In recent years, I’ve heard a lot of anarchists talking about the need for boundaries. It’s pretty tiresome: "Abolish all borders, but don’t you dare challenge my sacred boundaries!" I was attracted to godless anarchy those many years ago, not just because it was sexy, but also because it challenged boundaries of every sort. Freedom for me is the endless expansion of myself and my possibilities. And such expansion requires this challenge.

Besides, you really don’t need boundaries. All of us already have them in abundance. They seem to be a part of existing in a world with others. So the question I ask myself is: how do I view these boundaries?

Those who say "we all need boundaries" seem to see them as rigid borders between themselves and the outside world, borders that they need to defend and that others need to respect. This idea of respecting other people’s boundaries is a bit odd in itself. Maybe the little people of this pathetic society no longer perceive themselves as worthy of each others’ respect (and they might be right about that), so instead they come up with this abstract concept of boundaries, sacred barriers that I am to respect. Such boundaries are walls for them to hide behind.
might be fun in a snowball fight, but it's not the way I'd want
to live my life from day to day.

These boundaries are limits an individual puts on her own
free activity, ways of policing himself and others, because she
is afraid, because he feels that he is too weak for certain en-
counters, and that she and others should accept such weakness
rather than challenging it and seeking to overcome it. They are
the very opposite of the stiffening of oneself against another
that Stirner talked about. This stiffening has nothing to do with
an abstract boundary that I expect others to respect. Rather it
is the assertion of my strength and confidence in a specific sit-
uation of conflict. Boundaries, conceived as strict borders that
people are to defend and respect, are ways of avoiding such
conflict, ways of cowering back from the real, practical mean-
ing of freedom as self-ownership and self-creation.

But there is another way to conceive of boundaries, a fluid
way, in which boundaries are the places of encounter, where
the individual meets her world. When she hides within these
boundaries, treating them as protective walls, he loses touch
with his world and so also with all the things and beings
through which she can create herself. And so he becomes
rigid, stuck, incapable of growth and expansion, trapped
in a straightjacket of his own making. This is because the
boundaries have been reified; they have ceased to be meeting
points for interaction and have instead become fortress walls
blocking interaction.

So challenging boundaries - especially those to which you
or I feel most attached - is still central to the anarchist project.
That project is still one of going out and confronting the world,
facing and overcoming your limits, breaking down the walls
that keep you in your place. Only in this way can an individ-
ual take the world into herself and expand herself in a process
of endless self-creation and self-consumption. This process is
an endless overcoming of boundaries, an endless stretching be-
yond. Here and now, we have to break down the walls formed
by the institutions: the state, the economy, religion, law, ide-
ology, technology, etc. But even after these are gone (should
that day ever come), every individual who desires the fullness
of his freedom as his own being will have to continue challeng-
ing her own boundaries (and welcoming the challenge from
others). Boundaries will always be there, and so the challenge
must always be there as well. This is the practice of freedom,
because it is the practice of being one's own.