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Why a Radical Geography Must be Anarchist

Simon Springer

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See also David Harvey's "Listen, Anarchist!": A personal
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be anarchist".

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Abstract

Radical geographers have been preoccupied with Marxism for four decades, largely ignoring an earlier anarchist tradition that thrived a century before radical geography was claimed as Marxist in the 1970s. When anarchism is considered, it is misused as a synonym for violence or derided as a utopian project. Yet it is incorrect to assume anarchism as a project, which instead reflects Marxian thought. Anarchism is more appropriately considered a protean process that perpetually unfolds through the insurrectionary geographies of the everyday and the prefigurative politics of direct action, mutual aid, and voluntary association. Unlike Marxism's stages of history and revolutionary imperative, which imply an end state, anarchism appreciates the dynamism of the social world. In staking a renewed anarchist claim for radical geography, I attend to the divisions between Marxism and anarchism as two alternative socialisms, wherein the former positions equality alongside an ongoing flirtation with authoritarianism, while the latter maximizes egalitarianism and individual liberty by considering them as mutually reinforcing. Radical geographers would do well to reengage anarchism as there is a vitality to this philosophy that is missing from Marxian analyses that continue to rehash ideas—such as vanguardism and a proletarian dictatorship—that are long past their expiration date.

Introduction

Anarchist society, a society which organizes itself without authority, is always in existence, like a seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its waste, privilege and its injustices, nationalism and its suicidal loyalties, religious differences and

their superstitious separatism...far from being a speculative vision of a future society, [anarchism] is a description of a mode of human organization, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant authoritarian trends of our society.

Colin Ward (1973: 11)

It is often said that Anarchists live in a world of dreams to come, and do not see the things which happen today. We do see them only too well, and in their true colors, and that is what makes us carry the hatchet into the forest of prejudice that besets us.

Peter Kropotkin (2002 [1898]: 135)

Responding to David Harvey's (1972) influential essay on revolutionary and counter revolutionary theory in geography, which in hindsight effectively inaugurated a 'radical turn' for the discipline, Steen Folke (1972) outlined an argument as to 'Why a radical geography must be Marxist'. The upper-middle class background of most academics and the realization that geography had up to that point largely developed in a way that expressed dominant social forces troubled both scholars. These were welcome and long overdue criticisms, but the problem with both of these accounts is that anarchist ideas were nowhere to be found, which is troubling precisely because an earlier tradition of radical geography existed, and indeed thrived, a century before Folke claimed radical geography as exclusively Marxist. Harvey's profound influence and prolific output since that time merely solidified what Folke had considered obligatory, as radical geography—at least until the late 1980s and early 1990s when feminist critique began to demand our collective attention—had become essentially

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synonymous with Marxian analysis. Yet how could a 'radical' geography truly be radical without digging down into the foundations that had been laid by the anarchist geographies of Élisée Reclus and Peter Kropotkin? The pair were extremely influential in their time, where each had written a surfeit of radical geographical literature from an anarchist perspective as the sun was setting on the 19th century. Did Folke not consider it important to explore these roots? Indeed, the contemporary usage of the word radical comes from the Middle English sense of 'forming the root' and earlier still from the Latin *radix* meaning quite literally 'root'. How can geography claim itself as radical then without engaging with this earlier tradition of anticapitalist geographical thought? In what has evolved into a long career of critical geographical scholarship, Harvey's work has only very minimally touched upon Kropotkin and Reclus, and when he has addressed their work it has been with a certain sense of ambivalence.¹

To the credit of other radical geographers emerging in the 1970s, scholars like Richard Peet (1975, 1978), Myrna Breitbart (1975), Bob Galois (1976), and Gary Dunbar (1978) did in fact engage with Kropotkin and Reclus in their attempts to inaugurate a new critical trajectory for the discipline. Anarchism also received wider attention through special issues of the *Union of Socialist Geographers Newsletter* (Lauria, 1978) and the journal *Antipode* (Breitbart, 1978). Simon Springer (2013) further demonstrates how, although interest in anarchism by geographers has waxed and waned over the last century, it has contin-

¹ For example, Harvey (1999: 117) asks if Reclus' notion of social ecology and his vision of decentralized municipal socialism potentially delivering environmental justice is 'any less arrogant in principle than the World Bank, which believes the market can do it best?' Contrast this with a recent interview where Harvey (2012a: n.p.) claims, 'One of my favorite characters in geography's history was Élisée Reclus, who fought in the Paris Commune and was close with people like Bakunin and Kropotkin. So I'm very much associated with that tradition'.

ued to crop up through periodic bursts of interest, with Cook and Pepper's (1990) special issue of *Contemporary Issues in Geography and Education* representing another high point of engagement. Yet the irregularity of these initiatives meant that they were essentially eclipsed by the sustained attention that Marxist perspectives received, where Harvey's work in particular has subsequently become the touchstone for the vast majority of radical geographers who have followed. That Marxian geographers have chosen to largely ignore anarchism is actually nothing new. Marxists have long demonstrated a tendency to define anarchism as nothing more than opposition to the state, while also dismissing—or at least affording little consideration to—anarchism's shared rejection of capitalism and its refusal of the institution of private property. But as John Clark (1984: 128) contends, the essence of anarchism is not simply opposition to the state itself but the practical and theoretical struggle against domination in all its grotesque plurality, where

sophisticated and developed anarchist theory does not stop with a criticism of political organization, but goes on to investigate the authoritarian nature of economic inequality and private property, hierarchical economic structures, traditional education, the patriarchal family, class and racial discrimination, and rigid sex and age-roles, to mention just a few of the more important topics.

Thus to diminish anarchism to nothing more than a political tendency against the state is to willfully exclude anarchism from its place in the wider socialist movement. This makes sense from a Marxian perspective, as it allows Marxists to present their ideology as the only serious anti-capitalist option.

The current moment of neoliberalism and its emphasis on minimal states and individual responsibility does little to per-

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suade Marxists that they should reevaluate their neglect of anarchist ideas and its emphasis on the abolition of government. Neoliberalism has had precisely the opposite effect, where its unequivocal destruction of social provisions, its apparent reconstitution of class power, and its increasingly obvious exacerbation of inequality have all breathed new life into Marxian analysis. Yet while the anti-state rhetoric of neoliberalism and the oxymoronic notions of ‘anarcho-capitalism’ and ‘free market anarchism’ in particular would appear to add fuel to the fire of Marxian critiques of anarchism, the only thing burning here is a straw person. As the anarchist and adversary of Karl Marx, Mikhail Bakunin (quoted in Leier, 2006: 190) once warned, ‘Liberty without socialism is privilege and injustice. Socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality’. Thus, the appropriation of the word ‘anarchism’ by the extreme political right does so in the most simplistic and reductionist terms, ignoring the actual philosophy behind anarchism and its commitment to anti-capitalism. ‘We are communists’, Kropotkin (2002 [1887]: 152) proclaimed,

But our communism is not that of the authoritarian school: it is anarchist communism, communism without government, free communism. It is a synthesis of the two chief aims prosecuted by humanity since the dawn of its history—economical freedom and political freedom.

