envision a world in which we can live our lives fully, as unique, wild beings, moving freely into and out of relations with each other as our desires motivate us, never creating the sorts of complex structures of formalized relationships that I understand as "society." It is only in such a world that I can imagine feeling at home. But I really don't know how to go about creating this world.

Many of my friends wouldn't agree with my perspective on society, but we all agree that we want to create ways of relating that are radially different

from what the present authoritarian, capitalist society offers. We all seem to be uncertain about how we can destroy this society and learn to relate freely. Clearly, we need to examine what we consider our radical practice.

I have written articles and flyers. I have no illusions about the radical nature of these projects. They perpetuate certain types of alienated social relationships, and I am fully aware of this: But I write in hopes of inspiring something beyond the writing. I hope that what is unique in what I write will touch another unique individual, allowing us to break down the wall of written words and maybe meet and create projects together. This hasn't happened often though—usually, the social relationship of the printed word remains intact.

In the present situation, scamming and theft are ways of survival which are somewhat radical. They can involve an element of play and adventure lacking in regular jobs, but they are still basically ways of reproducing ourselves in this society and so are, in a sense, work. Still in a small way, theft helps to undermine the commodity, because you are taking something without paying for it. But the necessity for secrecy limits this element of radical critique. What is most radical about scamming and theft—as well as squatting, dumpster diving and gleaning—is that they drastically reduce our need to work and free our time for more worthwhile pursuits. But in themselves they are basically just survival tactics.

Vandalism and sabotage are attacks on property and, thus, on society. But, as most people use them now, they are limited attacks. They are largely just reactions to specific, particularly offensive acts of authority. The extent of the critique can be easily muted by its attachment to a particular issue—recuperating it for society. Still vandalism and sabotage are an active attack on society which may sometimes effectively fuck up some of the projects of Capital. But at their best they express only the destructive side of anarchic rebellion.

All of these activities are worthwhile as part of our rebellion against this society, but all are limited. None of them take us beyond the context of this society. Every one of these activities is, at least partially, created by society as a reaction against it. They don't free us from society or enhance what is unique to us. They only place us on the edge of society (which is certainly the most free and enjoyable place to be in society), and that is not good enough for those of us who want to live out our lives to the limits.

> "Not at the margins of what is collapsing
>
> Not at the margins of what is falling
>
> But at the center of what is... rising"

Since we want to create new ways of relating, ways which grow out of our unique individuality, not social roles, we can't merely react to society—making it the center of our activity and ourselves merely its margins. Each of us needs to make what is unique to us—our own desires, passions, relations, and experiences—the center of our activity. This implies a radically different conception of revolution than that of the various communists and orthodox anarchists who center on "the masses." Neither working class, nor common human activity can create the revolution I'm talking about. The rebellion of the individual against the constraints of society—against the processes of domestication—is the basis from which the revolutionary project has to grow. When the acts of rebellion of a number of individuals coincide and can embrace each other, those

individuals can consciously act together and in this are the seeds of a revolution that can free each of us as unique, wild, free-spirited individuals. But what does this mean on a practical level.

Making ourselves the center of our activity means relating to society and relating to each other in new ways. When we begin to live in terms of our own desires and experiences, our own passions and relations, we find ourselves perpetually—if often subliminally—in conflict with society. Since society depends upon structure and order, and what is unique to us is chaotic and unpredictable, we have a useful advantage in this struggle. We can study society, learn something about how it functions and how it protects itself; but no amount of psychological study can give the force of order knowledge of our unique individuality. As long as we act from our own uniqueness with our knowledge of society—avoiding falling into social roles and predictable patterns—our actions will seem to come from nowhere, yet will wreak havoc on our enemy. Refusing to play social roles in the expected way, refusing to pretend that we accept having to pay for things or work for survival, refusing to follow rules of etiquette and protocol—this is a beginning. Spontaneous (or seemingly spontaneous) pranks and guerrilla theater—which cannot be attributed to clowns, theater troupes or other social entities—may expose the nature of an aspect of society and even create a situation in which the choice between free life and the mere existence offered by society can no longer be hidden. Acts of theft, vandalism and sabotage, springing from our desires rather than being merely a reaction to a particular social atrocity, will be more random and more frequent. Our violence against society will strike like lightning, unpredictably and with the intensity of our desire to live our lives to the full.

But to be able to fight intelligently for ourselves against society requires knowledge and skills. Society, by placing us into social roles, limits our knowledge and skills, so we need to share this information. Books and articles can help us to do this, but are open to public scrutiny—including that of the authorities. That makes our activity more predictable and us more vulnerable. So ways of sharing knowledge that grow from our actual relations as unique individuals need to be created.

This need to share skills coincides with our desire to live life fully, to be able to freely relate and to enjoy each other as unique, wild beings, making the exploration of new ways of relating to each other an immediate necessity—not something to be put off until "after the revolution." Each of us is unique and so unpredictable. Having been taught all of our lives to relate as social roles rather than as the unique beings that we are, we have to rely on our imaginations to create new ways of relating, not on any already-tried pattern—and could it be any other way when we don't want to create new social roles? So the ideas I am sharing are tentative, calling for explorations into unknown realms, inviting us to adventures that are to be entered only to the extent that they fulfill our desires and enhance us as unique individuals. There is nothing inherently revolutionary about these explorations. They become revolutionary only in conjunction with a conscious and active resistance to society—a conscious recognition that our uniqueness and freedom as individuals is in conflict with society and that we must destroy it to fully free ourselves.

I've thought a lot about how to explore new ways of relating over the past several years. These explorations would need to be based on the unique desires of each of the individuals involved and on their mutual trust for each other. At

first my thoughts centered mainly on some sort of settled rural/wilderness living situation involving non-economized relating, projects of wilderness expansion and resistance to and sabotage of domestication and authority. The more I thought about this, the more it seemed that such a project would involve a compromise of my own real desires—and would most likely recreate society on a smaller scale with individuals playing social roles rather than relating on the basis of what they uniquely are.

When people come together on the basis of each of their unique desires and their trust for each other, their union is, by its nature, very transitory. Individuals will come and go as they please and participate in the way they please. This makes a settled living situation, at best, very temporary. Recently, I have been wandering. I would enjoy sharing this life with friends and lovers who wish to wander as well. We would be a wandering festival of rebellion and wonder. I say a festival, and not a tribe or a band, because the only constant would be the commitment of each individual involved to live their life to the full and fight against whatever prevents this, the individuals themselves constantly coming and going as they desire. Survival activities could include wild harvesting, theft, scams, sharing gifts with friends and accepting gifts from people who appreciate any street performance—public expressions of our creative playfulness—we do. We can share skills and knowledge with friends we visit, creating an informal network for spreading knowledge and skills among those we trust. Acts of vandalism and sabotage and other attacks against society will be easier since we will not be staying around—providing an added aspect of invisibility. In these wanderings, I would expect to spend a lot of time in wild places. I would want to explore these places and come to know them well. These wild places would be good locations to destroy this society. These gatherings would provide another means of sharing knowledge and skills as well as being a hell of a lot of fun.

