

# **A Modern Anarchism**

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# **Part 1: Anarchist Analysis**

# Introduction

We stand now at a turning point, wherein many roads sprawl out in front of us. With unprecedented access to information, the atlas seems to lie within our hands. But, at this crossroads, the popularizers of these many paths shout over one another to persuade new travelers, only to find that most travelers now choose tourism rather than migration; exploration rather than arrival. It is hard to blame them. Having seen many return from a path leading to a dead-end, or worse, having lost those they know to a terrible bramble from which they will never escape, these weary travelers are paralyzed by choice. Confused and discouraged, many simply return home where a tormentor awaits, but wherein there is no longer the stress of uncertainty.

I would like to tell you of a new path: its extent not yet fully explored, but peering through the forestation beyond, a great light emanates forth. Before we proceed, I would like to pose a question: why has this society accumulated so much power, yet somehow fails to meet the most basic needs of humanity? Why has this hierarchical structure changed hands between so many rulers, yet the peace they have promised never lasts? Their hands bloody, their adherents marching behind, a new society of domination always follows in time. Why? Those intent on creating their own societies of domination will offer all manner of empty excuses. But the true answers lie within an ideology which has been suppressed by the power hoarders: anarchism.

This work is not meant to be a brief introduction to the topic. There are plenty of those already in existence. Instead, I want to offer a modern synthesis of anarchist ideas. So, whereas many other books and essays endeavor to give a broad, non-committal overview, here I want to ground you in a particular location within the body of anarchist thought. In doing this, we will not wander down every trail, but we will stop to look at the scenery from time to time. And, for this reason, one might see this work as motivated by the impulse described by Voline in his work *On Synthesis* :

“The anarchist conception must be synthetic: it must seek to become the great living synthesis of the different elements of life, established by scientific analysis and rendered fruitful by the synthesis of our ideas, our aspirations and the bits of truth that we have succeeded in discovering; it must do it if it wishes to be that precursor of truth, that true and undistorted factor, not bankrupting of human liberation and progress, which the dozens of sullen, narrow and fossilized ‘isms’ obviously cannot become.”<sup>1</sup>

Such a process is, of course, a lofty goal for any one person to carry out. To do this, I will go beyond the standard list of European thinkers that one is typically introduced to when they begin an inspection of this subject. These names will certainly feature in our narrative, as they were very important figures in the development of anarchism as a revolutionary movement. But the ideas of the anarchists are not only important to some specific geographic region. Now, more than ever before, anarchism has achieved a state of critical insight, especially as it has been informed by the work of Black, queer, indigenous, feminist, decolonial, and other anarchist thinkers.

All those people who strive to be free of oppression will find their common struggle within its basis. After all, many of these realizations root to the earliest stages of humanity and will likely be at play in any possible human society. Many other anarchist works have failed to take into account these new developments of anarchist theory, to understand where the original struggles have fallen short, and then cooperate alongside this new coalition of thinkers in bringing anarchist principles to their highest culmination.

So let us begin...

# First Principles

Before we set off on this journey to form what I have called a “modern anarchism,” we seem obliged to answer a much simpler question: what is anarchism? Unfortunately, more than any other subject, one is forced to confront the many propaganda campaigns that have been carried out against it. And this is no mistake. As Lorenzo Kom’Boa Ervin has said in *Anarchism and the Black Revolution* :

“All who strive to oppress and exploit the working class, and gain power for themselves, whether they come from the right or the left, will always be threatened by Anarchism [...] because Anarchists hold that all authority and coercion must be struggled against.”<sup>1</sup>

Threatened by its liberatory ideas, the many enemies of anarchism have all spread their own falsehoods. They each have an interest in muddying the waters to obscure its true meaning and to dissuade their followers from considering it. As a result, the layman’s understanding of anarchism is that it represents the rejection of all rules and organization, leading many to envision chaos or power vacuum, to be quickly filled with a new tyrant or a wilderness fought over by atomized humans. But, behind the spectacles of destruction and revolt which the reigning power structures have distributed in deceptively cut video clips and convenient political narratives, there is an entire body of theory and revolutionary history that is hidden.

And within this body of theory, there have been a number of different ways of defining anarchism, each with its own merit. Before I give my definition, I would like to inspect a few passages from notable thinkers in the field, so that we can see what facets reoccur within the discussion. In the introduction to *Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice* , for example, Rudolf Rocker says that:

“Anarchism is a definite intellectual current in the life of our times, whose adherents advocate the abolition of economic monopolies and of all political and social coercive institutions within society.”<sup>2</sup>

Errico Malatesta states his definition of anarchism quite clearly in a response he wrote to Kropotkin’s *Science and Anarchy* , saying that:

“Anarchism is the method of reaching anarchy, through freedom, [...] without those authoritarian institutions that impose their will on others by force, even if it happens to be in a good cause.”<sup>3</sup>

It is also commonly said, by thinkers such as Peter Kropotkin or Lorenzo Kom’Boa Ervin, that anarchism is:

“the no government system of socialism.”<sup>4</sup>

Many other variations can be found throughout the literature. But what we will explore in the following series of essays is how each of these actually describe different aspects of a cohesive theoretical whole. After all, there are many aspects to the body of anarchism that one might wish to include in their definition. In both Rocker and Malatesta's versions, for example, we see a shared understanding of anarchism as being the method through which a new form of society is reached. In Rocker's, additionally, we get an understanding of anarchism as a body of political theory, an "intellectual current" as he says. And, lastly, In Ervin and Kropotkin's, we get a description of its orientation within the body of socialist theory as an anti-state philosophy. Here I will offer the following definition:

Anarchism is the opposition to all hierarchical power structures, the framework for locating and understanding them, and the method by which we might dismantle and replace those hierarchical power structures with a horizontal society of free association, controlled together by the people, which we call anarchy.

This definition then references three distinct aspects of anarchism: a mode of analysis, a method of struggle, and a socio-political goal. This part in our series will primarily focus on the first of these; the anarchist mode of analysis, saving the anarchist method and theory of anarchy for later parts. But, although it will not be the subject of this video, just understand that this usage of "anarchy" does not mean chaos or lack of organization, as you have likely been told. Anarchy is both individual and collective freedom to develop our full creative capacities, constituted through equality of structural power and the eternal principle of human solidarity. Such a society is not then a state of unrest, but the condition of existence in which humanity can determine for themselves what sort of future they wish to inhabit, free of direction by some dominator class, instead carried forth by their own motivated wills. If this society has been explained to you as a state of chaos, understand only that your rulers wish you to think of a society without domination, a society in which you are in control, as chaos. However, before we return to that topic in much greater depth in the later parts of this series, we will need to lay out an understanding of the society in which we currently exist. To do this, I will state what I think are the three primary principles that underlie all anarchist analysis:

1. Means cannot be disentangled from ends
2. Hierarchical power begets monopoly and domination
3. Power structures seek to perpetuate themselves

Though much else is said within the vast breadth of anarchist literature, I contend that it is these three principles which span the gamut. Indeed, they are of such importance, I will essentially spend the rest of this work explaining how they are justified and developing a structure of understanding based on their consequences. But, before we set out on that journey, let us take a few moments to discuss what is meant by "power" in these principles.

When I say power I mean, quite simply, "the ability to successfully enact one's will." This is sometimes called a theory of "power to" as opposed to "power over." The "power to" do a thing does not come along with a default value judgment. In order to derive whether some power is good or bad, we must develop a theory of how power functions and how different powers connect to human needs. If you can acquire food, for example, and if your body is in normal functioning order, you have the "power to" eat. If you can operate a vehicle and you have the ability to provide it with fuel, you have the "power to" travel. Neither of these are, in themselves bad powers for one to have; we would then be required to ask: food by what means? A vehicle that does what?



The statement of how powerful some entity is, the measure of that entity's ability to enact its will, is then also a statement about that entity's ability to transform the universe around them. And such powers, grounded as they are in reality, are limited by natural bounds. For this reason, powers are never purely creative nor purely destructive. In deriving any power, a being must balance its creative and destructive aspects. In the production of a painting, materials are exhausted. In the performance of a play, sweat and tears are shed, fat is burned, time is used up. It is a great strength of the firearm that it spends only the bullet it fires, yet it can kill so easily. It is a great service to the master that the servant is obedient, so that they expend little effort in disciplining them. And it is a benefit to the writer that their work exhausts only graphite or ink or reorients the switches on a hard drive, yet has the ability to create entire worlds. Powers are complex, multi-faceted, and contextual.

However, in the coming dialogue, you may see a few authors use the word power in a different way than I have just explained. They are using the "power over" usage I mentioned a few moments ago. The power "over" a thing may be seen as the power to dominate that thing; to use it or dispose of it as one pleases. From the perspective of the power to do something, power over other people might be seen as the "power to extract the obedience of others" which, as we will explore, has led to prolific suffering and destruction. However, I will be using this more holistic conception, as it has been developed in my work *Power*,<sup>5</sup> which serves as a companion piece for those who are interested in the subject.

With this understanding in hand, the problem is not that every individual has power in anarchism. Power, after all, is something that every individual has and which, depending on their context and desires, will differ considerably. In order for us to specify the real subject of our conversation, we must discuss what is called a power structure. A power structure is a material and conceptual system embodied through social, technological, and environmental relations that then determine how the collective powers of some group of conscious beings are directed. Any place wherein people orient their social arrangements, implement their technologies, or interact with their environment in a way where they redirect the total of their powers toward a coordinated end, they will have created a power structure. Like power, a power structure is not inherently bad. The agreement between two people to divide their labor as to pertain to their strengths is a very simple mutualistic power structure. But a vast system of domination, where there are those who sit above in cushioned seats and command the masses to carry out their will, would also be a power structure; although a very different kind.

It must then be said that the object of critique in anarchism is what is called a hierarchical power structure. A hierarchical power structure is a system organized to give one group of people both greater power than another group and power over that other group. And this is not an arbitrary construction. As we shall set out to demonstrate in this essay, as a material fact of how such hierarchical power structures are constructed, they will always have a very particular kind of relation to their society, technology, and ecology; the relations which we call authoritarianism and domination. Here and elsewhere, I use these words in a precise way:

**Authoritarianism:** The degree to which a power structure monopolizes control over the total social implementation of some power.

**Domination:** The degree to which some power structure utilizes coercion, violence, and/or deception to achieve its ends.

I have separated these two terms because, although the phenomena they describe nearly always occur together, they can and do occur apart at the scale of individuals. However, where it

is allowed to perpetuate, authoritarianism almost always demands domination of some sort in order to maintain its monopoly, whether it is threat of physical or social violence, grievous bodily harm, or a propaganda system through which it can manufacture consent. And a system of domination will almost always demand the establishment of authoritarian relations, wherein the subjugator class can keep such control of coercion, violence, and deception to themselves. Domination and authoritarianism might then be said to be the methods used by hierarchical powers to solidify and perpetuate themselves.

But the anarchist does not then tell us to just sit back and watch as these systems of domination expand and despoil the Earth. Hierarchical power structures are not inevitably constituted by the organic capacities of human beings, they are imposed upon human society by a ruthless process. The mistaken axiom at the core of all hierarchical ideology is that, because there are differences in individual powers, that this both necessitates and justifies hierarchical power structures.

Yet, just because the person who can construct a house is more powerful in the means of creating shelter than those who cannot, does this mean that they are also better than others as a chef or as a scientist or as an artist? The one who can compose a work of musical beauty is not better or worse than the analyst or the technician. The spectrum of human powers find their fullest expression in a society where all others are practiced. We are all reliant on one another.

Seeking to bring out these better aspects of humanity, the anarchist posits the creation of horizontal power structures, wherein power is distributed more equitably among all people and all decisions are made by those who are affected. These are then best represented in opposite tendencies to those of authoritarianism and domination. These are:

**Libertarianism:** The degree to which decisions about the implementation of total social power are socially distributed.

**Mutuality:** The degree to which a power structure utilizes impulses of cooperation, self-defense, and free thought to achieve its ends.

In these, we see how the most productive strengths of humans lie within their better capacities, not conceiving of difference as necessitating hierarchy, but embracing a unity in diversity. And it is the contention of the anarchists that, so long as these better impulses are not embraced and brought to bear in organizing society, humanity will suffer under a perpetual subjugation.

But up until this point, I have stated a great deal and provided little justification. In the following sections I would like to explain to you why power structures function as they do and give you an understanding of what dynamics are at play that lead to these issues. In order to do this I think it is best that we start from the beginning.

# Kyriarchal Power

Before all other considerations, there is the physical world. The universe, existing prior to consciousness, also then existed prior to power. After all, power is reliant on the existence of a will and there is no will in the procession of particles nor their assemblies until they have been constructed together into the form of a conscious being. Before the conceptions and intentions of conscious beings, there are only flows of energy, information, embodied in relations and structure. The universe is configured and reconfigured by these flows between its internal components, driven by differences from one part to the next. A cascade of events takes place at scales beyond all human reckoning every single fraction of every single second. With or without humans these churning processes would still proceed.

But we are holistically embedded within that universe. And, by this measure, every power that we have necessarily derives from those interactions with the real flows of physical reality which surround us. However, we have become separated from this fact. We forget where all things have come from and where all things will one day return. The world has ceased to be, as many organic societies considered it, the vital substrate of all existence, but instead a thing to be tamed, exploited, conquered, and extracted from. We have come to forget our place within this vast ecological balance and have sought to separate ourselves from its inherent movements. Worse than this, due to our mistaken belief in a separation, we have lost an understanding of how many of those flows even function. We can never grasp the full scope of nature, not just at the scale of the cosmos, but at the scale of our own planet, of our own continent, of our own communities.

Where the universe knows only what is, we have imposed upon it arbitrary relations such as private ownership, status, domination, obedience, and so on. Yet none of these can cover up our origins within the ecology, nor can they remake what the universe is. Every single process we carry out is foundationally predicated on the utilization of ecological growth, the long processes of natural chemistry, and our coincidentally hospitable place within the solar system. After all, there would be no human power to speak of if any of these were not so. What minerals and organic materials would human labor extract to build its tools? What animals would it consume? What landscape would it settle within? Our very physiology is an agglomeration of gradual improvements arising from millions of years of adaptation. As Murray Bookchin has said:

“We are part of nature, a product of a long evolutionary journey. To some degree, we carry the ancient oceans in our blood. [...] Our brains and nervous systems did not suddenly spring into existence without long antecedents in natural history. That which we most prize as integral to our humanity – our extraordinary capacity to think on complex conceptual levels – can be traced back to the nerve network of primitive invertebrates, the ganglia of a mollusk, the spinal cord of a fish, the brain of an amphibian, and the cerebral cortex of a primate.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet, despite these facts, we have come to see the universe as nothing more than a stage, the ecology a distant, niche concern, obscuring the manner in which we are holistically embedded within it. Layers and layers of the ecosphere are built up, all of them reliant on one another, all of them variegated by the diverse flows of energy within the universe. Together, these living materials represent a most robust transformation of physical matter, providing a biotic scaffolding that allows all other things to exist. And in this fact, the coordination of living material has been a crucial mechanism for the derivation of human power. We cannot hope to describe the countless, subtle ways in which humans were connected with the flora and fauna of their areas. Life was once inextricably oriented within the local ecology: the cycles of nature given meaning and purpose, their rhythm fostering an intimate knowledge of the patterns of the natural environment, as well as its pitfalls.

However, the truest catalyst for human power was the coordination with other human beings. In the expansion and redirection of these creative and destructive powers, the widest potentiality was discovered. Society was no convenience, it was a necessity both for survival and in providing the best life for those early peoples. Society was a thing arising from humanity's natural capacities for empathy and socialization, put to work in ensuring communal safety within the environment. Humans are equipped with a brain that is wired for sociality. Our very physiology pushes us toward a consideration of how the needs of others are equal to our own. In *A General Theory of Love*, professors of psychiatry Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon expound at length about how this human sociality is constructed, noting:

“[...] because human physiology is (at least in part) an open-loop arrangement, an individual does not direct all of his own functions. A second person transmits regulatory information that can alter hormone levels, cardiovascular function, sleep rhythms, immune function, and more—inside the body of the first. The reciprocal process occurs simultaneously: the first person regulates the physiology of the second, even as he himself is regulated. Neither is a functioning whole on his own; each has open loops that only somebody else can complete. Together they create a stable, properly balanced pair of organisms. And the two trade their complementary data through the open channel their limbic connection provides. [...] That open-loop design means that in some important ways, people cannot be stable on their own—not should or shouldn't be, but can't be. [...] Total self-sufficiency turns out to be a day-dream whose bubble is burst by the sharp edge of the limbic brain. Stability means finding people who regulate you well and staying near them.”<sup>2</sup>

Because the human is a being in eternal process, an open loop. Continually, the human is confronted with new stimuli, each imprinting themselves upon them in different ways, leading to internal changes to their psyche. And, in order to act effectively, they must attempt to coordinate their actions with their expectations, such that the feedback from their actions will form an end in coordination with their goals. Upon every step, seeing the results of what they have done, the human must choose whether they will adjust their expectations or adjust their actions. And this is no obscure philosophical fact. Human actions transform the world, changing its content and provoking responses from those other entities which exist.

All of these loops open, each human being and their entire environment then vies over how their actions and expectations will be formed. This alteration of expectations and intentions,

then coordinated with actions, I will call “conditioning,” as it is named in psychological literature. Conditioning is not always nefarious, of course. We are conditioned, especially at the beginning of our lives, to avoid actions which will genuinely harm us. It is good that we learn to withdraw our hand from the stove top. Pavlov’s Dog is not being taught to do anything harmful when he begins to salivate at the sound of the bell, any more than some humans have begun to salivate and proceed home at the sound of the dinner bell. Given this flexibility of conscious beings and taking seriously the need of humans to bond deeply with one another, it would seem that we are encouraged to produce a society of reconciliation with others, consideration of conscious needs, and mutuality with the environment.

But hierarchical power is predicated on the negation of these impulses. Hierarchical powers wish to bring those that they control into obedience to the seat of command, because obedience guarantees service to the goals of that structural leadership and the perpetuation of their direction of the powers of others. In order to achieve this, power structures are driven to utilize reward and punishment; what is called “operant conditioning” in the psychological literature. And by this measure, hierarchical society can be seen as something like psychologist B.F. Skinner’s “operant conditioning chambers.” In these operant conditioning chambers, the animal is given the option to either do some desired task and therefore receive a reward (typically food) or not do some desired task and therefore receive a punishment (some form of pain). These chambers then program the animals that are inside them to do the desired task, quite reliably as well. Hierarchical society then functions as an elaborate operant conditioning chamber, such that it may contort us into misery, yet still extract our compliance.

As the scholar Lewis Mumford reminds us in his theory of the mega-machine, hierarchical power is mechanistic. And in a machine, the relation between components must be specified very closely. After all, if these relations are not fine-tuned, then small changes in the input of one component may lead to run-on effects. Indeed, every time that information is conveyed from one juncture to the next, the worse that that information is conveyed, the more distorted the signal will be at the next step, like we see in a game of telephone. And hierarchical power, seeking to reduce all variance between its commands and the actions of its subjects, seeks for its power to be conveyed smoothly through us. Therefore, as we are the means by which this machine conveys its power, the invariant conveyance of power means the reduction of human lives, with all their creative energies, into dead components.

In this, we hear the echoes of Rudolf Rocker’s thesis in *Nationalism and Culture* that, the more hierarchical the power resting over some society is, the more that the culture of that people is strangled. Culture, after all, is the creative social product of a people, the result of their accumulated creativity unconstrained and turned onto the universe. Hierarchical structures, by contrast, relying upon the existence of a latent decentral power outside of themselves that they may then redirect to their whims, are necessarily sterilizing. As Rudolf Rocker says:

“Culture is not created by command. It creates itself, arising spontaneously from the necessities of men and their social cooperative activity. No ruler could ever command men to fashion the first tools, first use fire, invent the telescope and the steam engine, or compose the Iliad. Cultural values do not arise by direction of higher authorities. They cannot be compelled by dictates nor called into life by the resolution of legislative assemblies.”<sup>3</sup>

Hierarchical power is then reliant on the persistence of an organic society that it is alien to, which it exploits but cannot recreate. Because, though it is this ability of their human subjects to think of things outside precedent, to devise new talents, and to overcome complex obstacles which unlocks the power within many other things, these are the very same impulses that hierarchy must seek to suffocate so that it may ensure obedience. This is why power hierarchy drives toward the same end in all circumstances, even though its manifestations may differ; its eternal method is unquestioning conformity and thus the mechanization of the human subject.

This is one of the primary insights which has driven the anarchist analysis throughout history. And it has provided anarchist theorists with a powerful lens by which to understand and predict the actions of hierarchical structures. Indeed, this is why, even though anarchists have sometimes fallen victim to economic reductionism, it has never been a totalizing impulse within the movement. In an essay written by Deric Shannon and J Rogue called *Refusing to Wait*, they summarize some of these early theoretical developments:

“Early anarchists were writing about issues such as prostitution and sex trafficking (Goldman), forced sterilizations (Kropotkin), and marriage (de Cleyre) to widen the anarchist critique of hierarchy to give critical concern to women’s issues in their own right, while also articulating a socialist vision of a future cooperative and classless society.”<sup>4</sup>

But there was a tendency of historical anarchists to see some of these social issues as fundamentally unalterable until the conditions of capitalism and state domination were overturned. This is not because these issues were seen as unimportant, as we have already pointed out. It is instead that classical anarchists have often viewed capitalism and the state as the foundational mechanisms through which all other hierarchies are maintained. Consequently, these groups have sometimes been told that their liberation ultimately had to wait until after the revolution to be resolved, and asked to struggle instead toward emancipation from capital and the state first. This is precisely why the title of Shannon and Rogue’s piece on this subject is “Refusing to Wait.” Here they argue for an anarchist intersectionality with very good reason, pointing out that anarchists cannot put off the struggles of oppressed people in hopes that, one day, a rupture will eliminate capitalism and the state.

These struggles against hierarchy are not separate and we cannot procrastinate in their elimination until some rosy future after the revolution. They function right here and now to maintain all other hierarchies of power. In absorbing intersectionality, it must become a tool that is complementary to the anarchist framework, which requires that we expand it past a simple liberal analysis of identity and instead relate that identity to structure and vice versa. This is why J. Rogue and Abbey Volcano say the following in their piece about anarchist intersectionality titled *Insurrections at the Intersections* :

“Our interest lies with how institutions function and how institutions are reproduced through our daily lives and patterns of social relations. How can we trace our ‘individual experiences’ back to the systems that (re)produce them (and vice versa)? How can we trace the ways that these systems (re)produce one another? How can we smash them and create new social relations that foster freedom?”<sup>5</sup>

This echoes the words of the more radical tradition within intersectional feminism. Heard again from bell hooks in one of her interviews:

“I began to use the phrase, in my work, white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, because I wanted to have some language that would actually remind us continually of the interlocking systems of domination that define our reality and not just to have one thing be like...gender is the important issue, race is the important issue. [...] ‘all of these things actually are functioning simultaneously at all times in our lives.’”<sup>6</sup>

In this, we hear the common conclusion of intersectionality and our own power analysis: each hierarchy is fundamentally involved in the maintenance of the complete structure of domination and cannot be disentangled. Whether these powers derive from extraction, exploitation, degradation, deception, or subjugation simply does not matter to a hierarchical system. What matters to the hierarch is only what they may achieve through their means. This is what has motivated the development within intersectional theory of what Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza calls the “kyriarchy.” In her book *Transforming Vision*, she describes the kyriarchy as

“a complex pyramidal system of relations of domination that works through the violence of economic exploitation and lived subordination.”<sup>7</sup>

Here we see a very close overlap with Mumford’s conception of the mega-machine, but with an emphasis upon the ways that this system is carried out through its relations. What Fiorenza and the rest of the intersectional theorists want us to recognize is that it is not one singular hierarchy which transfigures any given society, but a web of domination systems, wherein one may be privileged within one hierarchy and not within another, in extreme danger within one environment and completely safe in another.

These contexts are not mere attitudes, upon each juncture they have been built into the structures of our cities, protected or discriminated against by law, externalized into systems of automation and bureaucracy; said in our own parlance, used as means to expand and protect power monopoly. Each location in the global mega-machine merely utilizes different aspects of the kyriarchy in order to maintain rulership, ordering and reordering these to establish a more supreme dominance. This is not to say that specific hierarchies do not function as the major ordering ethos within certain spheres; different hierarchies clearly have cultural and systemic dominance within their contexts, capitalism and the state perhaps most notable among them. But it cannot be said that domination is ever so simple that it can be boiled down to only the reign of capital or the state or patriarchy or white supremacy or any other single manifestation of kyriarchy, because each of these rely upon one another within their context in order to maintain hierarchical control.

All of these systems of discrimination and bigotry form part of the integral functioning of the factories and the roadways and the commodities that the kyriarchy produces and the effects can be seen in how these very things have been systematized within reality. This is why the separation between base and superstructure or a software-hardware metaphor still fails to understand the situation at hand; the truest goal for hierarchical power is to warp reality such that their will can be carried out. All means that achieve their goals lay upon the table waiting for use. Because, in this reduction of all things into power accumulation, the momentum of the mega-machine is toward a world where everything is unified within it and thus everything is reproductive of its complete control. This process of social reproduction is what Bichler and Nitzan call creorder. The creorder of any society is the dynamic process by which it continually adjusts and maintains itself to create a new ordered state. As they say:

“A creorder can be hierarchical as in dictatorship or tight bureaucracy, horizontal as in direct democracy, or something in between. Its pace of change can be imperceptibly slow – as it was in many ancient tyrannies – yielding the impression of complete stability; or it can be so fast as to undermine any semblance of structure, as it often is in capitalism. Its transformative pattern can be continuous or discrete, uniform or erratic, singular or multifaceted. But whatever its particular properties, it is always a paradoxical duality – a dynamic creation of a static order.”<sup>8</sup>

This process plays out then at every level, in the development of our creative and destructive capacities, through the formation of our expectations, in the development of our intentions, in the domination of our will, and all else. Through creorder, all of these aspects of ourselves and the world are disfigured into the shape that is needed by the machine and the range of possibilities we might achieve is sullied to meet demands of the rulers.

Because, though hierarchical power views itself as a form of godhood whose extent is infinite and limitations always temporary, the mega-machine is actually nothing more than a parasite by nature. Its power is derived solely in the fact that, standing at the juncture where decisions are made, those that stand above in the hierarchy act as gatekeepers to the total social flow of power. And, though this gatekeeping of command creates the illusion of facilitation, the work of hierarchy is actually to sabotage the free coordination of powers by splitting what already exists within the world, into an infinite procession of thresholds, staffed by middle men who each extract their toll.

This process is one of the driving factors to why hierarchical power actually serves to reduce complexity. This is spoken about at length by James C. Scott, in his book *Seeing Like a State* :

“Officials of the modern state are, of necessity, at least one step— and often several steps— removed from the society they are charged with governing. They assess the life of their society by a series of typifications that are always some distance from the full reality these abstractions are meant to capture. [...] State simplifications [...] represent techniques for grasping a large and complex reality; in order for officials to be able to comprehend aspects of the ensemble, that complex reality must be reduced to schematic categories. The only way to accomplish this is to reduce an infinite array of detail to a set of categories that will facilitate summary descriptions, comparisons, and aggregation.”<sup>9</sup>

But this is not only a problem seen in the state. Hierarchical powers, in general, will have similar interactions with their society. As a matter of principle, the narrower the bottleneck of power, the further information will be simplified by removal from the origin. And this is hardly an ambitious claim. We can see that they know these very limitations in the way they organize their own systems of power, demanding that the world be reduced into a scale they can understand, what Scott calls “legibility.”

“Certain forms of knowledge and control require a narrowing of vision. The great advantage of such tunnel vision is that it brings into sharp focus certain limited aspects of an otherwise far more complex and unwieldy reality. This very simplification, in turn, makes the phenomenon at the center of the field of vision more legible and hence more susceptible to careful measurement and calculation.”



Such a striving for legibility can be quite useful in the physical sciences, but human lives are not particles in a box. Seeing society from on high, humans become like ants, the details of the local landscape are obscured to those who make all decisions. The higher up one stands on the structure, the more that they see a summary map, and one lacking all of the nuances of ecological, economic, and social complexity. As a result, the flows of social life, containing all of their infinite suffering and happiness and all that lies in between become statistics, the great aggregation of labor power becomes a number by which they chart the disastrous course of the machine.

Whereas complexity requires a system of agents who are allowed to have variable action and association, enabling them to combine in new and unique ways, hierarchy demands that complexity reduce itself to the limits of the machine. Because, hierarchical power does not gather its data out of sheer curiosity. It is not like the scientist who measures much and interacts as little as possible. The information that centralized bodies endeavor to gather is gathered in order to then act upon the world; that is to say, to dominate society and to therefore reproduce their central authority.

And so, to any hierarchical machine, alterations can be made, but only within a certain range. These forces of simplification and legibility are not mistakes, they are the inborn dynamics of hierarchical power and they will arise anywhere it is imposed. Where the kyriarchal machine acts, it acts to sheer off any rough edges that stray too far from its prototypes, to externalize the importance of pertinent organizing details, to forcefully stratify both reality and information as to fit their schemas of interpretation, and to inflict real physical and emotional violence in order to achieve the absolute obedience of everything and everyone that exists.

This reordering force of simplification and regimentation is one of the driving factors to why authoritarian systems produce such misery within their people. As the gatekeeping of power becomes more strict and as the group of power controllers becomes arbitrarily smaller, the hierarchy of power becomes more extreme. The subjects of that hierarchical power are more and more alienated from their own capacities: those qualities within their personhood which could be turned onto the world in far more beneficial ways, are instead put toward menial labor and repetition. Their blood, sweat, and tears are shed only so that this great parasitic force dwelling over them may extract its diet.

Defined in its narrow monopoly over the flow of power in society, hierarchy demands that the raucous creative impulses of humanity are constrained to the needs of the hierarchs. And, in this, it would not matter whether one argued that these structures were a natural outcome of human society or not. By the fact that they turn humans into miserable machines, hierarchical structures stand counterposed to the organic human composition and its fundamental desires and needs. As Rocker says:

“Neither in Egypt nor in Babylon, nor in any other land was culture created by the heads of systems of political power. They merely appropriated an already existing and developed culture and made it subservient to their special political purposes. But thereby they put the ax to the root of all future cultural progress, for in the same degree as political power became confirmed, and subjected all social life to its influence, occurred the inner atrophy of the old forms of culture, until within their former field of action no fresh growth could start.”

That hierarchical society continues, even though it relies on sabotage of the full capacities of human beings and the production of their misery may seem difficult to imagine. After all, given

that the machine utilizes those very flows in order to derive its power, it would seem to benefit much more greatly from their expansion. But, if total human power is expanded in such a way that the hierarchs cannot extract their toll from the expansion, then they will slowly begin to lose their power leverage over the masses. And so, the only growth which is acceptable to hierarchical power is that power which it can exploit. Because, in order for power structures to perpetuate themselves, the most primary goal is always power leverage; to maintain a position of superior power over all other rivals. In this, it might be said that there is always an arms race between hierarchical powers; however it is far more complex than the acquisition of actual arms; it is a ruthless competition to earn access to means of domination and authoritarianism.

As this monopoly is factually established, competing power structures are then less able to access the means to accumulate their own power, which slows their accumulation more, leading to a destructive feedback cycle. So in order to ensure this affair takes place for competitors, but not for themselves, hierarchical powers utilize their access to domination to sabotage other structures. As a result, social power is concentrated into tiers by a systemic disallowance of other beings to access the broader capacities of society and thus the disallowance of others to express their own creative and destructive powers, unless it serves the owners. Therefore, hierarchical power must strangle the fullest expression of human potentials, lest it bring about its own destruction. Hierarchical power is then not a producer of progress, but an exploitative parasite which extracts its sustenance from constraining passage through the many gates of control.

The phenomena being described is clearest to see within the economy. The economy is that place wherein power has been made so legible to hierarchy that it is literally made into numbers; measured in dollars and cents, calculated, predicted, and discounted, invested, depreciated, and so on... As Bichler and Nitzan would say, capital is a symbolic quantification of power. Capital measures the real, numeric ability of its holders to organize and reorganize society to their will. And, because power structures always seek to expand, the owners of capital then seek to accumulate all of the components for creation, distribution, syndication, and all other manner of production. They can, through this accumulation, acquire the services of all of those with their desired creative powers, the technological infrastructure needed to coordinate those powers, and the supply of extracted ecological materials to continue the construction of their means. They can come to own the warehouses. They can come to own the land on which the businesses might be constructed. And if those other entities within society try to resist, they can exert their leverage to carry out wars both of attrition and aggression.

As they gain control of these new services and access to new information, the field of quantized power then expands, invading more and more deeply into our personal as well as our professional lives. The organic society which functions by way of its freedom from this incursion of hierarchy, comes to be more and more atomized, more and more alienated, more and more filled with the vanity of economic domination. After all, the owners of capital did not simply will their capital into existence. Their capital was accumulated because they requisitioned some portion of the power already afforded to them in order to control more of the world around them; that is to say, to exact obedience from the economy, society, and the ecology and to therefore perpetuate their further control of obedience. The capitalist, having the capital within their hands to begin with, pays the workers to produce products, sell them, coordinate their distribution, facilitate their repair, and so on, such that the owner of the enterprise derives all power. And the capitalist, desiring to extract the maximum amount possible from that labor, seeks to concede as little of that accumulated power to the worker as possible.

After all, the capitalist does not need to negotiate with the land or the buildings or the machinery they use to run their business. These things demand only the cost of upkeep. The worker though, thinks to demand more than starvation! The human being demands dignity! And the capitalist, no matter how magnanimous, is drawn to resent this fact. The conditioning of the mega-machine is such that the capitalists will try to reduce the worker to the status of a machine. This means to reduce the wage of the laborer, to charge the consumer a higher price, and to yield less through taxation; that is to say, to limit the amount of power which escapes the grasp of the owner of capital. And, were there no minimum wages or were the workers to roll over and do nothing, the capitalist would happily wring out every last scrap of power which they could extract out of them, such that they were relegated to slavery.

And, with this power they have extracted, fed back into an economy wherein all things are quantized by capital, nearly all things become possible. Capital is not limited only to the creation of new commodities. If the corporation truly seeks to ensure its accumulation, it means to sabotage the market, to more strictly constrain the access to new technologies, to carry out adversarial ad campaigns, to accumulate contested assets, and to capture interested consumer demographics. If it does not, its competitors may catch up, thus leading to an ever-expanding urge to increase power leverage. And it is this reliable leverage accumulation that solidifies the hierarchy of one rung over another. This is what drives the process of differential accumulation in the theory of *Capital as Power* :

“...capitalism isn’t simply an order; it is a creorder. It involves the ongoing imposition of power and therefore the dynamic transformation of society. In this process the key is differential accumulation: the goal is not merely to retain one’s relative capitalization but to increase it. And since relative capitalization represents power, increases in relative capitalization represent the augmentation of power. The accumulation of capital and the changing power of capitalists to transform society become two sides of the same creorder.”

This desire to accumulate power faster than their competitors is a universal law of hierarchical power. And, indeed, the utilization of the power of society does not end only where power is quantized. As we have said, the entire kyriarchal machine is unified and thus the power of capital rests on a continuum with the other powers in society. In fact, one of the most primary mechanisms through which the capitalist class ensures their leverage over the masses is the gatekeeping of popular power by the state, specifically: the police and the army. Through these, the state enforces both economic and political monopolies through violence, enabling the ruling class to maintain its narrow bottleneck of control. Because those workers who labor toward the goals of the capitalist, what access do they have to these means? If workers seek to take the warehouses and the tools and the supply lines back from those who own them, capital will employ the violence of the state to stop them.

This is the component purpose of the state in the mega-machine: to establish a fixed schema, put into place by those who already rule, in order to maintain and encourage kyriarchal growth, enforced through monopoly on violence, coercion, and threat. Said otherwise: the state is the primary mechanism of domination, carried out on behalf of whichever parasite stands at the juncture of ‘deservedness.’ In this way, the state serves to alienate the masses from the most basic capacities of society and to instead transform each into a form of rulership. This is why Malatesta defines the state in the following way:

“Anarchists, including this writer, have used the word State, and still do, to mean the sum total of the political, legislative, judiciary, military and financial institutions through which the management of their own affairs, the control over their personal behavior, the responsibility for their personal safety, are taken away from the people and entrusted to others who, by usurpation or delegation, are vested with the powers to make the laws for everything and everybody, and to oblige the people to observe them, if need be, by the use of collective force.”<sup>10</sup>

This interpretation stands in contrast to the liberal conceit of the state: that the state was meant to be a central representation of the society it stood over and, in this role, was also meant to act as mediator to alienate capital from complete administration of society. This mistaken belief in the separation of politics and economics is, in fact, what fuels the delusion presented by capitalists that they stand in opposition to state regulation. But this separation between capital and state has always been a convenient fiction. Bichler and Nitzan explain why this is the case in their work, saying:

“[T]he pivotal impact of mergers is to creorder not capitalist production but capitalist power at large. [...] By constantly pushing toward, and eventually breaking through their successive social ‘envelopes’ – from the industry, to the sector, to the nation-state, to the world as a whole – mergers create a strong drive toward ‘jurisdictional integration’ [...] Yet this very integration pits dominant capital against new rivals under new circumstances, and so creates the need to constantly creorder the wider power institutions of society, including the state of capital, international relations, ideology and violence.”

