Being an Anarchist

Catherine Malabou

2023

"Being an Anarchist" is the concluding chapter of Catherine Malabou's *Stop Thief! Anarchism and Philosophy,* now available in English. In it, the French philosopher argues that a "reckoning" is needed between philosophy and anarchism. Interrogating the gap between the conceptual embrace of the "anarchic" and the pompous disregard for historically-existent anarchism, Malabou seeks to redress an "anarchist failure of philosophical concepts of anarchism." While thinkers such as Schürmann, Levinas, Derrida, Foucault, Agamben, and Rancière all elaborate concepts of anarchy, the anarchic, and the ungovernable, they also insist on the irreducibility of their concepts to political anarchism, distancing themselves from it while mining it for resources. By exploring the peculiar disposition that leads philosophers at once to plunder and disavow anarchism, Malabou's broader aim is to disentangle the anarchic currents of our present, which assume both subversive and oppressive forms. While polarizations such as the Yellow Vests, the ZAD, or the decentralized movement to Defend the Atlanta Forest attest to new forms of mass organization and decision-making based on "self-generated, collective care for an environment, a territory," these subversive currents are

emerging alongside what Malabou terms an "anarchist turn in capitalism itself," a shift from neoliberalism to "ultraliberalism." How, she asks, "can the horizontality of alternative formations be distinguished from the veinstone of anarcho-capitalism?" For this, a clarification of the philosophical stakes of both anarchy and anarchism today is necessary.

> Any woman or man who dives into the heart of their unconscious naturally comes out an anarchist.
>
> —Jacques Lesage de la Haye[1]

The history of the motto "Long live Death" [*Viva la Muerte*] offers an exemplary metaphor of the two possible destinies of the death drive. "*Viva la Muerte*" was the rallying call of the national uprising of the Spanish against Napoleon in May 1808. Despite the formidable disparity between native insurgents and imperial troops, this movement could not be repressed by the occupier, lasted five years, and ultimately led to the expulsion of the French from Spain. It was already a cry for liberation. Adopted by the Spanish anarchists half a century later, it became a revolutionary call against a life of injustice. Then it was turned back against the anarchists by the Francoists, as the other destiny of the death drive: the deadly drive to destruction.

---

[1] Jacques Lesage de La Haye, "Psychanalyse, anarchie, ordre moral," in Roger Dadoun, Jacques Lesage de La Haye, and Philippe Garnier, *Psychanalyse et anarchisme* (Lyon: Atelier de création libertaire, 2002), p. 32. [CS translation]

have always adopted an approach along the lines of 'if you can't beat them, join them,' which is rare in Asian jurisdiction. This is definitely why I'm staying here in Taiwan."[31]

Join institutions, all the better to subvert them. Many critics will say that those are the words of the dominant. And yet … China is dangerously frustrated by these bold words that threaten its omnipotence and trouble its hegemony.

*

So again, we ask: how do we orient ourselves in this new geography whose pathways not only tangle the clear distinction between de facto anarchism and dawning anarchism, but also reveal the rhizomatic, variable topography of cyber-anarchism? How do we orient ourselves in the ontological indifference of differences?

*

How do we orient ourselves when it is as urgent as it is difficult to discern and point to these differences, to distinguish between horizontality and deregulation, liberation and uberization, ecology and economy…? When it becomes as urgent as it is difficult to assign the non-governable to its place even as it is knocking ever more loudly at the door of consciousness, unconsciousness, bodies…? That's when we understand that these uncertainties are already openings toward other ways of sharing, acting, thinking. Of being an anarchist.

Let's say it again: there's absolutely nothing more to expect from on high.

—Nathalie Zaltzman[2]

Fork the government.

—Audrey Tang[3]

"I am an anarchist." For philosophers, this statement seems forever to bear the stamp of impossibility. One cannot *be* an anarchist. In the era of the withering of principles, the phenomenon that is the anarchy of being resists all reduction to ontic determination: being is no longer such and such and therefore can no longer fulfill its function as a transmitter of predicates (Schürmann).

One cannot *be an anarchist.* Anarchy proves to be more originary than ontology, exceeding ontological difference itself. Its "saying" exceeds its "said," overflows the propositional form infinitely by taking the responsibility of obligation beyond essence (Levinas).

One *can* not be an anarchist. As soon as anarchy and power are associated with one another — *"the power to be able* to be an anarchist" — anarchism clearly participates in some manner in the drive for mastery (Derrida).

One cannot be an anarchist. It's not the predicate "anarchist" that transforms the subject, anarchizing the subject by determining it. It's not that. The subject must first develop their own anarchic dimension, prepare their own transformability, constitute themself as an anarchic subject before "being" it and predicating it (Foucault).

[31] Baptiste Condominas, "Taiwan: g0v, les hackers qui veulent changer la démocratie," *Radio France* International, December 2, 2016.