As I said above, in and of themselves, these are not revolutionary ideas. Hobos, freaks, rainbow people and others have often been wanderers, but with no awareness of the war of society against the free-spirited individual. We are at war, but we aren't fighting for power. We don't need to build armies to overthrow the powers that be; we need to become wild, free-spirited, unique individuals whose violence springs from our desire to live life to the limits, and so can undermine power itself. Wandering festivals of free-spirited individuals can incorporate this destructive activity—very possibly much more easily than more organized and readily defined groups.

I've already said that these are tentative suggestions, ideas to be tried and tested. I'm tired of feeling isolated because I refuse to sacrifice myself to social roles. I want to explore new ways of relating. I'd love to hear other people's ideas for exploring ways of relating that get beyond social roles and enhance what is unique in each of us. But more than that, I want to actively explore these ideas in practice and share these explorations with friends and lovers. Then we can cease to be merely on the margins of society and will each, as unique wild beings, become the center of an insurrectionary project that may destroy civilization and create a world in which we freely live, relate and create as our unique desires move us. We will become—to quote Renzo Novatore again— "a shadow eclipsing any form of society which can exist under the sun."

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1989

To Have Done With the Economy Of Love

> "Love of all things is integral beauty; it has no hate or possessiveness... So accept love wherever you may find it: It is difficult to recognize because it never asks." —Austin Osman Spare

Sexual love, erotic pleasure, is the source of boundless ecstasy, the expression of the infinite divinity of our bodies. It is the very creative energy of the cosmos. When this energy flows through us unchecked, we come to be in love, to desire to share erotic pleasure with the entire cosmos. But only rarely do we experience this boundless energy. Within the bounds of commodity culture, love too is a commodity. An economy of love has developed, and that economy destroys the free flow of pleasure.

The economy of love can only exist because love has been made a scarcity. As infants, we are wild, divine lovers in love with ourselves and with all other beings. But parents steal this from us. They deny the sexual nature of their love for the child and sell expressions of love in exchange for acceptable behavior. They punish or reprimand us for blatantly sexual behavior, calling it bad. They judge us and so teach us to judge ourselves. Instead of loving ourselves, we feel obliged to prove ourselves—and fail often enough to never feel sure of ourselves. Love ceases to be a free gift to the cosmos and becomes a very scarce, high-priced commodity for which we must compete.

The competition for economized love changes us. We lose our spontaneity, our free and playful self-expression. It doesn't do to act as we truly feel. We must make ourselves desirable. If we are good-looking by cultural standards, we have a big advantage, for appearance is a major part of what makes a desirable sexual commodity. But there are other useful traits—strength, sexual prowess, "good taste," intelligence, sparkling wit. And, of course, knowledge of how to play the social-sexual games. The better actor wins at these games. Knowing how to put across the right image, knowing just what role to play in what situation—this will buy you economized love. But at the expense of losing yourself.

Few people have both physical attractiveness and adeptness at playing the social-sexual games. So we are left without love except on very rare occasions. It is no surprise that when these occasions arise we do not let them flow naturally, but seek to hold on to them, to extend them. When love is economized, it no longer lends itself to free relating, because the flowing away of a particular lover has come to mean the end of love itself. Instead of relating freely, we seek to build relationships — making relating permanent, hardening it into a system of exchange in which lovers continue to sell love to each other until, at some point, one of them feels cheated or finds an economic relationship because of the fear of losing love — and having to go through the whole process of earning love all over again.

And relationships—being an expression of economized love—are usually supposed to be monogamous. We do not want to lose our lover to another. If we do not agree to only sell our love to each other, might not our lover find a better product, a lover they prefer to us, and leave us? And so the fears induced by the scarcity of love help to create institutions that reinforce that scarcity.

Some people don't choose the way of relationships. They want to prove themselves to be truly desirable commodities. So they become sexual conquistadors. They want to rack up a high score in the arena of sexual conquest. They don't care about sharing pleasure. They just want to create an image. And those who fuck them do it for the status as well. For these people, the ecstasy of total sharing has been lost completely to the economy of love. It is the score and only the score that counts. In order to make the commodities more valuable, the economy of love has created sexual specialization. Of course, the cultural emphasis on masculinity or femininity over our natural androgyny is the foremost aspect of this. But the labels of sexual preference, when made permanent self-definitions, are also a part of this. By defining ourselves as gay or straight or bisexual, as child lover or fetishist or any other limited form, rather than letting our desires flow freely, we are making a specialized product of ourselves and so reinforcing the scarcity of love.

When love becomes a commodity it ceases to be real love, for Eros cannot be chained. Love must flow freely and easily without price and without expectations. When love is economized, it ceases to exist, because the lovers cease to exist. Since we must become desirable products, we repress our real selves in order to take on the roles which our culture teaches us will make us desirable. So it is mask kissing mask, image caressing image—but no real lovers to be found anywhere.

If we are to experience the infinite energy of sexual love, the wild divinity of our bodies in ecstasy, then we must free ourselves of the economy of love. We have to throw off every aspect of this lifeless shell that our culture passes off as love. For nowhere in its realms can the wild joys of boundless pleasure be experienced.

But to break free of the economy of love, love must cease to be a scarcity for us. While the wild cosmos abounds with lovers, commodity culture has stolen this from us. So we are left with one way to free ourselves of love's scarcity. We need to learn to love ourselves, to find ourselves such a source of pleasure that we fall in love with ourselves. After all, is not my body the source of the pleasure I feel in love? Are not my flesh, my nerves, my tingling skin the vast galaxies in which this boundless energy flows? When we learn to be in love with ourselves, to find ourselves a source of endless erotic pleasure, love can never be scarce for us, for we will always have ourselves as a lover.

And when we love ourselves, the boundless joy of Eros will flow through us spilling freely forth. We will not grasp for love because of need, but we will freely share our vast erotic energy with every being who opens to it. Our lovers will be men and women, children, trees and flowers, non-human animals, mountains, rivers, oceans, stars and galaxies. Our lovers will be everywhere, for we ourselves are love.

As mighty gods of love, we then can roam the earth as outlaw heroes, for having escaped the economy of love, we have the strength to oppose all economy. And we will not tolerate this culture where our lovers are abused, enslaved and threatened, murdered and imprisoned. With all the mighty energy of love, we will break every chain and storm the walls until they fall and every one we love is free. And so will end the long, nightmarish rule of economy, the death-dance of civilization.