Though Bichler and Nitzan are focusing on these facts as they are pertinent to capital, it is true of all hierarchical power. Seeing opposition, the state will always seek to destroy or merge with its opponents in time, whether this is through wars of imperialism, trade agreements, foreign occupations, colonialism, annexation, invasion, or any other mechanism. Where there exists opposition, there exists a threat to perpetuation that must be eliminated, its autonomy replaced with subjugation, its oppositional will destroyed. However, both domestically and abroad, in recognition of their common interests to control the masses, capital and state always rationally choose merger, no matter what temporary theater they have offered to say otherwise. Capital benefits greatly from having the duty to do violence to protect itself outsourced to the state and the state benefits greatly from the extractive economy of capitalism generating a surplus for it to bridle.

This is also why there never has been and never will be a “proletarian state.” The very nature of a hierarchical power such as the state is to alienate the masses from power. This is within its form as a machine. Or, as Rocker has said in *Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice* :

“[J]ust as the functions of the bodily organs of plants and animals cannot be arbitrarily altered, so that, for example, one cannot at will hear with his eyes and see with his ears, so also one cannot at pleasure transform an organ of social oppression into an instrument for the liberation of the oppressed. The state can only be what it is: the defender of mass exploitation and social privileges, the creator of privileged classes and castes and of new monopolies. Who fails to recognise this function of

the state does not understand the real nature of the present social order at all, and is incapable of pointing out to humanity new outlooks for its social evolution.”

This is why the masses, no matter their power, can never merge with the state. Hierarchy and the masses empowered are polar opposites, deriving the impulses which give them their strength from precisely contradictory principles. If the masses were to hold the power to overcome the state, this would have represented a preceding deprivation of the state of its power monopoly. And in the event that the people hold this power to themselves, they would have only the choice to abolish the remaining, anemic state or to let it remain and in doing so, let an opposing power to themselves continue to exist — a power which, built hierarchically as it is, would soon again seek sabotage or monopoly as by its nature.

Because, though the defenders of the state often claim that it arose as a compromise wherein the people sacrifice some freedom in exchange for protection, this turns out only to be an incidental fact. The state only defends its people when it is beneficial for the state or its conjoined hierarchies. When it is not, the state cares nothing for them unless compelled. Their citizenry is a power host from which they begrudgingly extract their means of subjugation. And, because the state is therefore bound to the people underneath it in order to derive its power, it seeks to convince them that they should be grateful for the service of sheer self-interest that the state carries out in its defensive and offensive capacities against other states.

To imbue this selfish delusion, the mega-machine seeks to establish a nationalistic fervor which conceals the conflict playing out between all peoples and their rulers, of a power alienated from the masses and made to serve the needs of the ruling class, of a people gorged on the spoils of other alienated peoples as a bribery for domestic suffering. Empire seeks to convince the people that its wars of imperialism are necessary to defend the citizens, when it is really just that the domination of their state has expanded to such a degree that it now carries out a global project of sabotage to maintain its power monopoly. In every sphere that hierarchical power then expands, it is named differently as its exhibitions differ: imperialism, capitalism, white supremacy, colonialism, and so on... But each of these represent its need to reproduce a global mega-machine, to control all urge to rebel, to turn all collective powers of the planet into clientele.

Everywhere the kyriarchal machine expands, we experience the distress of constantly living under subjugation, surveilled by the very commodities we produce, deceived by every flow of information, distorted into sad simulacrum by day, distracted by monotonous entertainment by night, and forced into every other measure of distress offered by the domination machine. Every day it tempts the limits of our misery, discovering what new deprivation it might enforce upon us without provoking revolt.

However, the machine does not want to have to fight against the internally motivated will of the beings it dominates; that is a costly imposition. Given that there is a fundamental mismatch between the needs of the masses of humans and the needs of the structures that they are subsumed under, hierarchical powers have a wish to transform not only the expectations and intentions of their subjects, but also their desires; to desire their own domination and to participate in the domination of others. Because, though domination is quite often perpetuated through violence and coercion, systems generally much prefer deception if it is available.

# Mega-Mechanical Colonization

In his book *Capitalist Realism*, Mark Fisher speaks about a social phenomenon wherein the people have come to accept their state of subjugation under capitalist society. He explains this concept, which he calls *capitalism realism* as:

“...the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it.”<sup>1</sup>

In this way, Fisher says, capitalism has come not only to represent a single system oriented as it is within history, but instead the horizon of all possible systems. We have not only reached a new stage of society, in the words of Francis Fukayama, we have reached the ‘end of history.’ And Fisher’s claim is hardly controversial. We can see this being explicitly conveyed by the ruling class, for example, in Margaret Thatcher’s propagandistic phrase “there is no alternative.” This philosophy of justification is not even a celebration of capitalism, but an attitude of dour acceptance. Though we want better, we are simply not good enough for it.

But there is much more to this global power structure than capitalism. As we have discussed, the mega-machine is not programmed as a purely economic construct. A complex of hierarchical ideologies work together to produce the functioning of the mega-machine, what I have called the justifying philosophies of hierarchy in my other work. And it is for this reason that we are faced with more than just a capitalist realism. Because of the conditioning of hierarchical power structures, we have become deeply enmeshed in a hierarchical realism. Whereas capitalist realism might be said to have endeavored upon a few hundred years of brainwashing to support its rein, hierarchical society has had thousands. And, beaten down by these millennia of rulership, many of us can no longer even imagine what it would look like to be free.

This is because, as each human moves through these hierarchical systems, they are not only contorted into functional components by the machine, they undergo considerable internal conditioning as well. After all, no one likes to imagine themselves the villain of the story of life and becoming reliant upon the privileges afforded to them by the power structure, they will tend to justify the system they are embedded within. The power of those beings acting within the structure, having become intertwined with the system itself, is then also reliant upon the perpetuation of that system. And for the system to cease is for their expanded power to cease. In this, as one proceeds through a system of power, it becomes more and more unthinkable that they should destroy what they have built, that they should ever demure from the seizure of new power, or that they should ever diminish the power they have accumulated at some later date. As Rudolf Rocker says in *Nationalism and Culture* :

“It is in the nature of all ambitions to political power that those animated by them hesitate at no means which promise success even though such success must be purchased by treason, lies, mean cunning, and hypocritical intrigue. The maxim that the

end justifies the means has always been the first article of faith of all power politics. No Jesuits were needed to invent it. Every power-lustful conqueror, every politician, subscribes to it, Semite and German, Roman and Mongol, for the baseness of method is as closely related to power as decay is to death.”

And worse than this, hierarchical power attracts the corrupted. Seeing within this structure a means by which they can achieve a dominator’s ends there is little question of whether the petty tyrant will seize the opportunity. They do not care, after all, whether they are “corrupted” by our standards by the conditioning of the mega-machine; their simple impulse is to accumulate power and that impulse is rewarded prolifically within the hierarchical structures which have been brought into being. With these corrupted components in place, it is a guarantee that such a system will become filled with opportunists and parasites.

These hierarchical structures, controlled by the power hungry, bungled by corrupted reformers, and staffed by an endless array of sycophants, then have almost no checks on the free expansion of their influence. Where these systems persist, they will tend to pervade every sphere with their philosophies of justification, forcefully establishing the assumptions of the ruling class as the new standards of society. And, as this process goes on for longer and longer, it will tend to create a new notion of normalcy which benefits it, whether it is patriarchal, capitalist, or otherwise. The perpetuation of this normalized way of being becomes like a social ritual that, when repeated, brings hierarchical power further into reality.

This is the topic which queer anarchism orients itself around most notably. That is to say, what is this construct of “normalcy” that society develops and how are those that deviate from this standard of normalcy treated? Susan Song summarizes this in her piece *Polyamory and Queer Anarchism* :

“Queer theory opens up a space to critique how we relate to each other socially in a distinctly different way than typical anarchist practice. Where classical anarchism is mostly focused on analyzing power relations between people, the economy, and the state, queer theory understands people in relation to the normal and the deviant [...] Queer theory seeks to disrupt the ‘normal’ with the same impulse that anarchists do with relations of hierarchy, exploitation, and oppression.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite its internal drive toward mechanical uniformity, however, the kyriarchy does not have the power to ever fully eliminate these deviations from the norm. Humanity is a boundless source of new creative impulses which threaten to burst forth from any container made to restrain them. And this provides an eternal struggle for the mega-machine. The very existence of these deviations threatens the machine’s ability to control the boundaries of what is considered “normal” and thus to homogenize culture to maintain a bottleneck of power.

Because hierarchical power cannot turn itself into something it is not. Once the rulership realizes that it cannot eliminate some deviation from the norm, it must neutralize the conflict of that form of deviation and its own principles. This is what drives the process of recuperation. Recuperation is the process by which some subversive ideology or identity is maximally neutralized by a power structure. Instead of actually absorbing the orientation, however, hierarchical power structures are forced to absorb a mutated copy that has had all its subversive content stripped out. And the more subversive that that idea is to authority, the more elements they will have to

neutralize. The more and more that this ideology is hollowed out in the process of creating its mutated double, the more that what will remain is a facade of what once was.

Thus we see how, any time some people who have historically been oppressed gain the power to demand their equal treatment, if they cannot overturn the very hierarchical system itself in the process, the machine that they have allowed to exist proceeds to tear away all of those aspects of the popular struggle that once existed within their movement, neutering their further ability to control the boundaries of normalcy. The system then holds these up as trophies of its ability to progress; empty images skirting across the screens to assure us that all is in order; “the machine is legitimate and it can harbor progress. Be grateful for the limited cessation of your necessary suffering.”

Through the expansion and enforcement of all of these means, every time the mega-machine moves, it reiterates itself through its functional components. And it is now so well polished, its creordering dynamics so adaptive, that the machine hardly even fears a cultural rebellion. Upon any disruption, all of its pieces go to work in discovering which aspects of its counterbalance it may present as catharsis, even while defying all impulses toward change. The system no longer even needs to suppress its critics; it has demoralized the populace so thoroughly that it even recuperates the symbols of anti-capitalist rebellion. It lets these act as pressure release valves which diffuse popular revolt or desire for real transformation. It uses the shifting tides of subjectivity as a protectant against action.

As a result, the kyriarchy has now settled into nearly every region and ecosystem, injecting its values of authoritarianism and domination deeply into our cultures and intentions, convincing us that we are the ones who have something wrong with us. Contained in all of its propaganda is the idea that mutuality and libertarianism are inferior modes of social order, that we too should desire to become subjugators, even while no such path is made available to us. The machine vampirizes a mass organic creativity to even exist, while demeaning its existence. It dissuades us from a full embrace of mutuality, even knowing that everything would utterly devolve without it. Hierarchical power, the parasite that it is, must convince its host to despise its own strength, so that it never acts to free itself.

In this dystopian landscape, we hear the echoes of ideas which are explored by decolonial thinkers. In colonial occupations, the colonizing culture comes to determine the set of thoughts which can be thought, it establishes legitimacy, it gatekeeps power within those institutions which prop it up and excludes access to those it dominates. Imperialist white supremacy comes to replace the basic cultural values of the lands it occupies, driving these colonial subjects to even believe the myths of their own inferiority. Many even become ashamed of their stigmatized qualities and seek relief in mimicry of the occupying empire.

But this situation wherein the dominated peoples have become the progenitors of their dominator’s ideology is not only the province of foreign colonial occupation. As many Black radicals have pointed out, the Black peoples of the Americas can also be understood as a colonized people. Taken from their lands of origin and transplanted onto another continent, they retain much of their culture (indeed, they have built a culture anew), constantly at odds with the dominator’s conditioning. In this way, it is almost as if they are a sovereign people, yet integrated into a foreign nation. This is what Lorenzo Kom’Boa Ervin means in his work *Anarchism and the Black Revolution* when he says:



“Blacks (or Africans in America) are colonized. America is a mother country with an internal colony. For Africans in America, our situation is one of total oppression. No people are truly free until they can determine their own destiny. Ours is a captive, oppressed colonial status that must be overthrown, not just smashing ideological racism or denial of civil rights.”

That such direct parallels can be drawn between foreign colonial subjugation and domestic colonial subjugation is no coincidence. Each component of the kyriarchy, crossing over oceans and into other boundaries, separate though they may seem, are in fact all parts of a historical colonial process which drives the functioning of the mega-machine. In each, we see the establishment of a privileged group which can coerce the behaviors of another, through the social conception of some form of legitimacy, respectability, civility, or superiority. This then serves as justification for why a privileged group should be given access to the distribution of some resource, the application of some form of physical or mental violence, or the right to exact some form of deprivation upon the non-privileged group.

During colonization the machine has to subjugate a people that has some memory of an oppositional culture and thus an inherent knowledge of how they are now warped into the desired shape of their subjugator. This drives the colonized populations to misery as they witness their people degraded, their culture destroyed, their connection to the land, and all else, slowly eroded. That is to say, colonized peoples are those that are experiencing the first generations under degradation of hierarchical realism, whereas those peoples fully subsumed by the machine have long ago had their social conceptions distorted and their original histories of resistance erased.

Perpetuating itself for so many cycles in our daily actions to form and reform the world around us, the continuous existence of a ruling class has left us exceptionally well deceived by our captors. There is now almost no recess of our minds which does not contain the poison seeds of our dominator’s ideology. Just as Marilyn Buck called prison “a relationship with an abuser who controls your every move, keeps you locked in the house” using “the ever-present threat of violence or further repression,” society has functioned to make the abuser’s mentality social. We are like those victims who blame themselves for being beaten, our abuser telling us every time that we are humiliated that it is our fault, that we need to improve ourselves to prevent our further abuse. Within the belly of the beast, the power host is made docile, pushed to carry out its own subjugation and the subjugation of those abroad.

Said otherwise: humanity itself is the victim of a mega-mechanical colonization. An ancient cycle of exploitation wherein the mega-machine has moved into some area, crushed the organic culture of resistance, and then absorbed these peoples and their lands into the system as a power host. These settler peoples that now live upon colonized lands are the descendants of a millennia-spanning program of colonization that was once carried out upon their ancestors, but now upon their supposed “enemies.” As a result, nearly all peoples have had their relation to the land destroyed, their minds deeply pervaded with the ideology of their oppressors, and an organic culture of resistance replaced with relations of servitude.

Those who experience the results of a present day settler colonialism can then be seen as the most recent subjects of this process of mega-mechanical colonization. And, for this reason, these peoples also contain a crucial knowledge of what is lost as the mega-machine expands, of that organic culture of resistance which the forces of colonization are still at work trying to destroy. For hundreds of years, they have pleaded with the mega-mechanical colonists to embrace the

counter-system, but the forces of hierarchical realism have long ago destroyed all hope within them.

And so, even those who consider themselves radical in many countries now spend their days begging for reforms from liberal republics which nonetheless slide further into totalitarianism by the moment, fighting momentary insurrections for joy of struggle, not in hopes of success, or developing micro-sects which convince themselves that one day their work will come to courageously domineer the revolution even as they sink further and further into irrelevance. The enemy has so fully recuperated the revolutionary project that all that remains is aesthetics and this is enough to dupe many millions of people. Indeed, even many of those who call themselves revolutionaries have come to uncritically accept systems of domination which have alienated the masses from power just the same as the capitalist paradigm, but with the state operating as the new monopoly capitalist. They cannot even see clearly that they have configured another enemy system in this process, their project so poisoned by hierarchical realism it represents a sort of disastrous self-sabotage.

For many, what we have so far discussed will rightly appear to be a dire landscape and it is not shocking how one could portray this framework as a sort of political nihilism or social pessimism. For those who have given in to hierarchical realism, this may all only seem to imply that hierarchical power is too strong to ever defeat, that these structures will degrade and degrade us as they proceed over time. Indeed, nowhere within this discussion have we come to understand how to end those power structures, nor where hope lies in the contentious terrain. The principles of mutuality and libertarianism which we inspected at the beginning of this work seem now such a distant thought that they might appear to us as fantasy.

But humans cannot stand the misery of disempowerment forever. Though these structures of brainwashing and erasure are expansive, the resentment that grows in the core of the mechanized human can never be truly suppressed. Just as decolonial thinkers tell us that, in order for there to be a successful struggle, the colonial subject must reject white supremacist conditioning, reclaim their dignity, and overthrow their master, we must do the same. There is a struggle that lies ahead, standing between us and our liberation. Through the trees in the distance, that faint light still glows. Let us now proceed toward it.

# A Revolutionary Light

It may seem, after this long journey, that we have wandered far from where we began. Whereas we started with a depiction of the natural flows of the universe and our redirection of them, of the ecology as the originator of complex interrelations, and of the organic powers of human beings as the creative engine of society; we, like humanity itself, have traveled a dark path. And that light upon the horizon which I mentioned at the beginning of our dialogue may seem now so distant that there is no hope of escape. Worse, the very path which humanity walked to reach this pitch blackness is so overgrown that we can no longer even double back, nor is it clear we should want to.

But the flows of the universe move with or without our desires, the ecology churns forth upon its processes of natural chemistry and complexity, the human urge to create unbidden by limitation proceeds whether power structures like it or not. It is just that our ability to see the foundations has been obscured by a towering monolith within our field of vision. Gazing so long upon its face, many have become entranced by it, worshiping at its foot instead of rising to approach the crossroads.

Knowing what we have discussed, it seems our most imminent duty is to shake the supplicants from their trance, pleading with them to look around and witness what subjugation that they have grown to endure. And it is true, where these subjects of hierarchy have been deluded, distracted, or distorted into the needs of the kyriarchy in order to function, we must kindle the undying flame of defiance within them. It is this flame of defiance that will immolate hierarchical realism and all its associated justifications. It is this flame of defiance that can burn down the kyriarchal machine, that can light the lantern which guides us from the darkness; lying deep within the human psyche, though hierarchy has endeavored for millennia to snuff it out, defiance is a light that cannot die.

But we must do more than this. To rouse many individuals awake and to bring about a driving outrage within them is not enough by itself. We must bring about enormous energy to overthrow the system as it stands. And to do this, a very sizable proportion of the masses must be unified together in a common struggle. This is why the anarchist movements of history have focused so much upon economic issues. Capitalism is one of the only systems of oppression that cuts across all other issues of identity, making it a fulcrum around which an enormous diversity of peoples can be mobilized to collective action. Indeed, even those peoples once detached from capitalist hegemony are now quite entangled with it as it spans the globe. Thus it was not then and it is not now reductive to focus upon capitalism as a central hierarchy. If situated properly within this greater constellation of intersecting hierarchies, it must be understood in order to move forward.

However, there is something more universal than capitalist oppression discovered within the anarchist framework. Capitalism, after all, is an invention lasting only a few hundred years, pervasive though it is. When we create an analysis which only understands societies in terms of their economic arrangements, we build something fleeting and contingent; we apply this totalizing influence of capital to history mistakenly, projecting onto past peoples anachronistic motives

and modes; we project onto the future the very desires and attitudes that we currently wish to bring to an end.

Such a reduction of oppression will never suffice: the true unifying struggle of all oppressed peoples is the struggle against hierarchical power. All peoples know misery when mechanized by hierarchy; all people, whether conscious of it or not, experience alienation from the holistic application of their human powers. Submission to arbitrary authority is contrary to an inherent desire for boundlessness. And it is this issue that cuts across all identities past, present and future, from birth until death, in the public and the private, domestic or abroad, in the realm of the physical and the ideological. Wherever hierarchy reins, humanity suffers under subjugation.

And so, if anarchism can bring itself forward as the true opposition to all hierarchies of power, it may communicate a revolutionary vision to all peoples. This has always been the position which anarchism was meant to fill, almost the one it was crafted to fulfill from its inception. And this is why hierarchical advocates of all types have worked tirelessly to defame and distort the real goals and ideas of the movement.

If we are to tread that road which leads us from the darkness, we must wage a war on both the ideological and material front. The machine as it has been built is not a mere collection of individual attitudes. It is a systemized apparatus of coercion. And, no matter the feelings or beliefs of its masses of subjects, so long as it maintains its domination, it will simply act to suppress those attitudes which undermine it. The mega-machine will not be defeated simply by the passionate expression of new desires or words of solidarity or radical attitudes. The conflict at hand cannot be fought for in a collection of ideological silos, focused inwardly on the personal views of a small sect of adherents or a radical circle and their immediate periphery. As Bookchin says:

“To disengage ourselves from the existing social machinery, to create a domain to meet one’s needs as a human being, to form a public sphere in which to function as part of a protoplasmic body politic—all can be summed up in a single word: re-empowerment. I speak of re-empowerment in its fullest personal and public sense, not as a psychic experience in a specious and reductionist form of psychological ‘energetics’ that is fixated on one’s own ‘vibes’ and ‘space.’ There is no journey ‘inward’ that is not a journey ‘outward’ and no ‘inner space’ that can hope to survive without a very palpable ‘public space’ as well. But public space, like inner space, becomes mere empty space when it is not structured, articulated, and given body. It must be provided with institutional form, no less so than our highly integrated personal bodies, which cannot exist without structure. Without form and articulation, there can be no identity, no definition, and none of the specificity that yields variety. What is actually at issue when one discusses institutions is not whether they should exist at all but what form they should take—libertarian or authoritarian.”<sup>1</sup>

Because the truth which hierarchical realism has been developed to keep hidden from sight is that this is a systems war: a war between the system which could represent a social ecological society, to bring our collective needs and values into existence, and the system which represents a hierarchical society, one predicated on maintaining the privilege of a few gatekeepers and parasites. We have simply been unaware of this war for so long, purposely concealed as it has been from our sight, that we have neglected to tend to those systems of horizontal power which nourish our better nature. For now, the kyriarchy has seized almost all available territory, conceded by the masses out of ignorance to the conflict they are embroiled in.

This is why anarchists must not only change hierarchical consciousness, but construct a counter-power to the kyriarchal machine. Because our strength lies in reclaiming our alienated power and constructing the counter-system which might direct our efforts toward a common liberatory goal. The society of people who are turned toward hierarchical ends must recognize their strength and redevelop the horizontal power structures which will enable them to resist, to end the arbitrary, treacherous expansion of hierarchical influence.

When we choose to construct hierarchical power structures, we have not chosen, as “true utilitarians,” the means required to soberly carry out our affairs; it is instead that we have chosen to labor in the construction of the enemy system. As we pioneer forth in building a new authoritarian structure or trying to seize the reins of one that already exists, we really only work to neutralize the revolutionary aspirations of the people and prepare that same populace to be integrated into a global mega-machine. In the very movement which could potentially threaten hierarchical power, capitulation to its means instead helps to reclaim contested territory for the subjugator. Hierarchical power can only serve to create a further hierarchical power. Where it exists, it will attract the corrupted, corrupt the well-intentioned, and ultimately mangle the society which it dominates.

For this reason, if we as human beings wish to create a society wherein values opposite to such a system are expanded, it is also our responsibility to carry out actions which produce different social conditioning. Errico Malatesta offers a clear summary:

“[I]t is not enough to desire something; if one really wants it adequate means must be used to secure it. And these means are not arbitrary, but instead cannot but be conditioned by the ends we aspire to and by the circumstances in which the struggle takes place, for if we ignore the choice of means we would achieve other ends, possibly diametrically opposed to those we aspire to, and this would be the obvious and inevitable consequence of our choice of means. Whoever sets out on the highroad and takes a wrong turn does not go where he intends to go but where the road leads him.”<sup>2</sup>

Anarchism then heeds this call for the creation of a maximally libertarian approach, containing elements at its very core that are so conflicting to authoritarian modes that it cannot be recuperated lest hierarchical power risk a full refutation of its existence. Anarchism stands as the pure negation of oppression. And it is through this vector that we must work to create a revolutionary constituency and then cooperate upon our shared strategic landscape. We must bring together all peoples oppressed by the machine to undermine its functioning and to begin forming its most robust opposition together, respecting the unity in diversity and the equal deservedness of autonomy and dignity for all. Because within such aspirations, a hope exists for transformation; a coalition of all those degraded by hierarchical power, a growing series of waves to tear down the kyriarchal mega-machine and to reverse its colonization of horizontal society.

Having now traveled through a dark wood, filled with the most terrible horrors, let us set upon that trail leading out of the forest. Over the horizon there is the coming of a glorious reprieve. Beyond lies anarchy.

## **Part 2: Anarchy**

# Introduction

In the last part of this series, we journeyed through a very dark wood. Indeed, we spent more time in critique than most works that I have produced thus far. But after that long path through the forest, I promised you that we would move toward the light outside. Because, though in *Anarchist Analysis* we laid out the foundations of an analytical framework and began to uncover a revolutionary subject through its means, we neglected the discussion of an active and effective revolutionary theory.

This is because, for revolutionary theory to be powerful, it must do more than offer critique and it must also do more than appeal to the people in their suffering. To change the world, revolutionary theory must interface with reality not only as it is but as it could be. And do not think that I intend to repeat the analysis I gave in *After the Revolution*. You will hear such a structure referenced within this piece, called an anarchist or anarchic system. But, here, less than talking about an exact structure, I want to speak about the principles and dynamics underlying a liberatory society.

In doing so, I do not intend, as the political theorists of the last era did, to merely intuit these concepts, compared and contrasted to the ideas of contemporaries, developed upon purely philosophical lines, and then given the sheen of scientific fact. This is unnecessary. The predictions within the body of anarchist analysis have seen truly exceptional confirmation by the progress of the sciences and the procession of history. So we no longer need to debate whether the anarchist analysis accords to reality. We must uncover why it so accurately describes the universe and what that suggests about the struggle at hand.

What we will find is that we do not need to posit solutions blindly, driven only by meticulous critique or a desire to escape misery. There are key scientific advancements which can act as a lantern to guide our path, notably those seen within complex systems analysis and chaos theory. These fields, starting from the most fundamental principles that construct reality, have reproduced the core contentions of anarchism, inadvertently crafting crucial theoretical tools which can now be repurposed and turned toward the revolutionary task.

Though all these elements may appear scattered at first, we will see that they all in fact provide a different perspective on a common theoretical object. Here, in this second part of *A Modern Anarchism*, we are going to discuss what would actually constitute a transformation toward anarchy.

# Legacy

In our previous dialogue we spent a great deal of time speaking about the horrors of the current system and suggesting that there is a preferable counter-system. Despite this, we spent little of that time actually laying out what such an ideal society, what we have called ‘anarchy,’ might look like. It is not a topic which can be approached lightly and understood well. Just as it was a complicated journey understanding how the kyriarchy functioned in the first part of this series of essays, we will need to think about the underlying principles of a liberatory society in depth to understand how it is even proposed to function.

As we begin this process, recall from the first part of this series one of the primary principles of anarchist analysis: that means are intertwined with ends. Though this principle may seem quite easy to understand at first, it has many implications. The first of which is that we cannot conceive means or ends alone. To set out upon developing a set of means, we must first understand our desired ends and to understand which ends we can achieve, we must understand our available means. But we do not need to view this interplay as contradictory, what we have actually described is an iterative process.

If we wish to understand the hurdles that lie in front of us, we must integrate this means-ends interplay, taking corrections from our body of theory and available experimentation in order to build a transformative response. Each time we understand more about the system which brings us to misery, we can then formulate its shortcomings and, with these in hand, develop an understanding of what principles of action would negate that suffering. Similarly, as we better understand the system we desire, we must then embody this new system within our actions, bringing it closer and closer to existence as we proceed. This iterative analysis began in part 1 of this series, through a process of contraposition with those principles that lead to our suffering, but here it will be expanded enormously. The purpose of this part of the series is to begin formulating the replacement system to the kyriarchal mega-machine.

There are several components which are typically present in formulating this negation. The first is in understanding the values of anarchism; those conditions which the anarchist is seeking to maximize in order to bring about a greater flourishing of human experience. The second is in envisioning anarchy as a liberatory goal, a state of human existence characterized by certain emancipatory qualities which we strive towards in the revolutionary process. And the last is in viewing anarchy itself as a process, the real, daily manifestation of human needs and desires which brings about a different sort of society as it is struggled for.

It is very uncommon that any theorist has focused narrowly on one or another of these, but instead that each one of these approaches makes themselves more prevalent as they are pertinent to the discussion at hand. Similarly, each of these will enter into our discussion at different points, giving us some guidance at a new stage of analysis.

I should also say that the synthesis I provide in this series of essays is within the revolutionary tradition of anarchism. This is not by any means a universal conception among anarchists. Some anarchists of history and today have eschewed revolutionary goals entirely and instead advocate



a sort of eternal personal revolt or prepper isolationism. We will discuss why this is the case as we proceed. For now, however, let us expand on some of these notions of anarchy which precede us, so that we will better understand where it is that the theory of anarchy in this essay should be oriented within the history of the movement.

The first to call themselves an anarchist, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, defined anarchy as “[the] absence of a master, of a sovereign.”<sup>1</sup> Here, “the master” and “the sovereign” can be seen as a conceptual stand-in for those who are able to extract the obedience of others, those who have, as I described in the first part of this series, “power over.” In the desire to eliminate those who have power over other human beings, Anarchy is then, to Proudhon at least, the elimination of rulership.

But this statement alone is a significant oversimplification given the complexity of kyriarchy. After all, one who is master under one condition may not be master in another. Proudhon himself, in fact, had enormous blindspots which part 1 of this series exposes in great depth. However, it certainly holds true in the coming dialogue that the position of ‘master’ or ‘sovereign,’ wherever it exists, must be abolished and, if they seek to maintain their positions, the masters and sovereigns themselves. This is the significance of the class struggle within anarchism; to serve as a vector for the abolition of economic monopoly and to undermine the system which serves to prop it up. This is why Kuwasi Balagoon said:

“With anarchy, the society as a whole not only maintains itself at an equal expense to all, but progresses in a creative process unhindered by any class, caste or party.”<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, we see in the words of Carlo Cafiero:

“...anarchy means the absence of dominance, the absence of authority, the absence of hierarchy, the absence of pre-established order — order, that is, established by the few or by the first, which becomes law for the many or for the second.”<sup>3</sup>

In all of these we see the conception of anarchy as freedom from domination. This viewpoint could be restated in our parlance: anarchy is a totalizing rejection of the conditioning of the kyriarchal mega-machine. But there is something more to be brought out in Cafiero’s conception. That is to say, by his measure we are enacting anarchy wherever we work to disestablish hierarchical power. This is why he says that:

“Anarchy today is of an aggressive, destructive nature: tomorrow it will have a preservative, protective nature. Today it is direct revolution: tomorrow indirect revolution, the prevention of reaction.”

This is the anarchy-as-process approach we discussed a few moments ago. In the current moment then, anarchy is rebellion, because it is striving to eliminate domination. In the future, it will be a form of society based on the freedom to achieve one’s own unique fulfillment and development. Though this is not the exact thesis we will offer here, the phenomena that Cafiero is referring to will indeed come into play later in this work, this process of transformation which appears as chaos to the established order and order at a future time.

However, the conception of anarchy which foreshadows the conclusion of this essay most closely is Malatesta’s. He states this very clearly in the same notes we mentioned earlier:

“Anarchy is a form of living together in society, a society in which people live as brothers and sisters without being able to oppress or exploit others and in which everyone has at their disposal whatever means the civilization of the time can supply in order for them to attain the greatest possible moral and material development.”<sup>4</sup>

That is to say, anarchy is a form of society wherein the coercive forces of hierarchical power have been abolished and humanity is liberated to discover the true culmination of their natural creative impulse, bolstered through horizontal structures of solidarity and cooperation.

Here we also see Malatesta making mention of one of the core anarchist values, solidarity, in his mention that anarchy is a ‘way of living together in society,’ characterized by us living ‘as brothers and sisters.’ This marks Malatesta as belonging to what might be called ‘social anarchism’ as contrasted to ‘individualist’ or ‘egoist anarchism.’ The social anarchists have predicated their theory around the values of freedom, equality, and solidarity. We hear these three values repeated throughout anarchist literature. For example in the words of Nestor Makhno, who said:

“Anarchism’s outward form is a free, non-governed society, which offers freedom, equality and solidarity for its members. Its foundations are to be found in man’s sense of mutual responsibility, which has remained unchanged in all places and times.”<sup>5</sup>

We also see in Malatesta’s previous explanation what is meant by equality in the social anarchist tradition. Clearly we cannot mean absolute equality between every individual. In fact, this is an impossible notion of equality as we are not produced on assembly lines, but instead birthed with differing inclinations and formed by unique histories. The equality spoken of here is the ‘equality of structural power’ that was mentioned in my previous definition.

For the social anarchists anarchy is not then just freedom from rulership, it is a society in which individuals are not “able” to oppress or exploit others. This is to say, absence of domination and equality of structural power, the abolition of the structural means to dominate and the development of structural means to prevent it from re-arising. This is what Giovanni Baldelli meant when he said:

“He who needs something to rebel against is less of a social anarchist than he who seeks to create something against which there is no need to rebel. There may be no end to the ugly, sordid, and horrifying things against which an honest man cannot help but revolt, but there are also things that are beautiful, joyful, and pure. If it were wrong to attend to the latter while the former still thrive, then a hopeless perpetual struggle would become the only meaning of life.”<sup>6</sup>

The social anarchist then seeks to neutralize structural imbalances in power or to make them temporary and revocable. Equality is best expressed in the principle of ‘libertarianism’ we have previously discussed. Though such an equality of structural power sometimes acts as imposition upon individuals, it is also what creates an expansion of their individual power. Said otherwise then, it is the expression of solidarity within the realm of the political.

Lastly then, we must examine what is meant by this value of freedom. In discussing such a thing, we must first differentiate from the liberal conception of the word, wherein freedom is largely reduced to “freedom from imposition.” As we just discussed, this is definitely part of what the anarchists have meant when using the term. But this alone is a meager representation which

cannot hope to actually encompass the freedom which human beings desire. Freedom, like power, should be defined by way of what it allows you to do, not only in what you are not allowed to do.

Freedom by this measure is most meaningfully understood as range and intensity of power. In this way, it is more than potential actions. It is that range of potential actions that can be actualized. A being is then more free to the degree that an action or range of actions becomes apprehendable to them. In this conception, we are then required to analyze the range of possible actions which that being can truly carry out, not just an absolute freedom from all imposition. Absolute freedom from imposition culminates in utter isolation. As Rudolf Rocker says:

“For the anarchist, freedom is not an abstract philosophical concept, but the vital concrete possibility for every human being to bring to full development all the powers, capacities, and talents with which nature has endowed him, and turn them to social account.”<sup>7</sup>

Within this social anarchist conception is then also the belief that anarchy provides, through whatever means are at the collective whim, the ability of every individual to “attain the greatest possible moral and material development” as Malatesta has said or as Rocker said “for every human being to bring to full development all the powers, capacities, and talents with which nature has endowed him, and turn them to social account.” This is, at minimum, the demand for communism: the direct distribution from each according to their abilities and to each according to their need under a stateless, classless, moneyless system.

For these reasons, the social anarchists hold that freedom, equality, and solidarity must be valued jointly in order for any of them to be understood as liberatory goals. The fact of how these three principles are all simultaneously in play, not able to be considered in isolation, is probably best summarized in Bakunin’s quote that:

“No individual can recognise his own humanity, and consequently realise it in his lifetime, if not by recognising it in others and cooperating in its realisation for others. No man can achieve his own emancipation without at the same time working for the emancipation of all men around him. My freedom is the freedom of all since I am not truly free in thought and in fact, except when my freedom and my rights are confirmed and approved in the freedom and rights of all men who are my equals. [...] I who want to be free cannot be because all the men around me do not yet want to be free, and consequently they become tools of oppression against me.”<sup>8</sup>

These were not the only values laid out within the anarchist canon however. We mentioned a few moments ago the individualist or egoist tradition of anarchism. The father of egoist anarchism, Max Stirner, laid out a different set of values; what he called the unique and ownness. He insisted upon these precisely because they fought back against all abstractions, seeking to banish any idea which did not have its root in the individual good. Stirner summarizes these both most clearly in his work *Stirner’s Critics* :

“Everything turns around you; you are the center of the outer world and of the thought world. Your world extends as far as your capacity, and what you grasp is your own simply because you grasp it. You, the unique, are ‘the unique’ only together with ‘your property.’”<sup>9</sup>

We can see that one of the barriers to Stirner's language is that it is much less easily decipherable than that of the social anarchists. We seem immediately inclined to ask, for example, what is meant by the unique? Stirner says that, to attempt to describe the unique in a statement is to misunderstand its meaning:

“What you are cannot be said through the word unique, just as by christening you with the name Ludwig, one doesn't intend to say what you are. [...] Only when nothing is said about you and you are merely named, are you recognized as you. As soon as something is said about you, you are only recognized as that thing (human, spirit, christian, etc.). But the unique doesn't say anything because it is merely a name: it says only that you are you and nothing but you, that you are a unique you, or rather your self.”

The unique is the word which Stirner uses to refer to that elusive aspect of each individual which escapes categorization or description; that unrestrained identity which makes each being who and what they are. Though this may seem arbitrary at first, it is nothing of the sort. The program that Stirner carries out is to fight back against the reduction of complexity and nuance that we discussed in the last part of this series. Wherein the natural complexity of a system is discarded, that system will necessarily suffocate novelty and creativity, ending the growth of new things and replacing it with static obedience.

We find an even more interesting expansion of individual values when we inspect the second of those previously mentioned. Ownness might be understood as a radical reconception of what self and control are. One's ownness is their ability to interact with and apprehend the universe. It is then also a description of how, as this apprehension expands, one's selfhood is actually expanded to include those things. This is what Stirner means in the above quote when he says that “your world extends as far as your capacity.”