Inspired by Kropotkin’s visionary thought, as well as Reclus’ passion for social justice, this essay stakes a renewed claim for radical geography, a claim that is more in tune with the etymology of radical and focuses on the roots of anarchism that these two great thinkers brought to bear on geographical praxis. I position this article alongside recent interest in such a radical revival that has emerged in the form of special issues on anarchist geographies in the journals *Antipode* (Springer et

al., 2012) and ACME (Clough and Blumberg, 2012) and hope to open a dialogue that assesses the resurgent importance of anarchism in geographical praxis. In particular, I demonstrate how anarchism goes beyond a simplistic interpretation of being a philosophy that exclusively positions itself against the state and outline the problematics of this notion being perpetuated. I then focus on the division between anarchist and Marxian thought by raising the question of monopoly, highlighting how anarchism rejects this logic, while Marxism maintains certain contradictions in this respect, particularly in terms of its class-centric view of the proletariat and its role vis-à-vis the transition to socialism. Next I turn my attention to the question of revolution, which has been foremost in the minds of radical geographers, including a recent call from Neil Smith (2010) for a revival of the revolutionary imperative. I question the wisdom of such a demand by drawing a distinction between insurrection and revolution, where the former enables an embrace of process and prefigurative politics, while the latter is critiqued on the basis of its implicit politics of waiting, its totalizing logic, and its ageographical tendencies. The primary motivation here is to suggest that a radical geography would do well to begin a process of reengaging with anarchist thought and practice as there is a certain vitality to this philosophical position that is missing from contemporary Marxian analyses that continue to rehash particular ideas—such as vanguardism and a dictatorship of the proletariat—that are long past their expiration date. So let us carry the hatchet and make room for the seeds beneath the snow by debunking some of the myths that have been perpetuated about anarchism, spring is upon us and a forest of prejudice awaits!

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Beyond state centrality

the State...and capitalism are facts and conceptions which we cannot separate from each other. In the course of history these institutions have developed, supporting and reinforcing each other. They are connected with each other—not as mere accidental coincidences. They are linked together by the links of cause and effect. Peter Kropotkin (1995 [1908]: 94)

All in all, Marxist claims that anarchists view the state as the ‘chief evil’ or see the destruction of the state as the ‘main idea’ of anarchism are simply talking nonsense. In fact, rather than anarchists having a narrow view of social liberation, it is, in fact, Marxists who do so. By concentrating almost exclusively on the (economic) class source of exploitation, they blind themselves to other forms of exploitation and domination that can exist independently of (economic) class relationships. Iain McKay (2008: 112)

Political geographer Peter Taylor (1991a: 214–215) once declared that he was ‘broadly sympathetic to the anarchist “political” position’ and sought ‘to locate anarchism within a broader radical critique’. Taylor’s account is useful insofar as he traces the evolution of anarchist ideas back to a single socialist movement of the early 1800s where distinctions are blurred, while also attending to the eventual splinters that arose during the First International in 1864 and their magnification through the Bakunin–Marx rift that played out during the 1870s. Yet his account also drew a particular caricature of anarchist thought by positioning it as an isolated and singular vision concerned almost exclusively with the state. Taylor (1994, 1996) had much to say about state centrality throughout the 1990s, so it is pe-

cular to see him project this notion onto anarchist thought. His argument draws a series of false dichotomies that paint socialist, nationalist, feminist, and anarchist approaches into their own distinct boxes whereby exclusive priority is given to challenging capitalism, imperialism, patriarchy, and the authority of the state respectively. This rigid coding allowed Taylor (1991a: 225) to conclude 'We do not need a "new anarchism" based on the new material circumstances of the late twentieth century but a combined movement where all four forms of grievance are mutually respected'. Oddly enough, Taylor (1991b: 660) explicitly contradicted himself in a book review published that same year, where he argued that there was indeed an 'urgency and justification for a new anarchism'. Either way, Taylor's reading of anarchism is problematic.

Clark and Martin (2004: 95) note that critics sometimes contend that anarchist thought 'has emphasized opposition to the state to the point of neglecting the real hegemony of economic power. This interpretation arises, perhaps, from a simplistic and overdrawn distinction between the anarchist focus on political domination and the Marxist focus on economic exploitation'. Had Taylor given a more generous reading to anarchist thought through the whole of its historical trajectory, he would have recognized that while the question of the state is certainly at the forefront of anarchist critique, it is not the sole domain of concern, where in fact anarchism has just as much a stake in undermining class power, balancing cross-cultural exchanges, and reforming gender relations, as it does in subverting the dominance of the state. As anarchists such as Bakunin (2002 [1873]), Kropotkin (1994 [1912]), Reclus (Fleming, 1996), and Emma Goldman (1969 [1917]) demonstrated many years ago, these elements are hardly 'new' to anarchism, as each was just as concerned with the disastrous effects of capitalism as they were with the tyranny of the state. Indeed, given that Proudhon was the first person to ever declare himself an anarchist, it seems genuinely odd to suggest that the state was ever the sole

there is a continual reversing of theory into action and action into theory' (Bonanno, 1996: 2). As we think, as we act, as we write, so we shall be. To write the earth with the pen of our hopes and dreams is not merely to sketch an illustration without materiality. Its very composition refracts against the world in which we live and therein transforms its character. This is why a radical geography 'must' be anarchist, for in its anarchy comes not chaos and destruction, not hierarchy and vanguardism, not alienation and exploitation but new geographies of organization, solidarity, community, affinity, and opportunity. This is a 'magic' I have to believe in, because to refuse its enchantment is to stoke the funeral pyre of emancipatory politics and cede to the insanity of government. 'Anarchism is not a romantic fable', said Edward Abbey (1989: 22), 'but the hardheaded realization, based on five thousand years of experience, that we cannot entrust the management of our lives to kings, priests, politicians, generals, and county commissioners'. And so I am an anarchist, of course, so that right here and now, another world becomes possible. The foundations are in place.

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Radical geographers can do better. It is high time that we collectively look again at what we think we know about anarchism to begin exploring the horizontality, rhizomic organization, and decentralization of power that anarchism offers so that we might therein acquire a greater appreciation for what is already happening all around us from the streets of Cairo to the community garden on your own block. The geographies of direct action, mutual aid, and prefigurative politics demand our attention precisely because we stare them in the face on a daily basis, but scarcely recognize them for what they are. Every time you have ever invited friends over to dinner, jaywalked, mowed your neighbor's lawn, skipped a day at work, looked after your brother's kids, questioned your professor, borrowed your mother-in-law's car, disregarded a posted sign, or returned a favor, you have—perhaps unknowingly—engaged in anarchist principles.

Unfortunately old habits die hard, and in his latest book, Harvey (2012b: 69) scorns what he refers to as the 'naive' and 'hopeful gesturing' of decentralized thinking, lamenting how the term 'hierarchy' is 'virulently unpopular with much of the left these days'. The message rings through loud and clear: How dare anarchists (and autonomists) attempt to conceive of something different and new, when we should be treading water in the sea of yesterday's spent ideas. In his dismissal, what Harvey (2012b: 80) perhaps doesn't recognize is that he is not just denying 'some magical concordance'; he is also denying the very possibilities of space, with its undetermined stories so far and continually receding horizon (Massey, 2005), possibilities that he once argued so passionately in favor of (Harvey, 2000). Lefebvre (1991) demonstrated how our productions of space stem directly from our visualizations and that whatever materializations and administrations of space we might procure cannot be separated from the way we think about geography, precisely because thinking produces action. For anarchists, 'there is no difference between what we do and what we think, but

concern of anarchism. *What is Property?* Or, An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government was Proudhon's magnum opus, where his answer, 'property is theft', became a rallying cry against capitalism and an early defining feature of the anarchist movement. More recently, a new crop of anarchist geographers has advanced a composite understanding of anarchism. Anthony Ince (2010: 294) contends that 'Anarchism's holism—its recognition of the many different factors that influence and feed off each other as interrelated and inseparable in capitalist systems—means that it is ideally suited to an analysis of capitalism's contested geographical terrain', while Springer (2012: 1614) argues that 'the promise of anarchist geographies rests precisely in their ability to think integrally and therein refuse to assign priority to any one of the multiple dominating apparatuses, as all are irreducible to one another'. So while Taylor shows a measured degree of support for anarchism, unfortunately in presenting anarchism as a single-minded concern for the state—rather than appreciating it as an enduring, manifold, and protean critique of all forms domination—he actually contributes to the confusions of ideology that inform the so-called anarchocapitalists as well as to the crude rhetoric that detractors have employed to discredit anarchism.