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The Cybernet of Domination

(Author's note: This article is more speculative than I ideally would have liked, because it is attempting to trace the tendencies inherent in one aspect of modem society, tendencies which, of course, are in relationship to other aspects of this society. This should not be read as prediction, but as an attempt to show why cybernetics is not even potentially liberating and will ultimately be opposed by insurgent free spirits.)

> "The dictatorship of the instrument is the worst kind of dictatorship." —Alfredo M. Bonanno

There is a revolution going on. By this I do not mean an insurrection, an uprising of individuals against authority (though this revolution has managed to recuperate some anti-authoritarian tendencies towards its ends). I mean a substantial, qualitative change in the modes of social reproduction. The domination of industrial capital over these processes is being replaced by the domination of cybernetic capital. As with all such revolutions, this will not be a smooth, easy, peaceful transition. The old ruling order and the new ruling order are in conflict. The strength of reactionary elements in American politics over the past several years shows the tenacity with which the old order is trying to maintain its dominance. But increasingly that dominance is purely political, and the cybernetic new order dominates the economy. Some of my technophilic anarchist friends have told me that I "need to face up to the realities of the cybernetic age." To me, this means examining the nature of domination in the cybernetic age and relentlessly attacking. All that I've observed indicates that cybernetic science and technology are essential aspects of this domination.

Cybernetics innovators tend to be young (as compared to most of the political leaders of the "old order") and consider themselves rebels of sorts, at the cutting edge. The anarcho-technophiles I have met are quite sincerely rebellious and consider themselves to be opposing all authority. But most of the cybernetic rebellion — including a fair amount of the 'anarchist' cybernetic rebellion — seems like a rebellion of entrepreneurs, a rebellion to liberate a mode of production/reproduction not to liberate individuals. Since these cybernetic innovators are the human agents of a qualitative change in the nature of capitalism, it is no surprise that they choose to play a role similar to that of earlier capitalist revolutionaries. Most of the cybernetics freaks I know are too poor and too sincerely anarchic to ever become part of a new ruling class. But cybernetic innovators with money are creating just such a ruling class — though, as I will attempt to show below, this 'class' might more accurately be perceived as a system of relationships in which the technology itself rules and the human "ruling class" of cybertechnicians and scientists only serves the instrument, the machine. The rebellion of the cybernetic innovators is, from its birth, purely a coup d'etat. There is nothing truly liberating about it.

As banal as it is, it seems to need constant repeating: we live in a society in which the image dominates reality, in which most people see the image as reality. This makes it very easy for the cybernetic order to recuperate rebellion, because this new order not only has a far better grasp of image-making technologies than

does the old order; increasingly, it is becoming those technologies. A comparison of the old order — which still is the main source of domination in most of our lives — and the new order — which is perfecting the tools of domination, but at the expense of the old order — would be worthwhile here.

The old order is that of industrial/financial capital. But it is more than this — it is also the order of the nation-state and of real political power. Authority is blatantly centralized and openly hierarchical — no one else can pretend they are not being ruled. This is blatant because essential power in this order actually resides in human beings in their roles as part of the social structure. The political mode of this order is representational democracy or one of its variants, such as fascism, socialist dictatorship and other forms of dictatorship. The domination of civilization over all non-human-made existence is openly accepted as a positive and necessary thing. Commands and voting on a choice between various commands are the methods for getting things done. Punishment is the way of dealing with aberrations from the social norms (though even the old order frequently uses the language of therapy to describe its punishments). In other words, the old order is quite open about its authoritarian nature.

At present, in much of the world (quite noticeably in the U.S.), the technology of the new order is still mostly controlled by the old order, which is incapable of using it efficiently, because it can't be understood in the old order's terms. The social potential of cybernetics is, thus, best discovered by reading and listening to the cyber-mavericks. If their visions were pure sci-fi fantasies, I'd ignore them, but the socio-political structures to fit their visions are being actively promoted and created by various quasi-libertarian 'radical' groups and individuals (e.g. the Greens, libertarian municipalists, social ecologists, Robert Anton Wilson, Timothy Leary...).

In the new order, the dominant form of capital is cybernetic/informational capital. This does not mean the end of industrial, financial and mercantile capitalism, but rather their subjection to the cybernetic mode of social reproduction. This new mode allows for some changes in social structures that, on the surface, appear almost anarchic — changes such as those promoted by Murray Bookchin, the Greens, RA. Wilson and other libertarians of the left and right. These changes are not only possible, but are probably necessary to some extent for the efficient reproduction of cybernetic society. Decentralization is a major rallying cry of many cybernetic radicals. This apparently anarchic goal is, in fact, not the least bit anti-authoritarian in the context of cybernetic capitalism. Cybernetic technology not only allows, but promotes, a decentralization of authority. Industrial capitalism began the process by which authority would come to exist increasingly in the very physical machinery which reproduces society. Cybernetic technology is perfecting this process to the extent of even bringing technologies of social control into the realms of leisure — the home computer, video games and the like. All of these apparently individual bits of cybertech- which have permeated workplaces, schools, game arcades and, at least in the U.S., homes of nearly anyone who's not too poor to get a personal computer — are part of a potentially unified, global network. This network is becoming the center of authority and power. It includes both the material technology of cybernetic machines and the social technology of cybernetic systemic structures. Those who are too poor to buy the material machinery are encompassed in the network by its making them dependent on social programs that are part of the network — this dependence stemming from a lack of access they have

to knowledge which would allow them to create their lives for themselves. The decentralization offered by cybernetics can even extend to industry, fitting in well with the visions of certain techno-anarchists. Some corporations are already experimenting with having some of their production done in the form of cottage industry. What can't be done this way could probably be so automated that only a few technicians would be needed in a factory as trouble-shooters. (I've seen a huge factory which seemed to have only four workers.) So cybernetics allows for the apparent decentralization of production. But, of course, production itself remains unquestioned. This is because cybernetic 'decentralization' is not the least bit anti-authoritarian; it merely centers authority in a socio-technological network that has no spatial or material center, because the network is itself the center and it is (almost) everywhere. And it can easily intrude into all of our lives.

Along with apparent decentralization, cybernetic technology offers the possibility of apparent 'direct' democracy. This is what seems to attract those anarchists and libertarian leftists who drool over this technology. Everyone who 'owns' a computer is, at least politically, connected to everyone else who 'owns' a computer. It would be no surprise if some form of personal computer becomes available to even the poorer people in the more advanced areas of capitalist domination since this would more fully integrate them into the cybernet. If everyone in a particular nation had a computer, they could be easily convinced that they could make the real decisions that effect their lives — that they could vote 'directly' through their computers on all significant issues. That this constitutes as complete a separation between decision and action as may be possible is conveniently forgotten, as is the fact that the cybernetic system itself cannot be questioned significantly in this way since this system itself controls what can and cannot be questioned by the very nature of its technology. Cybernetic language is a high-tech newspeak. The 'direct' democracy it offers is only that which can reproduce cybernetic society. It does not eliminate representation; it can merely center it in technology rather than in elected human beings. But like all representations, this technology will act as a ruler.