This word, ownness, is also commonly translated as ‘property,’ such as in the previous quote. But this usage of ‘property’ is purposely tongue in cheek, a sort of double entendre on the philosophical concept of ‘the property of a thing,’ such as we might say that a rock has the ‘property’ of being solid. Stirner actually advocates the inversion of the liberal conception of ownership, absorbed into a totalizing selfhood and the dissolution of the principle of property-by-law and its replacement by the principle of property-by-apprehension. In this way, Stirner's conception might be seen as very presentist, focused upon real interaction and utilization of things. Indeed, within his context as a post-Hegelian, he might be seen as a sort of militant anti-idealist. After all, all those goals which do not relate directly to the individual good, which stand above human minds and impose themselves over egoistic needs Stirner calls “phantasms.” His contention is then that the unique can only be free when it is free of these phantasms and thus truly free to seek its ownness.

With this in mind, we see how the egoist anarchist power analysis focuses on how power structures are embodied in human interpersonal relations, the limitations inherent within the constructs of language, and the erroneous expectations which come along with categorizing others. Stirner wishes to bring our mind eternally back to the true depth and beauty of human individuality and the crucial importance of the unique and its own, to any other conception we could want to inspect.

So where are we to settle ourselves among these seemingly conflicting values of freedom, equality, solidarity, the unique, and ownness? Should we settle upon a conception of property as

individualized through use? Or socialized by understanding of solidarity? Should our focus be on producing a society where people are not able to oppress one another? Or should we seek to free the unique and its ownness to the utmost extent? Before we can settle such questions, we will need to inspect much deeper foundations, to build out an understanding of how the universe works and which sorts of systems can maintain themselves.

After all, though we have spoken of what various anarchists have contended a better world might look like, if we wish to lay out anarchy as a rational maxim, it is important that we begin our analysis within the world as it is. Values do not exist in some transcendent realm outside of the physical world, tempting us to aspire towards them against all odds. Values must be both concrete and achievable for them to be worth even discussing. As we will see, these stated principles are actually expressions of deeply held desires and needs within human beings, necessary simplifications of complex phenomena which arise from the interplay of real systems. In the inspection of a new foundation, we will find the stratum on which to build our liberation.

## A Fecund Existence

As we proceed forward in developing a synthetic understanding of revolution, it is necessary that we begin to synthesize the philosophical and scientific advancements of the modern era, taking into account where they offer insight into liberatory methods and where they have fallen short. We must understand both the universe and ourselves, uncovering those commonalities between all things, so that we may navigate the landscape with unhindered vision.

After all, any inspection of how the universe functions, whether it is molecular, cosmological, social, or otherwise, must recognize where its pertinent phenomena root to the physical world and how its physical aspects interplay with one another if it wishes to lay out a scientific analysis. This is why we began with the ecology in the last part of this series. We are not truly apart from nature, we have simply done an extraordinary amount of work to insulate ourselves from the repercussions of our extraction. We are the expression of the creative and destructive forces acting within the universe.

In order to recognize our place within a new political order, we must then recognize ourselves as the continuation of an existential lineage. This was the goal of Murray Bookchin, who sought to ground politics with relation to the natural world and to seek an understanding of the human project on a continuum with the development of the cosmos. As he says in *The Philosophy of Social Ecology* :

“Nature is not simply the landscape we see from behind a picture window, in a moment disconnected from those that preceded and will follow it; nor is it a vista from a lofty mountain peak [...] Biological nature is above all the cumulative evolution of ever-differentiating and increasingly complex life-forms with a vibrant and interactive inorganic world. [...] Insofar as this continuity is intelligible, it has meaning and rationality in terms of its results: the elaboration of life-forms that can conceptualize, understand, and communicate with each other in increasingly symbolic terms.”<sup>1</sup>

In this view then, we can understand the place of conscious beings within the cosmos as the elaborations of processes with a certain thrust toward self-knowing, even if we do not see the cosmos as ‘knowing’ it proceeds in this direction. The universe may indeed appear chaotic from our view and its evolution may appear meaningless and directionless, but upon inspection of its real development, we can recognize that it is elaborating its structures in certain recognizable directions. Bookchin explicates this elsewhere within the same piece:

“[We] must assume that there is some kind of directionality toward ever-greater differentiation or wholeness insofar as potentiality is realized in its full actuality. We need not return to medieval teleological notions of an unswerving predetermination in a hierarchy of Being to accept this directionality; rather, we need only point to the fact that there is a generally orderly development in the real world or, to use

philosophical terminology a ‘logical’ development when a development succeeds in becoming what it is structured to become.”

This wording is important: what it is structured to become. We do not presuppose here a sort of all-encompassing telos which supposes a purpose or conceptualization of progress within the universe, but instead an analysis of how the structures of reality, formed as they are, suggest rational development as per their form. But what determines this process of becoming? What features push reality toward these many diverse forms of autonomy and differentiation?

Here we have been exploring the domain of what is called systems analysis. Systems analysis is an extraordinarily broad-sweeping field, forming a methodology which might be said to apply to all things in the universe. As George Mobus and Michael Kalton say in their work *Understanding Complex Systems* :

“Unlike many other disciplines in the sciences, systems science is more like a meta-science. That is, its body of knowledge is actually that which is common to all of the sciences.”<sup>2</sup>

Systems, Mobus and Kalton tell us, are “bounded networks of relations among parts.” That is to say, they are defined not only through their internal elements and the relations between those, but also by functional boundaries. Every system, after all, is limited in some way; by its extent in space, by its duration in time, by its articulation through some axis of action. Yet also these systems are never fully isolated from other systems, even if it can be useful to consider them that way for analytic reasons. Their inputs and outputs are always determined by the world outside of them, even when their boundaries seem quite strict.

All systems, as we have belabored before in previous essays, are changing in relation to the world outside of themselves, defined by flows inwards and outwards, rerouted into both inwards facing and departing subsequent flows. But in feedback cycles, systems sync their input and output to their external and internal environment, allowing them to evolve and adapt, utilizing iteration in order to self-reproduce. Systems which function by way of these feedback cycles are what are called adaptive systems. What leads to these adaptive systems?

There are many dynamics, all of which are functioning together to produce the adaptivity and complexity seen in our world, but one which is key to understand in this process is: degrees of freedom. The usage of the word “freedom” here is rooted in the physical sciences and thus one may expect that it will differ significantly from its use in political theory. But there is a lucky correspondence to the theory of freedom laid out before. In the sciences, a degree of freedom is a parameter by which some system can differ and the greater the degree of freedom, the more significantly it may vary that measure. To increase the degrees of freedom is then to increase the number of ways that the system may differ.

Atoms, for example, become bound to other atoms in a preferential fashion through their charge arrangements and the kinetic energy present in the system. These degrees of freedom and their associated ranges of action define the functionality of the system. As these linkages, either fixed or variable, are solidified, so too does a structure. And the structure, composed of those degrees of freedom, then attains new modes of movement and construction, combining the accumulated behavior of that layer with the one before it and so on. It was in the process of recombination that the atom became a catalyst for the achievement of completely new horizons

of material organization. No atom by itself ever could have created the full culmination of macro-scale matter observed throughout the universe. The atom, combined as it is in concert with other atoms, creates the foundations for the molecular strata and, in doing so, involves itself in the movement of many more things.

This is why a system containing more degrees of freedom will also tend to be more complex. Because degrees of freedom within the system are what allow that system to become complex to begin with. In order for a system to cohere into some form, the elements within the system must be able to vary in relation to one another and things outside of themselves. This allows the elements to adapt and respond to varying conditions. And as these two systems then interact for longer and longer, the first system tends to come into equilibrium with that other system by the continual adjustment of their reciprocal internal dynamics. Wherein some system cannot act through many degrees of freedom, it will then be rigid and unresponsive to change, lacking adaptive capacity.

However, this ability to vary is by no means without its costs. One important piece to this puzzle is the constraining totalizing presence of entropy and therefore the necessity of any existing system to work against it. After all, every act within the universe expends energy in some capacity, including the process of holding together a system in stability and this means that systems will slowly expend their total stored energy over time. In order for some system to continue existing, it must then somehow overcome the process of breakdown and decay. Entropy is a sort of viability filter on the existence of systems. And systems which exist for an extended period of time are then those which have developed some mechanism for self-maintenance.

Such self-maintenance mechanisms are used to produce what is called autopoiesis. Autopoiesis is the process through which some system perpetuates its own organizing factors into the future. It is the name for self-reproduction. This stands in opposition to what is called allopoiesis, which is the process through which some system produces something other than itself. And it must be said that all systems contain some autopoietic and allopoietic aspects. All things are balancing becoming something else and reproducing what they already are into the future.

However, it is the concept of autopoiesis which has been explored a great deal in the last few decades, as it seems to define an enormous number of different natural processes, especially those seen within lifeforms. It was used first to describe the self-maintenance of cells. But, because processes seen in one strata have a tendency to parallel those seen in other strata due to the unified features of all stable systems, it has come to be spoken of in much more than cell automata. All sufficiently complex systems must then contain internal copies of themselves or, said otherwise, the ability to reproduce a copy of themselves. In living things, this is seen in the existence of genetic code, in molecular systems polar charge arrangements and auto-catalysis, in the cell in asexual reproduction. In human beings, thought contains the ability to perpetuate ideas which can then perpetuate themselves further.

More than this, in order for any system to maintain its autopoietic drive, in spite of the churning of entropy, it must develop some means of extracting energy from the surrounding environment. Inflows of energy serve to stabilize those internal functions which allow autopoiesis. As we have said, the entire universe is an all-pervasive selection through physical processes which can perpetuate themselves and wherein some new existential strategy persists, it forms the iterative foundation for the next sort of process. In this way, it might be said that the game of all existence is to discover a means of autopoiesis. The game of life, evolution as we now recognize it,



then might be thought of as simply the highest culmination of this inherent cosmic drive toward perpetuation of certain kinds of things.

What we see in the existence we occupy is a world moved forth by emergence, at various scales and within various systems. This process is of great interest to science because it can seem almost magical to observers, a hidden order arising which was before unseen. Emergence is a process wherein systems appear to function as more than the simple sum of their parts, wherein any observer which had been looking on would never have guessed what new dynamics would arise. We will study, as we move forward, what leads to this emergence. It will, in fact, feature deeply in the analysis of the coming sections. But in order to do so, it will be necessary that we understand the many other dynamics underpinning it.

One of the most important of these dynamics is the fact that the universe is driven forward by layers of feedback cycles. Systems build reactive models; each of these webs of relations forming the system of responses for each other agent in the web. As these relations are solidified within the web, a strata of interaction is established. And, as these strata are layered, each forming a foundation for the next, their reliable interactions form a substrate for emergent new dynamics that order and reorder the last. Each of these new strata form a foundation for further development, allowing all of the strata to function together. The more of these strata are layered together, the more capacity this system has to become 'complex,' though it is no guarantee.

However, as soon as we begin a discussion about 'layers,' it is easy to inject the values of a hierarchical society into the analysis. Herbert Simon, for example, the originator of Mobus and Kalton's framework for understanding, defines complexity through "layers of hierarchical depth." In this model, there is always a "hierarchy" between the whole system and layers of its sub-systems. This is to say, every system is like Russian nesting dolls where the total is the top layer and every layer of sub-systems is another below it. This is far from what we have described as a hierarchical power structure previous to this, but even within its framework, it seems to run into problems. Conflating repeated iteration, nesting, or layers of increasing scale, "hierarchies" is nebulous. A hierarchy, after all, is a system wherein the layers are organized by some aspect of primacy or importance.

However, the entire field of complex systems analysis stands to defray such a perspective. It is true, of course, to recognize that strata of interaction define layering stability. And the continual nesting of subsystems is a very useful metric for complexity. And it is not, for example, that one could not conceive of many systems taking place on various layers of scale and that certain functions could not be conceived of as rooting to one place or another in a hierarchy of origination points, but the functioning of the entire system can hardly be understood through this rigid conception. Each product offers not a layer to be commanded by the one above or below it, but instead a new strata of control for the whole system. Each layer is not a delineation in importance or even primacy, but a new vector for activity in itself and between itself and other layers.

After all, what control can the totality of the human body be said to exert over each sub-system? Each system within the body exerts its influence both upwards through many scales of strata and across to others on its scale. The functionality of the human brain, for example, arose very recently in the evolutionary process and is therefore below those ancient functions in temporal primacy. If one wanted to understand this history, they could map this onto a temporal hierarchy rooting back to single-celled life. However, if we were to analyze which layers have primacy of action over the others, the story would be much much more complicated. Though it

may seem at first that the human brain is the driver of the organismic system, the human brain does not maintain control over every part of the body.

The immune system, for example, does not operate at the whim of human thought. It is its own stratum of action that interacts with other things on its stratum and has effects that go both upwards and downwards in the layers. If we were forced to choose between these in primacy, we would be forced to conclude that the outcomes of the interactions of the immune system in fact have much more of an effect on the life of the brain than the brain on the immune system. Yet it is not the case that the immune system is in hierarchical importance relative to the brain. The immune system does not command human action. It is instead part of a holistically interconnected system of iterations developed over a very long period of evolutionary emergence. What would either system be without one another? Neither a human mind nor a functioning immune system. The same could be said for nearly every organ or constituent part of the human body.

We find this similar fact in nearly every natural system because, in order for there to be a layer on which another can iterate, it must have arisen from a process of emergence within the previous layer. And in those systems developed by the natural world, we find that the layers are built through slow iteration, diversity of couplings, and interlayer dependency. This means that organic systems occur primarily through holistic interconnections of self-organized systems, not tree structures. As thinkers as diverse as Murray Bookchin and Deleuze and Guattari note, hierarchy is nearly never found in nature, as nature functions through holistic interconnection, having no conception of “above” and “below,” functioning purely through difference and flow. Humans impose conceptions of domination onto nature. Nature functions only through being. As Bookchin says:

“The hierarchical mentality that arranges experience itself — in all its forms — along hierarchically pyramidal lines is a mode of perception and conceptualization into which we have been socialized by hierarchical society. This mentality tends to be tenuous or completely absent in non-hierarchical communities. So-called ‘primitive’ societies, that are based on a simple sexual division of labour, that lack states and hierarchical institutions, do not experience reality as we do through a filter that categorizes phenomena in terms of ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ or ‘above’ and ‘below.’”<sup>3</sup>

As Mobus and Kalton say themselves:

“Subsystems (components) are identifiable because the internal links between their components are stronger than the links the subsystems have between them in the larger parent system.”

And it is the depth of layered subsystems which determine complexity within their model. Yet nested layers of iteration stand in opposition to the very notion of hierarchical control. Hierarchy, after all, is not just the existence of layering. Hierarchy is a particular relation between layers. And the process of layering which leads to complexity is instead one that places primacy within the couplings of sub-systems, not those of greater to smaller systems. Hierarchical power structures demand extremely high interaction couplings of larger systems to the subsystems, not subsystems with other subsystems.

Yet hierarchical power structures are definitionally predicated on the wish to isolate the actors at the lowest level of the structure from one another and to therefore weaken subsystem

couplings, because strong couplings at the lowest level would equate to very strong leverage for their subjects against them. In the corporation, for example, strong couplings at the lowest level would be robust unions. At the level of society, they would be neighborhood council structures and citizen militias. In hierarchical society these are instead replaced by the rule of the shareholder and the representative. Whereas the molecule is bound to other molecules through couplings at their strata of interaction, the human being within the hierarchical structure is bound to action by the sheer domination of those strata above them. As we laid out in the previous section, this is not because of some dastardly plan. It is a simple mechanical fact that, to allow such strong couplings among subsystems would weaken the ability of the top of the hierarchy to command the rest of the layers beneath them and thus they cannot allow such an occasion to arise.

In doing this, hierarchical power structures actually limit the stability of internal, nested layers, because they impose an order from the top down. This is the reason why hierarchical power structures are ultimately complexity reducers, as we have said in the previous part of this work. Nor do they form a good strata of interaction for further iteration, as we can see by our global conflict. This is also why these sorts of systems end up being fragile over time. Because the system is so reliant on the central hub to which all spokes are attached, it means failure at the hub leads to failure in the whole system.

This brings us to what are called Black Swan Events. This is the name given to events which are extremely rare and typically disastrous. A Black Swan Event is not always necessarily something that arises from conscious action of individuals or systems, but may even arise from chance occurrence. In political systems, these Black Swan Events can lead to social collapses; bankruptcies, civil wars, power vacuums, and mass death. Different systems can then be thought of as ultimately fragile or persistent based on how they are built to weather these events.

Hierarchical systems respond to this fact by attempting to disallow failures in their central hub, through brutal regimes of domination, faux-meritocratic promotion cycles, or the manuring of some enlightened vanguard. But, by their very nature, Black Swans will always arise; whether it is through the selection of foolish leaders, the birth of incompetent kings, Peter Principled promotion cycles, corruption, sabotage, or accident, a time of crisis will come. And when it does, every spoke which was attached to that central hub will fail with it. The whole tent, held up by a single pole, collapses to the ground. In this way, hierarchical systems are not just undesirable because of some impossible ethical standard or purist political ideology, hierarchies are actually disastrous failure modes, inevitably backsliding into oblivion with our future wellbeing in their grasp.

The solution is then to build a system wherein Black Swan Events only affect small chunks of the total network. Wherein when one hub provides a failure point, it can only spread so far. If Black Swans are rare, then it is best to create a system where these rare disasters are localized and therefore contained. In order to create such a system, we cannot move toward centralization, as that produces a failure mode which collapses the entire ecosystem. Systems which are resistant to Black Swan events are those which have extremely diverse components, which have high degrees of freedom, and which have decentralized control.

Because, as diversity increases, Black Swan events which affect one sort of system will inherently cause less damage, as any given system will only be a small subsection of the total population of things. And those systems which continue to persist, built upon high degrees of freedom, will also have many possible responses available to meet the new burdens. Wherein

some system forms through these diverse degrees of freedom and wherein diversity of forms proliferates, this system will then be more resilient because of it. Bookchin discusses this principle as it is present in the ecology in his work *Energy, "Ecotechnocracy" and Ecology* where he says:

“Human beings, plants, animals, soil, and the inorganic substrate of an ecosystem form a community not merely because they share or manifest a oneness in ‘cosmic energy,’ but because they are qualitatively different and thereby complement each other in the wealth of their diversity. Without giving due and sensitive recognition to the differences in life-forms, the unity of an ecosystem would be one-dimensional, flattened out by its lack of variety and the complexity of the food web which gives it stability.”<sup>4</sup>

With this in mind, the key is not to go backwards toward hierarchical control, but to proceed even further into a program of iterative emergence, thus in the creation of more robust degrees of freedom. It is to multiply the diversity of forms and to expand the fecundity of the system toward ever greater heights. John Holland, another scientist who studies the subject of complex systems, notes this very thing in his work *Emergence* :

“With diligence and good fortune, we should be able to extract some of the ‘laws of emergence.’ [...W]e see that mechanisms for recombination of elementary ‘building blocks’ [...] play a critical role [...] Furthermore, we find that (a) the component mechanisms interact without central control, and (b) the possibilities for emergence increase rapidly as the flexibility of the interactions increases.”<sup>5</sup>

But it is important that we do not misunderstand these notions. It is not that any and all diversity or freedom of agents produces emergence. After all, a diversity of competing components could very well lead to an unstable, self-destructive environment, which would then be incapable of producing emergence. And, likewise, an environment where there is an attempt to maximize the existing degrees of freedom for singular agents is one which is antithetical to emergence too. If we were to fetishize the ability of the atom to travel in all three dimensions, the atom could never enter into stable arrangements which allow an entire new staggering strata of interaction to emerge.

In order to provide some clarity, we will need to discuss the scientific concepts of chaos and order. Whether anarchy is chaos or order, whether order and chaos are good or bad, has been returned to numerous times by the anarchists. But there is no use rehashing these old arguments. In order to arrive at concrete conclusions we need to ground ourselves in a scientific and mathematical understanding.

First of all, we must dismiss the false understanding that chaos refers to a system which is non-deterministic or self-destructive. In the sciences, chaos refers not to a system’s lack of determination or ability to exist in perpetuity, but instead its lack of predictability. That is to say, a system is chaotic in measure to the fact that, when there is small uncertainty in the input, there is increasingly high uncertainty in the output as time progresses. The more chaotic the system is then, the more that some small error in measurement cascades into larger and larger mistakes in prediction. Yet a system can be very unpredictable, while also being entirely determined

by physical processes. Newton's Double Arm Pendulum is fully deterministic, yet also highly chaotic. With this in mind, one is inclined to ask a question one layer deeper: what features do chaos and order really describe?

First, it should be said, chaos and order are descriptions of our ability to build models about some system, not a first-order description of the system itself. They are, essentially, measures of the systems' likelihood to propagate error over time, which is itself a phenomena arising from limitations of human knowledge. However, these measures do correspond to certain key features which are important to consider. More broadly, it might be said that chaos is a measurement of a system's sensitivity to initial conditions. And, by contrast, the more ordered a system is, the more it is constructed with an inertia to change and the less that differing conditions will affect its outcomes.

But with the inspection of this section in mind, neither of these can really be fetishized. After all, we have laid out quite deeply how viable systems must be able to differ considerably in order to adjust themselves to diverse circumstances and we have laid out in equal depth how systems must be able to maintain and perpetuate their own structure into the future, if they are to survive the great filter of entropy. When degrees of freedom for individual components, for example, are turned up too high, chaos goes up and so does incoherence; a system is formed which cannot hold together at all. Or, for example, if a signal must travel through many junctures in order to carry out some action, it will tend to propagate error at each, forming a system that is too dense to transmit consistent outputs and to therefore coordinate feedback with other systems.

This is why it has been found that emergence takes place on the border of chaos and order. This critical state of emergence, sometimes called self-organized criticality, or auto-organization, arises from that system's ability to adapt to unique circumstances and to re-route its inflows into novel configurations to make use of novel inputs. Emergent systems are then those built to take disrupting inputs and turn them into useful reconfigurations. Such adaptability requires a system which can differ, thus necessitating degrees of freedom, while at the same requiring a system which can store previous information so that it may process it and produce a new output. This is because adaptive systems must be both autopoietic and allopoietic, neither too rigid nor too flexible, neither highly ordered nor highly chaotic. To err in either direction is to create something which cannot meet the burdens of the great choosing filters of reality. A system which is highly ordered functions through linear, mechanistic dynamics, while a system that is highly chaotic has no mechanism by which to store information and therefore iterate consistently.

To an ordered system, therefore, the process of emergence will appear as chaos and to a chaotic system, emergence as order. These tools in hand, it is time to pour in the foundations of a liberatory structure. A great constructive project lies ahead of us now. The parts and tools arrayed in front of us, let us begin.

## Bridging the Unbridgeable Chasm

Empowered by the analysis of the last section, I'd like to return to our dialogue between the individualist or egoist anarchist and the social anarchist. In this previous discussion, it was said that the values of solidarity, equality, and freedom are considered together to build out the social anarchist vision, whereas the values of ownness and the unique act in combination within the egoist perspective. In this, it may seem that both groupings have left the other out of the picture. And one would hardly be blamed for thinking so. Indeed, the split between the social and individualist anarchists has often been regarded as "unbridgeable."<sup>1</sup>

Yet, given the discussion we have just had about different strata and their dynamics, such a bridge is not only imminent, but unavoidable. The dynamics at each layer of a system holistically inform those at another, even if they appear quite different when inspected alone. And so, if we are to regard that each of these schools of thought offer valuable insights about the strata they inspect, then we must conclude, with complex systems analysis in hand, that it will be in the accumulated processes of the social and the individual strata that the true driving dynamics of human political experience can be uncovered.

However, there has been prolific miscommunication between these two schools of thought. In this section, we will work to clear up this confusion. To do so, we will need to start with understanding the egoist position more fully. It is said, after all, that the bridge cannot be built because the individualist denies the social, not that the social anarchist denies the individual. If Stirner and other individualist anarchists reject all things outside the individual as phantasms, they reject these principles of freedom, equality, and solidarity as well! After all, Stirner opens *The Unique and its Property* with this provocative statement:

"What is not supposed to be my affair! Above all, the good cause, then God's cause, the cause of humanity, of truth, of freedom, of humaneness, of justice; furthermore, the cause of my people, my prince, my fatherland; finally even the cause of mind and a thousand other causes. Only my own cause is never supposed to be my affair."<sup>2</sup>

At first glance, it may seem then that Stirner is telling us to reject all cooperation, that individuals should do whatever they please, that they should give in to their passions and seek an eternal personal revolt, disregarding the needs of others. Indeed, the inward facing nature of Stirner's philosophy can sometimes seem to lead him to conclusions which neglect broader social struggles:

"Free yourself as far as you can, and you have done your part; because it is not given to everyone to break through all limits, or, more eloquently: that is not a limit for everyone which is one to the others. Consequently, don't exhaust yourself on the limits of others; it's enough if you tear down your own."

This focus on freedom of the self can be seen throughout the works of the egoists. Indeed, it is easy to conclude, when reading any one of these works, that a self-centered orientation

is the only mode that they are willing to entertain. And one cannot be blamed for wondering how this can cooperate with the perspective of the social anarchists. However, it is important to understand that what Stirner was really trying to do was develop a phenomenology, not a political program.

Stirner wants to understand what it is for the individual to live and experience life without the justifying philosophies of hierarchical society, the limitations and expectations of others, and all the essentializing factors we have been convinced to prioritize, muddying the conversation. In order to do this, he recognizes he will need to teach the reader a new way of thinking. He will have to crowbar them out of their deeply ingrained belief systems and ask them to look at things from a sober perspective. To achieve this, he writes in a purposefully antagonistic manner, phrasing himself in such a way that it undermines or aggravates the preconceptions his reader might have. Stirner wishes to act as a destabilizing factor, forcing people to confront their phantasms.

However, the unfortunate side effect of this approach is that his work is quite difficult to understand. His frequent use of double entendre, obfuscation, and poetic license make *The Unique and its Property* easy to misinterpret. Further, Stirner's phenomenological focus on the unique can easily lead one to believe that he fetishizes individual benefit as the only good. And, if one gives in to this obsessive searching for phantasms, rejecting all things outside the individual human being as ephemeral, without worrying oneself about a broader understanding of how social dynamics function to hurt and help the individual, they can be led to a highly negative, even anti-social vision. Renzo Novatore, an Italian individualist anarchist who was heavily influenced by Stirner, gives us a perfect example of this mindset when he says:

“No society will concede to me more than a limited freedom and a well-being that it grants to each of its members. But I am not content with this and want more. I want all that I have the power to conquer. Every society seeks to confine me to the august limits of the permitted and the prohibited. But I do not acknowledge these limits, for nothing is forbidden and all is permitted to those who have the force and the valor. Consequently, anarchy, which is the natural liberty of the individual freed from the odious yoke of spiritual and material rulers, is not the construction of a new and suffocating society. It is a decisive fight against all societies-christian, democratic, socialist, communist, etc, etc. Anarchism is the eternal struggle of a small minority of aristocratic outsiders against all societies which follow one another on the stage of history.”<sup>3</sup>

This hyper-orientation upon individual self-interest leads to a reductionist mindset. The individual is viewed as some transcendent entity, benefiting most from action outside the boundaries and agreements of the social fabric. Every imposition is seen as violating. Every responsibility is a shackle. And, as a result, they are encouraged to separate themselves from the solidaric impulse and seek only immediate self-benefit. Rebellion becomes a lifestyle rather than a method of dissolving power structures. One revolts only for the sake of freeing themselves; not as a social goal, but as an act of individual satiation.

However, such a view is phantasmal for numerous reasons. One of which is that we are not really capable of existing as beings only in ourselves. When we flee from solidaric coordination because we refuse to be burdened by something which does not satisfy our ego, we only play pretend about our true autonomy. If we are truly seeking the expansion of our individual capac-

ities in the world, we are factually, above any desires otherwise, bound to one another and thus we must internalize within ourselves a responsibility outside of our own satisfaction.

Said in Stirner's language, because the ownness of the self expands to those others which we apprehend and stand in solidarity, then one cannot disentangle self-interest and social interest. To ask the question at every juncture "how does this help me?" is to misunderstand the extent of 'me.' The denial of the social aspect and the wellbeing of others, except through the justification of how any given act directly helps the singular human being, is a simplification of a complex system. Given our previous analysis about the ways in which the various strata of the universe interact, recognizing that no strata has true primacy over another, we must recognize here a sort of individualist atomism. The insufficiency of such reductionist modes of analysis, thinking only of agents and not of relations, is noted by John Holland in *Emergence* :

"[T]here is a common misconception about reduction: to understand the whole, you analyze a process into atomic parts, and then study these parts in isolation. Such analysis works when the whole can be treated as the sum of its parts, but it does not work when the parts interact in less simple ways. [.W]hen the parts interact in less simple ways (...), knowing the behaviors of the isolated parts leaves us a long way from understanding the whole (...). The simple notion of reduction—studying the parts in isolation—does not work in such cases. We have to study the interactions as well as the parts."

Likewise, the individual is embedded in a web of social relations which form the basis of accumulated human action. This web of relations increases, not decreases the number of degrees of freedom. And so, because these degrees of freedom being discussed are those degrees of social freedom which empower all individuals, it cannot always be considered a form of domination over the individual to impose upon them on specific occasions, especially if that imposition empowers all.

This lack of understanding about self-sacrifice or responsibility to others is the problematic at the center of the vulgar individualist conception. The deification of the individual requires us to imagine an individual which can tell whether they have truly rejected all phantasms or whether they have merely accepted new ones. And, given the scale of brainwashing that has been carried out upon human beings and the very limited nature of each of these human beings, this is a precarious position for one to take. Just as an experimenter cannot conclude the entire structure of the science surrounding their experiment from singular results, individuals cannot conclude that they have the complete answers to what social phenomena will truly benefit their unique and its ownness. Perhaps, indeed, they are the most informed when it comes to specific aspects of their unique which they share with no one else, but there is an extraordinary amount which is shared among people, indeed all beings, within the ecosphere. Not all wisdom originates from inside, not all insight arrives from unrestrained individual expression. The unique cannot know itself fully and thus cannot be in its own power unless it is in feedback with others.

For this reason, we must recognize that best practices in expanding the unique and ownness are not only an individual endeavor, but a social one. And instead of trying to abolish all social structure because it imposes on individual power, which as a result reinforces and expands the atomization of uniques and thus their continued oppression, we should be seeking to use the social body to experiment with power structures which objectively expand the unique and its ownness.



After all, even if we conceive that every individual knows how some action may or may not benefit them directly and, while it is true that a social transformation will benefit everyone in society if we can bring it to fruition, we also have to accept that not everyone will live to see the results of these efforts toward a better future, nor that every effort will directly benefit the individual who struggles. Yet, just because the unique and its own may not be around to benefit from this possible future, does that mean that they should not seek it?

What happens when self-satisfaction dries up? What will become of the struggle of others who depended on the process of emancipation? If all choose only themselves, judged by themselves, all will have sabotaged the rest by sabotaging the process of social exploration. The result is merely a new world of phantasms, multiplied by the number of selfish, atomized humans, toward infinity. This is why Malatesta says:

“Intolerance of oppression, the desire to be free and to be able to develop one’s personality to its full limits, is not enough to make one an anarchist. That aspiration towards unlimited freedom, if not tempered by a love for mankind and by the desire that all should enjoy equal freedom, may well create rebels who, if they are strong enough, soon become exploiters and tyrants, but never anarchists.”<sup>4</sup>

Where social anarchists may ask that the individual sometimes sacrifice their own short-term benefit in order to attain a greater freedom of action for all, individualists of Novatore’s variety can sometimes come to conceive the needs of others only as a fetter. They demand that responsibility be framed in how it will interest them, when it is precisely the absence of such a demand that allows greater freedom of action for all. All that remains of the concept of freedom is “freedom from domination.” A freedom which conceptualizes society as a burden, not a vector for a more expansive selfhood. What frees the unique is reduced to rejecting all boundaries and preconditions.

But there is much within Stirner to suggest that he was not relegated to such a dead-end, nor was he a psychological egoist, viewing all actions as by-definition carried out in the self-interest of the individual. Stirner decried seemingly egoistic perspectives which nonetheless restricted and destroyed the unique and its ownness as ‘duped egoism.’ By contrast, Stirner advocated a sort of principled egoism, wherein one was bid to seek self-interest by metric of how it expanded the ownness of their unique in an objective sense. As Stirner says in *The Unique and its Property* :

“I am my own only when I am in my own power, and not in the power of sensuality or any other thing (God, humanity, authority, law, state, church, etc.); my selfishness pursues what is useful to me, this self-owned or self-possessing one.”

Self-ownership or self-possession, by Stirner’s conception, would most coherently entail ‘self-control,’ the ability to apprehend one’s own qualities and marshal them forth at the whim of the unique. With this conception in mind, we can take from Stirner a sort of stoic concept of self-mastery, a recognition of how control of self and continual dissolution of the self-boundary is one of the truest expressions of organic individual values.

In embracing such a principle, we also uncover a metric of personal excellence. To achieve mastery of self, we must earnestly inspect the capacities within us, ask how they do or do not

serve our unique personhood, and then bring those key qualities to their fullest expression. To do this, we must then achieve genuine inner-reflection, understanding ourselves and our relations to the world outside of us. And, given that the phantasmal constructions of the world definitionally confound this process, our dignity and autonomy rely crucially on our ability to locate and reject them.

In this understanding, discipline and agreement are not necessarily foreign desires, imposed from outside, but ones which might be cultivated under the condition that they benefit the ownness of the unique. And so, it cannot be said that, just because egoists focus on the individual as the primary agent, that they must then reject all collective goals. Egoist anarchists like Stirner may very well respond on the contrary that collective goals should be followed by the unique insofar as they benefit their autonomy and please their personhood. Indeed, such a consenting relationship of individuals is even given a name by Stirner, the “union of egoists.”

What Stirner rejects is the concept of social responsibility as an ideal that should take precedence over our own needs. If there is convergence on the collective affair, the egoists would say, it is simply that the unique is often better satisfied in cooperation! But why, Stirner asks, if the individual supposedly benefits from these goals that are constantly thrust upon them, are they so doggedly told to reject consideration of their self-interest at every turn? Should not the many collectivists occupy themselves explaining to individuals in society how they will benefit from their program instead of demanding their submission?

Individuals are constantly told to subvert their own needs to the needs of greater notions. Why is the individual so regularly denied? Why do so many collectivist philosophies, even including the social anarchists, insist on giving offhand recognition to the value of human individuality, but spend little time elucidating it? Stirner says, it is because the individual is the primary mover of all things and the unique and its need for autonomy and unhindered creative expression of self is a danger to those who would seek to dominate the individual.

This has some significant overlaps with our own analysis up until this point. The many hierarchical systems which exist are predicated on the discarding of the unique and the restriction of its ownness. Hierarchical structures are based around simplification of the individual, so that it may serve as a cog within the mega-machine. One can also see a similar notion being discussed by Ashanti Alston in his piece *Childhood and the Psychological Dimension of Revolution*:

“Once [...] customs and traditions become a part of a person they form a psychological ‘mask’ quite unknowingly to the person. You come to don that mask reluctantly, as your every physical, mental and emotional fiber resists. But once it’s fastened on your face, on your soul, it functions just like your heart pumps blood, lungs air, or stomach digest food. You forget about, or repress the memories of, the traumatic experiences which created the mask, and go on through life not even realizing that it governs, influences, pulls and jerks your every physical, emotional and intellectual activity. It effectively cuts you off from being in direct touch with your true feelings, with your spontaneous contact with the outside world, with friends, with your energy, and with your curiosity about life in general.”<sup>5</sup>

To push back against this, Stirner asks us to consider what means and ends would refuse such a simplification, which would defy the synoptic view of hierarchical power, and which would refuse the shackles of all ideological dogmas. He demands that we reject all phantasms

that confound our self-interest, that we unveil all priests of the secular religions which demand our self-sacrifice! Stirner offers us a method for freeing our true selves from imposition by power structures.

However, this does not lead to the conclusion that no organization, no society, and no structure which could be built would harmonize with the egoist method. We must conclude that the accumulated results borne out by the history of human struggle lead us toward solidaric conclusions. As Malatesta says in *Anarchy* :

“Solidarity is therefore the state of being in which Man attains the greatest degree of security and wellbeing; and therefore egoism itself, that is the exclusive consideration of one’s own interests, impels Man and human society towards solidarity; or it would be better to say that egoism and altruism (concern for the interests of others) become fused into a single sentiment just as the interests of the individual and those of society coincide.”<sup>6</sup>

Just as we can model the dynamics of many larger systems simply by considering the motion and combination of particles, we do not then reject thermodynamics or electrodynamics or Newtonian physics just because they do not make direct appeals to particles. The combined effects of previous strata within the process of iterative emergence are not more real than their meta-dynamics. Just as surely as atoms continue to move while we can analyze macro-scale agglomerations of matter, so too does the individual contribute to a mass of other individuals which then produce sociological, economic, and political agglomerations which must be understood in their own right. As Mobus and Kalton say in *Understanding Complex Systems* :

“As systems auto-organize to more complex levels, the dynamics of inter-system relationships take on new potentials. [...]n auto-organization, [...] when some components interact, they form strong linkages that provide structural stability. They persist. In network parlance, these components form a clique. Other assemblies or cliques form from other components and their linkages. Between, there are still potential interactions in the form of competition for unattached or less strongly attached components. Those assemblies that have the most cooperative linkages can be ‘stronger’ or more ‘fit’ in the internal environment of the system and thus be more successful at whatever competition takes place.”