The likening of anarchism to nothing more than a rejection of the state works in unison with the idea that anarchist ideals are rooted in a lack of organization that embraces chaos. Yet anarchism is not synonymous with chaos and collapse, nor is it opposed to organization. It is about actively reinventing the everyday through a desire to create new forms of organization and 'enacting horizontal networks instead of top-down structures like states, parties, or corporations; networks based on principles of decentralized, non-hierarchical consensus democracy' (Graeber, 2002: 70). Organization not only facilitates solidarity and mutual aid, it is an inescapable condition of social life, and as Errico Malatesta (1977 [1897]: 84) once pointed out,

the age-long oppression of the masses by a small privileged group has always been the result of the inability of the oppressed to agree among themselves to organize with others for production, for enjoyment and for the possible needs of defense against whoever might wish to exploit and oppress them. Anarchism exists to remedy this state of affairs.

In other words, when conceived as a social process, we begin to recognize that anarchism is deeply woven into the fabric of humanity, which demands a historical treatment that goes beyond simplistic tropes (Bookchin, 1996). It is in the spirit of seeking new forms of organization that anarchist geographies have been revitalized as of late, emphasizing a 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) ethos of autonomy, direct action, radical democracy, and noncommodification (see Clough and Blumberg, 2012; Springer et al., 2012), all of which extends beyond mere opposition to the state.

If not through a centralized state, 'how might anarchism be organized?' and 'what forms of action will this take?' are two of the most common questions asked of anarchists. Many anarchists, myself included, are often hesitant to describe an anarchist society in any detail, and although this is frequently misinterpreted as a dodge, there is good reason for such evasiveness. Anarchism is not about drafting sociopolitical blueprints for the future, and instead anarchists have been more concerned with identifying social tendencies, wherein the focus is resolutely on the possibilities of the here and now. Accordingly, the examples of viable anarchist alternatives are nearly infinite. Anarchist organizing is limited only by our imagination, where the only existent criteria are that they proceed non-hierarchically and free from external authority (Graeber, 2004). This could include almost any form of organization, from a volunteer fire brigade for safety, to community

radical democracy (Epstein, 2001). And yet radical geographers continue to hold fast to Marxism, owing perhaps to a deep affinity within academia that anarchism could never claim. Graeber (2007: 303) muses that this circumstance is a reflection of the vanguard spirit of the academy itself, where Marxism was, after all, invented by a doctor of philosophy, while anarchism was never really invented by anyone as 'we are talking less about a body of theory than about an attitude'.

I have no major qualms with autonomist Marxism, other than what is seemingly a lack of courage to simply call their ideas anarchist, as this has been the most autonomous domain of socialist thought all along. Yet such fear is somewhat understandable given that most academics continue to have only the faintest idea of what anarchism is even about. There are hundreds of academic Marxist geographers of various shapes, stripes, sizes, and shades, but hardly anyone is willing to openly call herself an anarchist for fear of ridicule. Anarchism is, even within the academy, continually dismissed through the crudest stereotypes, where its mere mention invokes an uncritical and reactionary image of disorder and violence. Among a crowd of intellectuals who take pride in attention to detail this is tiresome, and it was evidently already tiresome over a century ago when Reclus (1884: 627) wrote:

Public speakers on social and political subjects find that abuse of anarchists is an unfailing passport to public favor. Every conceivable crime is laid to our charge, and opinion, too indolent to learn the truth, is easily persuaded that anarchy is but another name for wickedness and chaos. Overwhelmed with opprobrium and held up with hatred, we are treated on the principle that the surest way of hanging a dog is to give it a bad name.

the notion of an improved alternative world. Instead, I mean to suggest that anarchism, as a process rather than a project, is able to conceive of utopianism in terms that allow for perpetual revision through its attention to prefiguration and the fact that we only ever live our lives in the here and now.

It may be said that my argument presents an old version of Marxism, and certainly, it is the traditional variant of Marxism that is the focus of my critique. But with all the ‘post’ revisions that are still being made, why not pause and reflect on how this activity of tacking on appendages and amendments often simply brings Marxism closer to anarchism, as is the case with the autonomists? Moreover, what has history taught us about the implementation of Marxist ideas on a broad scale? ‘The attempt to rescue the Marxism pedigree by emphasizing the method over the system or by adding “neo” to a sacred word’, Bookchin (2004 [1986]: 112) wrote, ‘is sheer mystification if all the practical conclusions of the system flatly contradict these efforts’. And yet this is the precise location where Marxian geographical inquiry finds itself today. Marx’s writings on commodity relationships, alienation, and, particularly, the accumulation of capital are still brilliant exegeses that inspire a great number of radical geographers, myself included. There is no doubt that Marxism offers a luminous interpretation of the past, but what it has to offer the present and future is misleading given the fragmented identity politics that exist in our contemporary world, where the notion of a universal proletariat is pure delusion. Anticapitalist and antiwar protests have become increasingly diffuse in recent years, where the solidarities and affinities that they are indicative of point to the emergence of new forms of emancipatory politics, breaking with Marxism’s traditional category of class (Newman, 2007). While the academy clings to Marxism, it has lost its appeal on the street, having been eclipsed within contemporary social moments, which are now largely inspired by anarchist principles of voluntary association, egalitarianism, direct action, and

gardens for food, to co-operatives for housing, to knitting collectives for clothes. Rather than a central political body, anarchists conceive of social organization as local voluntary groupings that maintain autonomy through a decentralized system of selfgoverned communes of all sizes and degrees that co-ordinates activities and networks for all possible purposes through free federation. The coercive pyramid of state dynamics is replaced with a web of free association, wherein each locality is free to pursue their own social, cultural, and economic arrangements. The global postal system provides some hints as to how this might work, as local associations can syndicate to deliver complex functions without uniformity or overarching bureaucracy. Postal services function not through a central world authority but through voluntary agreements between different post offices, in different countries (Ward, 2004).

Humans have always lived in societies, and although the formalized rule of the state is quite a recent phenomenon in the long march of history, we nonetheless need reminding that it is ‘but one of the forms of social life’ (Kropotkin, 2002 [1898]: 131). We need to radically flip our mindsets, as anarchist organization does not replace top-down state mechanisms in the sense of standing in for them. They abolish them by people instead building what they need for themselves, free from coercion or imposed authority. Throughout human history people have organized themselves collectively to satisfy their own needs. Organization under anarchism is no different in this regard. As Colin Ward (1973: 28) contends,

given a common need, a collection of people will, by trial and error, by improvisation and experiment, evolve order out of the situation—this order being more durable and more closely related to their needs than any kind of order external authority could provide.

This insight is derived from Kropotkin's (2008 [1902]) observations of the history of human society, where he documented the centrality of cooperation linked to everyday life and described it as 'mutual aid'. Although differentiated across space and time, mutual aid was and still is continuously present in human societies, even if its development is not uniform and the forms it takes are contextually specific. At certain times, in particular places mutual aid has been central to social life, while at other times the geographies of mutual aid have been all but hidden beneath domination, violence, and competition. Yet irrespective of adversarial conditions, mutual aid is always present, and

the moment we stop insisting on viewing all forms of action only by their function in reproducing larger, total, forms of inequality of power, we will also be able to see that anarchist social relations and non-alienated forms of action are all around us. (Graeber, 2004: 76)

The provision of social welfare did not originate with the state; it 'evolved from the vast network of friendly societies and mutual aid organizations that had sprung up through working-class self-help in the 19th century' (Ward, 2004: 27). Thus, mutual aid is not a hypothetical model for how society might be shaped; it is already happening, providing ongoing opportunities of togetherness and emancipation.