The ideology behind cybernetic technology is systems analysis. Systems analysis seeks to understand all interactions in terms of systems or networks of relationships in which each thing affects all other things. It attempts to scientifically (i.e. mathematically) understand these systems of relationships in order to better control them. Thus, the concept of 'process', as opposed to chains of command, becomes increasingly important in cybernetic society. 'Process' — a radical buzzword for "politically correct" ways of communicating and relating — fits in very well with systems analysis because it is an attempt to formalize decision making relationships without making anyone involved feel that they are being coerced. 'Correct' process is potentially, the way for the cybernet to integrate everyone as completely as possible into itself. Process militates against non-participation, tending to make non-participation appear as victimization rather than as a freely made choice. The ideology behind 'correct' process assumes that the individual is merely a part of the process of the system of relationships that is the group (on the micro-level) or. society (on the macro-level). Process is systems analysis applied to group and social projects. It is the domination of the ideology of the cybernet in our interactions. Process is used regularly mostly in radical, ecological, feminist and similar groups. But many corporations are integrating process — consensus, facilitation and

the like — with old order chains of command in experiments designed to make employees feel that they are more truly part of the corporation. Ultimately, the 'process' created by predominantly middle class 'radical' groups provides a system for controlling rebellious tendencies which fits perfectly into the framework of cybernetic control.

If a part of the cybernetic process is not functioning correctly, you don't punish it; you try to fix it. In the context of cybernetic society, punishment of criminals and deviants comes to appear increasingly inhuman and absurd. Efficient social control requires everyone to be as fully integrated into the social system as possible, and punishment does nothing to integrate the punished — more often than not it does the opposite. So the most 'progressive' elements in society create therapeutic approaches for dealing with social deviance. At present, criminals are still mostly punished though the language of therapy is used even in this context. Non-criminal deviance (e.g. 'excessive' alcohol use, 'inappropriate' sexual behavior, acting up in school, 'madness') tends to be labeled a disease and 'treated'. The proliferation of 12-step groups and new-age therapies is just a part of this phenomenon. Many of these groups very blatantly teach that you cannot do anything about your alleged problems by yourself; you have to become part of an interdependent group of fellow victims, helping each other to recover — forever and ever and ever — and become productive members of society. Occasionally, even criminals — particularly people convicted of DUI or minor drug offenses — are given a choice between punishment or forced therapy. A therapeutic approach to social deviance appears very humane — enough so that many anarchists have integrated aspects of therapeutic ideology into their perspectives-but this is deceptive. The purpose of thcrapy is to reintegrate social deviants into the social machine as well-oiled cogs. It defines technology or the conception of the wilds as integrated systems to be used in an integrated manner by society. Even "deep ecologists" only reject the integration of civilized social systems and wild 'eco-systems', because they feel that civilized social systems have strayed too far from the 'natural' systems to be capable of integrating (making some sort of social apocalypse inevitable), not because they reject the idea that undomesticated relating and interaction can be systematized. While most corporations continue on apace destroying the environment, it is quite hip now to talk ecology, and the most progressive corporations even try to act ecologically. After all, it is to their ultimate benefit. How can you possibly expand capital if you destroy the resources necessary for such expansion? So cybernetic capitalism tends toward an ecological practice as a means of domesticating the wilds without destroying them, of integrating them into the social system of the cybernet.

Of course, these are all just tendencies which the development and increasing power of cybernetic capital seem to be pushing towards. The old order of industrial capital is still quite strong, dominating in the political arena, and so still quite significant as a mode of social domination. But an intelligent insurgency needs to understand domination in its totality, needs to be able to recognize its new faces, so that insurgents aren't duped into embracing a new form of domination as liberation. Most of the individuals I know who have embraced some version of ecotopian, cybernetic, green anarchism seem to be quite sincere in their desire to live free of all constraints. But they seem to ignore some very basic aspects of cybernetics. As science, cybernetics is the study of systems of control. Practically, it is the production of such systems,

technologically and socially — the production of integrated systems of social control. Some of the most common words of cybernetic language make this obvious. 'Data' comes from a Greek word which means 'That which is given" — that is an axiom, that which you are told, without proof, and are simply not to question. Information originally meant, literally "in formation" in Latin. The cybernet offers no liberation whatsoever, merely the illusion of liberation to keep rebels "in formation." It undermines individual experience and the trust of individuals in their own experience by creating realms of pseudo-experience, that is, of "the given," of information which has no connection to anything outside the cybernet. Individuals, increasingly, rely only on what they are told by the cybernet, and so become dependent upon cybernetic society. In this way, the cybernet becomes the most truly totalitarian system yet — precisely by 'decentralizing' and using the integrative methods of process and therapy which make individuals the agents of their own domestication in a situation in which no one trusts themselves, but all are dependent on the cybernet.

There is one flaw in this system. It disenfranchises those who do not want or cannot afford to have cybernetic technology in their home. Even when home computers do become available to the very poor, many may have no interest in even learning how to use them. It is further quite doubtful that the fully enfranchised — the technicians and scientists who know how to produce and fully use these technologies — will be interested in bringing everyone up to their level of knowledge about the cybernet. So, the disenfranchised — especially the voluntarily disenfranchised — will tend to become increasingly more so, until they are nearly completely outside the cybernet. While inside the cybernet the tendency is toward total control, — outside the cybernet the tendency would be toward the total breakdown of social control. Ultimately, in such a situation; insurgent rebellion would only be possible outside the net.

At present, this situation is being forestalled as the new cybernetic order and the old order have an uneasy truce. The old order needs the informational technologies which create and are created by the new order. And the new order is not yet powerful enough to dispense with some of the harsher means of social control produced by the old order. The new order has also found ways of integrating some of the more progressive elements of the old order, such as multinational organizations, into itself. It is also quite possible that the cybernet will find continued uses for cops, prisons and the like within its systemic network of social control. Or the uneasy truce may go on, indefinitely. Since the real relations between people do not, in fact, fit the formulas of the cybernet and its systems analysts, there is no way of predicting what might happen. My own desire is for an insurrection that will blow all systems of social control to bits.

But cybernetic technology is becoming the dominant mode of post-industrial capital. It is a mode in which capital, technology, authority and society become so totally integrated that they are truly one. Rebellion, in this context, means rebellion against the cybernet and rebellion against society in its totality or it means nothing. This is what it means for the insurgent to face up to the reality of cybernetic technology. The insurgent individual can no longer do anything less than rebel against the totality of society — including all of those 'radical' perspectives which are nothing more than the cutting edge of the real "new world order."