Acting under the individualist atomist deception, when the choice between individual satisfaction and social responsibility is posited, the duped egoist will more often choose the former, even though the interests of all or much of humanity may lay within the latter, that individual included, even if it is not obvious to them at first. As a result, this leads to a philosophy which tends to sever social ties, which seeks to internalize benefits and externalize risks, and which cannot, therefore, build the cooperative bonds which are necessary to free us all. Individualist atomism then really serves to turn the individual into a phantasm, something which does not objectively lead to the self-interest of the unique.

In her essay *Queering Heterosexuality*, Sandra Jeppesen includes some of her own revelations on this topic. She recounts how, as an anarchist she had practiced a nomadic, socially withdrawn lifestyle for quite some time, until she attended a workshop wherein a facilitator was discussing the notion of social responsibility:

“at the workshop, the facilitator, who was an older indigenous-identified male, said that responsibility tells us where we belong in our lives. i have always been troubled by this notion of belonging, yearning for it in some ways, and yet unable to find it because i was charmed by the notion of spontaneity, freedom, the nomad life, new friendships and relationships everywhere with everyone who came along. [...] now i think of responsibility differently, i think of it as a deep connection to another person, related to intimacy. it means that we think of their feelings and needs as equal to our own, and quite often, more important than our own. we can also think of our responsibility to self as, rather than being in conflict with responsibility to others, being profoundly connected with a responsibility to others, in the very anarchist sense that the liberation of one person is predicated upon the liberation of those around them.”<sup>7</sup>

The rejection of the needs of others as equal to our own precludes the necessary actions we must carry out to eliminate the systems which impose phantasms upon us to begin with. To continually ask only how some action might benefit ourselves, judging the answer only by our limited view, is to be unprepared to withstand the necessary self-sacrifice, the process of correction and introspection, the acts of solidaric responsibility, that are required to carry out such an experimental project. And, in doing so, we dissolve the bonds of trust and solidarity which ultimately empower us to begin with.

With this in mind, while there are blind spots in the ideas of both of these schools, it must be said that the transformation of the world is that which is contained within the margin that the atomists neglect. What Stirner called the “union of egoists” is in fact the vector by which social transformation can take place. And it is the social anarchist who concerns themselves with the construction of a real, functional union of egoists and the program it must carry forth to actually achieve liberation.

Thus, if we take the phenomenology of Stirner, but strip out the reductive appeal to an internally over-determined self-interest, we find that his theory can synthesize strongly with the social anarchist position. After all, Stirner’s values are the very individual principles that the social anarchist seeks to expand when they say that they hold to the joint values of freedom, equality, and solidarity. We sacrifice for others precisely because we love the potential within them, precisely because we want to see a world wherein the individuals of society have their capacities expanded together and the atomization which has brought them to such misery, repaired.

Simultaneously, in this conception, we are warned against an over-focus on the social level and therefore the destruction of plurality. To do so would be to turn our anarchist society into a new manifestation of the mega-machine, indeed to prevent it from being an anarchist society at all. Just as the diversity of functions within an ecosystem determines the strength and adaptability of that ecosystem under disruption, the full diversity of uniqueness is an unqualified boon to the functioning of the social whole. The anarchist must struggle forth with the purpose that all humans are freed from the society of the mask, seeing within the joint existence of equality, freedom, and solidarity the most robust expansion of the oneness of a society of uniques.

Together then, the values of the last era: freedom, equality, solidarity, the unique and oneness can function in harmony. But we must do more than simply regurgitate the conclusions of those

who have come before us. Combined with the insights of systems analysis, we can now see these principles clearly in light of their relation to complex systems and their function.

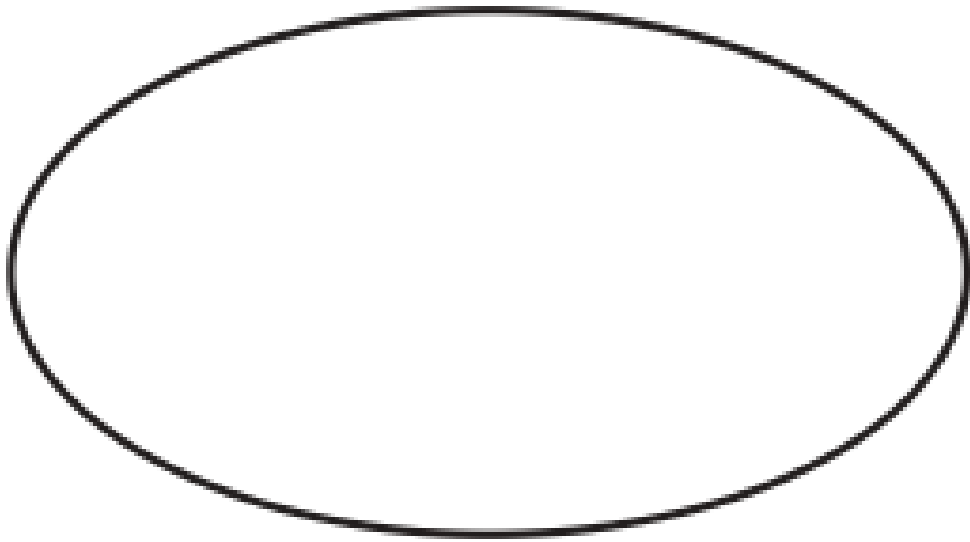
And so, having mediated these disputes between the anarchists of history, let us move forward.

# Complex Systems Anarchism

Taking seriously the task of human emancipation and having in hand the foundational principles which produce viable systems, our work is now to construct a complex adaptive system that moves naturally toward ecological emergence. And if we wish to construct a system which will pass the great choosing filters of reality, to survive entropy, competition, attack, and failure, we must determine those autopoietic processes which bolster these qualities.

Said otherwise, the work of the anarchist is to prefigure a horizontal creorder within the belly of the kyriarchal mega-machine. And to do this, we must ask what functions we wish to be modeled at the end of this process, resulting as it will from an allopoietic process between ourselves and that future social, political, and economic structure. To do this, we must utilize the conclusions found within our previous analysis and use them to develop a series of more robust hypotheses, so that we can actually analyze their success and failure through objective metric.

In this spirit, let us first reformulate the five values which have so far dominated our dialogue: freedom, equality, solidarity, the unique, and ownness, but this time in relation to systems science. It is important that we cease speaking of these values as simple philosophical concepts, and instead formulate them as functioning properties of agents, relations, and boundaries.



**Equality** can be formulated as the equality of access to structural power for some agents. It may be referred to here alternatively as libertarianism or structural equality.

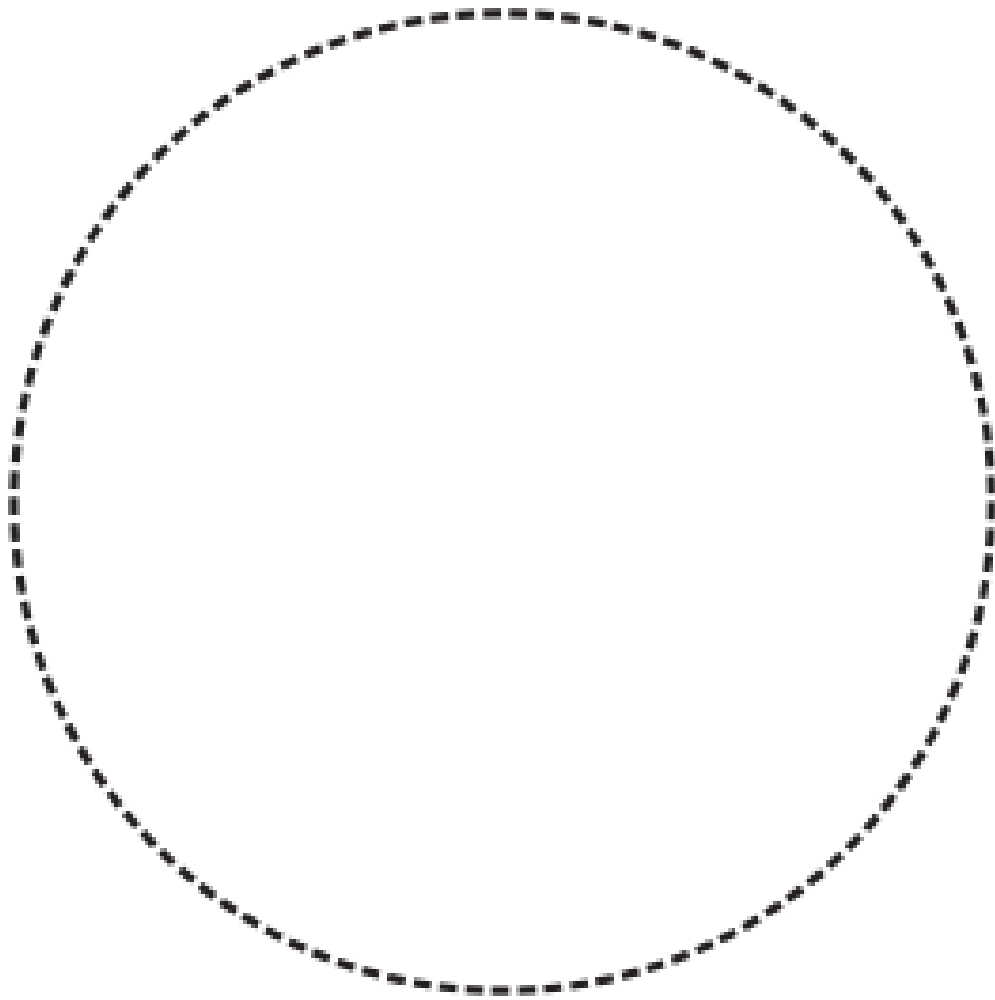


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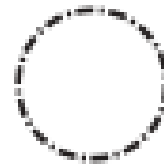
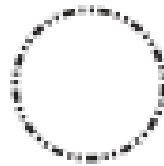
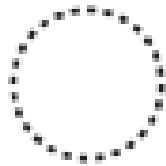
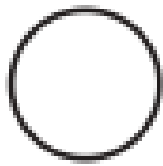
**Solidarity** can be formulated as the strength of cooperative relations between agents in the system.  
I may refer to it alternatively as mutuality or coupling strength.



**Freedom** can be formulated as the diversity and extent of power to act for the agents.  
Or, alternatively: degrees of freedom or actualized potentiality.



**Ownness** can be formulated as the imminent ability to utilize the world for some agent.  
Or alternatively: apprehension, ownership, or consumption.



**Uniqueness** can be formulated as the assembly of identifying features for each agent. This may occur instead as diversity or ‘the unique.’

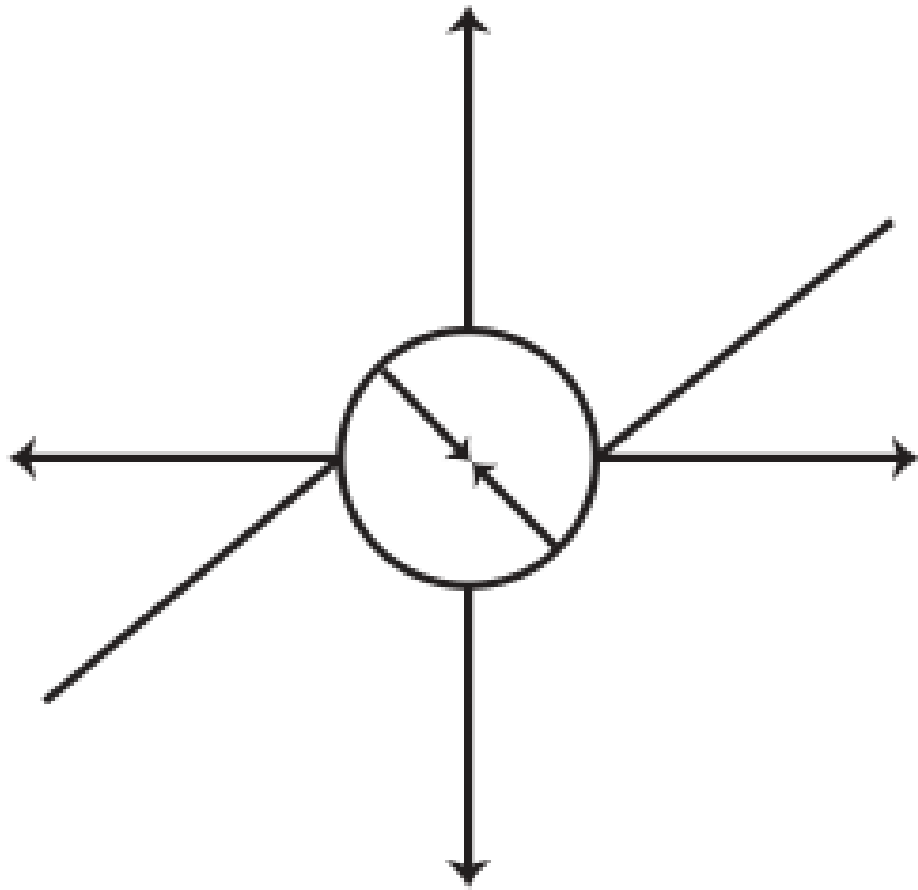
One can see that these are neither abstractions nor distant ideals, they are parameters for the internal functions of a specific kind of system: the antithesis of the mega-machine. In this way, we might re-list these norms in their systems parlance: structural equality, coupling strength, degrees of freedom, utilization, and agent diversity, or they could also be stated by their anarchist philosophical underpinnings: libertarianism, mutuality, actualized potentiality, apprehension, and the unique.

It must be said that none of these truly function apart. Just as Stirner was sure to insist on the necessary unity of the unique and its own, so too have the social anarchists insisted on the simultaneous functioning of freedom, equality, and solidarity. Neither can these truly function apart within a complex systems analysis. Any system which utilizes these principles must utilize them simultaneously to achieve the desired outcome. However, just as a function of many interacting variables can be inspected by reducing one or another of these variables and finding the ensuing interplay of what remains or by taking partial derivatives, we can discuss what principles arise from emphasis on the interplay between our anarchist systems principles.

In considering this multi-variable interdependency of the social and individual under conditions of emancipation, we will find that very familiar structural suggestions within anarchist theory result. Indeed, it is my contention that the anarchists were, not armed with modern science, instead intuiting deeply complex realities from logical inspection, theoretical rigor, and unknown to themselves, the remnants of an indigenous critique of European society which had been arrived at by an extraordinarily long process of organic iteration.

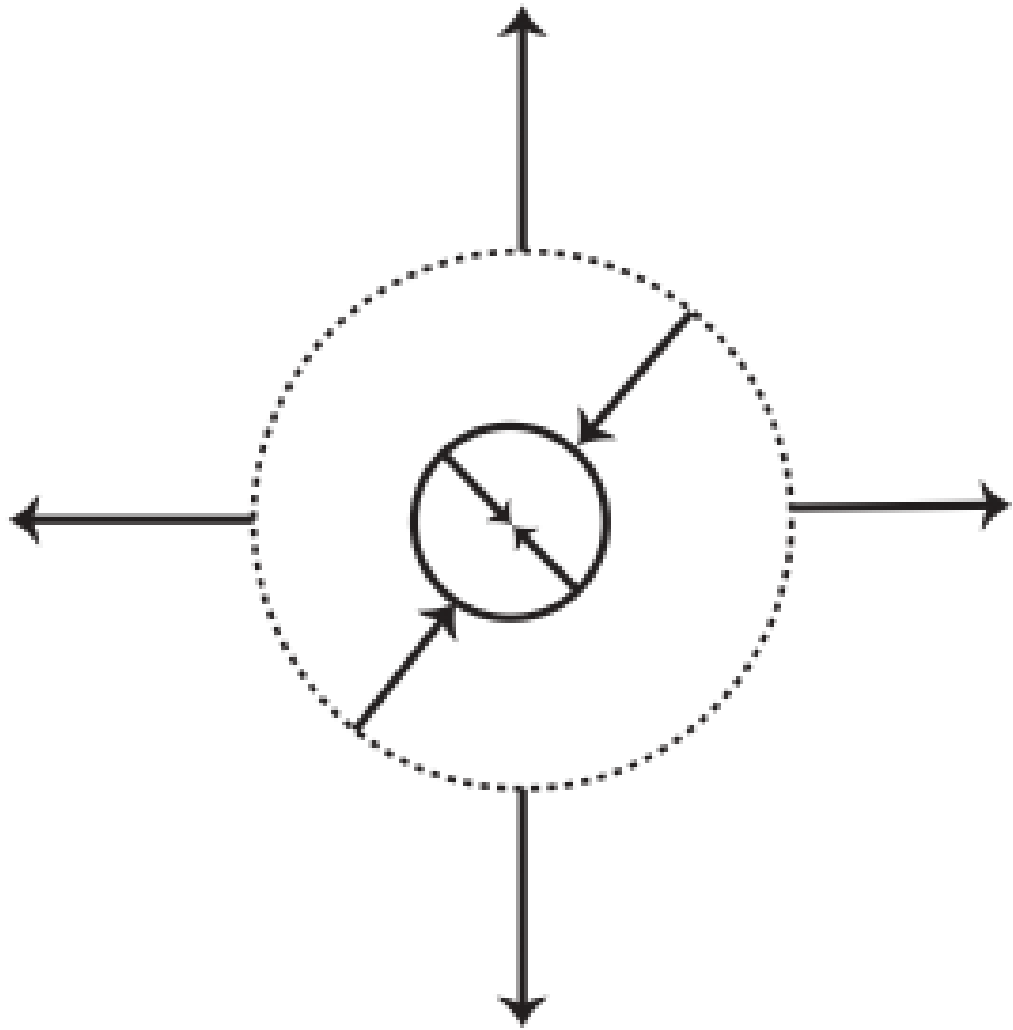
As I have noted that these are hypotheses, do not take this list to be exhaustive, nor each of these as settled. There are surely modifications or improvements to be made. But these are my earnest attempts to produce a ‘tracing’ of the anarchist political theory utilizing complex systems theory. We will now proceed through these, giving a brief analysis along with each:





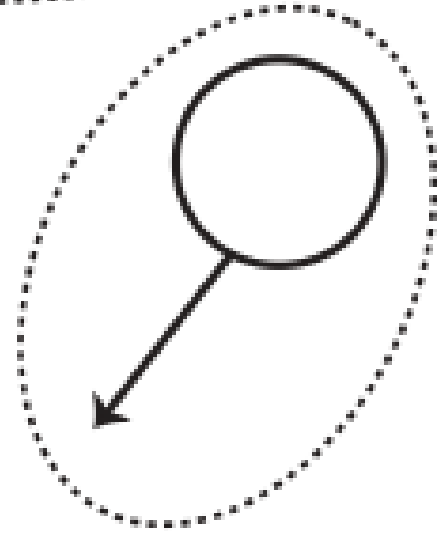
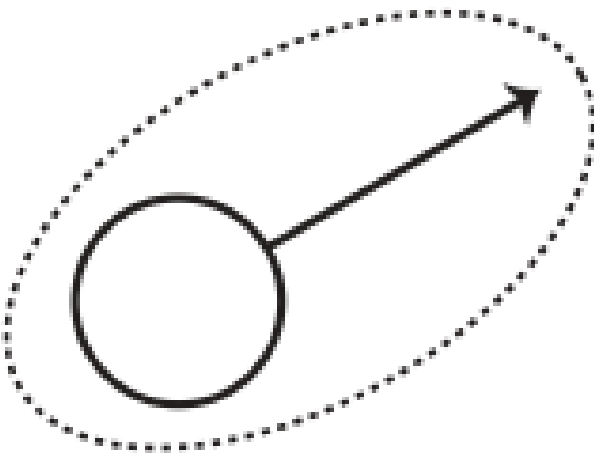
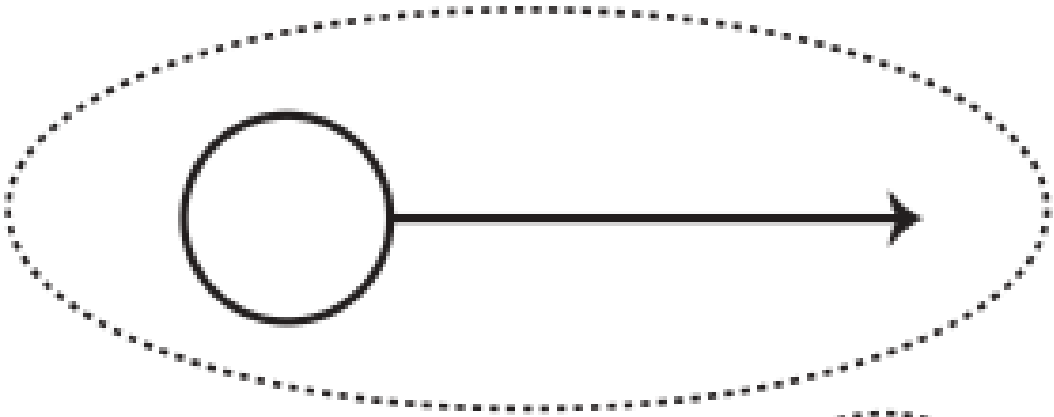
**Freedom-Unique: bodily autonomy**

Diversity and extent of power along with uniqueness leads to the justification for safeguarding bodily autonomy. The individual should have control over their own life and the way they treat their own body. They should be able to alter their own biology as they please, to reconceptualize their identity, to consume or not consume whatever substances they desire, and anything else which affects only them.



**Unique-Ownness: individual power**

When we consider the fusion of human uniqueness along with the extension of self and right to consumption, we find the core force of the individual, individual power. It is through this dual consideration of the unique and its own, precisely as Stirner would intend, that we locate human singular experience. This is the place where personal apprehension, both in the sense of one's personal belongings, but also the immediate connections to other social beings enters. This is not only the realm of one's home, one's mode of transportation, one's means of production and reproduction, but the realm of family, of spouses, lovers, friends.

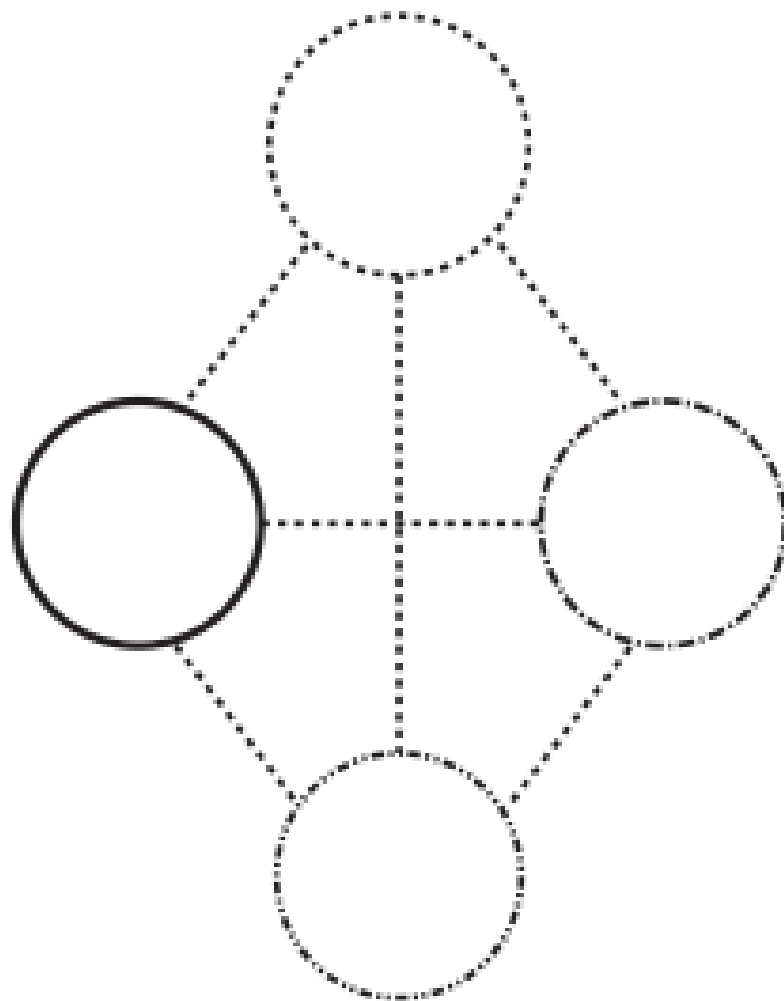


### **Freedom-Ownness: usufruct**

In the expansion of the variety and extent of power by one's capacity to apprehend the world, we find the justification for usufruct. Under usufruct relations, where a thing is being unused, the one who uses it is the one who owns it. That is to say, they are given the right to benefit from that thing by virtue of their continued usage. Bookchin defines usufruct as:

“[...] the freedom of individuals in a community to appropriate resources merely by virtue of the fact that they are using them. Such resources belong to the user as long as they are being used. Function, in effect, replaces our hallowed concept of possession — not merely as a loan or even ‘mutual aid,’ but as an unconscious emphasis on use itself, on need that is free of psychological entanglements with proprietorship, work, and even reciprocity.”<sup>1</sup>

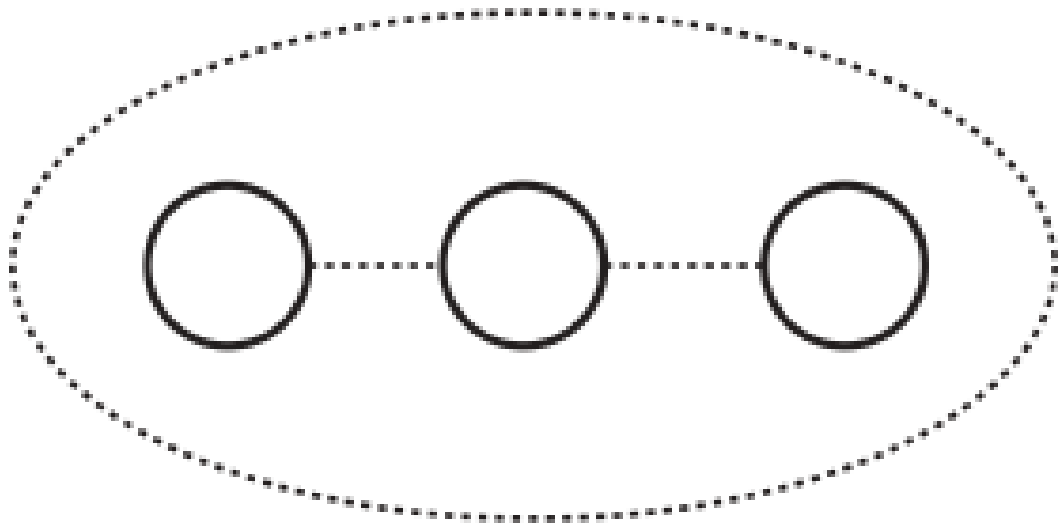
This is a fusion of freedom with ownness because what is one's own or one's ‘property’ as Stirner calls it, is also what one freely consumes and as they gain the ability to consume that thing, they take it into themselves more and more. After all, for a thing to be one's own within this conception is to have power over its usage or to apprehend its qualities. It is to be one with something. One's house would be owned by occupancy, their toothbrush by regular use, their transportation by travel, etc...



**Solidarity-Unique: unity in diversity**

The simultaneous desire for recognition of individuation and solidarity with society is embodied in Bookchin's concept of 'unity in diversity.' This is to say, difference is not a means by which fissures and separations must take place. It is in the safeguarding of the diversity of things that we discover a unified method. Together, we work to express a society of difference wherein plurality is not a threat, but a strength. It establishes a foundation wherein disagreement and conflict are not destructive, but constructive.

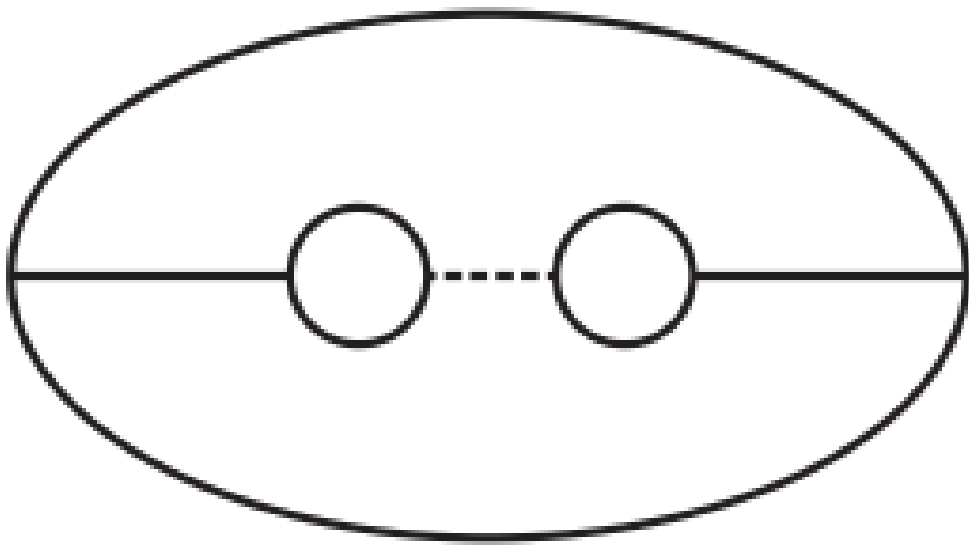




**Solidarity-Ownness: social ownership**

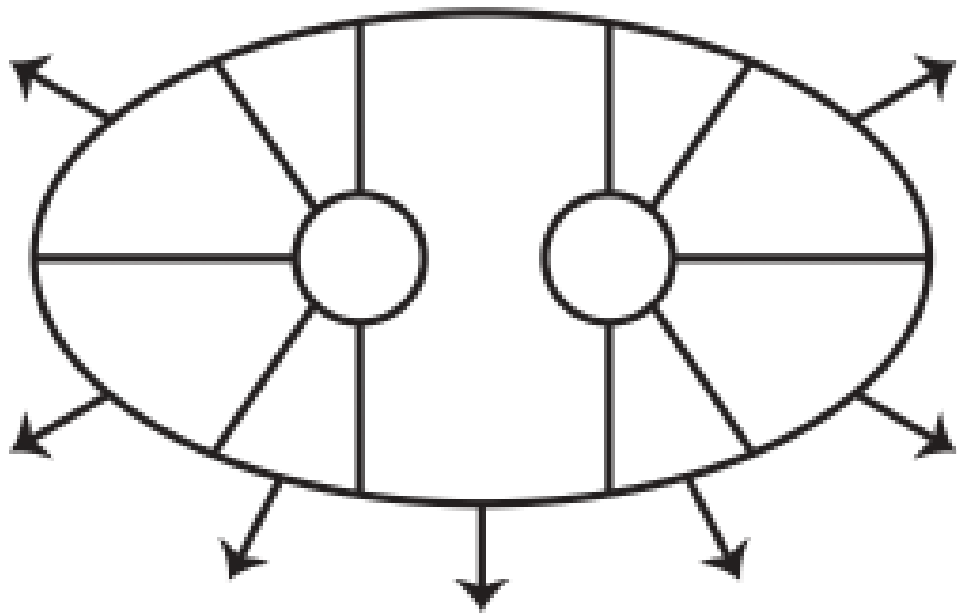
Cooperation with others, held in balance with the desire to expand each being's capacity to apprehend and utilize the world, is the justification for social ownership. Recognizing that many people may want access to apprehension of some person, thing, or place, gives rise to an understanding that things must be shared. Similarly, those things which are not immediately apprehended by a person should still lie within their sphere of control and they should be allowed to consume the product of those things by way of the cooperative impulse.

For every unique to have the maximal ownness, we would have to live in a society functioning under socialist property relations; private property, after all, functioning through monopolization. To own things which they do not immediately interact with would be to limit the ownness of other uniques in which they stand in solidarity. In doing this, the individual turns their ownness into a phantasm of others and thus becomes a force to be upended itself.



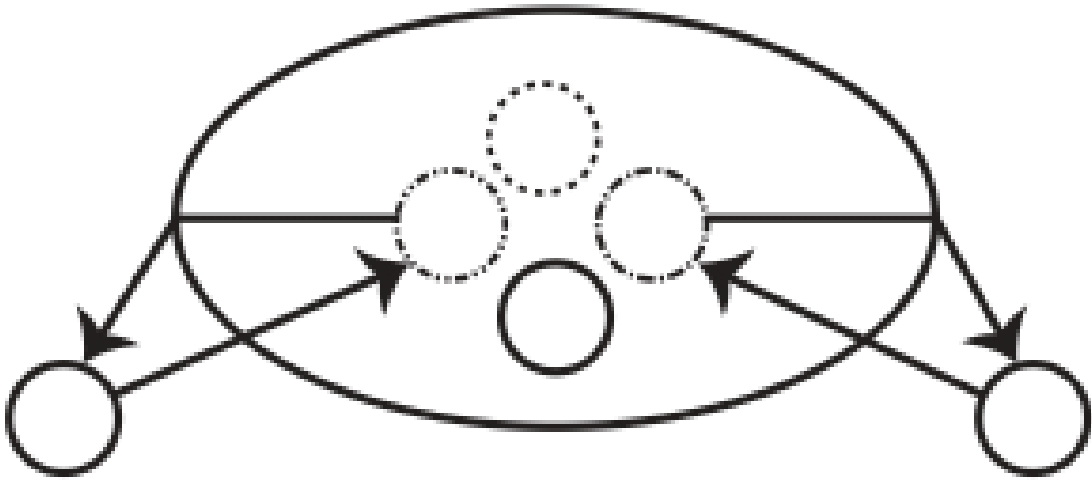
**Equality-Solidarity: democracy/consensus**

Cooperation in use of equal structural power is embodied in structural consent, called either consensus or democracy by various theorists. That is to say, we conceive that collective actions should only move forward insofar as they are held as cooperatively approved by those actors involved and that they abide by libertarianism. This maintains strong sub-systems couplings, while also preventing over-centralization of power. It is an interplay between the pull of the clique and the push of power sharing.



**Equality-Freedom: communal power**

The variety and extent of power which is enabled through equality of structural power is a measurement of communal power. That is to say, the extent and variety of power each person has is expanded in measure to their equal access to those structures which exist. As they interface with those structures, they gain structural power by measure. This is the force which actualizes social potential.



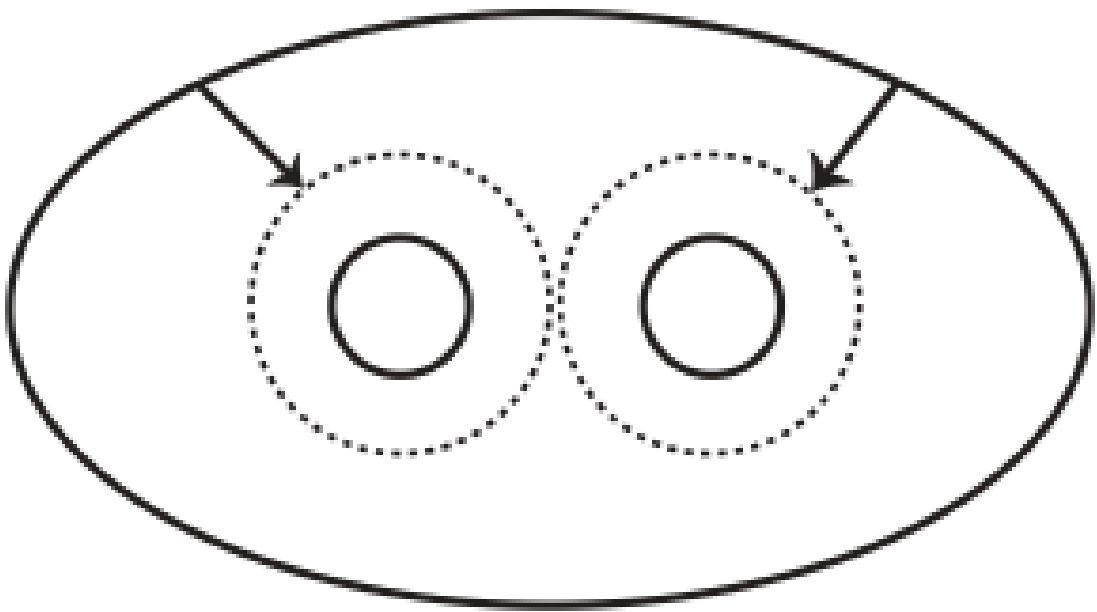
### **Equality-Unique: subsidiarity**

Equality of structural power bearing on the assembly of identifying features for each body, is best embodied in what is called subsidiarity. In anarchist theory, this principle is sometimes stated as 'those who are affected decide.' This principle exists in order to prevent everyone from being involved in every decision, thus creating unnecessary redundancy. It also takes into account the unique perspectives that individuals who are affected by some decision will likely have. It is a prudent method for choosing pertinent parties to bring into the decision making process.

This is also the counterbalance to the project of simplification which we mentioned in part 1. In order to prevent context from being destroyed, an anarchist system seeks out context eagerly. This then also serves the purpose of maintaining complexity which will be needed to form a robust society.