Unlike Marxists, who view history in utilitarian terms (Springer, 2012), anarchists recognize that means and ends cannot be separated. The anarchist project then is one that aligns with feminism insofar as it is an attempt to promote the feminization of society through the extension of cooperation, equality, compassion, and sharing, which constitute mutual aid relations and contrast with the aggression, racism, exploitation, misogyny, homophobia, classism, and rivalry of our

Marxism, remains all but ignored by contemporary human geographers. When anarchism is considered, it is either misused as a synonym for violence and chaos or derided as a hopelessly utopian project, one that is ostensibly irreconcilable with 'reality' or any practical application.⁸ Yet it is incorrect to assume anarchism as a project, which instead reflects the domain of Marxian thought. Anarchism, as I have attempted to demonstrate, is more appropriately considered a continually unfolding process, a forever protean means without end that is perpetually being prefigured through direct action, mutual aid, voluntary association, and self-organization. Unlike Marxism's stages of history and its revolutionary imperative, which imply an end-state politics, anarchism is a political philosophy that fully appreciates the essential dynamism of the social world. As such, explaining the passage from the current condition of neoliberal miasma to an emancipated future is the problem of utopian thought, not the 'anarchism without end' I describe here, which abandons any pretext of achieving a completely free and harmonious society in the future and instead focuses on the immediacies of anarchist praxis and a prefigurative politics of direct action in the present. History has clearly demonstrated that revolution merely introduces new forms of tyranny, and accordingly I advocate a distinction between permanent insurrection, which is supported, and final revolution, which is opposed. This is not to argue that dreams of a better tomorrow are an insignificant component of anarchist thought, as indeed prefigurative politics embrace

⁸ The number of recent human geography articles that uncritically assume anarchism is tantamount to violence, chaos, and disorder is disheartening. For a small sampling from the last decade see Byrne and Wolch, 2009: 746; Dahlman and O'Z Tuathail, 2005: 578; Hagman and Korf, 2012: 207; Hastings, 2009: 214; Herod and Aguiar, 2006: 430; Hooper, 2008: 2563; Johnston, 2006: 287; Lim, 2012: 1352; Malm and Esmailian, 2013: 486; Mohaghegh and Golestaneh, 2011: 490; Raeymaekers, 2009: 57; Shirlow and Dowler, 2010: 389; ten Bos, 2009: 85; Watts, 2004: 209; Wilford, 2008: 653.

a gambit so powerful that it even blinds its own advocates. 'Our vanguardism will be different', they tell themselves, 'We'll do things right this time, we're not like the Bolsheviks or the Khmer Rouge, and the eventual withering away of our temporary authority is assured'. But the problem is not to be found in either the sincerity or lack thereof of this sentiment; the problem rests within the very idea itself. Marxism does not appreciate that we cannot liberate each other, we can only liberate ourselves, and so it places its faith in a proletariat led by a vanguard that inevitably reproduces that which it rails against. It does so precisely because it employs the same twisted methodology of the oppressor, reaping what it sows through its reliance on authority. Stirner (quoted in Kalyvas, 2010: 351) recognized the folly of an outside agent being responsible for individual liberation when he suggested, 'Whoever will be free must make himself free. Freedom is no fairy gift to fall into a man's lap [sic]'. Thus, until the day arrives when we can individually find the courage to unchain our imaginations from the prisons of vanguardism and hierarchy, the specter of authoritarianism will continue to haunt our political organizations and social relationships, infecting them with its violence. Our performativity literally makes the world (Butler, 1997). The roles we play and the scripts that we follow set the parameters of possibility. But when we venture into the realm of improvisation, traditional Marxism recoils with the same sense of horror as capitalism. There is a rational order that must be followed in both ideologies, and those who refuse to play by the rules of the game by actively laughing in the face of authority are shunned for their bravery, or worse, silenced through ridicule, imprisonment, or most heinous of all, execution.

Contemporary radical geography needs a shot in the arm precisely because it remains indifferent, skeptical, and even hostile toward those unconventional geographical imaginations that fall outside of a traditional Marxian analysis. Consequently anarchism, as an alternative socialism to

male-dominated modern society (Goldman, 1969 [1917]). Anarchism does not trace a line, or provide a model, but instead points to a strategy of breaking the bonds of coercion and the chains of exploitation by encompassing an infinite number of everyday acts of resistance and cooperation. Child care co-ops, street parties, gardening clinics, learning networks, flash mobs, community kitchens, unschooling groups, independent media collectives, rooftop occupations, freecycling activities, direct action organizations, radical samba, peer-to-peer file sharing, sewing workshops, tree sitting and monkey wrenching, spontaneous disasters relief, culture jamming, book fairs, microradio, building coalitions, collective hacking, dumpster diving, wildcat strikes, neighborhood tool sharing, tenant associations, workplace organizing, and squatting are all anarchism in action, each with decidedly spatial implications, and this is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. So what forms of action does anarchism take? 'All forms' Kropotkin (2005 [1880]: 39) answered,

indeed, the most varied forms, dictated by circumstances, temperament, and the means at disposal. Sometimes tragic, sometimes humorous, but always daring; sometimes collective, sometimes purely individual, this policy of action will neglect none of the means at hand, no event of public life, in order to keep the spirit alive, to propagate and find expression for dissatisfaction, to excite hatred against exploiters, to ridicule the government and expose its weakness, and above all and always, by actual example, to awaken courage and fan the spirit of revolt.

It should be clear then that the practice of mutual aid, which rests at the very core of anarchism, is as much a critique of capitalism, imperialism, and patriarchy, as it is of the authority claimed by the state.

The problematic alignment of anarchism to nothing more than antistate modes of thought and practice serves to marginalize this particular trajectory of socialist thought, making it seem less viable or desirable among those who might otherwise be sympathetic to anarchist leanings. This is a strategy that attempts to infuse Marxism with a certain critical purchase over leftist thinking that anarchism supposedly lacks, when in reality—as we will see in the following section—both anarchism and Marxism sprung from the same roots of socialist critique, but eventually splintered in different directions stemming from differences in opinion over the role of the state. Yet this divergence does not mean that anarchism dropped all of its other substantive content to become purely an antistate ideology, as some Marxists seem to assume. Unfortunately anarchism’s historical alignment with socialism has not stopped Marxists from suggesting that anarchist ideas grease the rails toward a neoliberal future (see Dean, 2012a; Harvey, 2012b), a delusion that has been exacerbated by conservatives, particularly within the United States, and their inane misappropriation of the term anarchism to signify their own demonization of the state so that capital may become completely unfettered. Such readings are profound misrepresentations of anarchism as a political philosophy, willfully engaging in caricature by dismissing anarchism’s anticapitalist roots. And yet Marxists, beginning with Engels, have repeatedly trotted out the myth that anarchists consider the state as the main or only enemy:

In Bakunin’s view, the struggle against the main concentration of power in society, the state, *was no less necessary* than the struggle against capital. Engels, however, puts the matter somewhat differently, arguing that for Bakunin the state was the main enemy, as if Bakunin had not held that capital, too, was an enemy and that its expropriation

with acknowledging that the everyday is the only moment and space in which we have any tangible control over our lives (Springer, 2011, 2012). Thus, far from being utopian, anarchism is precisely the opposite. It is an antidote to Marxian political deferral. Embracing the here and now of the everyday represents a deeper appreciation for space—time as a constantly folding, unfolding, and refolding story, where direct action, radical democracy, and mutual aid allow us to instantaneously reconfigure its parameters.