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1993

The Ideology of Victimization

In New Orleans, just outside the French Quarter, there's a bit of stenciled graffiti on a fence that reads: "Men Rape." I used to pass by this nearly every day. The first time I saw this, it pissed me off because I knew the graffitist would define me as a 'man' and I have never desired to rape anyone. Nor have any of my bepenised friends. But, as I encounter this spray-painted dogma every day, the reasons for my anger changed. I recognized this dogma as a litany for the feminist version of the ideology of victimization — an ideology which promotes fear, individual weakness (and subsequently dependence on ideologically based support groups and paternalistic protection from the authorities) and a blindness to all realities and interpretations of experience that do not conform to one's view of oneself as a victim.

I don't deny that there is some reality behind the ideology of victimization. No ideology could work if it had no basis whatsoever in reality. As Bob Black has said, "We are all adult children of parents." We have all spent our entire lives in a society which is based on the repression and exploitation of our desires, our passions, and our individuality, but it is surely absurd to embrace defeat by defining ourselves in terms of our victimization.

As a means of social control, social institutions reinforce the feeling of victimization in each of us while focusing these feelings in directions that reinforce dependence on social institutions. The media bombards us with tales of crime, political and corporate corruption, racial and gender strife, scarcity and war. While these tales often have a basis in reality, they are presented quite clearly to reinforce fear. But many of us doubt the media, and so are served up a whole slew of 'radical' ideologies—all containing a grain of real perception, but all blind to whatever does not fit into their ideological structure. Each one of these ideologies reinforces the ideology of victimization and focuses the energy of individuals away from an examination of society in its totality and of their role in reproducing it. Both the media and all versions of ideological radicalism reinforce the idea that we are victimized by that which is 'outside', by the Other, and that social structures—the family, the cops, the law, therapy and support groups, education, 'radical' organizations or anything else that can reinforce a sense of dependence—are there to protect us. If society did not produce these mechanisms — including the structures of false, ideological, partial opposition — to protect itself, we might just examine society in its totality and come to recognize its dependence upon our activity to reproduce it. Then, every chance we get, we might refuse our roles as dependent/victim of society. But the emotions, attitudes, and modes of thought evoked by the ideology of victimization make such a reversal of perspective very difficult.

In accepting the ideology of victimization in any form, we choose to live in fear. The person who painted the "Men Rape" graffiti was most likely a feminist, a woman who saw her act as a radical defiance of patriarchal oppression. But such proclamations, in fact, merely add to a climate of fear that already exists. Instead of giving women, as individuals a feeling of strength, it reinforces the idea that women are essentially victims, and women who read this graffiti, even if they consciously reject the dogma behind it, probably walk the streets

more fearfully. The ideology of victimization that permeates so much feminist discourse can also be found in some form in gay liberation, racial/national liberation, class war and damn near every other 'radical' ideology. Fear of an actual, immediate, readily identified threat to an individual can motivate intelligent action to eradicate the threat, but the fear created by the ideology of victimization is a fear of forces both too large and too abstract for the individual to deal with. It ends up becoming a climate of fear, suspicion and paranoia which makes the mediations which are the network of social control seem necessary and even good.

It is this seemingly overwhelming climate of fear that creates the sense of weakness, the sense of essential victimhood, in individuals. While it is true that various ideological "liberationists" often bluster with militant rage, it rarely gets beyond to that point of really threatening anything. Instead, they 'demand' (read "militantly beg") that those they define as their oppressors grant them their 'liberation'. An example of this occurred at the 1989 "Without Borders" anarchist gathering in San Francisco. There is no question that at most workshops I went to, men tended to talk more than women. But no one was stopping women from speaking, and I didn't notice any lack of respect being show for women who did speak. Yet, at the public microphone in the courtyard of the building where the gathering was held, a speech was made in which it proclaimed that 'men' were dominating the discussions and keeping 'women' from speaking. The orator 'demanded' (again, read "militantly begged") that men make sure that they gave women space to speak. In other words, to grant the 'rights' of the oppressed—an attitude which, by implication, accepts the role of man as oppressor and woman as victim. There were workshops where certain individuals did dominate the discussions, but a person who is acting from the strength of their individuality will deal with such a situation by immediately confronting it as it occurs and will deal with the people involved as individuals. The need to put such situations into an ideological context and to rent the individuals involved as social roles, turning the real, immediate experience into abstract categories is a sign that one has chosen to be weak, to be a victim. And embracing weakness puts one in the absurd position of having to beg one's oppressor to grant one's liberation—guaranteeing that one will never be free to be anything but a victim.

Like all ideologies, the varieties of the ideology of victimization are forms of fake consciousness. Accepting the social role of victim—in whatever one of its many forms—is choosing to not even create one's life for oneself or to explore one's real relationships to the social structures. All of the partial liberation movements—feminism, gay liberation, racial liberation, workers movements and so on—define individuals in terms of their social roles. Because of this, these movements not only do not include a reversal of perspectives which breaks down social roles and allows individuals to create a praxis built on their own passions and desires; they actually work against such a reversal of perspective. The 'liberation' of a social role to which the individual remains subject. But the essence of these social roles within the framework of these 'liberation' ideologies is victimhood. So the litanies of wrongs suffered must be sung over and over to guarantee the 'victims' never forget that is what they are. These 'radical' liberation movements help to guarantee that the climate of fear never disappears, and that individuals continue to see themselves weak and to see their strength as lying in the social roles which are, in fact, the source of their victimization.

In this way, these movements and ideologies act to prevent the possibility of a potent revolt against all authority and all social roles.

True revolt is never safe. Those who choose to define themselves in terms of their role as a victim do not dare to try total revolt, because it would threaten the safety of their roles. But, as Nietzsche said: "The secret of the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment of existence is to live dangerously!" Only a conscious rejection of the ideology of victimization, a refusal to live in fear and weakness, and an acceptance of the strength of our own passions and desires, of ourselves as individuals who are greater than, and so capable of living beyond, all social roles, can provide a basis for total rebellion against society. Such a rebellion is certainly fueled, in part, by rage, but not the strident, resentful, frustrated rage of the victim which motivates feminists, racial liberationists, gay liberationists and the like to 'demand' their 'rights' from the authorities. Rather it is the rage of our desires unchained, the return of the repressed in full force and undisguised. But more essentially, total revolt is fueled by a spirit of free play and of joy in adventure—by a desire to explore every possibility for intense life which society tries to deny us. For all of us who want to live fully and without constraint, the time is past when we can tolerate living like shy mice inside the walls. Every form of the ideology of victimization moves us to live as shy mice. Instead, let's be crazed & laughing monsters, joyfully tearing down the walls of society and creating lives of wonder and amazement for ourselves.