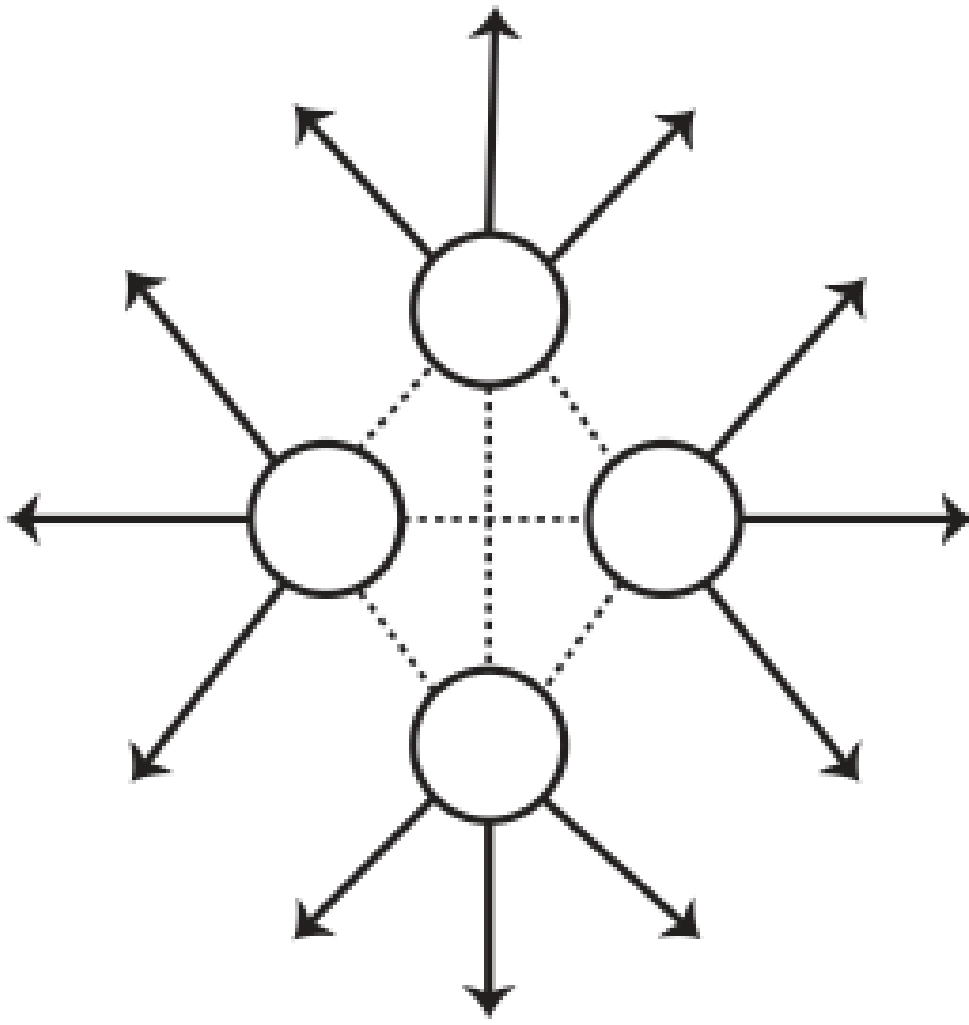
Moreover, this represents a society that is in feedback with its environment. Whereas hierarchical society seeks no input from the masses that it exploits because that is the very feedback it wishes to silence, horizontal society functions only when the voices of all those people who labor to produce society are listened to. It seeks to foster the most robust coupling of the interpersonal context of the masses, such that lasting, stable systems of human social construction can be built on top.





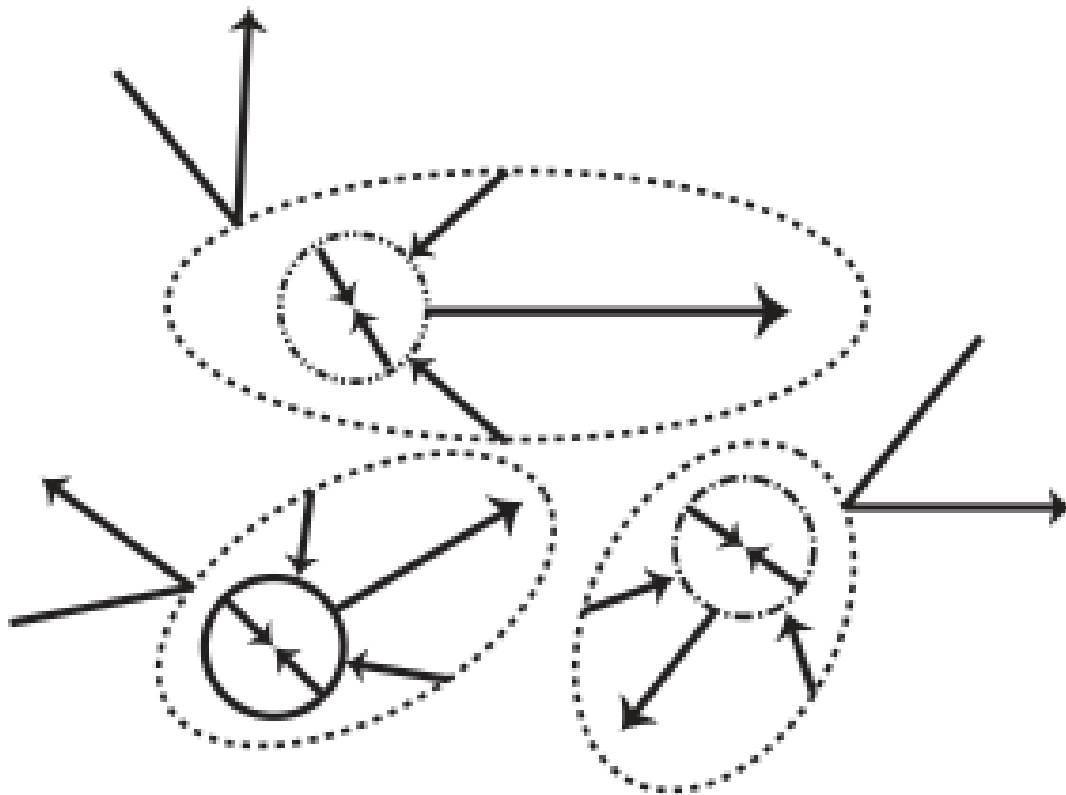
**Equality-Ownness: delegation**

Equality of structural power in regards to the extent of each being's capacity to apprehend and utilize the world, is best understood in the concept of delegation. That is to say, the balancing of the need for structural power and the utility of others expanding their ownness is why we delegate people to certain tasks, with the notion in mind that they will also be recallable. Delegation is therefore the balance between equality and ownness.



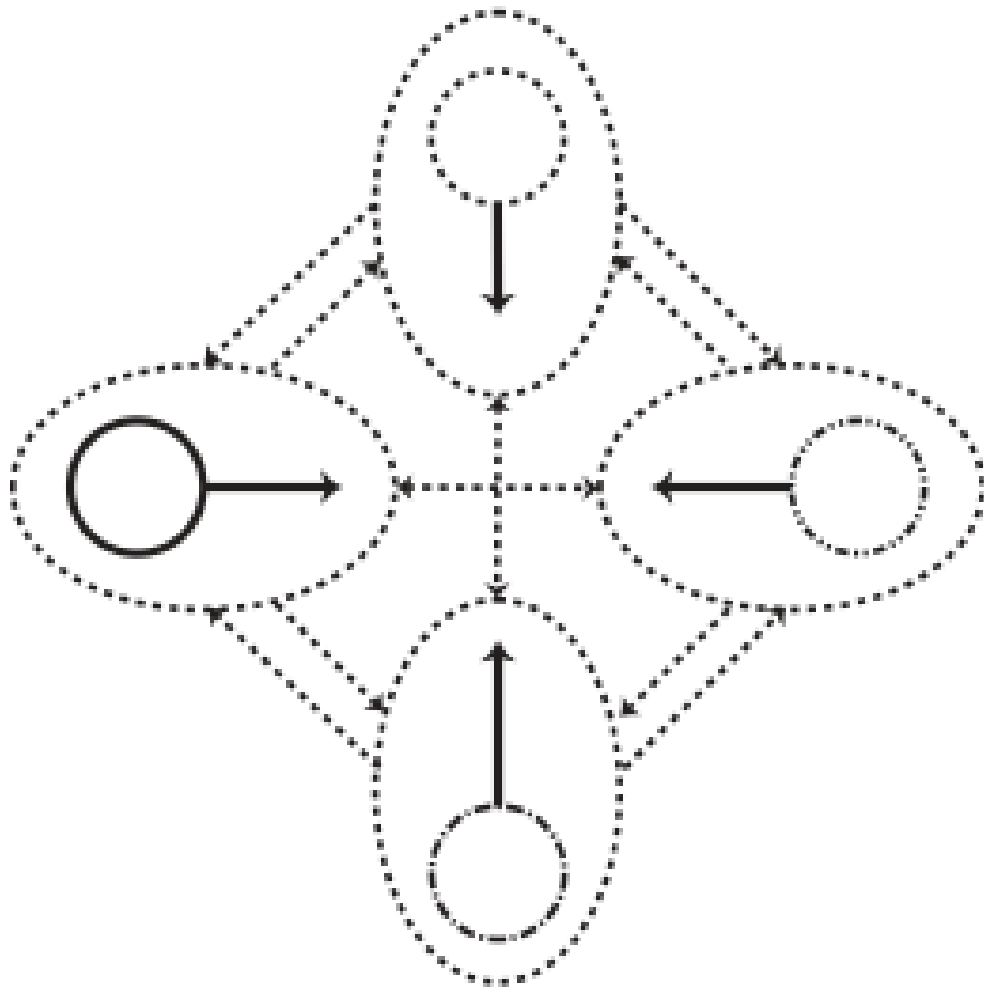
**Solidarity-Freedom: mutualistic social power**

Cooperative social bonds combined with freedom of power to act is represented through direct, mutualistic coordination with others. It is the harmonious balancing of the arrayed powers of society. This is not the force of society as mediated through power structures, but instead the raw constituent, spontaneous power of the masses. It is the raw mutualistic force of the people. It is interpersonal aid, it is group kindness, it is consideration of the needs of others, it is cooperation upon a goal without need for mediation by structure.



**Freedom-Unique-Ownness: autonomy**

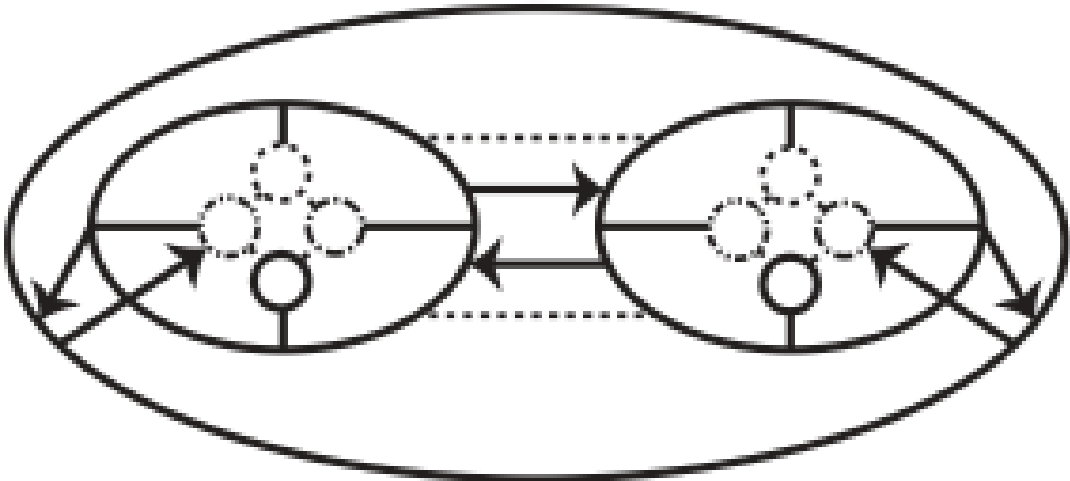
The principle which best expresses the unique and its ability to apprehend the world around it along with the full extent and variety of powers that may be available to it is the principle of human autonomy. Every being and group of beings should be given a free landscape on which they might expand their capacities, develop their creative abilities, and create new things at their own whim.



**Solidarity-Ownness-Freedom: communism**

It is only under solidaric conditions that everyone will be able to expand their ownness to its maximum extent and eliminate the coercive hierarchies of the owning class, to dissolve the means of production into the people, not as a tool for separation and domination, but as a means to build social cooperation and flourishing. Through their interplay in the distribution of goods which they participate in and considering that others are acting in solidarity, the expansiveness of the people amounts to direct distribution and thus direct satisfaction of their needs.



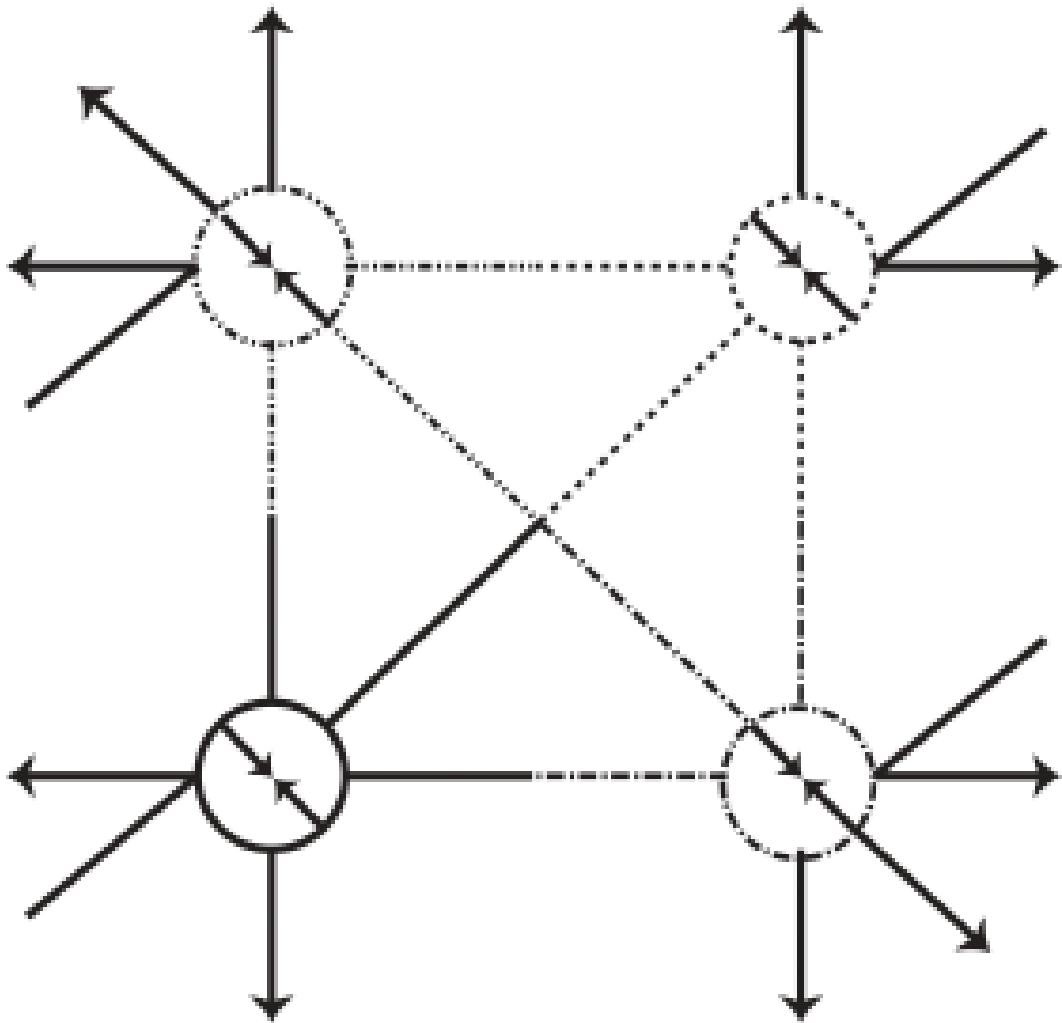


### **Unique-Solidarity-Equality: confederation**

In the triune of uniqueness, cooperation with others, and equality of structural power we find the justification for confederation. Here we find the constructing force of those 'layers of depth' which Mobus and Kalton identify as characteristic of complex systems. We see that in this system they do not arise as imposed from above, but that they arise from the organic direction of the horizontal system itself. That is to say, confederation arises from the unique needs of individuals and people within regions to cooperate with one another, still respecting a balance with structural power. They then form these council bodies within the larger federated bodies they exist within, giving them a space to practice their unique needs in cooperation with others, but also still acting in cooperation with larger structural bodies.

That is to say, for those who function in communal conjunction with one another, bodies are formed which create the conditions for that equal structural power, as well as the means for structural cooperation. In this equal access, people expand their range of available actions and gain access to new strata of interaction; confederations build up lanes of access which are then used to convey the power of the individual at different levels and to build out their participation in power at this level of society.

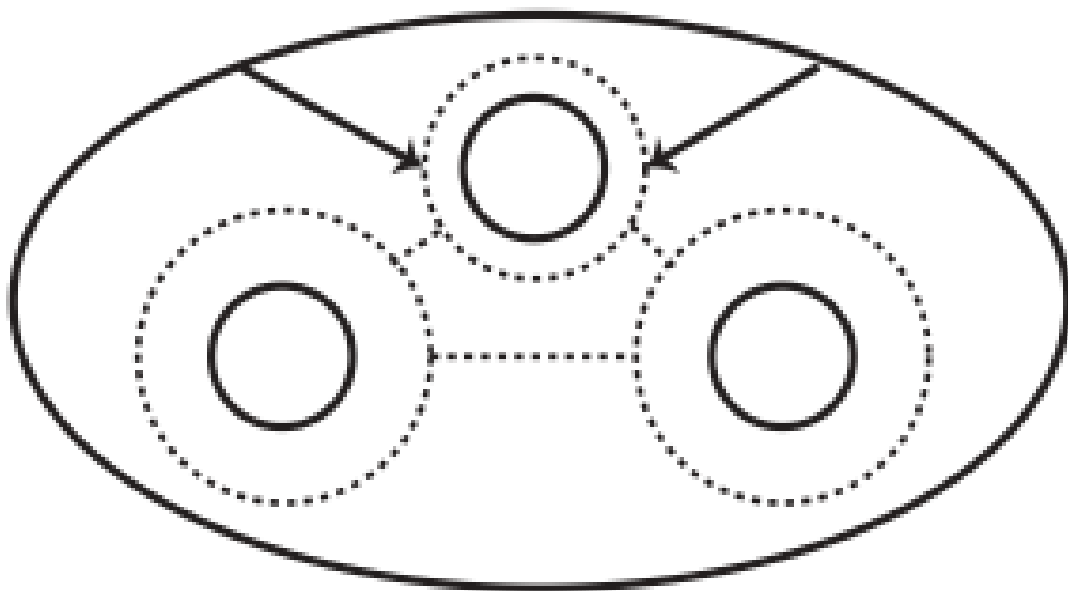
Equality of structural power is the opposition to alienation of individual power, held jointly with the needs of solidarity. And all these considered together produce a society which is embodied in maximal freedom for the individuals and rejection of simplification, which therefore results in the greatest embodiment of a socialized unique.



### **Freedom-Solidarity-Unique: complementarity**

When we consider the freedom found in equality of structural power and respect for the unique of every individual, we arrive at Bookchin's ecological value of complementarity. That is to say, this agglomeration of unique individuals is not only productive of conflict which then resolves into new ways of being. These differences rely on one another to produce something that is greater than the sum of its parts.

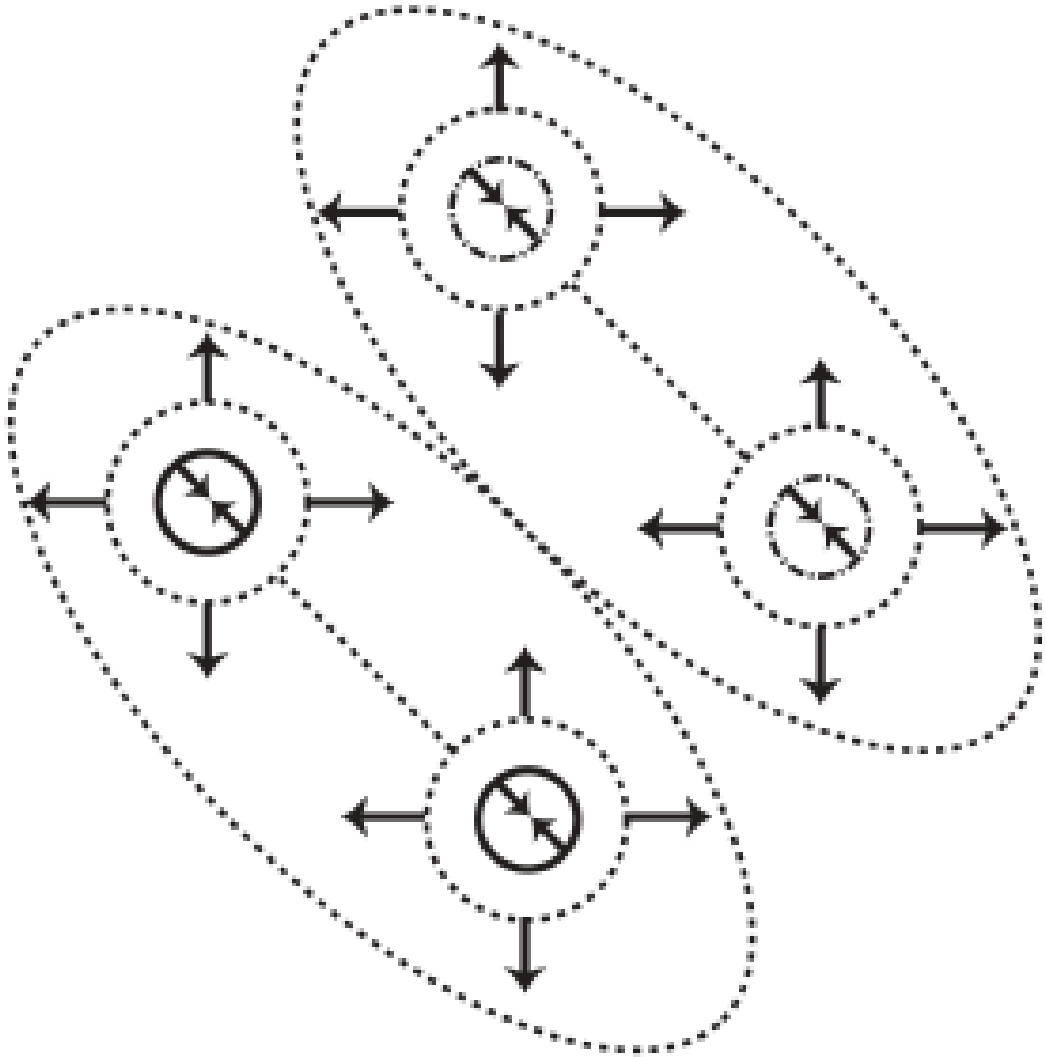
This fusion of freedom, solidarity, and the unique forms one of the key triunes in understanding the property of emergence, auto-organization, or self-organized-criticality as we have called it. It is within this web of complementary social and structural connections that new strata of interactions form. Complementarity is a driving force in this process.



### **Equality-Solidarity-Ownness: irreducible minimum**

In the triune of equality of structural power, cooperative social condition, and expansiveness of self, we find the justification for what Bookchin calls the ‘irreducible minimum.’ Bookchin speaks of how this irreducible minimum was one of the key characteristics of organic society that we should be trying to reclaim:

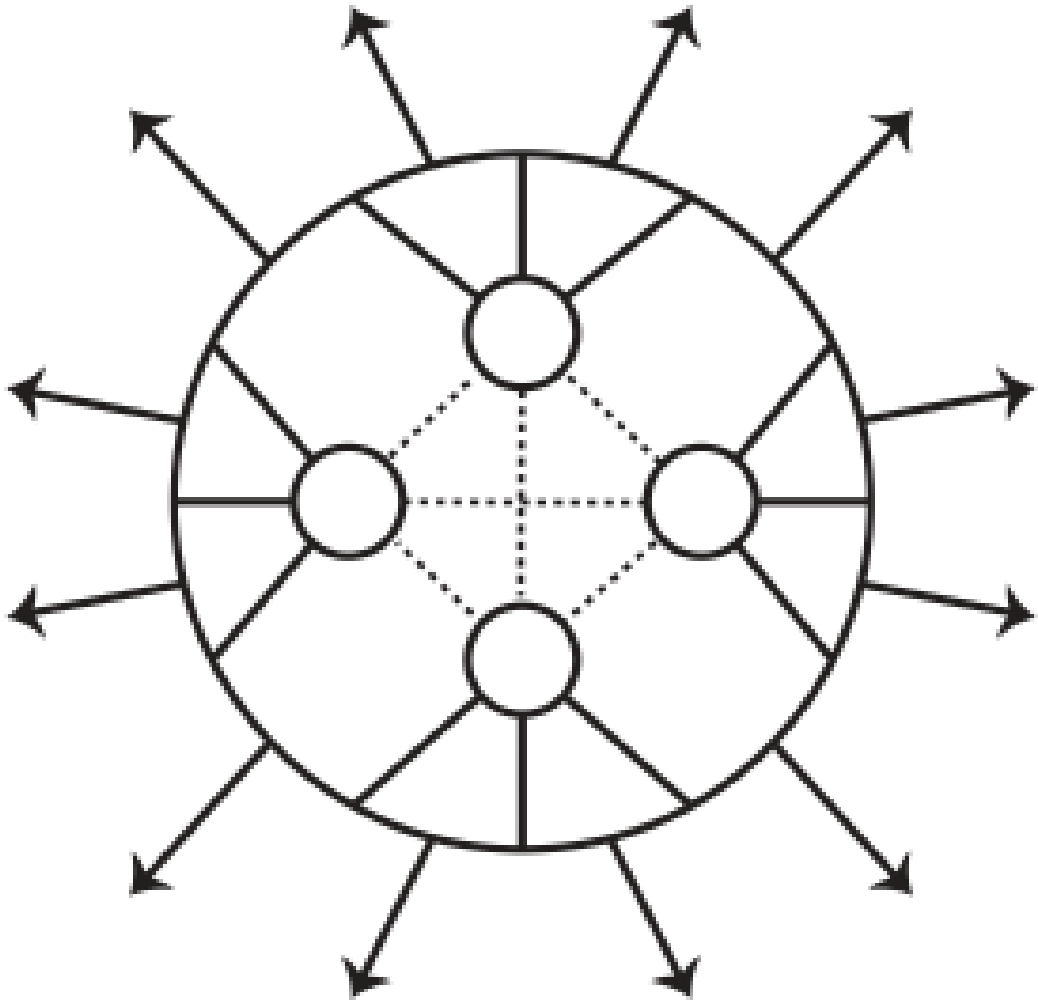
“[O]rganic society, despite the physical limitations it faced (from a modern viewpoint), nevertheless functioned unconsciously with an implicit commitment to freedom that social theorists were not to attain until fairly recent times. Radin’s concept of the irreducible minimum rests on an unarticulated principle of freedom. To be assured of the material means of life irrespective of one’s productive contribution to the community implies that, wherever possible, society will compensate for the infirmities of the ill, handicapped, and old, just as it will for the limited powers of the very young and their dependency on adults. Even though their productive powers are limited or failing, people will not be denied the means of life that are available to individuals who are well-endowed physically and mentally. Indeed, even individuals who are perfectly capable of meeting all their material needs cannot be denied access to the community’s common produce, although deliberate shirkers in organic society are virtually unknown.”



### **Unique-Ownness-Solidarity: free association**

We also find a very important fusion in the triune of human uniqueness, the apprehension of others, and who they choose to associate with. This is what gives us the principle of free association under anarchism. People should not be forced to associate, to organize with, to fraternize with those who they do not desire to. Said otherwise, they may disassociate from whatever collective they please. In this, the collective that they choose under free association could be called the 'union of egoists,' as Stirner called it. And the structures laid out here, as often specified by the social anarchist, could be seen as the mechanisms by which an enduring, wide-spanning, effective union of egoists would be formed.





### **Solidarity-Equality-Freedom: horizontal society**

Together then, cooperative networks of agents, equality of structural power, and variety and extent of 'power to' gives us the description of what is called 'horizontal society.' Together, these form the restoring force which maintains horizontality, producing a society of reconciliation and cooperation. A society which is able to meet its needs through structural means, but also contains the ability to meet them outside the structure if need be. Here are those social norms which reinforce anti-kyriarchy and those structural norms which empower all. This is because, in the combination we find mutualistic social power, communal power, and consensus.

Together, these are the qualities that allow the strata developed in an anarchic society to adjust themselves to change, a system which rejects rigidity and therefore failure by Black Swans. This is what I will call an 'anarchic system.' Such a system has very high degrees of freedom, not just at the individual level, nor just at the social level, but at every level. It is important that this is the case, because systems are only adaptive when the particular strata that are interacting are adaptable to change. If the degrees of freedom within a system are in a different strata than that with which the system is interacting, the system will tend to have a harder time adapting to the changes. If, for example, a change takes place at a macro-scale strata but there are no degrees of freedom within it, then lower strata which do have degrees of freedom will be forced to take the brunt of the adaptation. In this anarchic system, however, each strata can move and change, because we do not only prioritize freedom of individual power, which would force individuals to take the brunt of every adaptation, we also prioritize the freedom of structural power.

With this, we have laid out a brief coverage of many of the structural precepts found within social anarchist, individualist anarchist, and social ecologist literature. I will put to the side some of these combinations, especially the quadruples, as they are largely higher iterations of these previous dynamics. They are worth an inspection, just as all of these are worth their own inspection alone, but for now we will move on. But, most importantly, we are no longer in the dark about what sort of system should be constructed. We have arrived here from a relational analysis of what is needed to build a system capable of social emergence:

A confederation of freely associated, directly democratic council structures based around the dictum that 'those who are affected decide.' This plurality of structures can then delegate individuals and groups to the tasks at hand, delineating how the free association is administered and abiding by the idea that each should produce according to their abilities and things should be distributed based on need. This system then stands as the organic production of autonomous, dignified, unique beings who exert their powers together in cooperation and through which all individuals are strengthened by an accordant complementarity and unity in diversity.

Quibbles over many of the terms here abound, having formed their own debates in the history of the movement. But what we have described is precisely what many anarchists theorists have advocated, even fought and died for as revolutionaries. I only now put it in the words of systems analysis, so that it is clear. This is, in fact, what I was referring to in the first part of this series when I described the goal of anarchism as:

“[...] a horizontal society of free association, controlled together by the people.[...] [B]oth individual and collective freedom to develop our full creative capacities, constituted through equality of structural power and the eternal principle of human solidarity. [T]he condition of existence in which humanity can determine for them-

selves what sort of future they wish to inhabit, free of direction by some dominator class, instead carried forth by their own motivated wills.”

I referred to this as anarchy, but there is more to the phenomena than this. After all, these are the features which we have suggested allow a critical point to potentially take place, not those features which produce self-organized criticality as a bygone conclusion. It is now time we speak of emergence.

# The Emergent Anarchy

So then, how does emergence factor into this analysis and why is it that emergence occurs? As we have inspected, emergence does not take place by way of conscious planners or top-down control. It cannot be forced into existence by command of a king. Instead, it appears to occur in the presence of certain key systemic features. A particular configuration of elemental diversity, just-so internal and external relations, and organically constituted boundaries make up the true interplaying forces of the emergent process.

And do not take this to mean that such an order is inevitable. Just as there is no teleology toward the end of capitalism, there is no teleology toward emergence. It was not, after all, inevitable that life should arise on Earth. Though all things develop as per their form, there is no guarantee that these forms will inevitably produce a new strata. Judging from the vastness of the universe and the relative desolation of life found within it, it is clear that, were the conditions to have differed very slightly, abiogenesis never would have occurred. Yet it did. In long eons, improbable things become commonplace and those improbable things only ever occur in those circumstances where the previous component has come into being.

We, as a species, and as an ecological whole, in combination with the material and ideological structures we create, are the crucial constituents to form that higher emergence. And if the substrate of society is consciousness, then the culmination of an emergent society lies within the will, acting to transform its conditions. The more driven, the more purposeful the action of the participant in these new things, the more quickly might the task be fulfilled, mistakes corrected out and earnest action marshaled toward success.

Do not be confused: it is not necessarily that these features themselves are guarantees of emergence. That is to say, you can go about creating very diverse and adaptive systems yet you will not simply achieve emergence ipso facto. It is instead that each of these qualities contribute to one aspect of the system, creating something that is delicate enough to probe the phase space of reality and thus settle into a sort of existential equilibrium. Emergence is then less like a prescribed process and more like a resonant frequency arising from that system's unique qualities.

These key properties of degrees of freedom, elemental diversity, and strongly coupled sub-systems, which still manage the balance of autopoiesis and allopoiesis form a sort of functional substrate which allows the system to search through the configuration space of reality to find a particular resonant frequency, to allow it to establish complex interrelations, and for these to elaborate into something that is more than the sum of its parts. This sort of system, balanced upon the edge of chaos and order, may perpetuate itself forward, yet adapt, discovering its own harmony between inside and out.

Anarchism then offers us such a potentially emergent system of relations for human political, economic, and social affairs. These five key qualities, produced within anarchist theory and occurring before then in some indigenous societies, maintain the delicate balance of autopoiesis and allopoiesis that is necessary to form a horizontal creorder. And the state of existence which

emerges from these systemic features, which it produces organically as per its free functioning, I will call anarchy.

For this reason, I will call a political, economic, and social order which is constructed in such a way that it might allow anarchy to emerge, an anarchist, anarchistic, or anarchic system, rather than anarchy. It may be said then that an anarchic system is a kind of horizontal power structure, though there are horizontal power structures not capable of producing anarchy, such as single organizations or groups. It must be said, it is irrelevant whether the anarchic system calls itself anarchist. We have spoken only of function, not dogma. It only matters if it is built with the prerequisites to allow anarchy to emerge.

More than this, as the new strata for emergence, it opens up a world of new things. It is not a fixed state of existence, but a new orientation for change. It is adaptation, it is self-organization, it is flux. As Rudolf Rocker says:

“Anarchism is no patent solution for all human problems, no Utopia of a perfect social order, as it has so often been called, since on principle it rejects all absolute schemes and concepts. It does not believe in any absolute truth, or in definite final goals for human development, but in an unlimited perfectibility of social arrangements and human living conditions, which are always straining after higher forms of expression, and to which for this reason one can assign no definite terminus nor set any fixed goal.”

It may seem, in laying out so much detail here that we disagree with Rocker. But we do not at all. We have merely laid out what autopoietic components are needed to produce an eternal allopoiesis. Adaptation means capability to change, to utilize the available degrees of freedom is the highest purpose of this new organism. In this, it becomes possible that we could hold the great beast of exploitation at bay and build a society based in mutuality and libertarian power. Not only is this structure horizontal by its very nature, but it allows few vectors through which forces of even interpersonal power could become malignant or structurally embedded.

Like kyriarchy serves to maintain hierarchical society, these impulses maintain a horizontal society. Indeed, they will not only reproduce horizontal society, but be reproduced by the horizontal power structures which characterize it. Hierarchical power, relying on reduction by centralism, imposition by narrow rulership, and misery produced from subjugation, turns humans into components. By contrast, horizontal power views humans as complementary beings. In this way, as the relations of horizontal power are expanded, so too is human freedom.

Anarchy is that harmonious state that stands to organically dismantle the kyriarchal mega-machine. Anarchy itself, that emergent mode of existence which arises from anarchic society, then serves as the new creorder and itself becomes the new force of order and reorder. Anarchy is the resurrection of the species' immune system from near dissolution and a return to homeostatic function. What is formed in this are the self-perpetuating material and social structures which maintain the horizontal creorder. Such a structure is then one that is built to diminish and destroy hierarchical power relations eternally. That is to say: to diminish the misery-making-forces of domination and authoritarianism and to banish their anti-life impulses of simplification and regimentation.

And, having eliminated these pernicious conflicts within the societies that humans have built, in dissolving the kyriarchal mega-machine, we open up the potentiality that we might reharmoni-

nize ourselves with pre-human nature. In this, humanity may finally be prepared to produce what Bookchin called 'free nature.' As he says in *The Philosophy of Social Ecology* :

“In a very real sense, an ecological society would be a transcendence of both first nature and second nature into a new domain of a 'free nature,' a nature that in a truly rational humanity reached the level of conceptual thought — in short, a nature that would willfully and thoughtfully cope with conflict, contingency, waste, and compulsion. In this new synthesis, where first and second nature are melded into a free, rational, and ethical nature, neither first nor second would lose its specificity and integrity. Humanity, far from diminishing the integrity of nature, would add the dimension of freedom, reason, and ethics to it and raise evolution to a level of self-reflexivity that has always been latent in the emergence of the natural world.”

To those who say that such a horizontal order is an impossible ideal, we can only bring their attention eternally to the process of emergence and the delicate auto-catalytic manner in which it has always arisen, in all systems over the course of our universe. To any being which could have looked upon its conditions, life on Earth would have seemed an improbable ideal for the ten billion years it lay barren. In the epoch of quark-gluon plasmas, atoms would have seemed far-fetched. For great eras no solids existed and great clouds of gas spanned lightyears, coalescing around their gravitational centers, yet did not the era of solids begin with the first solids? Did not the era of molecules begin with the first molecules? Did not the era of single-celled organisms begin with those first autopoietic protein chains? Wherein any new thing begins, it must begin in a first fundament, arising anew in the existing substrate of reality.

Once these strata, established as they are by shifting conditions and improbable, autopoietic processes become absolute facts, their apparent infeasibility dissolves and we regard their existence as conventional wisdom. We study these emergent properties and tell ourselves confidently that they are the rational outcome of previous conditions, pretending they are now obvious. But there is a reason why the students of emergence often return to its defining feature as 'surprise.' When systems work together to become more than the sum of their parts, wondrous processes can take place. Processes which transcend previous, stale, false wisdom, which defy previous dictates and limitations.