Conclusion

The greatest discovery of our generation is that human beings can alter their attitudes of mind. As you think, so shall you be. William James (quoted in Johnson and Boynton, 2010: 19)

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them. Henry David Thoreau (2004 [1854]: 248)

Perhaps owing to texts like *The Critique of Everyday Life* (Lefebvre, 2008 [1958]), which had a profound influence on the Situationists, Edward W Soja once asked Henri Lefebvre if he was an anarchist. ‘No. Not now’ he replied, and when queried as to what he is now, Lefebvre replied ‘A Marxist, of course...so that we can all become anarchists sometime in the future’ (quoted in Soja, 1996: 33). Thus, despite the major impact he had on a more autonomist Marxian trajectory, Lefebvre’s response exemplifies the politics of waiting that signifies traditional Marxism. It is an attitude that resides in the decomposing body of vanguardism and bears only the withered fruit of an idea that has been, on numerous occasions, proven thoroughly rotten. The vanguard is a cipher for a new dictatorship,

an alignment with anarchist—autonomist sensibilities doesn't seem to suit Smith (2010: 57–58):

the invocation of political spontaneity as a means to a different future conjures up its own utopianism. A revolution of the discursive self is necessary, whether connected to political movements or not, but it is not a sufficient means to revolutionary social change. 'Change yourself and the world will change with you' was a hopeful 1960s slogan, which had its genuine uses, but the need for political organization is not thereby dissolved.

Unfortunately this critique misses the mark, as anarchism is not opposed to organization, 'It is about creating new forms of organization. It is not lacking in ideology. Those new forms of organization are its ideology' (Graeber, 2002:70). Anarchism is about the reinvention of daily life through the active creation of horizontal networks of affinity and mutual aid in the place of hierarchical structures (Springer, 2014).

Unlike the end-state politics of Marxism and neoliberalism, which both envision a moment where history ends and a harmonious global village of one sort or another is instantiated (Springer, 2012), the prefigurative politics of anarchism is considered as an infinitely demanding struggle (Critchley, 2008). In other words, whereas a revolutionary imperative is a means to an end, an insurrectionary imperative is a means *without* end (Springer, 2011). There is an ageographical tendency to the revolutionary imperative that some Marxists have begun to reject, notably autonomists and the Situationists, which moves them closer to an anarchistic understanding of the world. As a political philosophy, anarchism fully appreciates the processual nature of space, where the politics of waiting—for the revolution, for the withering away of the state, for the stages of history to pass—are all rejected in favor of the realism that comes

was a necessary even if not sufficient condition for the social revolution... [Engels' account] distorts Bakunin's argument, which also held capital to be an evil necessary to abolish (Gouldner, 1982: 863–864, original emphasis).

In short, anarchism has just as much of a critical bite against capitalism as Marxism could ever claim for itself, where the primary difference has been that Marxism continues to want to work with particular forms of monopoly, while anarchism refuses to involve itself in such an exclusionary practice.

Of monopolies

One cannot redistribute wealth without first becoming master of all wealth; redistribution is first and foremost monopoly. Anselme Bellegarrigue (1848: n.p.)

It was at this point—the necessity of striking down monopoly—that came the parting of their ways. Here the road forked. They found that they must turn either to the right or to the left—follow either the path of Authority or the path of Liberty. Marx went one way; Warren and Proudhon the other. Thus were born State Socialism and Anarchism. Benjamin Tucker (2005 [1897]: 7)

That anarchism is firmly embedded in socialist practice and thought has been true since its inception as a political philosophy when Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (2008 [1840]: 241) became the first person in history to declare, 'I am an anarchist'. Alongside Pierre Leroux, Marie Roch, Louis Reybaud, and Robert Owen, Proudhon is rightfully considered a preeminent godparent of socialism. His ideas were so influential in late 19th

century in France that it is impossible to disentangle his critique of property from the libertarian movement that resulted in the Paris Commune of 1871 (Archer, 1997). Like Marx (1976 [1867]), but nearly three decades before him, Proudhon (2008 [1840]: 116, original emphasis) devised that capitalists cheat their workers because they produce more value than wage labor affords them, and it is accordingly the workers who are ethically entitled to control the means of production:

Whoever labors becomes a proprietor...And when I say proprietor, I do not mean simply (as do our hypocritical economists) proprietor of his allowance, his salary, his wages—I mean proprietor of the value he creates, and by which the master alone profits. As all this relates to wages and the distribution of products...Many persons talk of admitting working people to share in the products and profits; but in their minds this is pure benevolence: they have never shown—perhaps never suspected—that it was a natural right, inherent in labor, and inseparable from the function of producer ...This is my proposition: *The laborer retains, even after he has received his wages, a natural right of property in the thing which he has produced.*

Proudhon located the power to produce without working at the heart of capitalism's exploitation, an idea that 'anticipat[ed] what Marx and Engels were later to call the appropriation of surplus value' (Enrenberg, 1996: 55). Similarly, Proudhon (2008 [1840]) opposed all nonlabor-based income, including rent, dividends, interest, and profit. In fact, anyone familiar with both would recognize that Marx's (1976 [1867]) first volume of *Capital* recapitulated many of the ideas first presented in Proudhon's (2008 [1840]) *What is Property?* but

rational plan (Newman, 2011). Aside from the obvious authoritarianism of such a project, we should also recognize that not everything needs to be remade, and revolution is insensitive to the 'other worlds' and 'diverse economies' that already exist and are continually being remade through experimentation beyond capitalism (Gibson-Graham, 2008; White and Williams, 2012). Insurrection defies the blueprint imposed upon society by institutions—whether capitalist or Marxist—and consists of the voluntary assertion of autonomous self-arrangement so that one may immediately disengage from established discourses and structures, becoming emancipated from domination through a politics of refusal and the prefiguration of alternatives.

Unlike Smith's (2010) revolutionary imperative, which sidesteps any discussion of Marxism's false promise of a withering state—an untruth that history has repeatedly exposed—insurrection embraces a mode of organization that spontaneously springs from self-activity. As we have already seen, Bakunin (2002 [1872]: 318) was well aware of the ruse of the dictatorship of the proletariat and he revealed this through an understanding of the state as always having been an endowment of some form of privilege:

a priestly class, an aristocratic class, a bourgeois class. And finally, when all the other classes have exhausted themselves, the State then becomes the patrimony of the bureaucratic class and then falls—or, if you will, rises—to the position of a machine.

Such reflection makes the withering argument, and thus revolution itself, untenable when expressed in the vanguardist terms of seizing the state apparatus. If revolution is ever to be salvaged as a viable idea, it should be refocused toward the particularities of the everyday and the insurgent possibilities that exist within the here and now (Springer, 2012). But such

a peaceful and non-violent society' (Marshall, 1992: 636). While the history of anarchism shows moments of violent engagement, particularly during the 'propaganda of the deed' era of the late 19th century, the bulk of anarchist activities (i.e. the practice of mutual aid) throughout history and into the present have been nonviolent. It was during the height of the propaganda of the deed era that anarchism became particularly distorted in popular opinion. The actions of the few saw anarchism misaligned from its egalitarian imperatives and cooperative principles in the judgment of the public, where it became vilified as nothing more than a pact among terrorists and assassins. Yet the notion that the whole of anarchism is rotten because of the actions of those anarchists who have employed violent tactics is unreasonable. Such thinking is no different than the contemporary witch-hunt against Muslims, as though the actions of a violent minority somehow reflect the thinking and practice of the peaceful majority. Since anarchists generally accept the idea that means and ends should be indistinguishable, and 'given the anarchists' respect for the sovereignty of the individual, in the long run it is non-violence and not violence which is implied by anarchist values' (Marshall, 1992: 637).