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Nature as spectacle. The image of wilderness vs. wildness

(Author's note: The frequent use of quotation marks in this essay is to reinforce the idea that nature and wilderness are concepts, not actual beings.)

Nature has not always existed. It is not found in the depths of the forest, in the heart of the cougar or in the songs of the pygmies; it is found in the philosophies and image constructions of civilized human beings. Seemingly contradictory strands are woven together creating nature as an ideological construct that serves to domesticate us, to suppress and channel our expressions of wildness.

Civilization is monolithic and the civilized way of conceiving everything that is observed is also monolithic. When confronted with the myriad of beings all around, the civilized mind needs to categorize in order to feel that it is understanding (though, in fact, all it is understanding is how to make things useful to civilization). Nature is one of the most essential of civilized categories, one of the most useful in containing the wildness of human individuals and enforcing their self-identification as civilized, social beings.

Probably the earliest conception of nature was something similar to that found in the old testament of the Bible: the evil wilderness, a place of desolation

inhabited by ferocious and poisonous beasts, malicious demons and the mad. This conception served a purpose especially important to early civilizations. It induced fear of what was wild, keeping most people in the city walls and giving those who did go out to explore a defensive posture, an attitude that they were in enemy territory. This concept, in this way, helped create the dichotomy between "human" and "nature" that keeps individuals from living wildly, that is, in terms of their desires.

But a totally negative conception of nature was bound to reach its limits of usefulness since it made civilization into an enclosed and besieged fortress, and to survive civilization has to expand, to be able to exploit more and more. "Nature" became a basket of resources for civilization, a "mother" to nurture "humanity" and its civilization. It was beautiful, worthy of worship, contemplation, study... and exploitation. It was not evil... but it was chaotic, capricious and unreliable. Fortunately for civilization, "human nature" had evolved, rational and needing to order things, to bring them under control. Wild places were necessary so that people could study and contemplate "nature" in its untouched state, but precisely so that civilized human beings could come to understand and control "natural" processes in order to use them to expand civilization. So the "evil wilderness" is overshadowed by a "nature" or "wilderness" that has positive value for civilization.

The concept of nature creates systems of social value and morality. Because of the apparently contradictory strands that have gone into the development of "nature," these systems also may appear contradictory; but they all achieve the same end: our domestication. Those who tell us to "act civilized" and those who tell us to "act natural" are really telling us the same thing: "Live in accordance with external values, not in accordance with your desires." The morality of naturalness has been no less vicious than any other morality. People have been imprisoned, tortured and even killed for committing "unnatural acts"- and still are. "Nature," too, is an ugly and demanding god.

From its beginnings, nature has been an image created by authority to reinforce its power. It is no surprise that in modern society, where image dominates reality and often seems to create it, "nature" comes into its own as a means of keeping us domesticated. "Nature" shows on TV, Sierra Club calendars, "wilderness" outfitters, "natural" foods and fibers, the "environmental" president and "radical" ecology all conspire to create "nature" and, our "proper" relationship to it. The image evoked retains aspects of the "evil wilderness" of early civilization in a subliminal form. "Nature" shows always include scenes of predation and the directors of these shows have been said to use electric prods in attempts to goad animals into fights. The warnings given to would-be "wilderness" explorers about dangerous animals and plants and the amount of products created by "wilderness" outfitters for dealing with these things is quite excessive from my own experiences wandering in wild places. We are given the image of life outside of civilization as a struggle for survival.

But the society of the spectacle needs the "evil wilderness" to be subliminal in order to use it efficiently. The dominant image of "nature" is that it is a resource and a thing of beauty to be contemplated and studied. "Wilderness" is a place to which we can retreat for a short time, if properly outfitted, to escape from the humdrum of daily life, to relax and meditate or to find excitement and adventure. And, of course, "nature" remains the "mother" who supplies our needs, the resource from which civilization creates itself.

In commodity culture, "nature" recuperates the desire for wild adventure, for life free from domestication, by selling us its image. The subliminal concept of the "evil wilderness" gives venturing into the woods a tang of risk that appeals to the adventurous and rebellious. It also reinforces the idea that we don't really belong there, thus selling us the numerous products deemed necessary for incursions into wild places. The positive concept of nature makes us feel that we must experience wild places (not realizing that the concepts we've had fed into us will create what we experience at least as much as our actual surroundings). In this way, civilization successfully recuperates even those areas it seems not to touch directly, transforming them into "nature," into "wilderness," into aspects of the spectacle which keep us domesticated.

"Nature" domesticates because it transforms wildness into a monolithic entity, a huge realm separate from civilization. Expressions of wildness in the midst of civilization are labelled as immaturity, madness, delinquency, crime or immorality, allowing them to be dismissed, locked away, censured or punished while still maintaining that what is "natural" is good. When "wildness" becomes a realm outside of us rather than an expression of our own individual free-spiritedness, then there can be experts in "wildness" who will teach us the "correct" ways of "connecting" with it. On the west coast, there are all sorts of spiritual teachers making a mint selling a "wildness" to yuppies which in no way threatens their corporate dreams, their Porsches or their condos. "Wilderness" is a very profitable industry these days.

Ecologists — even "radical" ecologists — play right into this. Rather than trying to go wild and destroy civilization with the energy of their unchained desires, they try to "save wilderness." In practice, this means begging or trying to manipulate the authorities into stopping the more harmful activities of certain industries and turning pockets of relatively undamaged woods, deserts and mountains into protected "Wilderness Areas." This only reinforces the concept of wildness as a monolithic entity, "wilderness" or "nature," and the commodification inherent in this concept. The very basis of the concept of a "Wilderness Area" is the separation of "wildness" and "humanity." So it is no surprise that one of the brands of "radical" ecological ideology has created the conflict between "biocentrism" and "anthropocentrism" — as though we should be anything other than egocentric.

Even those "radical ecologists" who claim to want to reintegrate people into "nature" are fooling themselves. Their vision of (as one of them put it) a "wild, symbiotic whole" is just the monolithic concept created by civilization worded in a quasi-mystical way. "Wildness" continues to be a monolithic entity for these ecological mystics, a being greater than us, a god to whom we must submit. But submission is domestication. Submission is what keeps civilization going. The name of the ideology which enforces submission matters little — let it be "nature," let it be the "wild, symbiotic whole." The result will still be the continuation of domestication.