The doomsday prophets stand here to tell us that it cannot be, as to tell us that the era of molecules cannot arise from the strata of atoms. They tell us that the era of an emergent social order based in our internal species relations and its relations with the ecology cannot take place, that we must be held in subjugation to a world-spanning, parasitic machine and to believe ourselves subject to its gears, hoping it will evolve into a liberatory thing out of some historical inevitability or that it will wither away of some natural process, gradually becoming its own negation.

But emergence does not arise from the churning of machines and systems of top-down control. No planner can make the emergent order. That centrality, that desire to control all things, is in fact the antithetical principle to such an emergence. It must instead arise within us, of us. We must form those first autopoietic processes ourselves as products of the principles of the social strata, as the harmonization of our needs and desires and creative powers as individual agents, recognizing our place within the ecological mass, as the continuation of a process of ever-growing complexity and diversity. Only under such conditions could transformation ever take place. Only

under these improbable motive forces could we become more than the sum of our parts, not a machine, but a new strata of reality.

Moving away from the state, we move toward the communes.

From capitalism – to socialism

From white supremacy – to racial diversity

From patriarchy – to gender equity

From ableism – to disability justice

From gerontocracy – to youth liberation

From transphobia – to bodily autonomy

From xenophobia – to humanism

From speciesism – to animal liberation

From reductionism – to holism

From hierarchical society – to horizontal society

From atomization, from slavery, from inequality, from regimentation, from deprivation – to anarchy.

## **Part 3: Revolution**



# Introduction

Over the last two parts of this series, we traveled a long path. First, we had to rouse the sleepers awake, to force open their eyes and implore them to gaze upon the horror that had endured in their slumber; to look around and regard a waking nightmare. Indeed, the darkness is so deep that, had we stopped there, hope may have seemed nothing more than a distant dream; a reminder why we sleep instead of wake. But this was not the end of our exploration. We journeyed further through the forest until we arrived upon a lofty overhang which oversaw a world beyond the canopy. And there lay a verdant cove in the distance. Knowing this place existed, we assured ourselves that, were we to reach it, there would be fertile soil in which we could plant the flourishing garden which we call anarchy.

But it will not be easy to reach this place nor to plant our garden. A great trek lay ahead, through the unknown, where treachery will lie, where momentous dangers will continually bar our progress. To tread this path, we will be forced to strengthen ourselves step by step, overcoming exhaustion and discouragement. If we are to protect the world and those we love, great sacrifices will be forced upon us, of ourselves and of many of our old comforts. Now, we have returned home to prepare ourselves for the long path ahead.

We do not tread this path because it will be joyful, though joys there may be along such a trek, nor because we expect a return on our efforts, though the names of great heroes may indeed echo through time, but because predation and parasitism have risen to such a height that they threaten the very continuation of all life. Because our misery and alienation deepens day by day. Because the ecology collapses now around us. If there is a purpose for humanity in this planetary ecosystem, it is to reverse the drive toward death and to bring about a new world of complexity and diversity. If the horror is ever to end, it is us, the people, that will carry out its final decline. We are left with only one option and it is: revolution.

# The Anatomy of A Power Structure

Setting upon our path now, with knowledge sufficient to drive us from the dark wood, knowing what better potentialities might await us, it is necessary we prepare ourselves for the journey. This requires us to synthesize together all those principles which have been at play before and to find those new principles which might come into play in the ensuing analysis. For this reason, we may restate some of these foundational conclusions, but we will do so in the interests of deriving the next layers of our conception.

In the analysis before, we spent significant time formulating the key relational principles that characterize the kyriarchal mega-machine as well as how anarchy might function by way of a foundational method. However, what we did not do is discuss the landscape between where we are now and where we wish to be, nor what principles would allow us to walk whatever path might take us there.

Such a path through the landscape has been proposed in many forms by many different people, the vast majority quite unsuccessful in practice. This bevy of failures, in fact, contributes to our modern paralyzation. It is easy now to give up hope that real transformation will ever be possible. It seems hard to imagine that the astounding force and renowned brilliance of the previous revolutionary waves could not have contained the potential to undergo this transition. If they could not do it, how can we?

But the presence of previous failures does not show that failure is a permanent state of existence. Preceding the first true success of any measure, there is always a litany of mistakes and half-measures. And, not trusting that chance will fulfill our liberatory future, it is up to us to ask what lessons might be learned from our previous shortcomings, to what degree our failure was incidental as opposed to guaranteed, and in what ways we can prevent these conditions from reoccurring the next time we struggle.

And so it must be said: one of the most important reasons why these failures have taken place is that we have not mapped the landscape we are meant to bridge correctly. Confronted by sloping mountains and plummeting valleys, we find the ground infirm, our bridges tumbling down into ravines beneath, attempting to scale impossible ascensions by hand. So with this, it is necessary that we think more methodically about the terrain we are confronted with, asking how the relations which form its basis can be moved and shifted, how we might avoid these peaks and valleys or confront them where necessary.

In the first part of this series, we intimated that a power structure is:

“a material and conceptual system embodied through social, technological, and environmental relations that then determine how the collective powers of some group of conscious beings are directed.”

Though, in that definition, we referred to the categories of: the social, the technological, and the environmental, which then have bearing on the conscious, let us construct a mapping that is

even more precise. The anatomy of all power structures consists of some combination of the four following fields of relations: individual conditioning, interpersonal relations, social structures, and environmental structures.

**Individual Conditioning** is the result of nature and nurture acting on some given individual, comprising all of their psychological and biological conditions. This also crucially includes ideology, which is a system of ideas that inform an individual's outlook on the world.

This category includes examples such as: reward-seeking behavior, personal meaning, fear, trauma, delusion, bodily disfigurement, or strengthening, but also capitalist ideology, anarchist ideology, communist ideology, liberal philosophy, Buddhism, Islam, Daoism, and so on...

**Interpersonal Relations** are those relations which an individual has with the other conscious beings that they directly interact with.

For example: friendships, intimate partnerships, families, boss-worker relations, but also such phenomena as racism, transphobia, sexism, xenophobia, domestic abuse, etc...

**Social Structures** are consistent patterns which direct the flow of social power and are reified by continued use of social power.

For example: capitalist property relations, the state, law, white supremacy, patriarchy, honor, chivalry, but also anarchic society, communal ethics, organic societies, mutualism, hospitality standards, and so on...

**Environmental Structures** are non-conceptual structures, embodied in the non-human physical world. These are those structures which, were humans to cease existing, would remain.

I.e: infrastructure, factories, buildings, technology, armories, cars, tanks, firearms, forests, deserts, fields, animals, asteroid belts, galaxies, even natural law.

And note that these are not simply the key features of hierarchical power structures, these are the anatomical features of all viable power structures. It is depending on how these relations are arranged that some structure may then be based in authoritarianism and domination or libertarianism and mutuality. And also note: these four fields of activity are not separated into singular realms, as if sealed in different containers.

The universe is constrained only by the laws of physics and mediated only by flows of energy. And so, while it may be the case that certain phenomena most primarily root to one or another of these fields of activity, they all intervene on one another in crucial ways. As energy flows from one place to another, unbound by our conceptual distinctions, these different aspects then naturally form together into complexes. And these complexes then grow more and more sophisticated, more embodied as they involve more of these realms. This means that these recurring bundles of relations are also not happen-stance occurrences. They exist because they work in perpetuating their existence through the real diversion of energy flows and, wherein any thing perpetuates its existence, it lives as a real impulse and affects the world repetitively.

All these complex bundles of relations are then constructed and reconstructed through the reordering process we discussed earlier in this series of essays. And this reordering is built in order to maintain a set of key power relations that characterize the existing power structures and which cannot be undermined lest the system cease to function. In each system, the set of key power relations will differ, causing the reordering to function differently as well. But it is these power relations which animate the system, resting in all four fields and perpetuating themselves throughout.

This is important because in order for systems to self-perpetuate, they must also then iterate. This is to say, as certain varieties of systems are met with choosing filters, only those which

carry out successful strategies in relation to that filter will survive and then go on to produce copies. For this reason, the adaptation we discuss, as well as the systemic structures themselves, must be understood as iterations of these power structures which seek successful strategies for autopoiesis. Based on how rigid these structures are, then, they may iterate more or less broadly.

Beings within the mega-machine, for example, pressured by kyriarchal social structures, limited by environmental relations, and forced into eternal conflict with internal forces of opposition, carry out strategically viable paths to maintain systemic consistency, not only in their own interest – as it is indeed within their interest to perpetuate the system that provides them sustenance – but because the system constantly produces pressures which condition the actions of the beings within them. And the strategically most useful position, in the interests of systemic autopoiesis and individual self-interest, is for hierarchical power structures to maintain maximal kyriarchy. Note that maximal kyriarchy is not the same as maximum kyriarchy. Maximum means that we have achieved the highest possible peak of a given thing. Whereas, maximal instead means that we have achieved a relative peak, given relevant circumstances. This is important, because the system cannot achieve maximum kyriarchy without destroying itself, as this would involve absolute unitary power and suffocation of all complexity and organic creative impulse. The kyriarchal mega-machine is a parasite which must resist killing its host.

This is why neither the system nor its individual agents can harbor a significant variation from these maximal kyriarchal strategies for long. Though it is true that authority may drift from one place to another and that domination may shift more from threat, to deception, to real exhibition of physical violence, the basic precept of the machine always remains the same: deprivation of the masses from control of the world around them and the enforcement of that deprivation through coercive means. If any component were to function otherwise, it would threaten the systemic and individual ability to self-perpetuate and therefore be purged.

Even when well-intentioned actors make their way into privileged positions within the system, they will find the limits of their control quite quickly. Whether individuals or entire parties, the machine cannot be changed by bureaucratic willpower alone. Its interconnections are deeply embedded into reality. Thus we must also emphasize, it is not that the capitalists themselves are the great masterminds of the capitalist system any more than the civil administrators within the state are the controllers of the governmental apparatus. The system, built as it is, bounds all possible actions and drives internal pressures that maintain its key relations. As Malatesta has said:

“...social wrongs do not depend on the wickedness of one master or the other, one governor or the other, but rather on masters and governments as institutions; therefore, the remedy does not lie in changing the individual rulers, instead it is necessary to demolish the principle itself by which men dominate over men”<sup>1</sup>

This process, wherein systems maintain themselves under various kinds of pressures within the four fields of activity by changing their internal and external relations, while still maintaining their key relations, I will call restructuring. Restructuring is a process that takes place as one pressure, occurring in one part of a power structure, is relieved by enforcing pressure elsewhere. And, because of this restructuring, the misery of the subjects within the global mega-machine is rarely reduced on aggregate. More often, as the machine seeks maximal kyriarchy, it enforces that misery in some other way. This can take place largely within the local system’s bounds, such

as the example where an economic system is faltering and therefore uses xenophobia, white supremacy, or some other form of exclusion to maintain economic supremacy. Or it may be external, such as in the example of imperialism, colonialism, international economic exploitation and other such forms of geopolitical leverage.

This restructuring process is also the reason why the old predictions that the “contradictions” of capitalism would build up until it could no longer hold itself together, have failed to come true. Where the system would break, it re-routes the stressors into some other field, holding its threatened component in place and burdening some other oppressed population, some other bureaucratic agency, bolstering some other form of domination, annihilating some new niche within the ecology. Restructuring maintains systemic consistency, producing interrelations between apparently discontinuous pieces. And the interrelations of the machine can only shift within certain key limits. So let us now briefly discuss the broadest strokes of these interrelations in the current world and we will return to these interrelations as we discuss what the process of transformation must look like.

Firstly, individual conditioning perpetuates individual conditioning. Ideology, for example, has a tendency to confirm itself through bias, through the accumulation of evidence, and in one’s intellectual development. A person’s expectations of the world form their actions, which then either enforce or diminish those expectations in the future. This is a very important component of kyriarchy, as it embodies a micro-political perpetuation of its hierarchical features. Most importantly to kyriarchy, hierarchical realism perpetuates itself within the minds of its subjects as they move through their lives.

Individual conditioning then also determines how people will interact with others in their lives. At a young age, people are conditioned to treat others in particular ways based on the way they have been treated beforehand, based on the expectations set for them by others whom they trust. And, as they move through their life, they then serve this purpose to others. Subsequently, this leads to the development of the mask we discussed in part 1 as well as the foundation for willing performative aspects of identity. And, depending on how this process plays out, it will enforce feelings of either belonging or alienation. This takes ideological orientation and brings it into the person’s immediate social world. As others are affected by the outcomes of this ideological orientation, they will often then be conditioned toward these orientations themselves, especially as these principles become more generalized in their environment, whether they like them or not. This interface is then a key playing field of racism, sexism, transphobia, ableism and all other forms of bigotry, themselves becoming embedded in the cycle of individual conditioning.

Social structures also serve a crucial function to enforce different ideological perspectives by forming the acceptable bounds of normativity. And the mega-machine produces bounds of normativity which reinforce kyriarchal maximization. This is then a primary interaction in producing the Overton Window, which creates more individuals with a kyriarchal ideology. Individuals may be said to become polarized toward or against specific structures within society that affect them based on how well aligned their ideological orientation is with those structures. And so those which have developed a hierarchical polarity will tend to seek out hierarchical structures and operate within them. In this, these individuals work to enforce or reinforce kyriarchal social structures set upon them by oppressive norms. And this cyclic process of normalization can then develop attitudes of slavishness, backward conceptions of progress, and desire for submission to the mega-machine. This is one of the most primary mechanisms through which hierarchical

realism is established and reinforced.

Individual conditioning is then also in immediate feedback with environmental structures. The way that one views the world, affects the way they will treat the world around them. If the world is a thing to be “used” then it is okay to use it up and discard it. This is true both of ecological structures and human infrastructure. The idea that humanity is “superior” to nature leads to exploitation of nature. And, the recognition that one has no ownership of the urban cityscape around them also leads to low investment, thus low impetus toward custodianship. Furthermore, the content of people’s environments determines a very significant aspect of their individual emotional content, affects their belief in the success or failure of the society they are embedded in, and limits the sorts of choices they are able to make within its bounds.

Different kinds of interpersonal relations influence the development of further interpersonal relations. Indeed, this is a crucial aspect of how hierarchical mentalities become wedded to one another; a sort of electric valence which helps align the many ideological components of society toward a common end. As people are exposed to these standards of interpersonal by those around them, they develop new neural networks, new dopamine pathways, which will change their behavior to act more in accordance with the needs of the mega-machine. Interpersonal structures such as families perpetuate the creation of a family bond, to expand the family group more broadly, or to protect the members of that family. As do friendships tend to perpetuate themselves into the future, to promote new friendships adjacent to those you know, and to protect those within this realm. Accordingly, these dynamics of interpersonal perpetuation also play out in examples such as village communities and small towns or clans.

So too do interpersonal relations and social structures interact quite prolifically. Not only must it be said that almost all social structures originated in interpersonal relations at one point or another in their history, perhaps more importantly, social structures form the normative bounds of interpersonal. Patriarchy, for example, produces the norms for how men and women are expected to act, both in society abroad, and in interaction with each other. These oppressive patriarchal gender standards introduce a hierarchical contagion into nearly all gender interpersonality, driving the prevalence of domestic violence and abusive household power dynamics, placing men and women against one another in the workplace, and therefore introducing a constant struggle which perpetually resists resolution. Moreover, because patriarchy provides the core social conditioning and expectations that define the role of men and women in society, it also acts as suppression of transgender and queer identities by conjunction. These identities become ‘other’ and therefore invite contempt, revulsion, and desire for suppression by those who have been brainwashed by the patriarchal order. Capitalism as well produces arbitrary human interrelations, driving humans to think of all interactions as transactions, to see other human beings as disposable competitors, turning human existence into nothing more than a race to hoard artificially scarce resources. White supremacy produces social fissures between different racial populations, creating distrust and resentment, even pitting disenfranchised non-white populations against one another. The examples of this interface, as with the others, are endless. All of these sorts of dynamics are why, as we shall discuss, we cannot simply alter social structures alone; mass alterations in interpersonality must take place if we wish to alter those social structures to begin with.

Interpersonality is also crucially conditioned by environmental structure and acts to condition it in return. Interpersonality creating environmental structure was seen much more commonly in the development of early townships and when small cities made structures to serve as stages

to already existing interpersonal relations. But because the mega-machine relies on monopolizing all environmental structures, this process mostly takes place in the opposite direction in the modern world. This process of environmental monopoly has taken place through accumulation of the legal ownership of land and standing structures, but expanded most prolifically with the enclosure of the commons, as well as global imperialism and settler colonialism. As a result of this aspect of mega-mechanical colonization, new interpersonal relations have a great deal of difficulty developing environmental structures to suit them. Environmental structures, reorganized for the needs of kyriarchy, now serve to restructure interpersonality rather than be formed by it.

Social structures also perpetuate themselves by using other social structures. Capitalism is, for example, encoded deeply into law. But so has white supremacy been at various points in history. The state and its representative fictions are used to suppress movements which might undermine kyriarchy, whose complexes bolster one another. As capitalism fails, kyriarchal mentalities rise, especially in phenomena such as anti-semitism, white supremacy, homophobia, or transphobia. As particular hierarchical social structures are diminished, others are called in to produce maximal kyriarchy in their place. This is the field of play for many of the most important shifts in the functioning of the mega-machine, as we have said up to this point.

And the interaction of social and environmental structures is one of these interactions which has been written about most extensively of any we discuss. Environmental structures form the bounds of motion within a given social regime. Environmental structures require transformation to abide by social structures and social structures function to bolster existing environmental configurations, thus the historical emphasis on how the means of production form the basis of class society. This can also be seen in discussions of environmental racism, culminating in phenomena such as redlining, or in the ecocidal interaction between hierarchical power structures and the ecology. This also plays a very significant role in ableism, allowing access to or denying access to even many public and private facilities.

Lastly, environmental structures bolster one another prolifically. In fact, the perpetuation of environmental structures by other environmental structures comprises everything that is non-conscious in the cosmos. The entire universe, up until conscious beings entered the picture, functioned through environmental structures interacting with one another. The laws of physics and chemistry, unbound and undiverted by consciousness. Those energetic reservoirs moved about by conscious action all originated here, through billions of years of process.

As we can see, each of these interfaces between the four fields are overflowing with analytic potential, bursting from the bounds of these mere paragraph overviews. Indeed, as we abbreviated the analytic interfaces of the five values in part 2 of this piece, we will hold off on the higher order interrelations for now. It is more important that the reader hold these conceptions in mind as we proceed, as we will return to them time and time again in the analysis to come. So with this introductory inter-relational analysis complete, it is time we move on to the namesake of the essay.

After all, the mega-machine presents a problem so dire and so necessary to confront that this confrontation comprises a dictum for existence. If we want to live in a world of complexity and diversity, of freedom of power, cooperative coordination, and holistic embrace of uniqueness, we will have to fight for it. Because, though the misery of the mega-machine may be held at bay by manufacture of consent, it is within its sheer functioning as a machine to cyclically return to this deprivation and degradation of its subjects. In this case, all that is left is suppression of their subjects' retaliation by fiat of violence and coercion.

But it is not enough to analyze. We could sit and muse on the interrelation of all things for hours or days or months or years; so long as we do not act, we will fail to free ourselves from this misery. In this, we echo Marx in saying:

“Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.”<sup>2</sup>

It is not enough to say we oppose a system, nor to lay out what kind of system we would like by contrast. We must earnestly ask: how do we propose to alter or destroy the one at hand? What kind of power structures must we create and how will the enemy structure respond when we do? Because, like any machine, the kyriarchal mega-machine can cave under sufficient force. Let us speak of how.



# Breaking the Machine

So then, seeing as we are caught up in the gears of this great death machine and knowing that our only ray of hope lies in the construction of a horizontal counterpower, we must determine the strategic conditions ahead. In beginning this analysis, let us again note that all power structures survive by internalizing flows of power. However, whereas under horizontal power structures complexified energy reservoirs are built up and distributed at the whim of the masses, able to be shared and utilized by those that they affect, under hierarchical power structures there is a drive to make all complexified energy reservoirs standardized and manipulated to produce obedience to authoritarian structures. And so, likewise, whereas hierarchical power structures, based on monopoly of power, are threatened by the existence of bodies which resist monopolization, horizontal power structures, based on distribution of power to the masses, are threatened by all bodies which seek to monopolize powers within society. In order for one to grow, it must grow at the expense of the other. Where both exist, they always, in time, enter an overt struggle to totalize the field of power and therefore dismantle the key relations of their opposite.

In the greater strategic landscape, there is no way for hierarchical power and horizontal power to cooperate. There is also no way for a hierarchical impulse to become a horizontal impulse, because all viable power structures seek to perpetuate their fundamental relations. It is therefore only in systemic failure that some power structure can be replaced by its opposite. Just as solidified objects require some substantial energies to disassociate, so too does the mega-machine. And this is no small account. In fact, dismantling the mega-machine requires such a titanic energy that it can even appear to be changing into a liberatory form when it is really only being partially dissociated. Where half-measures predominate, many of its basic catalytic components are able to re-solidify back into another rigid, hierarchical structure, as we have seen time and time again in the attempts at state capitalism.

This is why all these hierarchical methods have failed to bring us closer to our liberatory goal. The refusal of the authoritarians to recognize the unity of means and ends has made them into foot-soldiers for reaction. An anti-hierarchical path requires that we eternally inject agitation into the mega-machine, such that its kyriarchal structures malfunction, such that human interrelations can be re-formed, and then allowed to solidify into an anarchic structure instead. Wherever authoritarianism and domination seek to reproduce themselves, they must be perpetually countervailed through libertarianism and mutuality.

These facts also give rise to several notable theoretical principles within anarchism. The first is the necessity of what anarchists call “direct action.” This is to say, anarchists do not act through secondary parties to carry out our goals. We do not beg for power from outside sources and we do not need to be granted permission to act from higher bodies. Anarchists act directly in the world to achieve their ends. More than this, they build their strength by acting. Anarchists must always seek to become the force within the world which reshapes the world and ensures its ensuing form.

To alienate one's power to intermediaries is to rely on those intermediaries for power, to trust that they will act in the benefit of the people instead of the bounds of the system they are contained within. But as we have seen, when the flows of power move, individuals cannot be trusted to act as representation of the wills of others; they can only be expected to move as their conditions dictate. And so, wherever some flow of power relies on the continued grace of our enemy, it becomes a mechanism for our later defeat when it is withheld.

Accordingly, the broadest details of a transformative strategy can be stated summarily: to constantly diminish the field of relations that have been claimed by hierarchical power and therefore to weaken the kyriarchal mega-machine, while continually growing the field of relations that have been subsumed by horizontal powers, therefore strengthening the masses and setting the stage for anarchy. This condition of struggle must persist until it produces progressive crises, each of them driving the enemy to reveal its true face, wherein we escalate through an era of extended conflict.

If a well-organized, distributed, horizontal process is carried out to its most extreme form, it will constitute a revolution; the phase transition of human political structure, the dismantling, melting down, and refashioning of old component pieces. This revolutionary demand remains the same in all societies: the complete control of the flow of power by the masses of people. The abolition of the mega-machine; libertarianism and mutuality held together in harmony. Any revolutionary demands that do not have this as their thrust will only backslide into reformism and realpolitik in time.

This is, in fact, why systemic reform will always be a dead-end. It is a request for mercy from a countervailing, hierarchical system. Reform can only ever give a jolt to an otherwise smooth-functioning machine, destined as it is to settle back into equilibrium and return to its primal drive. In this way, the demand for simple quality-of-life improvements, in and of themselves, cannot be revolutionary in their thrust. After all, hierarchical powers can improve people's lives by considerable amounts so long as the demands of their subjects do not diminish the ability for the mega-machine to continue on. And so, when the bounds of those things which people want improved are relegated to easier sustenance, better housing, better wages, and so on, there can be no complete transformation of society. It ultimately amounts to begging for bread-crumbs from the table of the ruling class. Under extreme pressure, the mega-machine may indeed do what is necessary to provide those things, but in return it will vampirize some other aspect of human existence which will make all of these demands in vain.

And so, given that power is the ability to enact one's ends, mass power is crucially reliant on the existence of some means which can feasibly bring about the liberatory ends of the masses. It is, after all, not enough to decide that one grabs an item from the tabletop, the subject must also move their limbs to meet the task. And to lift a great weight, one must strengthen their body to meet the burden. In this same way, horizontal power constitutes the material strengthening of the masses, to lift a great weight indeed; a complete transformation of human social, economic, and political affairs and in their wake, the reunion of humanity with the ecology, the destruction of phantasmal boundaries, and the establishment of interconnectedness and holism.

This gives enormous historical revolutionary importance to the content of the vehicle that is built! If that vehicle which is built to weather the transition is a model of hierarchical control, it will only ever degrade into a component of hierarchical society. Indeed, as we have seen, it can become the progenitor of hierarchical society itself.

This is then the justification for the revolutionary praxis called 'prefiguration.' In this, we must actively construct the negating impulses within the world we currently have and then tend them to fruition. This requires us to create a counter-system which embodies emancipation, which protects and perpetuates the liberatory process. The prefigurative anarchist is then attempting to carry out actions and create real, living structures which are as similar to the critical point we discussed in the second part of this series as conceivably possible. This might be seen as the creation of auto-catalytic forms of existence that, as they perpetuate, act to shift relations around them, to internalize flows of energy and form them into a horizontal counter-power, and to therefore bring about a system that is closer to our anarchic critical point.

Within the anarchist milieu, there is some significant dispute over what form this creative process must take. Some may take a looser and more anti-organizationalist approach, oriented around the creation of informal affinity groups and fluid interpersonality. However, bearing in mind the conclusions from our foray into complex systems analysis, the range of possibilities for effective solutions is significantly narrowed. The horizontal powers we construct absolutely must be able to self-perpetuate into the future, as to provide a continuing impetus for social and political transformation. If they do not self-perpetuate, then they cannot learn from their mistakes, internalizing lessons and solutions to repeated problems. And they must also be able to spread themselves through a process of automatic proliferation. That is to say, we must build an engine of anarchist revolutionary transition which perpetuates itself and multiplies prolifically.

When looking upon every frame of the thing that we build, we must see within it the impetus to produce its next moment's existence, not only overcoming current hurdles, but new challenges that will confront us as our power grows. Every time our structures fall apart and must be reformed from scratch, we lose our progress, decreasing the total leverage we can build against hierarchical power. Every time we produce something that is short-sighted and incapable of looking forward to foreseen circumstances, it will be taken off guard as it confronts new and difficult challenges.

After all, our structures will never carry out a wide scale social revolution if we cannot eventually develop power leverage over enemy structures. To defeat a power structure, it must be overpowered. And when some system has power leverage over another, it will tend to gain more and more power over time, unless it is stopped. Indeed, this tendency of power structures with superior leverage to continue exacerbating their leverage is so important that we will give it a name: ratcheting. Every moment that passes in which we do not develop our counter-structures and wherein we do not empower ourselves together through them, the mega-machine increases its ratcheting over us and through us.

Moreover, if some structure no longer has to exert energy catching up to the enemy and maintaining their gains against an overwhelming tide, all of its energy can be spent on further expansion and basic autopoiesis of existing structures which have already been solidified. It can then begin to accumulate reserve energy reservoirs. And when a system has developed to such a strength that it can utilize its reserve energy reservoirs to suppress opposition, we might say it has become the hegemon or that its reign is hegemonic. In this occasion that some power structure holds hegemony over its region of interest, its structural power will begin to grow faster and faster, with each new flow of energy serving to expand its existing structure. As creorder continues, ratcheting continues, producing a more and more unassailable hold over its territory.

Therefore: with prefiguration and direct action considered together, each action we carry out must be in the interest of creating autopoietic mass power, as to distribute the organic power of

those masses in a way which is consistent with the eventual production of anarchy. This is to say, we must create multi-faceted horizontal power structures which act to reduce hierarchical power leverage, to impede its ratcheting process, and to eventually establish leverage over the mega-machine instead.

In order to move from here to there we will have to change both the environmental and social structures that exist, as well as the ideological and interpersonal relations of society, not as separate programs, but as a unified and concerted prefigurative project. For this reason revolutionary action carried out as it must be through prefigurative methods must also consist in the joint construction of horizontal organizations and horizontal consciousness. This concept, regarding the importance of simultaneous action in all four fields of activity, I will call strategic holism.

This concept of strategic holism is not a minor realization. It is so totalizing in its importance that it influences every aspect of how we must struggle. This is to say, it is not enough to build horizontal organizations and to change ideological conceptions apart from one another. Each of the four fields will have a tendency to backslide into kyriarchy without the other ones there to provide a restabilizing force. More plainly those anti-kyriarchal mentalities must be held by those who occupy horizontal revolutionary organizations. And, where anti-kyriarchal mentalities have been spread throughout culture, they must serve to catalyze the creation of horizontal organizations which will embody their strength.

Likewise, horizontal organizations must also attempt to create more horizontal mentalities inside and outside of themselves. The catalyst of a horizontal revolution cannot become a tiny affinity group cut off from the rest of society if it hopes to achieve any success. And at the same time, it must still remember to grow organically. That is to say it must grow at the rate at which it has permeated society with its new ideas and in measure to the degree that it has constructed real, existing horizontal power structures that may facilitate a further expansion of these ideas. As Malatesta says, in closing his essay *Organization* :

“If it is utopian to want to make revolution once everybody is ready and once everybody sees eye to eye, it is even more utopian to seek to bring it about with nothing and no one. There is measure in all things.”<sup>1</sup>

Just as the mega-machine builds and perpetuates itself through kyriarchal interrelations in all four fields of activity, so must we construct anarchic responses in those same fields. And so, let us inspect the dynamics which must play out in order for us to truly embrace this necessity of strategic holism.

Firstly, the aspect of individual conditioning as it tends to perpetuate itself within the individual, is a field of interaction that anarchists have focused on quite prolifically. In fact, this work is aimed at just such a process. My goal in exposing you to these ideas is to create a self-consistent ideological system which perpetuates itself over time within you. But this is not the only important thing to be said upon this field by any means. We must also cultivate a self-questioning process, wherein we act to root out kyriarchal mentalities which have been embedded within us, because those too, as we have said, perpetuate themselves within our psyches unless we do the work to uproot them. In order to cultivate such a process, we must take seriously the work of enriching our unique through rigorous and ceaseless self-education, nourishment of our psyche and our body, self-discipline, struggle for autonomy and selfhood, perpetual mindfulness, and loving treatment of self. We must hold ourselves to very high standards, while also accepting

that we make mistakes, that we are in an unceasing process of self-transformation to become the beings which are needed to overthrow the kyriarchal mega-machine.

The masses are psychologically and socially conditioned, through many interlocking systems of hierarchy, to have given up hope on transformation. They are exhausted by the grueling work of existence under capitalism, under patriarchy, under white supremacy, under colonialism, under cisheteronormativity, and all other systems of exploitation. In this way, we must act within our interpersonal field to promote a loving orientation; a delicate balance between acceptance of others along with a belief in their capability to change. We must act to externalize the education we have amassed and therefore sow the seeds of an autopoeitic anti-kyriarchal consciousness. As Goethe says:

“If we treat people as if they were what they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming.”<sup>2</sup>

What we do in this interpersonal world which surrounds us matters. We must act to embody our political principles within our personal lives to the best degree possible, in our relationships, in our orientations toward friends and co-workers, and toward the strangers which surround us in the bustling urban landscapes we often occupy. This does not only serve to prefigure the interpersonal relations of a new world, which we will discuss shortly, it acts to produce healthier human beings around us, to establish anti-kyriarchal mentalities, and to give reality to hypothesized interrelations. It produces conscious people and conscious people are harder to exploit.

We should, in fact, be trying to spread an anti-kyriarchal consciousness which promotes activity in all our personal affairs. Radicalization should be seen as a process wherein those who can act to destroy the mega-machine are convinced to do so, not just convinced that they should. It is to remind the people of their hidden uncoordinated might and to coordinate it once more between themselves to the best ends of the masses of the oppressed. We must therefore construct not only the will, but the knowledge about how to act, to give people hope that transformation can take place, to unburden them, to give substance to their dreams while in movement. As Frantz Fanon says in *Wretched of the Earth* :

“To educate the masses politically does not mean, cannot mean, making a political speech. What it means is to try, relentlessly and passionately, to teach the masses that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too, that there is no such thing as a demiurge, that there is no famous man who will take the responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people.”<sup>3</sup>

Radicalization is then a process of preparing the polarities of the many individual components of society to respond in a particular way given shifting circumstances, not just in the future, but right now. It is our work to act as the catalysts for this radical consciousness and to spread education, both through action, through development of prefigurative bodies, through the perpetuation of a new, generative interpersonal substrate, and through concerted propaganda, such that the masses will act in proper response to the conditions at hand.

Because, the larger the number of those who are radicalized and who have prepared themselves by inhabiting these new interpersonal relations, when the time comes that conflict with

the mega-machine escalates, the more people will be ready to seize upon that moment. And, by contrast, the fewer radicals that there are, the fewer people will be mobilized to act in order to change the conditions of the system when a rupture arrives. No matter how fortuitous the rupture at hand, if the people have not been radicalized, they will be unable to seize this opportunity. And if they have not already undergone significant revolutionary education, they may struggle in a way which is ineffective or counter-productive, even if they do recognize that the time for militancy is at hand.

It is also integrally important that we change the way we relate to one another, not just at a mass scale, wherein social structures may be affected by agglomeration. We must seek out the kyriarchal conditioning within our interpersonality, asking how it serves to reproduce hierarchical society and how it serves to make us easier to exploit. This serves not only to undermine the social structures at hand, but also to produce more comradeship, more cooperation, more solidarity, more freedom within our personal lives. We must reject misogyny not only because it bolsters kyriarchy, but simply because it hurts those around us. We must reject racism not only because it bolsters white supremacy, but because it degrades and dismantles the psyches of other human beings.

If we wish to create a new society, we must then begin inhabiting these new forms of being. We must question all those interpersonal conceptions that define our lives, asking what interpersonality would bolster continued solidaric relations, asking what would restore trust. In this, we must practice loving kindness to the extent it is available, we must try to embody trustworthiness and sincerity, lack of uncharitable judgment, and patience for others. We must be steadfast friends and reliable partners and caring lovers, knowing that these relationships perpetuate themselves at each juncture we are present in their reproduction. At the same time, we must learn to assert ourselves, to develop confidence and dignity in our personal experiences. To escape and confound the abuse, degradation, and oppression in our lives, to stand our ground in the face of exploiters, and to defend others from those acts of subjugation that we witness.

However, we must also create new social structures that act to produce these new human psyches. This is another crucial role that prefiguration plays in the process. As we have said: prefiguration provides those structures that facilitate revolutionary training within the current mode of society. Because where the people lack such a training ground, they may tend to be deceived by charlatans, just as the uninitiated are more likely to be taken in by all manner of underhanded schemes. And, though it may sound dour, if the people have not been educated in the revolutionary school of prefiguration beforehand, they may even be incapable of managing that which is suddenly handed to them. After all, though hierarchy and leadership are not strictly necessary in themselves, the functions which have been absorbed into those administrators and the skills of the technicians and the civil procedures of the bureaucrats and economic movements known to the heads of Industry still comprise key functions in coordinating the flow of power in society. And while it is true that much of these particular bases of knowledge will change so radically in our new structures that a substantial portion of the old ways will be disposable, if we think that absolutely no pertinent knowledge would be lost in a violent, exterminationist transition, we would be deluding ourselves as to the evidence of history. The people do not simply inherit the expertise that was once held in these privileged enclaves out of desire, but are instead thrust into learning out of bare necessity while under active siege by outside forces.

This is why history shows that, on the occasion that the people are not properly prepared for rupture, most often some despot comes forth and claims that a new hierarchical rule is neces-

sary, that the masses will aimlessly mismanage the environmental and social structures which they have inherited, and that this despot should stand at the helm instead. Accordingly, the people must be made skeptical of all such power hoarders and learn to sufficiently manage their own affairs, to carry out their revolutionary duties as human beings, to transform social and environmental structures before rupture arrives, and in doing so, transform themselves and their relations to others. The radicals of a prefigurative revolutionary method must then learn how to orient themselves holistically within horizontal structures, knowingly embedded in a tumultuous and unfavorable world, committed to learning these new ways of being that characterize the horizontal creorder. If they do not, they will be caught on the back foot when the time comes that they have the opportunity to seize the flows of power once captured by the mega-machine.

This means we must create horizontal organizational structures at all scales to prepare us for the coming world, revolutionary social structures that will perpetuate themselves, which then act in the other fields. This entails liberation in many spheres of social structural opposition: socialism, racial equity, gender equity, disability justice, youth liberation, trans liberation, social ecology, animal liberation, and others. It must abide in a social strategic holism. Because these represent our movement from hierarchical society to horizontal society. Wide scale libertarian organizations and forms of mutualistic norm then act as the key autopoietic components of this revolutionary transformation. This array of horizontal social structures must become forces in and of themselves, reproducing themselves at new junctures, perpetuating one another in our anti-kyriarchal approach.

So too must we remember that the individual is formed by their interaction with environmental structures. If we want to transform human interactions with their environment, we must endeavor to create new spaces that nurture a social ecological stance, to produce reverence for the organic and inorganic natural world, and to provide reintegration of this alienated humanity with their environment. Those spaces we craft within the urban landscape must then serve as refuge from the hierarchical orientations we have become accustomed to; spaces where we are once more in control, where an ethos of the commons pervades instead of the ethos of monopoly.