The meaning of revolution, if it is to be rescued at all, should be realigned away from the use of violence and the conquest of state power (Holloway, 2002) and toward the insurrectionary potential of the everyday. Such a view is not without its critics though, as Neil Smith (2010: 57) argued that it misinterprets the ambition of revolution as simply seizing state power and replacing one regime with another, wherein 'Only a willful misreading of Marxist political theory could make such an elementary mistake. It not only disavows a whole history of revolutionary thought but it also conveniently erases Engels and Lenin's argument about the withering away of the state'. Smith is correct, revolution is more than just the capture of the state; it exemplifies a totalizing spatial logic of Promethean impulse that seeks to remake everything according to a

without proper acknowledgment. Unlike Marxists who have paid little attention to Proudhon largely owing to Marx's own 'highly distorted' accounts that were 'almost always charged with scorn' (McKay, 2011: 65), anarchists continue to engage with Proudhon's work and have long been aware that we find 'the doctrine of surplus value, that grand "scientific discovery" of which Marxists are so proud, in the writings of Proudhon' (Rocker, 1925: n.p.).

Few Marxists are aware of this history, and indeed one reviewer of this article called Marx's intellectual debt to Proudhon an 'absolutely absurd claim', but it is hard to argue with the evidence as 'Marx's discussions of Proudhon's ideas...span almost the entirety of his career' (Thomas, 1980: 193). Marx, like Proudhon before him, argued that abolishing interest-bearing capital was destructive of capitalism. Marx, like Proudhon before him, differentiated between possession and private property and argued that cooperatives should replace capitalist firms. Marx, like Proudhon before him, argued that the working classes must emancipate themselves. Marx, like Proudhon before him, regarded property as the subjugation of the labor of others by means of appropriation. Marx, like Proudhon before him, saw the cooperative movement as a necessity of transitioning away from capitalism and thus recognized the need for communal land and workplaces. Marx, like Proudhon before him, proclaimed the need for 'scientific socialism'. Marx, like Proudhon before him, argued that the state was an instrument of class rule, although they differed in terms of whether or not a temporary proletariat dictatorship was necessary to see it properly undone.²

In this light, it is utterly peculiar that so few geographers have actually engaged with Proudhon, until we recall that Marx first made a name for himself by ridiculing the then well-known socialist through 'the perpetuation of a spiteful

² AllofthisistracedinsignificantdetailinMcKay(2011).

distortion of his thought' (Vincent, 1984: 230), using Proudhon's fame to get people to read the work of a then unknown radical thinker. Clearly annoyed by Marx's antics, Benjamin Tucker (1883: 2) argued that Proudhon 'demonstrated to the world' both the 'the historical persistence of class struggles in successive manifestations' and 'the tendency and consequences of capitalistic production...time and time again during the twenty years preceding the publication of "Das Kapital"'. But then again as Ian McKay (2011: 70) argues with tongue in cheek, 'all this could be just a coincidence and just a case of great minds thinking alike—with one coming to the same conclusions a few years after the other expressed them in print'. And so we find only fleeting references to Proudhon in Harvey's entire body of work, until his latest book on Paris, where the French socialist can finally and hardly be avoided (Harvey, 2013).³ This omission, which stems from the 'persistent misconceptions concerning Proudhon's thought result[ing] from the continued reverence shown to Marx and, as a result, his assessment of Proudhon' (Vincent, 1984: 230), sets a tone for radical geography that is clearly visible in the number of articles we find making reference to early proponents of socialism in human geography journals since the publication of Harvey's (1973) first major Marxist work four decades ago. Marx has clearly monopolized the discipline's collective attention (see Table 1). As Edward Hyams (1979: 92) writes, 'no good Marxists have had to think about Proudhon. They have what is mother's milk to them, an ex cathedra judgement. For the essence of Marxism...is authority'.⁴ Awkward as it may be, the written record proves that Proudhon first suggested many key aspects of Marxism

³ To be fair, Harvey's (2013) reading of Proudhon is generally quite positive.

⁴ And so a reviewer of this article responded by stating that, 'the diverse approaches to critical human geography tend, in one way or another, to lean on texts by Karl Marx to interpret the world—far more than Kropotkin

Perhaps you still retain the opinion that no reform is at present possible without a coup de main, without what was formerly called a revolution and is really nothing but a shock. That opinion, which I understand, which I excuse, and would willingly discuss, having myself shared it for a long time, my most recent studies have made me abandon completely. I believe we have no need of it in order to succeed; and that consequently we should not put forward revolutionary action as a means of social reform, because that pretended means would simply be an appeal to force, to arbitrariness, in brief, a contradiction.

In particular, it is the violence and authoritarianism of revolution that prompted Proudhon to rethink where an anarchist philosophy should be aligned, and revolution was accordingly dropped from his vocabulary.

A great number of anarchists have followed suit, where the violence of revolution and the contradiction this entails for anarchism's vision of a peaceful and egalitarian society is the primary concern. Tucker (1926: 71) argued that 'Force cannot preserve anarchy; neither can it bring it. In fact, one of the inevitable influences of the use of force is to postpone anarchy', while Ethel Mannin (2009 [1944]: 73) wrote that:

The history of bloody revolution everywhere is the history of failure...people are not to be bludgeoned into it; only what is achieved through the great upsurge of the human spirit, out of the impassioned desire of the multitude endures; what is imposed by force has no roots, and cannot last.

There is, nonetheless, ambivalence with respect to violence in the anarchist tradition, even if 'all anarchists look forward to

ments (Pleyers, 2011) are accordingly a far cry from the homophobia, sexism, racism, and selfishness of the libertarian right, precisely because anarchism is rooted in notions of affinity, solidarity, and togetherness expressed *here and now* through lived everyday experiences.

The revolution of the everyday is a thematic that was taken up by the Situationists,⁷ where for the Marxist-inspired Guy Debord (1994 [1967]) and Raoul Vaneigem (2012 [1967]), possibilities to break with capitalism occurred at the level of daily practice and lived experience. Yet this character is entirely absent from traditional Marxism. Friedrich Engels (1978 [1872]: 733) couldn't see past his particular version of revolution, which effectively served as an excuse for the authoritarianism of Marxist ideas:

[The anarchists] demand that the first act of the social revolution shall be the abolition of all authority. Have these gentlemen (sic) ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will on the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon—authoritarian means if such there be at all; and if the victorious party does not wish to have fought in vain; it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries.

Engels' goal was to discredit anarchists and lend credence to the idea that a proletarian dictatorship is the only viable socialism, and yet this critique rings hollow because it misses the mark of anarchist intentions, which had been far more reflexive about this situation than Engels ever let on. Proudhon (1846: n.p.) addressed this criticism directly, where in a letter to Marx he wrote:

(McKay, 2011). Proudhon, the anarchist, accordingly played a pivotal role in the development of Marxian thought, and although Marxists tend to claim the Paris Commune for themselves as it is widely regarded as the first assumption of power by the working class during the Industrial Revolution, Proudhon's influence is undeniable (Hyams, 1979).⁵

Debates over the Paris Commune's policies and outcome solidified the divisions between anarchists and Marxists, fully realizing the fragmentation of socialist ideas, which had begun splintering even before the First International in 1864. Kropotkin (1992 [1885]: 97), for example, was dismayed by the Commune's departure from Proudhon's antistatist ideas when 'In proclaiming the free Commune, the people of Paris proclaimed an essential anarchist principle ...[but] they stopped in midcourse ...[perpetuating] the old governmental principle by giving themselves a Communal Council copied from the old municipal councils'. The main division between anarchism and Marxism consequently emerged out of differences in

or Reclus—and for good reasons'. No qualification is offered as to what those reasons might be. Instead, this is stated with authority, as though it is a matter of fact that Marx had better ideas.