When wilderness is seen as having nothing to do with any monolithic concept, including "nature" or "wilderness," when it is seen as the potential free spiritedness in individuals that could manifest at any moment, only then does it become a threat to civilization. Any of us could spend years in "the wilderness," but if we continued to see what surrounded us through the lens of civilization, if we continued to see the myriads of beings monolithically as "nature," as "wilderness," as the "wild, symbiotic whole," we'd still be civilized; we would not be

wild. But if, in the midst of the city, we at any moment actively refuse our domestication, refuse to be dominated by the social roles that are forced upon us and instead live in terms of our passions, desires and whims, if we become the unique and unpredictable beings that lie hidden beneath the roles, we are, for that moment, wild. Playing fiercely among the ruins of a decaying civilization (but don't be fooled, even in decay it is a dangerous enemy and capable of staggering on for a long time), we can do our damnedest to bring it tumbling down. And free-spirited rebels will reject the survivalism of ecology as just another attempt by civilization to suppress free life, and will strive to live the chaotic, ever-changing dance of freely relating, unique individuals in opposition both to civilization and to civilization's attempt to contain wild, free-spirited living: "Nature."

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The Cops In Our Heads: Some thoughts on anarchy and morality

In my travels over the past several months, I have talked with many anarchists who conceive of anarchy as a moral principle. Some go so far as to speak of anarchy as though it were a deity to whom they had given themselves—reinforcing my feeling that those who really want to experience anarchy may need to divorce themselves from anarchism.

The most frequent of the moral conceptions of anarchy I heard defined anarchy as a principled refusal to use force to impose one's will on others. This conception has implications which I cannot accept. It implies that domination is mainly a matter of personal moral decisions rather than of social roles and relationships, that all of us are equally in a position to exercise domination and that we need to exercise self-discipline to prevent ourselves from doing so. If domination is a matter of social roles and social relationships, this moral principle is utterly absurd, being nothing more than a way of separating the politically correct (the elect) from the politically incorrect (the damned). This definition of anarchy places anarchic rebels in a position of even greater weakness in an already lopsided struggle against authority. All forms of violence against people or property, general strikes, theft and even such tame activities as civil disobedience constitute a use of force to impose one's will. To refuse to use force to impose one's will is to become totally passive—to become a slave. This conception of anarchy makes it a rule to control our lives, and that is an oxymoron.

The attempt to make a moral principle of anarchy distorts its real significance. Anarchy describes a particular type of situation, one in which either authority does not exist or its power to control is negated. Such a situation guarantees nothing—not even the continued existence of that situation, but it does open up the possibility for each of us to start creating our lives for ourselves in terms of our own desires and passions rather than in terms of social roles and the demands of social order. Anarchy is not the goal of revolution; it is the

situation which makes the only type of revolution that interests me possible — an uprising of individuals to create their lives for themselves and destroy what stands in their way. It is a situation free of any moral implications, presenting to each of us the amoral challenge to live our lives without constraints.

Since the anarchic situation is amoral, the idea of an anarchist morality is highly suspect. Morality is a system of principles defining what constitutes right and wrong behavior. It implies some absolute outside of individuals by which they are to define themselves, a commonality of all people that makes certain principles applicable to everyone.

I don't wish to deal with the concept of the "commonality of all people" in this article: My present point is that whatever morality is based upon, it always stands outside of and above the living individual. Whether the basis or morality is god, patriotism, common humanity, production needs, natural law, "the Earth," anarchy, or even "the individual" as a principle, it is always an abstract ideal that rules over US" Morality is a form of authority and will be undermined by an anarchic situation as much as any other authority if that situation is to last.

Morality and judgment go hand in hand. Criticism—even harsh, cruel criticism—is essential to honing our rebellious analysis and practice, but judgment needs to be utterly eradicated. Judgment categorizes people as guilty or not guilty—and guilt is one of the most powerful weapons of repression. When we judge and condemn ourselves or anyone else, we are suppressing rebellion—that is the purpose of guilt. (This does not mean that we "shouldn't" hate, or wish to kill anyone—it would be absurd to create an "amoral" morality, but our hatred needs to be recognized as a personal passion and not defined in moral terms.) Radical critique grows from the real experiences, activities, passions and desires of individuals and aims at liberating rebelliousness. Judgment springs from principles and ideals that stand above us; it aims at enslaving us to those ideals. Where anarchic situations have arisen, judgment has often temporarily disappeared, freeing people of guilt— as in certain riots where people of all sorts looted together in a spirit of joy in spite of having been taught all of their lives to respect property. Morality requires guilt; freedom requires the elimination of guilt.

A dadaist once said, "Being governed by morals... has made it impossible for us to be anything other than passive toward the policeman; this is the source of our slavery." Certainly, morality is a source of passivity. I have heard of several situations in which fairly large-scale anarchic situations started to develop and have experienced minor ones, but in each of these situations, the energy dissipated and most participants returned to the non-lives they'd lived before the uprisings. These events show that, in spite of the extent to which social control permeates all of our waking (and much of our sleeping) lives, we can break out. But the cops in our heads—the morality, guilt and fear—have to be dealt with. Every moral system, no matter what claims it makes to the contrary, places limits on the possibilities available to us, constraints upon our desires; and these limits are not based on our actual capabilities, but on abstract ideas that keep us from exploring the full extent of our capabilities. When anarchic situations have arisen in the past, the cops in peoples' heads—the ingrained fear, morality and guilt—have frightened people, keeping them tame enough to retreat back into the safety of their cages, and the anarchic situation disappeared.

This is significant because anarchic situations don't just pop out of nowhere—they spring from the activities of people frustrated with their lives. It is possible for each of us at any moment to create such a situation. Often this would be tactically foolish, but the possibility is there. Yet we all seem to wait patiently for anarchic situations to drop from the sky— and when they do explode forth, we can't keep them going. Even those of us who have consciously rejected morality find ourselves hesitating, stopping to examine each action, fearing the cops even when there are no external cops around. Morality, guilt and fear of condemnation act as cops in our heads, destroying our spontaneity, our wildness, our ability to live our lives to the full.

The cops in our heads will continue to suppress our rebelliousness until we learn to take risks. I don't mean that we have to be stupid—jail is not an anarchic or liberatory situation, but without risk, there is no adventure, no life. Self-motivated activity—activity that springs from our passions and desires, not from attempts to conform to certain principles and ideals or to blend in to any group (including "anarchists")—is what can create a situation of anarchy, what can open up a world of possibilities limited only by our capabilities. To learn to freely express our passions—a skill earned only by doing it—is essential. When we feel disgust, anger, joy, desire, sadness, love, hatred, we need to express them. It isn't easy. More often than not, I find myself falling into the appropriate social role in situations where I want to express something different. I'll go into a store feeling disgust for the whole process of economic relationships, and yet politely thank the clerk for putting me through just that process. Were I doing this consciously, as a cover for shoplifting; it would be fun, using my wits to get what I want; but it is an ingrained social response—a cop in my head. I am improving; but I have a hell of a long way to go. Increasingly, I try to act on my whims, my spontaneous urges without caring about what others think of me. This is a self-motivated activity—the activity that springs from our passions and desires, from our suppressed imaginations, our unique creativity. Sure, following our subjectivity this way, living our lives for ourselves, can lead us to make mistakes, but never mistakes comparable to the mistake of accepting the zombie existence that obedience to authority, morality, rules or higher powers creates. Life without risks, without the possibility of mistakes, is no life at all. Only by taking the risk of defying all authority and living for ourselves will we ever live life to the full.