There is also important work to be done in transforming our environment to foster new interpersonal relations and in developing interpersonal relations which confound existing hierarchical arrangements of the environment. In order to develop new interpersonal relations, it will be necessary that we create new spaces for those interpersonal relations to inhabit. This entails that we must then reclaim literal territory from the mega-machine, to reverse enclosure and reproduce the commons. In rural areas, the mega-machine has often not claimed all valuable territory. There is still untamed wilderness and unwatched places. For this reason, there is great potential in utilizing this wilderness to create intentional communities, agricultural cooperatives, and communes. Suburbanization also offers unique opportunities. The proliferation of home ownership allows the possible development of backyard garden networks and rewilded yards, for example. So too might quasi-formal organizational models such as neighborhood pods or block committees serve to rekindle solidarity within these atomized areas. In urban areas, struggles to develop interpersonality may involve efforts such as squatting, urban agricultural cooperatives, and establishing community centers, among others. However, it must be said that the struggle to redevelop spaces for interpersonality to thrive are most difficult here, because of the absolute proliferation of mega-mechanical control over the land.

It is imperative then that the urban, the suburban, and the rural are linked together, as to repair the atomization between them, recognizing each as a crucial front in the struggle. At the

same time, we must always keep in mind that these differing conditions entail different strategic imperatives and try not to impose approaches from other conditions onto these others. Aiding in this, popular assemblies should be hosted, so as to produce connection between the catalyst group and the local population, to allow inquiry into local conditions, and to produce new spaces for interpersonality to flourish. Those who dwell in each of these places must develop communication with radicals in each of the others, coming together without false beliefs in the superiority of one or another of these fronts. The fractures must be repaired through both an ongoing dialogue and through material demonstrations of solidarity, meeting one another where they are at as they struggle to reclaim their commons from the mega-machine.

Lastly, we must also endeavor to reproduce ecological cycles which perpetuate themselves. That is to say, we must restore those self-perpetuating cycles within the ecosphere which have produced all of the ecological fecundity that we currently direct and redirect. Thus the common recognition in ecological thought that our goal is simply to reduce human impact in the environment. But we are counseling more than that here; we must create new ecological structures which, lying in harmony with those that already exist, produce a true place for humanity. That is to say, we should be trying to create a new humanistic ecology, not humanistic in its focus around humanity, but in that it is a complex, functioning ecology that holistically includes humanity. There was once such an ecology, before humanity rose to dominate the world around it. But we cannot and should not want to go back. We must go forward. We must abandon our position as dominators and instead recognize ourselves as stewards of a new ecology which flourishes as per its needs and our own; not just as the organic creatures we evolved to become from natural selection, but those which we have now become and can become. We must learn to live alongside the ecological mass, to know its worth, and to cultivate its fullest wellbeing.

So, with this in mind, we have now discussed a broader overview of how we might walk the path ahead, but we have not discussed what we will encounter along the way. Let us now lay out the cartography of our struggle and begin mapping our journey through the wilderness.



# A Revolutionary Roadmap

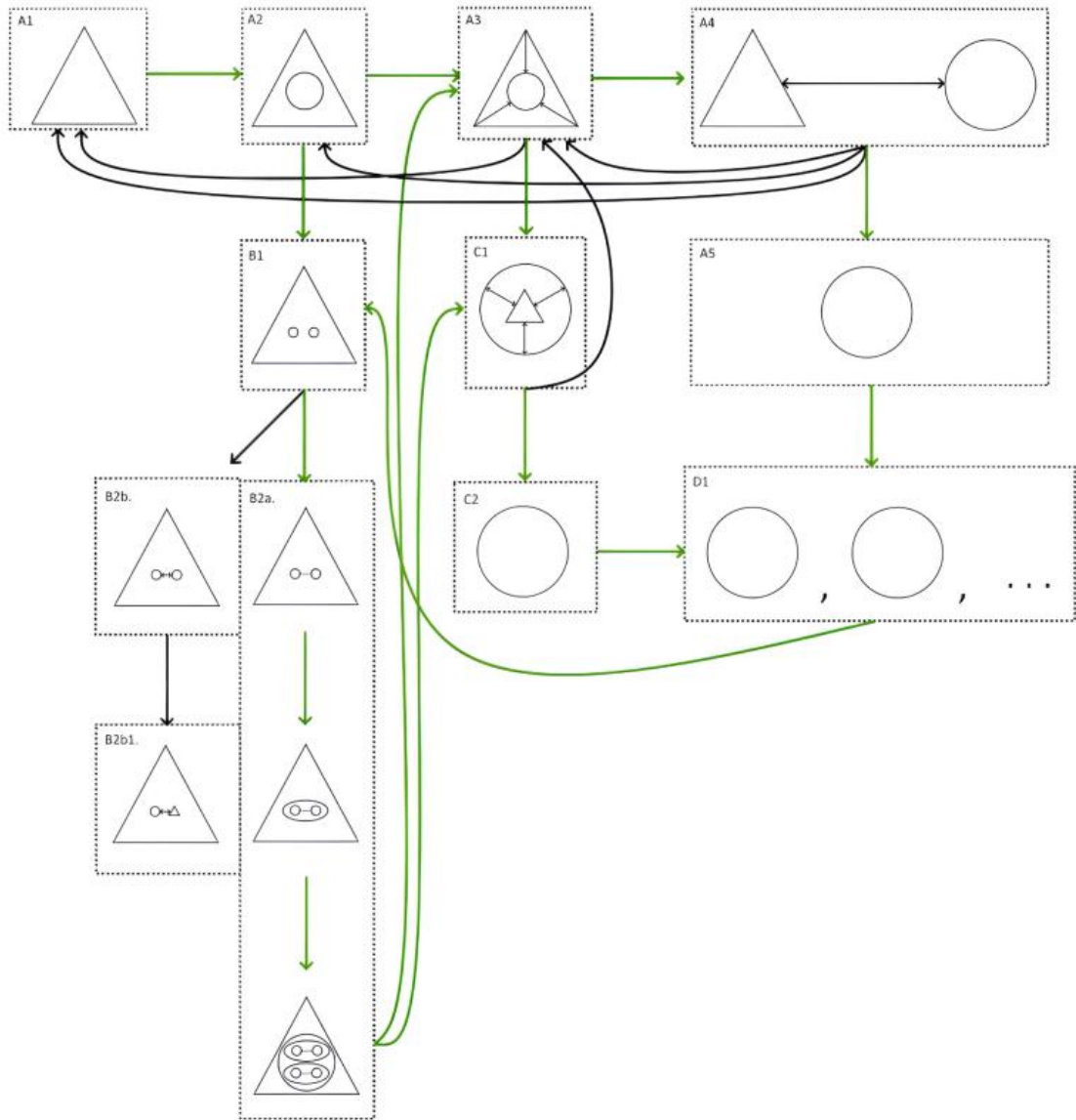
So now that we know our current location, our destination, and the method by which we might walk whatever path we are confronted with, let us attempt to arrange a route. To facilitate such a desire, I will propose a sort of revolutionary roadmap. It would be easy for the reader to mistake the following roadmap for a prediction or an all-encompassing statement about the future. It is, after all, the repeated refrain of the foundational revolutionary theorists that we will not be able to predict the form of a revolutionary transformation, what exact methods will be utilized to make decisions or coordinate resources, and what conditions will persist after reaction is suppressed. But what I produce here are not predictions; they are anticipations.

Because, though to say that there are circumstances that will change the unique content of our decisions and then cease all inspection of commonalities may seem tempting, given our desire to avoid rigid blueprints and fantastical utopias, a complete denial of planning is nothing less than a strategic disaster. A general that does not plan for war, is a losing general. Viable systems are those that have the ability to form and carry out successful strategies within the landscape of their conditions. This capability to “look ahead” in order to guide future action is a fundamental component in a wide variety of complex tasks. In fact, it is part of learning. Mobus and Kalton speak about this extensively in their work, *Understanding Complex Systems* :

“Based upon the fact that every system always has potentials and probabilities that constitute the topography of an expected future, there is a next step, the emergent capacity to actively use this expectation in a way that amounts to proactively moving into the future. This comes to fullness with the evolution of creatures that have the ability to cognitively anticipate the future.”<sup>1</sup>

In order for us to succeed, we must plan, understanding how circumstances will change our response. This means that we must anticipate trends in the data. We must derive a plan for action based on the results of our theory and the results of history. We not only have to strategize our response to the current system, we must strategize how we will prepare ourselves for the megamachine’s ensuing incarnation. This requires careful thinking and the construction of robust autopoietic methods, toolkits which are prepared to deal with not only the current incarnation, but its replacement, flexibly.

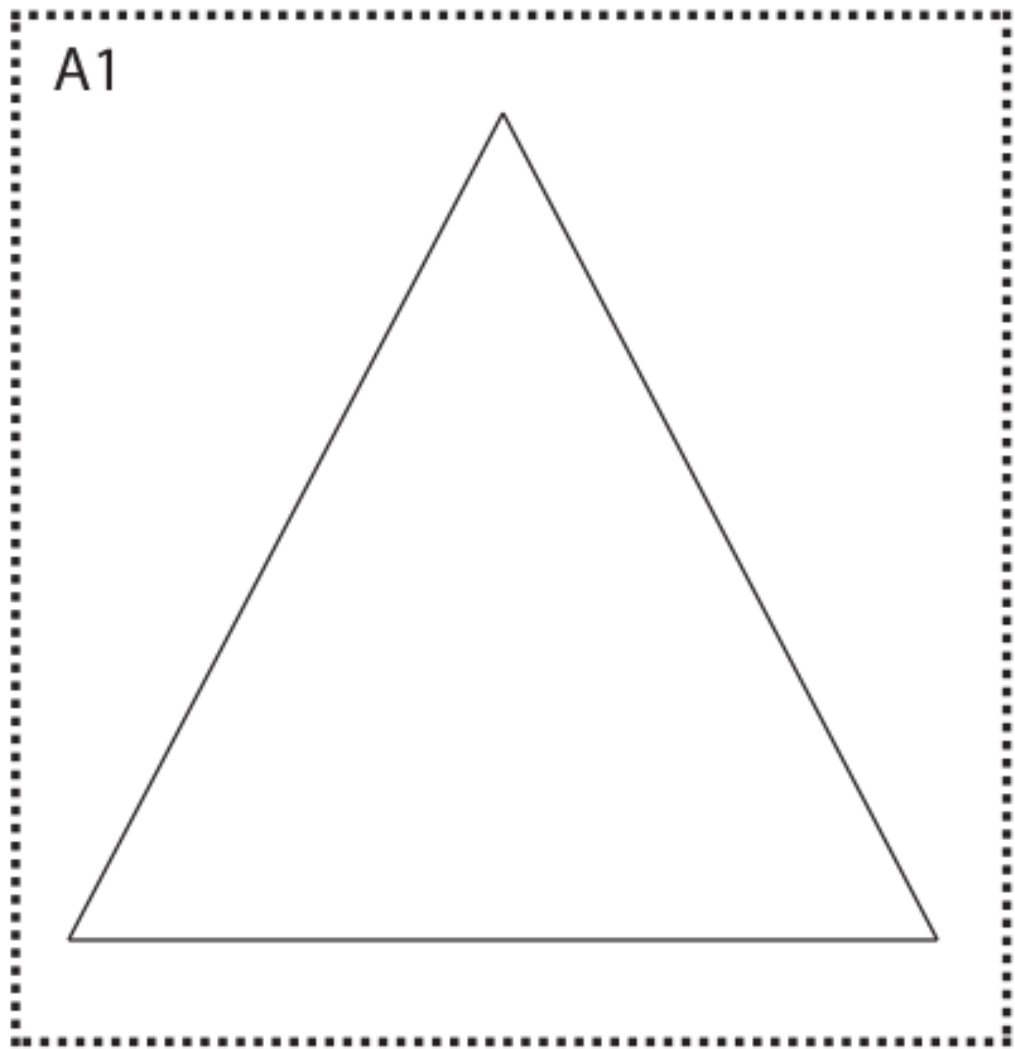
It is now time for us to discuss a strategic overview given all of the facts in mind thus far within this series of essays. In this spirit, what follows is a generalized flowchart which covers the field of possibilities. Then, after this, we can discuss how we might proceed on our trek.



Illustrated here is our preliminary flowchart. Each square or rectangle drawn with a dotted line can be understood as a frame in time or space wherein certain strategic conditions prevail. These conditions are represented visually using triangles, circles, and lines. Triangles represent hierarchical power structures. Circles represent horizontal power structures. Lines with arrows, as we used them in part 2, represent the exertion or flow of power. Arrows connecting the frames can then be understood as “paths of possible movement.” Anywhere an arrow points in between the frames it is a statement that that frame could be reached under certain conditions.

With this in mind, let us now discuss each of the frames within this revolutionary atlas.

## **A1) Kyriarchal Stasis**



In this frame, the mega-machine has achieved very high degrees of social and political suppression, having created a deeply hegemonic atmosphere for hierarchical power structures. This is a society wherein hierarchical realism has, if not fully caught hold, attained a very firm grasp over culture and nearly all other flows of power. This means that the people will likely have become oblivious to the functions of those very power structures which control their lives. Not only can they probably not even imagine their own liberation, they may have even come to desire their own subjugation, brainwashed and downtrodden by behavioral control. Though no people are ever truly broken, here they have been sunken deep within themselves by the propaganda structures of society and the just-so balances of reward and punishment. This is the condition which has been described extensively in the early part of this series of essays.

Appropriately, the system seeks to return to this frame at nearly every other frame, and is always at risk of doing so if it is able to eliminate horizontality. However, we cannot understand this frame as a singular state of existence. Kyriarchal stasis can be achieved through the implementation of liberal democracy, fascism, state capitalism, and many other sub-variations of these. Though clearly anyone can see that these differ in drastic ways which bear addressing in their own tactical rite, there are clear strategic imperatives that hold in all of these.

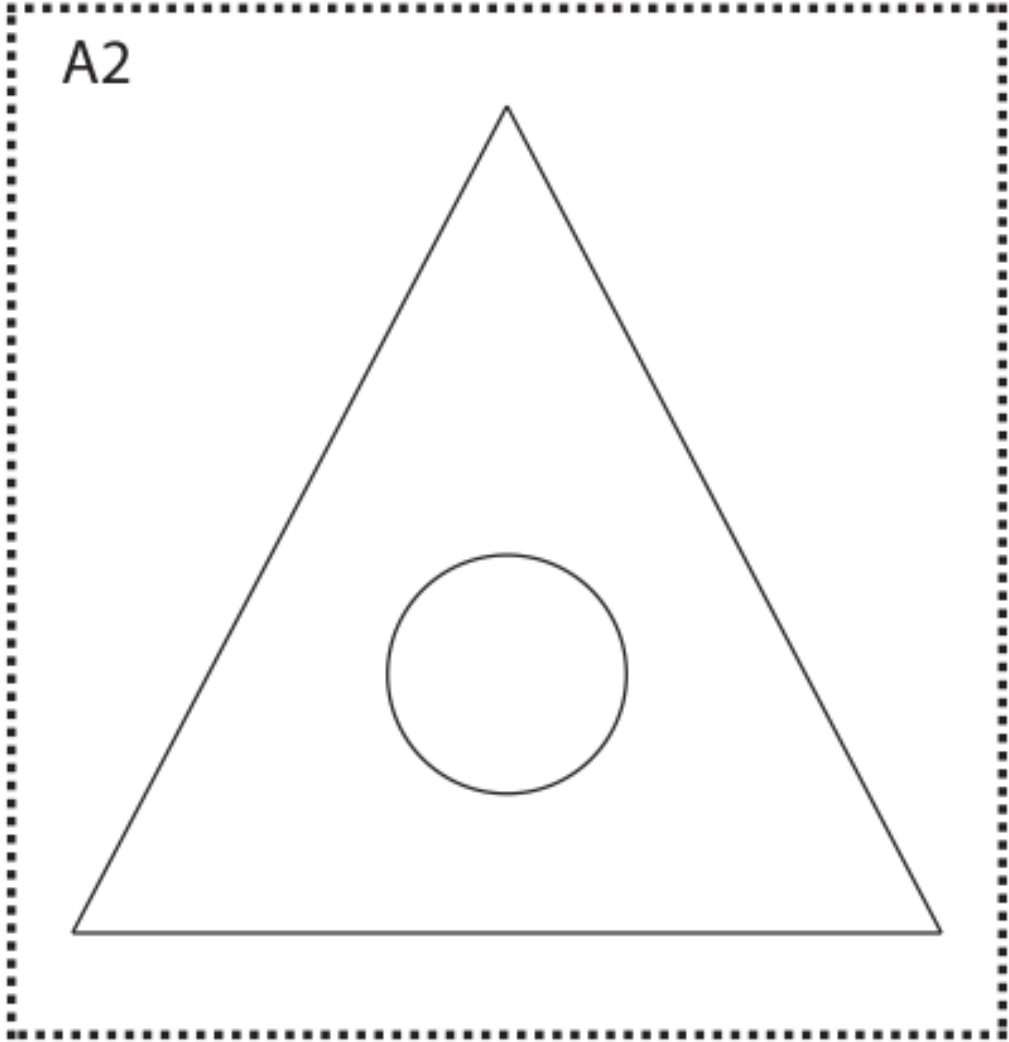
Firstly, this frame can only exist so long as its hold in the four fields continues. If it falters in individual conditioning there will be doubt of its dogmas. If interpersonality fails to enforce its structures of control, its people may slowly recover their dignity. If social structures fail to hold the people in place, coup may lurk around the corner. And if environmental structures can be seized or re-formed, its total control over all things may dissolve. In this way, it has been noted by many revolutionary theorists that the people, when subjugated, are almost guaranteed to one day recognize the misery of their conditions. A being can only subsist in deprivation for so long, after all, when they can look around and recognize that all possibilities are otherwise. Thus the kyriarchal stasis is a sort of containment chamber, not destined to burst if structures can hold, but constantly at threat should this containment falter.

Spreading radical consciousness is therefore a necessity within this period, even if done through subtle means. Radical propaganda should be proliferated to the maximal degree, bearing in mind the long struggle ahead and the presence of growing suppression. Whatever means necessary, an anti-kyriarchal consciousness must be spread. Radicals should study theory and radical history and encourage such reading broadly through reading groups, study groups, discussion groups, and so on... And, importantly, radicals should try to integrate and participate in their community, providing expertise and insight where they can.

Within the era of kyriarchal stasis, revolutionaries must tend the soil in preparation for new growth, to plant trees under which they may never sit. Here live those visionaries and truth-tellers who have come before their time, outcasts who do what is necessary to construct the scaffolding for those horizontal power structures to come. Exiting this era means that the people slowly reclaim their inherent dignity. Therefore the transition into Catalysis is embodied in the rekindling of hope; the portent of a revolutionary bravery which may one day grow into revolt.

## **A2) Catalysis**

A2



This frame may be seen as equivalent to the production of those early auto-catalytic forms in the creation of life. Here is the production of organizations formed under transformative principles, the accumulation of power into an embryonic horizontal creorder, arising as it does within the ambient background of a hierarchical society. This aspect of catalysis takes place within every kyriarchal stasis, whether in the skeptical thoughts of a regimented people or in the bonds of cooperation and unified power within communities. This is the era wherein these forms are solidifying into autopoietic bodies of struggle.

During this period of time, groups will begin to form components of a broader regional, national, or continental expansion, all of them operating in different localities and within different fields of need. In each they will be tasked with analyzing the conditions of their area and discovering the rhetoric which will catalyze a growing anarchist or libertarian socialist affinity therein. In some places, this horizontal culture will have already occurred organically from before the mega-machine colonized this region. This horizontal culture, whether anarchist adherents are welcome or not within these spaces, should be supported in the struggle for autonomy. They should also be studied. After all, therein can be found autopoietic horizontal forms which have lasted decades, centuries, or millennia. They should be respected and understood.

However it is done, however, an anti-kyriarchal consciousness must be spread. Because the beliefs and expectations of people act as bridges to the actualization of potential realities. And if we wish to act in a coordinated fashion with many other people, we must begin to circulate common knowledge and agreement on our shared goals of strategic holism, prefiguration, and direct action.

This is not to say that each organization can or will immediately transform individuals, form completely new interpersonal relations, prefigure strong horizontal social structures, and communalize the environment. Each of these will likely be protracted struggles to dismantle psychological conditioning and behavioral inertia. And, as has always been noted by the broadest spectrum of leftist theorists, the means of production and the configuration of the natural world are mighty things, often only altered by large agglomeration of activity, therefore typically occurring at the scale of social machines. It is quite challenging to prefigure environmental structures. Groups may have to gain significant power before they can begin communalizing property, recuperating the ecofield, restructuring infrastructure, and so on... Nonetheless, it must be understood as a goal.

And, insofar as the methods can be both understood and acted upon, every person practicing our shared method and educating others on it becomes like a catalyst creating more catalysts for an oncoming process. Every catalyst becomes a vector for expansion. And by spreading these ideas through the people in every latent actuality, this anarchist conception functions as a sort of actuation wave, perpetuating a further and further libertarian polarity within the masses of people, pushing them to agglomerate like molecules into sophisticated apparatuses for struggle. This process then acts to turn every rupture into an opportunity for transformation and every reaction by kyriarchy into a vector for resistance. In fact, this catalytic process must act at every scale and within every structure. Where this can pervade, it can act as a suppressor to the hierarchical instinct everywhere it begins to rise. In this process, they should endeavor to build out what I call the Four Pillars of Prefiguration: councils, economics, defense, and intelligence.

Councils are organizational bodies which are created to facilitate decision-making between some group of people within a locality, acting to coordinate their combined powers together. These are not relegated to being simple geographic entities, they may also serve to give voice

to some group of people with a common identity or shared interest. Economics is a category meant to represent our ability to produce and distribute materials to meet people's needs. Horizontal economics may include decommodified relations such as free stores, timebanks, or direct sharings, but they could also be embodied in cooperatives or unions or collectives or communes, so long as they function under horizontal mechanisms. Defense represents the capability of our projects to prevent violence by countervailing forces, to teach people hand to hand training, de-escalation, weapons training, and small unit tactics, to train the people to defend their own neighborhoods and communities, and to keep public events safe from reactionary incursion. Intelligence represents our capability to gather information, to embed in enemy structures, to publish sensitive information about our opponents, and to do effective spycraft.

These four kinds of structures then represent different kinds of schools to teach revolutionaries how to manage a complex society within the belly of the one that exists, but also to prepare all of those necessary components which allow a self-perpetuating power structure. There is a greater expansion of this four pillars concept in my work *Constructing the Revolution*, which might be seen as a companion piece to this work.

As all of these strategic goals come to fruition, it will increase the amount of power relations that have been internalized by horizontal structures, meaning that the mega-machine will be slowly deprived of some of its common accumulation. In this, the very growth itself of this horizontal power will tend to escalate tensions with the mega-machine. After all, this new embryonic creorder represents a dire threat to kyriarchy if it is constructed as we have described here.

However, there is escalation by existence and there is escalation by overt conflict; a fact that the anarchists of history are all too familiar with. Accordingly, horizontal structures should only begin overt escalation of tensions with hierarchical powers when their victory can be certain and bearing in mind the proliferation of an anti-kyriarchal consciousness -and thus the likelihood that new radicals may be brought to the fore. Unless these conditions are favorable, they should use all the time that is available to them to internalize more power into revolutionary structures and to spread anti-kyriarchal consciousness.

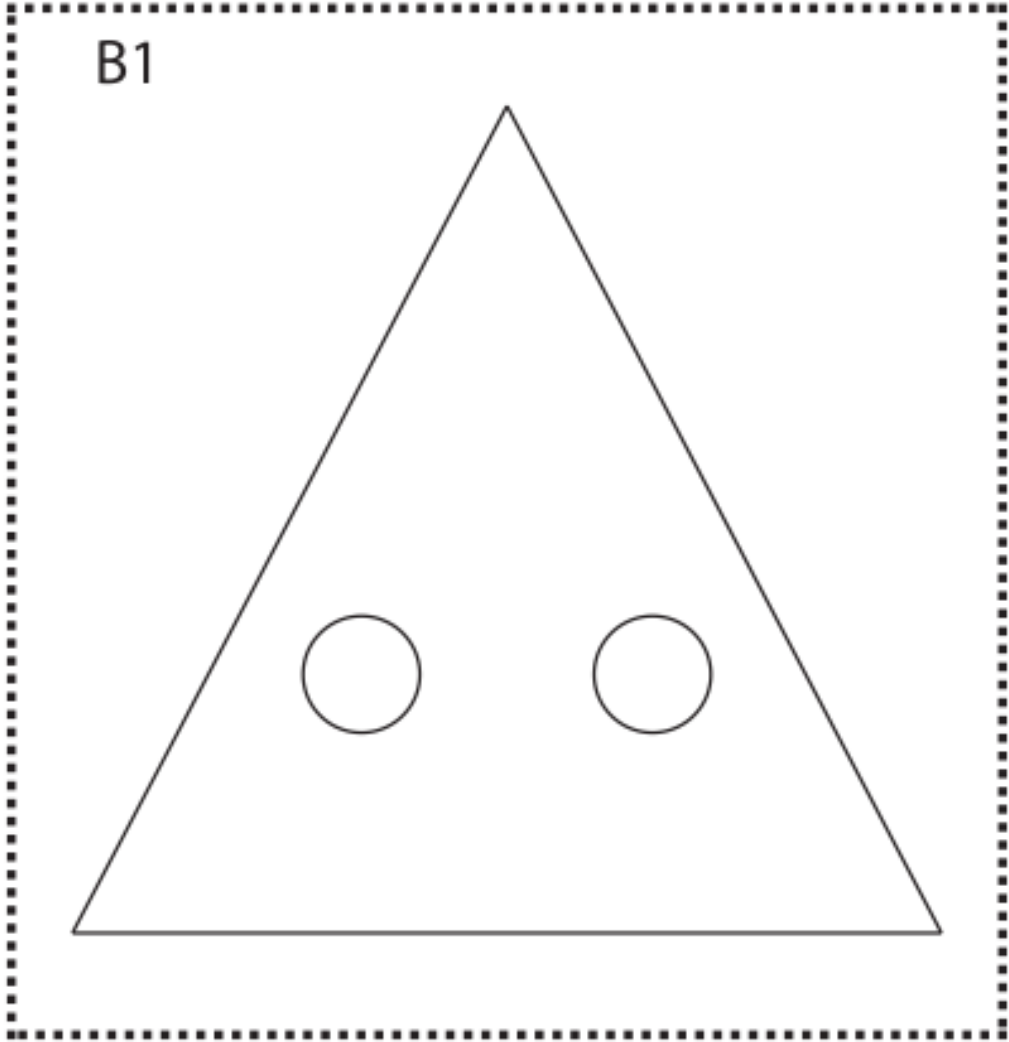
Because, though horizontal power structures should not eagerly seek rupture (especially within Catalysis), this does not mean that they should not prepare for it. Indeed, revolutionaries must construct organizations that are prepared to wage conflict well before conflict arrives. In time hierarchical power will begin to recognize the threat of what is growing within. And if these horizontal powers are unable to respond to this escalation, they will be crushed. For this reason, during Catalysis, our horizontal power structures must prepare for the next frame, recognizing what is to come. As Sun Tzu has said:

“The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable.”<sup>2</sup>

And so we reach the first branch in our chart. At this point there may only remain one horizontal power structure or many may grow. Even though these can be seen as exhibitions of a similar strategic impulse to internalize flows from the mega-machine into horizontal power, the two may occur more or less often in different contexts, both in their likelihood to survive and in their strategic viability. If many groups begin to form before the mega-machine escalates, it may be said that you have proceeded into Adjacent Catalysis.

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### B1) Adjacent Catalysis

Adjacent Catalysis is a frame which describes more than one horizontal power structure arising within the same region as another while a hierarchical power structure with superior leverage remains. That is to say: more than one horizontal organization arises within the same locality, that polity resting within the control of the kyriarchal mega-machine. This frame is also meant to stipulate that these concerned horizontal bodies have chosen neither to associate nor to enter conflict with one another.

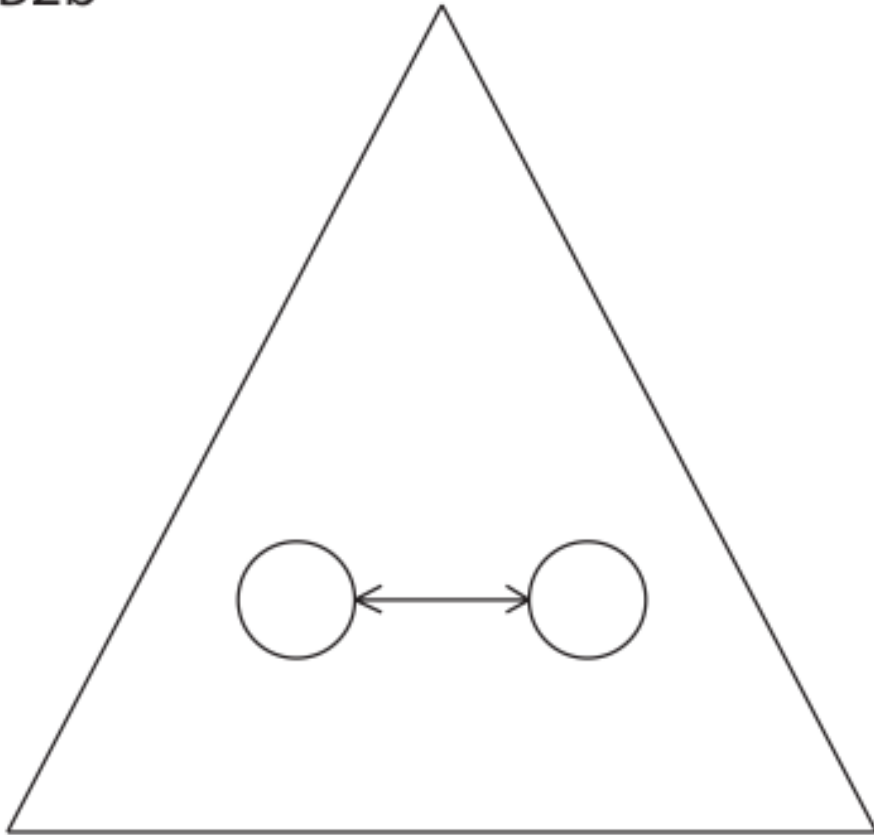
It is an inevitable reality that this frame will take place, both at the scale of national regions and at the scale of global struggle. However, though this is clearly permissible by principle of free association, this also correlates with decreased communication and structuralization, thus decreased trust and decreased power in a general sense. The more fractured these horizontal power structures are, the weaker that they will become. And in this weakness, the more likely it is that hierarchical power will increase its ratcheting over everyone. Unlike hierarchical power structures, which seek to destroy or consume one another, horizontal powers must seek to confederate. Indeed, enormous efforts will be worth it in order to join these structures together, as it may make or break the revolutionary future of the planet.

However, this frame is not a representation of some strategic failure. It occurs most often because there are many different struggles that the people of this region are facing. This is to say, this occurs most often in places where the mega-machine is diversely kyriarchal, utilizing many different modes of cruelty and exploitation to achieve its ends. Accordingly, many groups focused on the issues of many people are likely to form. It is therefore a necessary temporary stage in the struggle, though containing its own internal conflicts which must be resolved for revolutionary success.

In this capacity, it is also a frame of great potential. This is where the seeds are multiplying, where the soil is growing richer, and wherein new struggles are being addressed. This is where diverse structures grow together embryonically. Side by side, many groups develop the total horizontal social power acting within their context. If these horizontal structures move towards confederation and cooperation, they enter Extended Catalysis, as will be discussed shortly. If, however, they choose to compete against one another, they move into the stage called Self-Sabotage.

### **B2b.) Self-Sabotage**

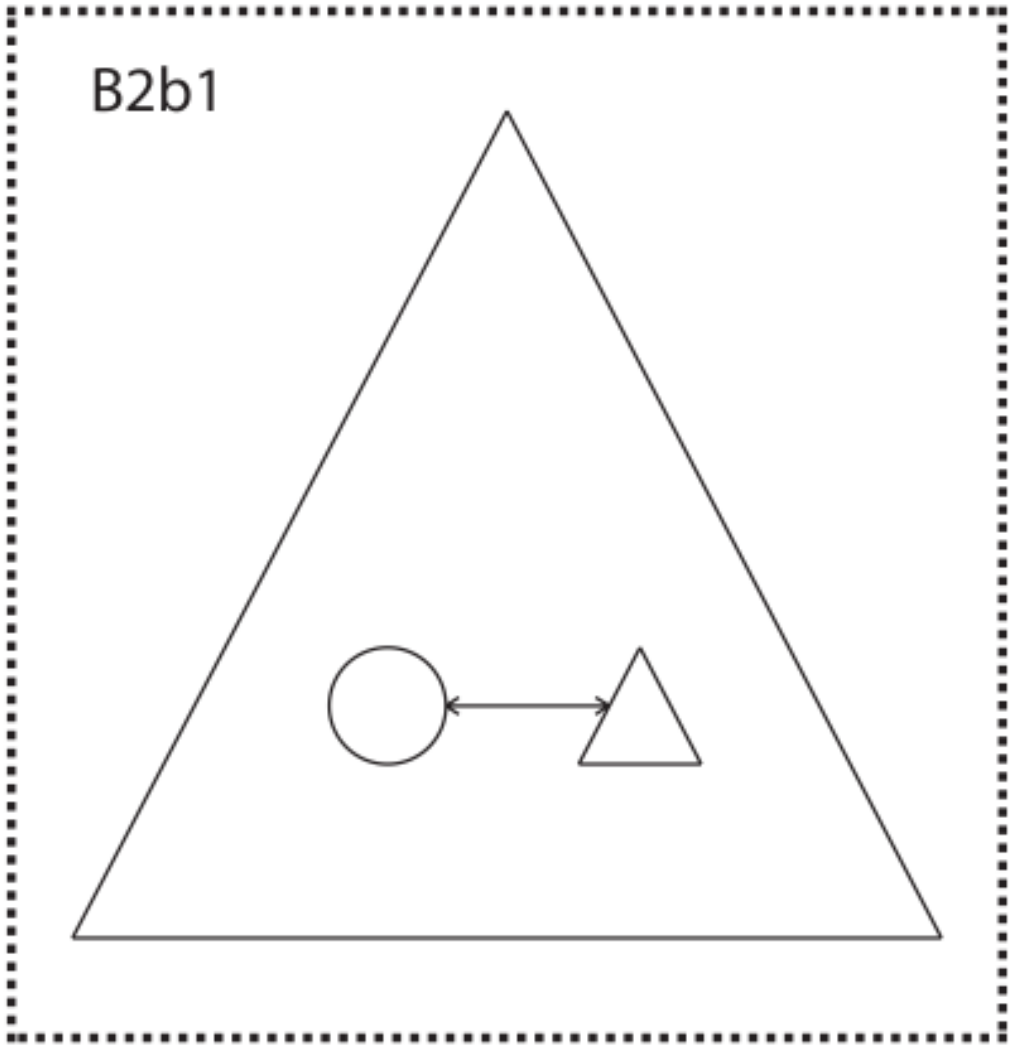
B2b



This frame represents when a horizontal structure seeks to destroy another horizontal structure. This is the frame of rivalries, competition, and betrayal between horizontal organizations. By all measures, this is the worst strategic option that is available for horizontal power structures on the entire chart. Such an occasion is the height of incompetence, a counterproductive foolishness that can likely never be justified. Already facing a nearly unified kyriarchal front against the horizontal revolutionary movement, those who seek the destruction of other horizontal powers sacrifice success in a liberatory war in favor of the narcissism of small differences. This does not mean that all federations are inherently good, of course. Disorganized federations can hurt more than they help, by distracting participants, wasting energy on fruitless endeavors, and by functioning to prevent the creation of a more organized and horizontal federation. Nor does this mean that any horizontal power structure is free from need for criticism. After all, during this stage and for a long time to come, the organizations in question will be in the process of fighting back against individual and interpersonal programming which will cause people to act in harmful and ineffective ways. Indeed, these leftover kyriarchal behaviors must be countervailed in order for the movement to succeed. However, healthy conflict and discourse, aimed toward growth and change does not lie in this frame. It lies in the frames to success. Accordingly, as pressures rise, Adjacent Catalysis is a much preferable situation, such that these horizontal powers can move toward Extended Catalysis: to quash rivalries and to cease competition with one another in favor of mutualism. Self-Sabotage should be resisted at all costs. It represents aid to the mega-machine. If it cannot be stopped, it is very likely to proceed to Mega-Mechanical Recolonization.

## **B2b1.) Mega-Mechanical Recolonization**

B2b1



This frame represents the occasion when, where there were once numerous horizontal power structures, now one or more of them have become hierarchical. This can take place either in the transformation of one that already exists into a hierarchical structure on its own or by one horizontal power structure seeking to dominate the other. In the latter occasion, it might be said that this dominating horizontal structure ceases to be a horizontal structure in measure to how much it seeks to dominate the other horizontal structure. If its domination is slight, then it has not necessarily entered Mega-Mechanical Recolonization. Because it must be noted that this transformation is not simply the presence of some hierarchical feature within the four fields. This process of correcting ideological and interpersonal orientations continues for the individual for an extended period of time as horizontal power internalizes more of the flows of society. And so this frame is not meant to represent the case where people within one of these organizations are simply demonstrating old cultural brainwashing which they have not yet dismissed, but who are otherwise amenable to horizontal counseling and grievance resolution. It is unlikely at this stage that any organization will have the ideology of its adherents totally decolonized from the mega-machine.