⁵ The preceding discussion is not meant to smear Marx and establish Proudhon as the rightful intellectual ancestor of socialism, but rather to offer a more honest appraisal of the intellectual milieu of the time, which emerged from 'endless conversations and arguments in cafes, classrooms, bedrooms, barber shops involving thousands of people inside and outside the academy (or Party)' (Graeber, 2007: 304). Any 'Great Man' theory is a fiction of the academic game, where 'winning' means other scholars turn your name into an adjective. It is very telling then that we now have anarchism, named for an idea, and Marxism, named for a man, as the two main variants of socialist thought. Although Proudhon was evidently frustrated by Marx, referring to 'The Poverty of Philosophy' as 'a tissue of vulgarity, of calumny, of falsification and of plagiarism' (Thomas, 1980: 211), much like Kropotkin, Bakunin, Reclus, and the other anarchists of the 19th century, Proudhon didn't think of himself as having invented anything particularly new. After all, anarchism's basic principles of self-organization, voluntary association, and mutual aid are as old as humanity, and it is to time immemorial that he owed his intellectual debt.

opinion over the need for leaders—or a vanguard—and the question of revolution itself (see below) as well as the degree of autonomy afforded to the workers in any postrevolutionary conjuncture and the closely related question of the monopoly of violence.

Anarchists rejected any such monopoly on the premise that violence is first and foremost the primary dimension of state power and accordingly any state, whether controlled by the bourgeoisie or captured by the workers, will inevitably come to function as an instrument of class domination. In contrast, Marxists believed that because a minority class rules most societies prior to socialism, the achievement of a classless society requires the previously disadvantaged class to acquire a monopoly over and superior capacity for violence. As Bakunin (1953 [1873]: 288) argued,

They [Marxists] maintain that only a dictatorship—their dictatorship, of course—can create the will of the people, while our [anarchists] answer to this is: No dictatorship can have any other aim but that of self-perpetuation, and it can beget only slavery in the people tolerating it; freedom can be created only by freedom, that is, by...rebellion on the part of the people and free organization of the toiling masses from the bottom up.

The desire to overturn the state and create a liberated socialist system via despotic power is thus a contradiction, as is the related Marxian notion of withering away the state. Bakunin (1953 [1873]: 288) recognized this when he observed,

If their State is going to be a genuine people's State, why should it then dissolve itself? ...[Marxists] say that this State yoke—the dictatorship—is a necessary transitional means in order to attain

What matters today is what we identify as the primary enemy. Is the primary enemy capitalism or is the primary enemy the state? Communists and socialists rightly recognize the primary enemy as capitalism. The problem with anarchists is that many of them see the primary enemy as the state or the state form. So they don't think that seizing the state—or trying to expropriate it in various sorts of ways by winning parts of it—matters. They think more about just abolishing it completely. That is a mistake.

The real mistake is Dean's instance that the only true form of socialism is Marxist, and the fallacious claim that all antistate perspectives are synonymous with, or at least complementary to neoliberalism, an error that is repeated by Harvey (2012b). While undeniably anarchist theory has focused on individual liberty, where Stirner (1993 [1845]) set the tone with *The Ego and Its Own*, only intellectual distortion can read this as a precursor to the privatized tyranny of neoliberalism. Although 'pursued through seven hundred pages of heavy-handed mockery and insult' in the unabridged version of *The German Ideology* (Berlin, 1978: 105–106), Stirner is clearly not out to defend the privileges of the ruling class, as this is not his conception of egoism, which is instead meant as the destruction of idols of every kind. The direct action, DIY ethic of anarchism expressed through squatter movements (Ward, 2004), autonomous indigenous movements (Yashar, 2005), social centers movements (Hodkinson and Chatterton, 2006), worker cooperative movements (Vieta, 2010), and alter-globalization move-

⁷ The Situationists were a radical international organization comprised of political theorists, artists, and intellectuals who espoused an antiauthoritarian version of Marxism. They aimed to create alternative life experiences by bringing together play, critical thinking, and freedom through the construction of situations and unitary urbanism (Wark, 2011).

proletarian identity to congeal and the entire structure to be torn down and resurrected with new leaders.⁶

The Marxist spirit of vanguardism and a classcentric view of the proletariat take center stage in Jodi Dean's (2012a) *The Communist Horizon*, which although being touted as a manifesto for a new collective politics, instead offers a reactionary response to the language of autonomy, autogestion, and horizontalism that has been so inspirational to contemporary social movements. The spontaneity of 'the coming insurrection' (The Invisible Committee, 2009) is rejected and in its place Dean (2012a: 241) regurgitates the dead letter idea that collective action must constitute itself as a political party and be marshaled by a vanguard to lead a revolution, which in her own words requires 'discipline and preparation'. To Dean (2012a: 242 original emphasis), 'a communist party is necessary because neither capitalist dynamics nor mass spontaneity immanently produce a *proletarian* revolution', which reestablishes a class-centric outlook for Marxism. Elsewhere, and in demonstrating ignorance for the history of socialism, Dean (2012b: n.p.) snipes that 'anarchism just repeats the neoliberal ideology, except with an oppositional, kind of groovier flavor'. Playing into the same oxymoronic rhetoric of those who call themselves anarcho-capitalists, anarchism is astonishingly caricatured by Dean as a cipher for capitalism. How anarchism's cooperative approach to social change (i.e. mutual aid) can be considered 'neoliberal' is a mystery that Dean fails to respond to. What is obvious is that either she has never heard of Kropotkin and the anarcho-communist perspective he advanced, or she conveniently ignores it to score political points. Yet Dean (2013: n.p.) does not stop at inexplicably severing anarchism from socialism and communism, she also recapitulates the state-centric caricature of anarchism:

| <i>Journal</i> | <i>Engels</i> | <i>Kropotkin</i> | <i>Marx</i> | <i>Proudhon</i> | <i>Reclus</i> |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Annals of the Association of American Geographers | 45 | 19 | 180 | 5 | 20 |
| Antipode | 173 | 41 | 560 | 24 | 18 |
| Economic Geography | 16 | 1 | 101 | 0 | 0 |
| Environment and Planning A | 46 | 5 | 207 | 0 | 6 |
| Environment and Planning D | 54 | 6 | 223 | 3 | 6 |
| Geoforum | 34 | 7 | 154 | 3 | 9 |
| Journal of Economic Geography | 4 | 0 | 23 | 1 | 0 |
| Political Geography/Political Geog- | 37 | 10 | 212 | 4 | 18 |
| raphy Quarterly Progress in Human Geography | 37 | 17 | 208 | 4 | 19 |

the emancipation of the people: anarchism or freedom, is the goal, the State or dictatorship is the means. Thus, to free the working masses, it is first necessary to enslave them.

Such vanguardism and noticeable inconsistency appalled anarchists and became the fundamental divide between socialists.

Marx's economic analysis is rooted in the notion of exploitation, where other forms of oppression, or what anarchists would call 'domination', are reducible to the conflict of class relations. There is no space for gender oppression, homophobia, racial discrimination, or other social hierarchies to take on a separate analysis within a strictly Marxist view. These struggles are not seen to have their own integrity beyond the ostensibly more fundamental problem of capitalist exploitation and thus the force of Marx's view is its insistence that the ultimate analysis of a society is that of its economic relations. To carry this idea forward, 'If there is a single site of oppression, an Archimedean point about which history and struggle turn, then those who are more conversant with that point are the ones best positioned to oversee struggle and resistance' (May, 2008: 80). Thus the idea of the vanguard is inextricable from Marxism precisely because it maintains a classcentric outlook wherein Marxists maintain that economic exploitation should monopolize our analyses of oppression. But if, in contrast, domination is considered multifarious, a reading that geography actually demands as there is no single site of oppression and capitalism can never claim a totalizing and monolithic hegemony, then the distinction between an intellectual class and the masses is more difficult to sustain. Once we recognize multiple sites of oppression—patterns of domination that fold into, out of, and across the every day—the geographies of rebellion become much more diffuse than a single class-based revolution. This is not to say that networks of solidarity cannot and should not be constructed

of the established. If I leave the established, it is dead and passes into decay.