I want no constraints on my life; I want the opening of all possibilities so that I can create my life for myself—at every moment. This means breaking down all social roles and destroying all morality. When an anarchist or any other radical starts preaching their moral principles at me—whether non-coercion, deep ecology, communism, militantism or even ideologically-required "pleasure"—I hear a cop or a priest, and I have no desire to deal with people as cops or priests, except to defy them. I am struggling to create a situation in which I can live freely, being all that I desire to be, in a world of free individuals with whom I can relate in terms of our desires without constraints. I have enough cops in my head—as well as those out on the streets—to deal with without having to deal with the cops of "anarchist" or radical morality as well. Anarchy and morality are opposed to each other, and any effective opposition to authority will need to oppose morality and eradicate the cops in our heads.

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Social Transformation — or the abolition of society

> "Society... 1. a group of persons who have the same customs, beliefs, etc. or live under a common government and who are thought of as forming a single community... 3. all people, when thought of as forming a community in which each person is partly dependent on all the rest" Webster's New World Dictionary

Nothing we "know" can be assumed to be true — none of our conceptions of the world are sacred and we would do well to question them all. Many anarchists talk about creating a "new" or "free" society. But few question the idea of society itself. The conception of society is amorphous — and so more difficult to deal with than particular aspects of it like government, religion, capitalism or technology. It is so ingrained in us that questioning it feels like questioning our very nature — which makes it all the more necessary to question it. Freeing ourselves from the character armor that represses our desires and passions may very well demand, not merely the transformation of society, but its abolition. The dictionary definitions above show society to be a single entity made up of individuals who are in a condition of (at least potential) dependency upon each other — which is to say, who are not complete in themselves. I see society as a system of relationships between beings who are acting (or being treated) as social roles in order to reproduce the system and themselves as social individuals.

The dependency of social individuals is not the same as the biological dependency of infants. Biological dependency ends once the child achieves adequate mobility and hand-and-eye coordination (in about five years). But in those five years, the social relationships of the family repress children's desires, instill fear of the world into them and so submerge the potential for full, free, creative individuality beneath the layers of armoring which are the social individual, beneath the psychic dependency which makes us cling desperately to each other while we despise each other. All social relationships have their basis in the incompleteness produced by the repression of our passions and desires. Their basis is our need for each other, not our desire for each other. We are using each other. So every social relationship is an employer/employee relationship, which is why they seem always, to one extent or another, to become adversarial — whether through joking put-downs, bickering or full-fledged fighting. How can we help but despise those we use and hate those who use us?

Society cannot exist apart from social roles — this is why the family and education in some form are essential parts of society. The social individual doesn't play only one social role — but melds together many roles which create the character armor which is mistaken for "individuality."

Social roles are ways in which individuals are defined by the whole system of relationships that is society in order to reproduce society. They make individuals useful to society by making them predictable, by defining their activities in

terms of the needs of society. Social roles are work — in the broad sense of activity that reproduces the production/consumption cycle. Society is thus the domestication of human beings — the transformation of potentially creative, playful, wild beings who can relate freely in terms of their desires into deformed beings using each other to try to meet desperate needs, but succeeding only at reproducing the need and the system of relationships based on it.

> "A pox on all captivity, even should it be in the interest of the universal good, even in Montezuma's garden of precious stones." Andre Breton

Free-spirited individuals have no interest in seriously relating as social roles. Predictable, predetermined relationships bore us and we have no desire to continue to reproduce them. It is true that they offer some security, stability and (luke-)warmth... but at such expense! Rather, we want freedom to relate in terms of our unrepressed desires, the opening of all possibilities, the raging fire of our passions unbound. And such a life lies outside any system of predictable, predetermined relationships.

Society offers safety, but it does so by eradicating the risk that is essential to free play and adventure. It offers us survival — in exchange for our lives. For the survival it offers us is survival as social individuals — as beings who are composites of social roles, alienated from their passions and desires — involved in social relationships to which we are addicted, but which never satisfy.

A world of free relating among unrepressed individuals would be a world free of society. All interactions would be determined immediately. All by the individuals involved, in terms of their desires — not by the necessities of a social system. We would tend to amaze, delight, enrage each other, to evoke real passion rather than mere boredom, complacency, disgust, or security. Every encounter would have a potential for marvelous adventure which cannot fully exist where most relating is in the form of social relationships. So rather than remain captive in this "garden of precious stones" called society, I choose to struggle to abolish society — and that has several implications as to how I understand "revolution" (for want of a better term).

The struggle to transform society is always a struggle for power, because its goal is to gain control over the system of relationships that is society (a goal which I see as unrealistic since this system is now mostly beyond anyone's control). As such, it cannot be an individual struggle. It requires mass or class activity. Individuals have to define themselves as social beings in this struggle, suppressing any individual desires which do not fit in to the. "greater" goal of social transformation.

The struggle to abolish society is a struggle to abolish power. It is essentially the struggle of individuals to live free of social roles and rules, to live out their desires passionately, to live out all the most marvelous things they can imagine. Group projects and struggles are part of this, but they grow from the ways in which the desires of the individuals can enhance each other, and will dissolve when they begin to stifle the individuals. The path of this struggle cannot be mapped out because its basis is the confrontation between the desires of the free-spirited individual and the demands of society. But analyses of the ways in which society molds us and of the failures and successes of past rebellions are possible.

The tactics used against society are as many as the individuals involved, but all share the aim of undermining social control and conditioning, and freeing the individual's desires and passions. The unpredictability of humor and playfulness are essential, evoking a Dionysian chaos. Playing with social roles in ways that undermine their usefulness to society, that turn them on their head, making toys of them is a worthy practice. But most importantly, let us confront society with ourselves, with our unique desires and passions, with the attitude that we are not going to give in to it, or center our activities around it, but are going to live on our own terms.

Society is not a neutral force. Social relationships only exist by the suppression of the real desires and passions of individuals, by the repression of all that makes free relating possible. Society is domestication, the transformation of individuals into use value and of free play into work. Free relating among individuals who refuse and resist their domestication undermines all society, and opens all possibilities. And to those who feel that they can achieve freedom through a merely social revolution, lend with these words of Renzo Navatore:

> "You are waiting for the revolution? Let it be! My own began a long time ago! When you will be ready... I won't mind going along with you for a while. But when you'll stop, I shall continue on my insane and triumphant way toward the great and sublime conquest of the nothing!"

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