This frame constitutes a conflict which is outright and concerted, domination by either an internal or external threat. And, on this occasion, the mega-machine can be understood as having internalized the acting body in question and thus they cannot be trusted as allies. It must be emphasized: this frame is meant to represent the idea that the organization in question has functionally become a hierarchical entity. This is to say: the flows of power within that organization no longer move by the boundaries of freely agreed measures and cooperative development, but instead have begun to function by way of monopoly control within the group or a desire for that group to establish monopoly control over a "territory." This may mean they have begun openly cooperating with other hierarchical organizations and supporting more authoritarian praxis. This may also mean that an internal hierarchy has arisen wherein one or some small group of members have come to make all formal decisions.

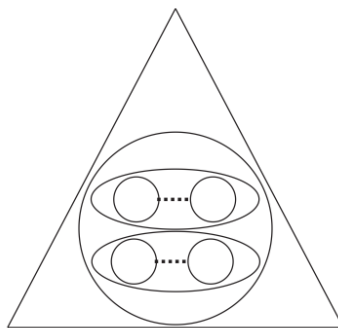
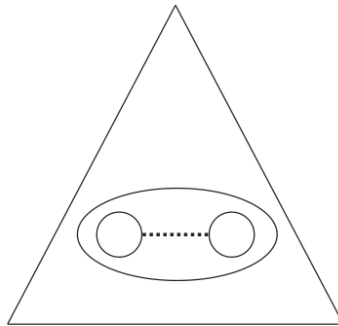
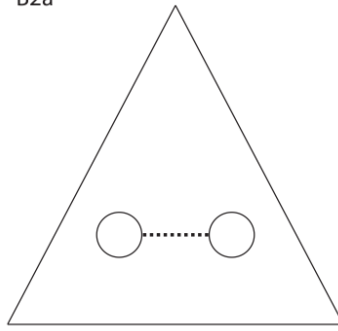
Regardless of these particulars, horizontal organizations must refuse to confederate with hierarchical organizations. Cooperation with hierarchical power plays into the hierarchical tactic of co-option and consumption. Over time, hierarchical powers will seek to subvert the horizontal structures within the organization and to establish monopoly control through sabotage.

This does not, of course, mean that the horizontal organization is obligated to enter overt conflict with the hierarchical organization in question. But they must at minimum avoid strategic or organizational cooperation. There can be no unity between the hierarchical and horizontal structure at any scale. Where the two exist, they will always enter a war for hegemony in time.

Horizontal power structures must maintain autopoiesis of mutuality and libertarianism within and without, focusing their actions upon the construction of Catalysis, so as to proceed toward Emanation.

## **B2a.) Extended Catalysis**

B2a



Whereas Catalysis will tend to rely upon the creation and expansion of few distinct organizations across a large region, Extended Catalysis is a process wherein a large variety of catalyst groups are built up within the same region, federated, then those federations are federated, and so on... preferably until these federations cover the entire interested region. This federated structure is then the one which solidifies more power and coordinates resources between different components.

It is important to note: Extended Catalysis is discerned as a frame from Catalysis by a difference in scope and duration, impressed upon revolutionaries by necessity. Extended Catalysis is Catalysis, but at length, without possibility for retreat, and with prolific recourse to confederation. Extended Catalysis, like Catalysis, will tend to take place within a deeply ingrained or very wide-spanning mega-machine, building up the power of the horizontal structure to the maximal degree before struggle takes place. Extended Catalysis occurs, most notably, because the mega-machine has territorialized too many aspects of society for a horizontal power structure to effectively escape the mega-machine's influence into rural geography. Accordingly, the focus of Extended Catalysis is to solidify the existence of these horizontal power structures within their points of origination, not to escalate conflict. Because this ensuing power structure does not seek to tactically retreat (largely because it cannot), it will tend to rest within the urban centers, though it may also have extended presence in rural communities.

The difference between Catalysis and Extended Catalysis, then, is that Catalysis, once it proceeds through Emanation later, is more likely to seek un-colonized territory to occupy, whereas horizontal power within Extended Catalysis is forced to co-exist with the mega-machine, therefore extending the period of time it has available to internalize flows of power once controlled by the kyriarchal mega-machine, but also restricting its freedom to maneuver.

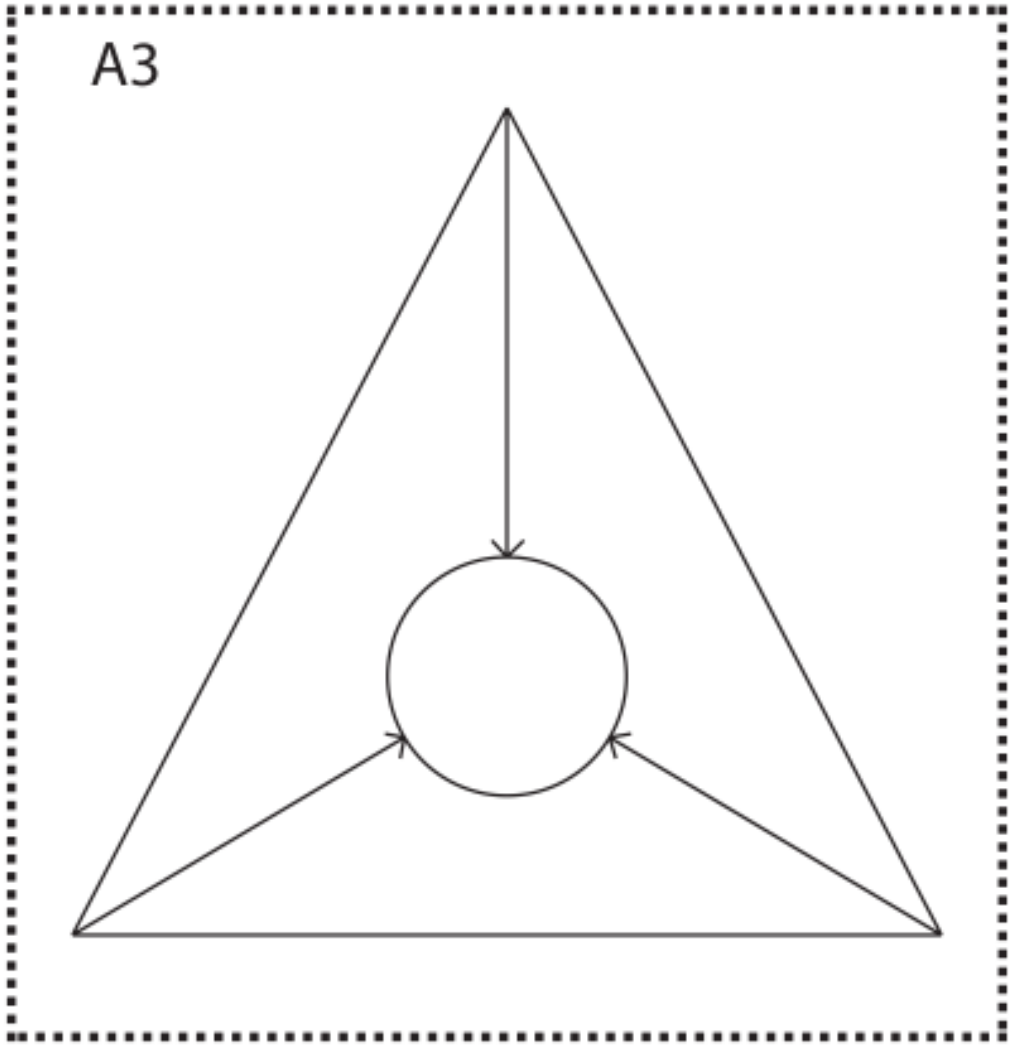
These things being said, however, there are noted strengths to Extended Catalysis in a purely theoretical sense: when two horizontal bodies voluntarily cooperate, this correlates with increased communication and structuralization. Under this condition, horizontal power increases, allowing the combined power structure to resist sabotage by hierarchy even more effectively. In order for this circumstance to occur, anarchist organizations must seek to create other anarchist organizations and to prepare themselves for the sorts of agreements that will need to be made to join organizations with relatively horizontal power structures together, even though their cultures and expectations may differ considerably. This is carried out by necessity, recognizing what the mega-machine might do to destroy them.

Over a considerable period of strengthening, if this structure can be built up without any state suppression, then this structure may be able to move straight into Civil Conflict, going to war with the state and capital directly; seizing territory in an old-fashioned sense. However, while this extended catalytic process is taking place, just as in the case of Catalysis, it is most likely that the state will recognize what is arising within it. Indeed, if this extended catalytic process is potentially more powerful than simple Catalysis, as we claim it may be, then the hierarchical power structure is likely to begin countervailing this structure somewhat quickly. In this occasion, Extended Catalysis may enter Emanation, wherein the same basic dynamics continue as for Catalysis, but with a stronger structure.

### **A3) Emanation**



A3



Though the era of catalysis was pervaded by a totalizing, ambient kyriarchal background, progression into this frame takes place as horizontal power grows in strength, resisting that ambient kyriarchy. This is then also the stage wherein the kyriarchal mega-machine has likely recognized what is arising inside it and has begun to countervail the horizontal structures which threaten its monopoly. This can be seen as an era of rising conflict, but wherein the mega-machine has not yet mustered the necessary energy to crush the horizontal society it countervails. If it can succeed in this process, the conditions may be said to return to Catalysis or Stasis. And, in this attempt to return the strategic conditions to Catalysis or Stasis, the mega-machine will act with varying scales of violence, suppression, and sabotage, within this frame, attempting to kill the auto-catalytic horizontality, and forcing the group in question and often many other groups into an era of struggle.

However, in this stage of Emanation, the mega-machine is nonetheless in a mode of struggle and reapportionment of available powers. For this reason, horizontal structures should seek to confound the mega-machine in its process of reapportionment, while actively planning positions of fallback and sabotage should the structure grow to the strength that is actually needed to crush this horizontality. Horizontal power must begin, in this period, preparing for the violence of the mega-machine, establishing organizational structures that are both covert and public. Accordingly, while revolutionaries must begin forming clandestine militias and spy networks, they must also begin making even more serious inroads into the social movements seeking to provide crucial assistance to those in need, seeking to restore dignity and develop the horizontal power of those harmed by the violent expansion of the kyriarchy.

This era of struggle will introduce new difficulties, necessitating a new sort of bravery as we proceed through a crisis with the system. Whether in our clandestine activity or in the economic conflicts which might be caused by the expansion of our horizontal economics, we must prepare ourselves with diverse and flexible tools; those which will be absolutely necessary if we are to put down this most terrible predator of human history, the kyriarchal mega-machine. This entails strategic patience, only ever antagonizing the mega-machine when we are confident in our ability to win the engagement. Horizontal power should never try to escalate any further than it can rise to meet the burden.

For this reason, during Emanation it is imperative that catalyst groups encourage the rapid escalation of social power, such that the people develop the strength to begin disciplining their government, not vice versa; a task that, crucially, one learns only by doing. The people must therefore coordinate their power together into cohesive organizational structures. They must discover the methods by which they can rise up and pressure the state to their will every time it disobeys. When it brings riot police, the people must bring an overwhelming wave that crushes the state's suppressive attempt. When the mega-machine sends their spies and their wreckers and their informants, horizontal structures must eject them, confound them, or utilize them to our whim. The people must become strong enough to teach the state humility. Only then shall we ever throw off its reign.

As horizontal power expands, it will internalize more and more power relations, placing pressure on the mega-machine, and therefore encouraging the machine to utilize prolific restructuring. This means that the system may assume configurations which seem quite foreign to previous conventions. And technical disciplines based upon one or another of those configurations will find themselves incapable of understanding the system they are witnessing before them. As the

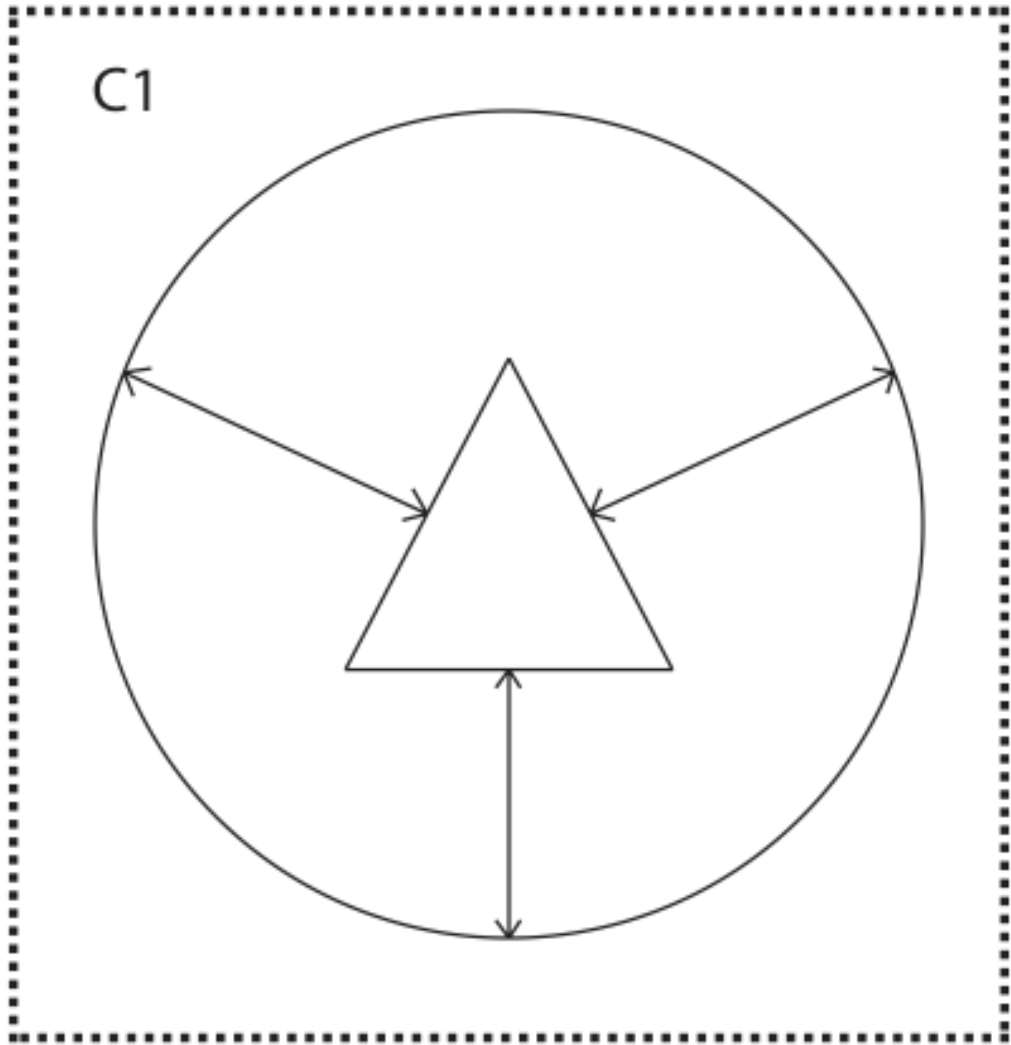
old thinkers have put their finger on the particulars of its functioning, it changes into something new.

Each time this happens, our tactics will have to change to meet these new burdens, using every success to bolster the next attempt, building councils of the oppressed, establishing radical democracy, fighting for unions, establishing solidaric networks of radicals, and doing everything within our power to internalize flows of power permanently into our horizontal structures, so that each new wave is stronger than the last.

At some point, this repetitious cycle will tempt the mega-machine and it will expand its brutality to test the mettle of the growing revolution. If revolutionaries proceeded to this frame through Extended Catalysis, then the horizontal power structure should be able to drive the masses to support it and rally them to countervail the suppression by hierarchical power. And if the masses are organized toward a mass revolt, it is possible horizontal power may move into the frame Civil Conflict.

But, if the project has proceeded here through Emanation, it is much more likely that hierarchical power will recognize what is taking place and seek to end the expansion of horizontal power well before it has a critical mass of support. This means that the horizontal power must be prepared to go to war to maintain itself. Ultimately within this, the horizontal power should be seeking to diminish and ultimately destroy the hierarchical power it coexists with, again leading to Civil Conflict. However, if it cannot, horizontal power structures may be forced to tactically retreat, either seeking new territory which has not been internalized by the mega-machine or maintaining autonomous zones within the urban centers. In either occasion, this means they will move to the frame called Secession.

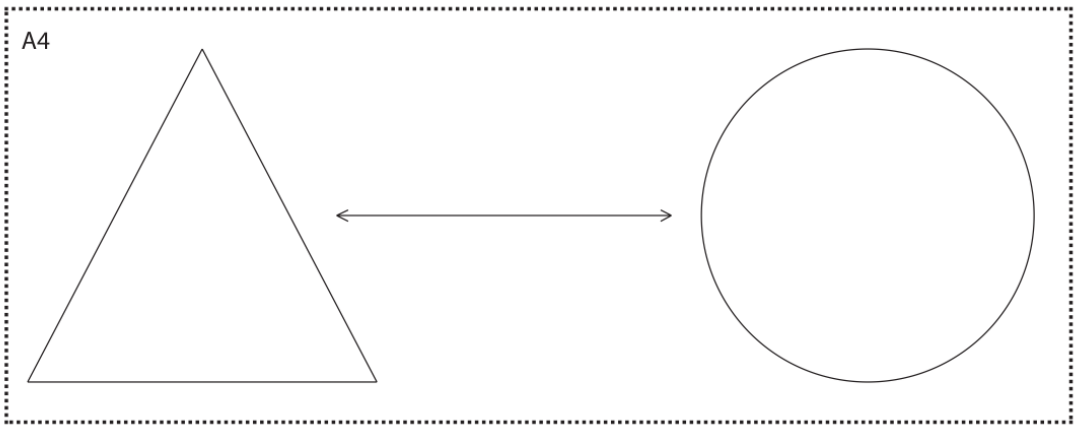
## **C1) Civil Conflict**



This frame can be understood as the escalation to overt warfare with the hierarchical power structure. Whereas in the previous frame, tensions were escalating and limited conflict with the state had begun which characterized an oncoming rupture, this frame is when horizontal power and hierarchical power become engaged in a military affair. In this frame, the horizontal power will be forced to truly embrace the underground/overground approach, especially if the majority of their power rests in the urban centers. This stage may see escalation to tactics such as decapitation strikes, land and property seizure, infrastructure sabotage, and urban guerilla combat. This marks the beginning of the era of war and revolutionaries must understand themselves as oriented in such a battlefield. It is now a matter of self-defense to defeat the mega-machine. The mega-machine must be defeated, in fact, for this area to be claimed and maintained by the horizontal powers resting there.

As this combat escalates and as more territorial autonomy is claimed, council federations must assemble to navigate social unrest and to provide the basic amenities of life to people with those areas that they populate. Mutuality and libertarianism must expand prolifically, solidifying control over the metabolized mega-machine, then forming these old tools to horizontal needs. As this process takes place, this is likely to lead to Autonomy, though it may start first as Secession.

#### **A4) Secession**



This frame takes place when a horizontal power structure is beginning to successfully detach from the mega-machine, but has not completely done so. This is to say, within this frame, the horizontal power structure has either internalized so many flows from the mega-machine it once rested within that it can expand autopoiesis largely through those flows or it has fled the urban centers and begun internalizing environmental structures outside of the immediate control of the mega-machine. Either way, within this frame, the horizontal power structure has begun to achieve autopoiesis, while still in conflict and interaction with hierarchical powers.

This is because this is the era marked by the end of hierarchy's hegemonic control of the relations within the seceding territory, even though it may maintain control of all surrounding territory. In this era, hierarchical control over all four fields of relations is being thoroughly undermined and replaced: hierarchical philosophies of justification are falling apart, interpersonal relations of domination are declining, hierarchical social structures are being dismantled, and land, infrastructure, and goods are beginning to be horizontally redistributed by default.

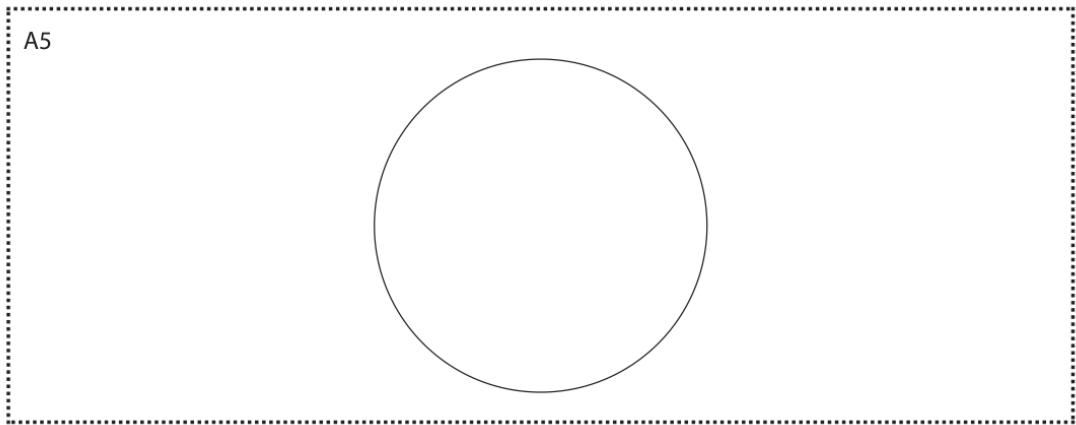
As with other frames, we must note that none of these are likely to disappear immediately. Indeed, it is expected that the scars of the old world will join us long after our struggle is complete. It is likely, during this era and the next, that something akin to the system described in my essay *After the Revolution*, will be instituted. This system will have to mix decommodified and market components in order to facilitate its interaction with external systems and will require a continued existence of militia formations. But in this era, the internal balance of power for this region has now come decisively into the favor of horizontality.

For this reason, the machine will do everything in its power to reclaim those seized flows of power and thus the machine will carry out barbaric campaigns of sabotage and military intervention. For this reason, many of the features seen in *Civil Conflict* will occur, however this frame marks the point where the horizontal power is moving toward autonomy instead of requiring an immediate war to seize enemy territory.

Remaining in accordance with a principle of self-defense, it is effective for this region to go tit-for-tat as a strategic method. At every step that our structures are forced to interact with the hierarchical power structure outside ourselves (and we will be forced to do so) we must make the interaction a one-way interaction. This has been at the center of each era, but in this era the injunction rises from a watchword to a rule for effective conduct. If the enemy breaks its agreements, we should do so in return. If they follow their agreements, we should follow our own. But we should never rely on the continued benevolence of an existential enemy, no matter how cooperative they may appear at the moment.

If this process took place by consuming the territory of the mega-machine, then it will only ever be maintained through active conflict with hierarchy; whether cyclic, sporadic, or whatever else, thus this is categorically an era of regional conflict. Under an extended conflict and alongside substantial demonstration of fighting effectiveness for horizontal power structures, the hierarchical power structure may not want to continue an all-out war. Instead, the hierarchical power may want to concede Autonomy to this region.

## **A5) Regional Autonomy**





This is the era wherein horizontal society has become the new creorder within its region of control and wherein it is at roughly equal or even superior advantage to the hierarchical power it borders. This is the culmination of the attempts to internalize flows of power into the horizontal structure, which is not a total autarky, but has established an autarky of some crucial features. The structures which characterize the new society now solidify and reproduce themselves naturally. This means that this is the true end of hierarchical hegemony not just within the horizontal region, but also in the shared field of the autonomous region and the local mega-machine. Nonetheless, the mega-machine still exists and so this era may or may not still be characterized by civil, regional, or global conflict. Crucially, however, this is the first era since Catalysis that the horizontal power may be able to establish some homeostasis.

The mega-machine may even cease conflict with the autonomous region, as to spare itself expenditure of further resources. Such a time of peace, while it will represent a pause on the revolutionary process of mega-mechanical decolonization, it will also represent an opportunity for horizontal society to continue reinforcing itself and creating the conditions for a self-organized criticality.

In this way, the defining characteristic of this era is that the horizontal power structure has now achieved high degrees of autonomy from hierarchical power. This is not to say that it has no entanglements with the global system, but instead that it has now exited the era of struggle with the hierarchical power structure it sought to gain separation from. Struggle in this era will be defined not by grasping to continue existence, but instead a slow ratcheting of horizontal power over regional hierarchical powers. As the horizontal power within the region is given time to adjust, it may very well begin to decommodify more of its internal functions and may require less militia formations for internal protection. However, it should not move without foresight on either of these, as this era has not marked a decisive end to hostile engagements.

With this in mind, it is important that this rising horizontal regional hegemony still not move too aggressively or become too eager to eliminate its enemy outright, though it must indeed carry out extensive spycraft, conduct subtle campaigns to undermine the kyriarchy abroad, and to degrade hierarchical hegemony in those opposing regions of control, a singular regional autonomy is unlikely to bring about this complete destruction by itself.

If conflict is unavoidable, the horizontal structure should, as it gains more power leverage over the hierarchical structures around it, only take those battles where it has superior strength and then allow the structure to retract. Over time, this will weaken the structure and exaggerate the ratcheting of the horizontal structure instead.

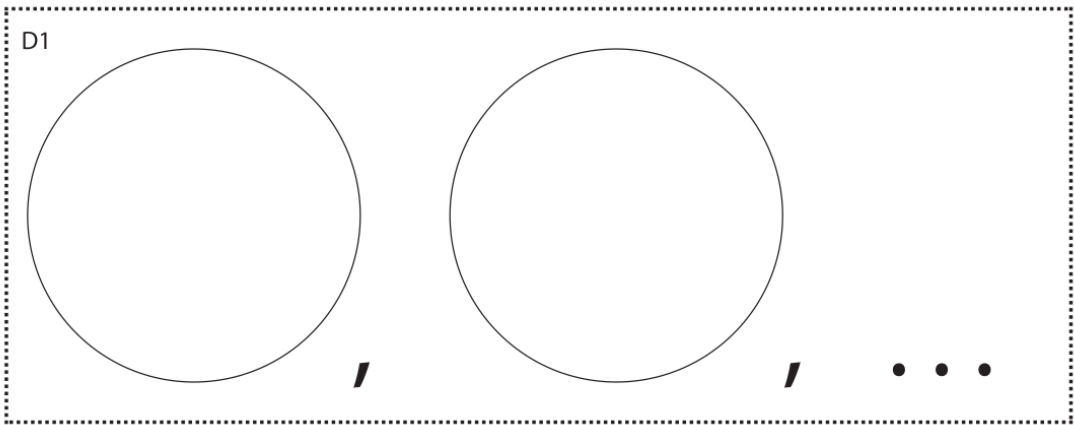
If the horizontal structure becomes too eager, seeking to exterminate the hierarchical power in its midst without giving it the possibility of escape, they will be faced with a brutal and bloody struggle, much more gruesome than that which would have been carried out by strategic patience.

Ultimately, the goal of this stage of struggle is for this horizontal regional power to confederate itself further with other horizontal power structures within the region and prepare itself to crush the enemy when the battle arrives. Here we see why it is so crucial that horizontal power structures must be built everywhere. When the time comes that the horizontal structure is in conflict, it will need other horizontal allies. If it does not have them it will be in a position to be sanctioned, to be teamed up on by many hierarchical powers, or to simply be starved out.

With this in mind, so long as this regional autonomy remains, it should focus on slowly expanding its borders through the seeding of new autonomous organizations at the bounds, as

well as helping to develop new catalytic bodies of revolt deeper within the hierarchical polities abroad. As these new horizontal organizations are seeded into the enemy structure, they should be bolstered and supported, then encouraged to undergo Emanation, Secession, and Autonomy, themselves. If this can be repeated or if other autonomies can arise from their own originating struggles, the regional mega-machine can be consumed from the inside out through repetition. If this process can be repeated, it will lead into Adjacent Autonomy.

## **D1) Adjacent Autonomy**



This is the stage wherein numerous horizontal structures in some region or across numerous regions have begun to achieve autonomy from their hierarchical structures. This is the beginning of a new era of world politics for the project. Other nations which may have been largely uninvolved or which did not see their stake in the conflict at hand, will likely become players. And, just as the horizontal structure confederated itself with other horizontal power structures within the region in order to solidify its control, it will now need to do the same upon the global scale. Confederations will need to be created and solidified at the continental or intercontinental scale. And, if possible, at the global scale.

As more horizontal power structures begin to populate the regional landscape, once homogeneously occupied by hierarchical power, it will be a prolific driver of conflict, just as it was upon the smaller scale within the local mega-machine. For this reason, regional horizontal power structures must coordinate and confederate so that their combined power grows precipitously and can be coordinated against the local arm of the mega-machine. If this can be done, it establishes a horizontal ratcheting more and more certainly and, indeed, may even establish power leverage over the hierarchical structure that they have seceded from. This era is therefore defined through a global struggle between horizontal powers and hierarchical powers, which are likely to form into blocs based on their allegiances.

These confederated regions must then begin asking themselves what can be done to achieve the global-scale revolutionary goals at hand. They must establish trade networks, coordinate expertise, provide key materials and technologies, and therefore internalize more relations into confederations across the planet. Since the goal is to eventually achieve global confederation, this represents the beginning inspection of true solidarity. These autonomous regions, each arising in their own local conditions, will have to answer the most important questions about what material solidarity looks like in shifting circumstances. Solidarity is, as Andrewism has said, a conversation, not an act.

However, now that these horizontal regions are rising to the stage of world powers in their confederation, they must not rest on their laurels, but instead speed up the horizontal expansionary process we have discussed before, utilizing the greater power which has been gained from escalation in previous stages. The mega-machine must be suppressed, confused, distracted, and undermined prolifically. Simultaneously, its rulers must constantly be given the impression that they can escape, that the mega-machine can avoid its certain demise, or that it can retreat to live another day. As Sun Tzu has said:

“When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Do not press a desperate foe too hard.”

This is because, when an enemy is cornered, they will fight much harder than if they were engaged under normal circumstances. It is important that the enemy is always fought when it is weakest, never encouraged to fight at its strongest. This has been a dire mistake of the revolutionary movements of history and served to catalyze not only extensive regional military conflicts, but ingrained legacies of hatred and power-structural resentment that have festered for decades and potentially even centuries. The hierarchical power must be slowly, organically suffocated to death and more and more of its waning regional control slowly internalized by surrounding confederating horizontal powers.

There is much much more that could be said about each of these frames. Indeed, in the next part we will discuss some of these further details. And it is possible this flowchart could be built

up a great deal more, iterating these strategies at several more scales or delineating different frames more closely. However it is better to understand that what is really taking place is a sort of algorithmic loop: The anarchic agent starts by seeding anti-kyriarchal catalysts into the world at their scale, attempting to build a horizontal power structure. This horizontal power structure then acts as the anarchic agent at a new scale, seeding anti-kyriarchal catalysts at its own scale and below. The anarchic agents at all scales then work to internalize flows previously held within the kyriarchal mega-machine into this new scale of horizontality. This then either expands the horizontal power structure itself or creates more horizontal power structures, which are then combined together at yet another new scale to produce new associations, and so on, and so on...

We must proceed onwards toward a repetition of the loop leading to Adjacent Autonomy and then that layer's federations and free associations. Indeed, it might be said that there will be movement into the global stage precisely in step with this progression. The more filled the planet becomes with horizontal power structures proceeding through Catalysis, Emanation, and so on..., the more that the globe will begin to see a slow turn toward horizontal power leverage. In this process wherein the horizontal powers across the planet have begun to produce a true, effective threat to hierarchical power, we will be in a period I call Counter-Hegemony.

So taking for granted now these different frames of analysis and the namings we have given them, let us speak of some of the generalities of how this struggle will proceed from mere Counter-Hegemony at the global scale.

# A New Hegemony

So what conditions might prevail if we were to proceed successfully upon this repetitive, iterative process, carried out at larger and larger scales? In time, whether the ascent is long or short, the global balance of power will tilt toward horizontal power structures. And when this tipping point toward a global anarchic society has been achieved, we can speak of a new era.

Unlike those frames within our flowchart which all served to delineate germinating dynamics, of a society struggling to be born within a suppressive kyriarchal mass, during the era wherein horizontal power structures have scaled to the scope of global struggle and truly embarked upon the internalization of continents and hemispheres, we will begin to establish a shining period of global horizontal hegemony. This is to say, we will finally come to confront the last bastions of Authoritarianism and Domination now as a superior force instead of one which struggles to be born.

This is the beginning of a stage I will call Anarchic Hegemony. This is the era wherein horizontal society has become so hegemonic it no longer fears opposition, wherein horizontal flows of power are no longer spent just trying to resist and overcome the enemy, but instead serve to reinforce the horizontal creorder. This is the era wherein the global creorder moves toward horizontal orientations. And, given that this is a return to power structural homogeneity, this will also likely correspond to a drop in regional or global conflict. However, such arrangements will have to be carried out consciously. As stakes rise to the level of regions, pressures may push some set of horizontal powers toward competition instead of cooperation, just as we discussed in Self-Sabotage. Just as in the smaller frame; the goal must always be to secure mutualistic confederations instead of to secede or compete.

As time moves forward, if this process can be carried forth with humility and solidarity, harmonious control of the horizontal creorder will become more and more pervasive. Thus sounds the death knell for kyriarchy. Where once all hierarchies propped one another up through various structures within the four power structural fields to produce a totalizing hierarchical conditioning, these will now be progressively broken into pieces and eliminated. In this, anarchism no longer acts from behind, but is a fully self-sustaining force which can no longer be undermined without a prolific, coordinated, counter-revolutionary campaign. This era may still be characterized by some civil strife, as remnants of the old order remain, but they will have no claim to social primacy and are stuck in a matrix of defeat. Where once prolific restructuring was available to them, by way of their control over the total social flow of power, they now act as anarchists once did, to build out hierarchical relations under a totalizing suppression by horizontal creorder. Accordingly, there can be an escalation in decommodification and an appropriate de-scaling of militia structures, given that domestic threats will have declined. The cooperative market and the presence of militia confederations should remain only in measure to present competitive threats.

During this era, horizontal power structures must continue to spark Catalysis, to encourage Emanation, to expand anti-kyriarchal consciousness anywhere on Earth where hierarchical creorder remains, and to bolster horizontal internalization where autonomous territories have been

created. This is necessary if we are to build that power structural homeostasis which can theoretically produce emergence.

However, it must be said: it is impossible to predict at what stage of our struggle that emergence might start to take place. As we have said before, one of the characteristics of emergence is that it is quite unpredictable, to the degree that some complexity scientists have chosen this as part of its very definition. So we should not rely on it arising at any given stage. Where we rely on emergence to solve our present problems, we may be left waiting for an untold amount of time while our enemies simply amass whatever power is available to them. We must instead always eagerly seek the expansion of these horizontal power structures and their confederations, knowing that these are the crucial preconditions for emergence. Those preconditions must be built up as prolifically as they are available to us.

In this way, and bearing in mind that anarchy is that emergent political order which might arise from an anarchic society, a society which acts as more than the sum of its parts, it is possible that anarchy may arise at any time during this revolutionary process. Indeed, one of the characteristics of emergence is that it tends to take place far away from equilibrium conditions. And it would certainly be advantageous if this could be achieved before outside interference is eliminated, as it would allow the system to achieve a greater utilization of its available resources. Wherever it might take place, the destruction of hierarchical power would proceed much more rapidly. And, indeed, wherever it can be observed to have taken place, revolutionaries must look closely at what conditions allowed it.

However, the other characteristic is that emergence takes place through gradual adaptation. This indicates that it is more likely anarchy will arise after the global shift in power relations, when horizontal power structures can be allowed to enter a relaxation state. Because, though it is certainly the case that hierarchical power will push the anarchic system far away from equilibrium conditions, it would be challenging for this system to be allowed the space for gradual self adjustment with constant forces of kyriarchy countervailing it. Not only will hierarchical power structures constantly serve to disrupt any gradual process of self adjustment through sabotage, competition with prevailing hierarchical power structures will necessitate that decisions be made quickly rather than slowly and iteratively.

So we must endeavor to recall: such a society, under the wrong conditions, could fall backwards into reaction in time. Anarchic society must watch after itself closely that this does not happen and that, instead, the participants in this global revolutionary process endeavor forth in liberating more and more of the ensuing hegemonic horizontality from the stasis of the megamachine, both outside of the horizontal power structure and within it. Indeed, even under anarchy we will always be in the process of fighting back against hierarchical power structures that continue to exist. This is what Rudolf Rocker meant when he said:

“I am an anarchist not because I believe anarchism is the final goal, but because there is no such thing as a final goal.”<sup>1</sup>

This future will not be some perfect utopia, but a new society containing its own conflicts to be resolved, both hierarchical and horizontal. Our revolution must proceed toward an endless emancipatory future, seeing no tyrant as too great to topple and no problem too intractable to confront. In this process and this process only will our global society approach the further enactment of an anarchic ethos, wavering here and there as all societies do, but fluctuating about

a critical point, a state of harmonious, social ecological balance. It is at this stabilization point that a phase transition will have solidified. The fundament will have been established on which a new array of things, an entirely new world of interactions, can arise. Just as each strata is itself a wonder, anarchy becomes the playing field for things once inconceivable to take place. So anarchy is not the end of history, but the beginning of a new era of history.

And so it is clear: if we are to step into this new era of history, we must act and act now. We must break the mega-machine and prepare the world which negates it forevermore, knowing that no inevitable arc comes to sweep us away and no great cataclysm can be relied upon to eliminate our enemies. Our revolutionary responsibility is startlingly clear: we must stand tall in the face of a withering wind and walk toward the horizon, knowing that no higher being, no emancipatory process is coming to save us. It is those who act, not those who speculate about inevitable stages of historical progress who make history, even while great men are lauded with praise for things they had no hand in.

History does not act. We do.



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Originally published in video format on the YouTube channel Anark, this piece combines the three-part essay A Modern Anarchism by Daniel Baryon into one document.

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