Stirner accordingly ridiculed the traditional notion of revolution, viewing those social movements aimed at overturning the state as implicitly statist insofar as from the ashes of the state they aimed to establish a new one. The displacement of one government with another was not a viable option for Stirner, an idea that anarchists have held ever since. Although some anarchists have continued to employ the language of 'revolution', the envisioned meaning is very different from that of most Marxists. The intention of insurrection is what might be referred to a 'revolution of the everyday' where individuals become 'insurgents' by refusing the existing structures of domination and walking their own way. Stirner accordingly intended insurrection in its etymological sense of 'rising up' above government, religion, and other hierarchies not necessarily to overthrow them but to simply disregard these structures by taking control of one's own individual life. This approach is of course the very essence of direct action, which in contrast to civil disobedience and its grand gesture of defiance proceeds with no consideration of authority whatsoever, as all authority is deemed illegitimate (Graeber, 2009). Direct action and insurrection are accordingly synonymous inasmuch as they reject any notion of vanguardism and invoke a prefigurative politics wherein the spectacular moment of revolution is replaced with the ongoing process of actually creating alternatives in the here and now rather than waiting for a singular

⁶ Prefigurative politics refers to the idea that anarchism is made flesh through effecting social relationships and organizing principles in the present that attempt to reflect the future society being sought. The idea of prefiguration is thus not to be confused with predetermination, as it is about the active and ongoing process of building a new society in the shell of the old (Ince, 2012). Here again, we see a close political resemblance between anarchism and autonomist Marxism, as prefiguration is nearly synonymous with Antonio Negri's (1989) notion of self-valorization.

The problem with revolution

The State is not something which can be destroyed by a revolution, but is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently. Gustav Landauer (2005 [1910]: 165)

Ontological Anarchy proposes that we wake up, and create our own day—even in the shadow of the State, that pustulant giant who sleeps, and whose dreams of Order metastasize as spasms of spectacular violence. Hakim Bey (1994: 2)

Marxist geographers have traditionally viewed revolution as a means to an end for their political project. This reading has, however, been challenged as of late, particularly within autonomist Marxist circles, where the revolutionary imperative has been called into question. Hardt and Negri (2000, 2009) are perhaps the most well-known proponents of an alternative reading to revolution, with their suggestion that our efforts should be focused on a certain spontaneity that already exudes from the populace and foments political disruptions within the small cracks that inevitably exist within hegemony. This interpretation has significant correspondence with anarchist sensibilities and aligns with those anarchists who have argued against revolution and for insurrection. Max Stirner (1993 [1845]: 316, original emphasis) was one of the first to articulate this idea, suggesting that while revolution aimed to create new arrangements, insurrection in contrast,

leads us no longer to *let* ourselves be arranged, but to arrange ourselves, and sets no glittering hopes on 'institutions'. It is not a fight against the established, since, if it prospers, the established collapses of itself; it is only a working forth of me out

on a voluntary basis of affinity, but it is an indictment of the idea that a vanguard somehow represents our collective hope, rather than its own self-serving interests.

This line of critique reveals an additional sense of monopoly that Marxism subscribes to in the form of universalizing the proletariat and claiming such ontology as the engine of emancipation for all of humanity. Such a class-centric outlook is problematic precisely because identity is far more fractious than many Marxists care to admit, and yet Marxism as a philosophy presents itself as having a firm hold on how solidarities may be mobilized and from where they should be impelled. In this respect, its vanguardism once again becomes apparent. What this also hints at are the limits of Marxian thought, which emerge from and have consequences on how it explains the transition from capitalism to socialism, or from a class society to a classless society. It is important to remember that the Marxist explanation was developed almost entirely out of analogy with the transition of feudalism to capitalism—that is, from one class society to another class society. This raises a key question about the utility of Marxian analysis, namely, is it possible to explain and account for the transition from a class society to a classless society by means of the same dialectic that accounts for the transition of one class society to another? As Murray Bookchin (2004 [1986]) notes, there are very significant differences between the development of the bourgeoisie under feudalism and the development of the proletariat under capitalism, which Marx failed to anticipate or acknowledge. This is a powerful critique of Marxist epistemology, which goes beyond abstraction to penetrate the concrete materiality of how revolution is actually operationalized. It also goes some way to explaining why the state does not actually wither under Marxism once put into practice and why a bourgeois character remains entrenched in the new socialist state. As soon as the reigns of the state are captured, Marxism becomes mere ideology, assimilated into advanced forms of state capitalist movement as we

saw in the Soviet Union and its eventual collapse and as has become abundantly clear in contemporary China. Thus, when Bookchin (2004 [1986]: 117) argues, 'By an incredible irony of history, Marxian "socialism" turns out to be in large part the very state capitalism that Marx failed to anticipate in the dialectic of capitalism', it is hard to dismiss his charge when the empirical record verifies his assessment.

Whereas Marxism represents the vanguardist-cum-statist edge of the socialist political spectrum, or at the very least accepts the state in utilitarian terms as a means to an end through a supposedly 'provisional' dictatorship of the proletariat, anarchism is the domain of libertarian socialism and rejects the idea that violent means can justify or ever possibly lead to an emancipated condition. Put differently, to be antistatist within the domain of socialist thought is to be anarchist. Although autonomist Marxists would undoubtedly object, I would nonetheless critique libertarian categories of ostensibly 'Marxian' affiliation as being to a significant extent synonymous with socialist anarchism and at the very least, 'anarchistic' in their outlook. In particular, there is significant correspondence between the anarcho-geography of Kropotkin (2008 [1902]) and Ward (1973), wherein the potential for a new society is seen to already exist within the materiality of capitalism, and the analyses of autonomist Marxists who actively seek to create the future by fostering alternative social relations and new forms of being in their everyday lives (Katsiaficas, 2006; Marks, 2012; Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006). 'As a replacement for an exhausted and failed orthodoxy', Harry Cleaver (1992: n.p.) notes that autonomist Marxists offer a more vibrant and dynamic Marxism, 'one that has been regenerated within the struggles of real people and as such, has been able to articulate at least some elements of their desires and projects of self-valorization'. In searching for the future in the present, the approach taken by anarchist geographers to the issue of transcending capitalism thus finds

a common ground with autonomist Marxists in emphasizing existing activities that embody the primary importance of creative forms of social cooperation and alternative ways of being. Anarchists and autonomists both attempt to organize their productive activities in ways that impede capitalism with a view toward eventually breaking its command over society (Gautney, 2009).

Presumably it is for political reasons stemming from the recent misuse of the word anarchism by the political right that autonomist Marxists have chosen alternative discursive framings to represent their ideas. Arguably it is for similar reasons that the tag of 'Marxist' is sometimes dropped in favor of the more straightforward referent of 'autonomist'. Whatever the reasons for its nomenclature, there is significant correspondence between autonomist and anarchist ideas. Clough and Blumberg (2012) provide a useful discussion that traces the nuances of these two dimensions of libertarian socialism to bring them into conversation, while Pierpaolo Mudu (2012: 413) traces the history of 'how and to what extent the people linked to anarchist or autonomist orientations shared principles of action and how individuals sharing these principles interacted'. These are critically important interventions in building wider solidarity for the same general principles of freedom, affinity, and the reorganization of society along a non-hierarchical, horizontal axis. Anarchists and autonomists both engage such a process through a reimagining of revolution, where its basis is to be found not in a profound moment of widespread social and political upheaval that originates from an allegedly universal experience of immiseration among a particular class, but within the insurrectionary locus of the everyday and the contextual specificity of lived experience.