[2] Nathalie Zaltzman, "La pulsion anarchiste," in *Psyche anarchiste. Débattre avec Nathalie Zaltzman*, PUF, 2011, 58–9.

[3] "'Fork' is emblematic of the 'open source' community. It signals the creation of a new project from a previous project, that is, 'forking' from the project to create a new one from it." See the explanation at the end of this conclusion in Audrey Tang, "Fork the government" (February 2), *La 27e région,* posted by Magali Marlin on March 16, 2016.

One cannot be an *anarchist*. The word is a signifier so inflated with the void of its own signified that it has become a fetish, rendered sacred, prelude to a new idolatry (Agamben).

One can *not* be an anarchist. The negativity at work in politics, the structure of originary misunderstanding and miscounting, cannot be placed. Its political expression is rare and intermittent, only glimpsed. Its expression plays, but never holds a pose (Rancière).

*

"I am an anarchist." Each word in this statement presents an insurmountable obstacle to all the others. Each word, an echo of the politically untenable nature of anarchism.

*

By emphasizing the impossibility of "being an anarchist," philosophy missed its critique of domination. This occurred even as philosophy ceaselessly interrogated its own position as a dominant discourse. Derrida, more than anyone, demonstrated that traditional European philosophy authorized itself to "speak about the whole,"[4] even if this excessive power is accompanied by a certain "non-knowledge," which is not ignorance, but the refusal to see: "One could say that the philosopher authorizes himself to know about everything on the basis of an 'I don't want to know.'"[5]

The problem is that the philosophical concepts of anarchy developed to denounce this "not wanting to know" have participated in the same refusal to see. While they have enabled a destabilization of the archic paradigm of Western metaphysics,

---

[4] Jacques Derrida, "Privilege: Justificatory title and introductory remarks," in *Who's Afraid of Philosophy*, trans. Jan Plug, Stanford University Press, 2002, 61.

[5] Derrida, "Privilege," 61.

whom were students, occupied the Taiwanese parliament to protest a new trade pact with China. They founded g0v (pronounced "gov-zero"), a collective of *civic hackers*. Shortly thereafter, the ex-Minister of Digital Affairs Jaclyn Tsai was looking for a way to bolster trust between citizens and the government. She came across a g0v "hackathon" and, soon after attending, put together a plan for collaboration by proposing the launch of a neutral citizen platform and naming Audrey Tang as her assistant. Tang became Minister in turn in 2016.

Tang's strategy consists in using open source coding tools "to radically redesign and rebuild an existing government process or service — and from this create new tools to show citizens how the state operates,"[29] in other words, to reveal government information to the wider public. In "Hack the pandemic," Tang declared:

By simply replacing the "o" with a zero in your search bar, you enter a "parallel" government site that might function better and where you will find viable alternatives. In the g0v initiative framework, there are currently some 9,000 citizen-hackers participating in what we call "forking" the government. In open source coding culture, to "fork" is to take something that already exists in a different direction. Citizens accept digital surveillance, but the state also accepts a transparency, an opening of its data and codes, and integrates the criticism that will inevitably emerge.[30]

*

Is Audrey Tang a symptom of domination or of emancipation? A reinforcement of the logic of government or its defeat? Tang said: "Civic hackers often produce work that threatens the existing institutional structures. In Taiwan, institutions

---

[29] "Reprogramming power: Audrey Tang is bringing hacker culture to the state," *Apolitical*, October 18, 2018.

[30] Interview with Catherine Hebert, Blog "Hinnovic," Montreal, May 6, 1921.

more useful to try to give shape to the problem by raising the question. Relating the remains of white, male domination of philosophy to a thieving disavowal of anarchism, I am not undertaking to restore to anarchism what the philosophers stole — it's impossible, anyway, to return the broken bit, to glue it back onto an improbable origin. My approach evidently obeys no proprietary instinct. In any case, anarchism wouldn't take being restored to itself, since its past exists only in the future. So, it's none of that. The question I have raised is the following: if the anarchist problem since Proudhon is precisely to think about politics without the aid of hegemony, in any form whatsoever,[26] it is also now a question of doing so when a certain anarchism has itself become hegemonic.

*

Would you believe it? Today, there are anarchists holding governmental positions. Audrey Tang, Minister of Digital Affairs in Taiwan, the first transgender minister in history, a genius cybernetician and free software creator, defines themself openly as a "conservative anarchist."[27] This pleonasm should not be misconstrued. What Tang means is that they want to work on the conservation of the anarchist utopia experimented by Net programmers who, over the past twenty years, have been suggesting that a virtual participative democracy be substituted for classical political decision-making.[28]

Back in Spring 2014, Audrey Tang participated in the emergent Sunflower Movement, in which young activists, most of

---

[26] Recourse to the concept of hegemony is strangely frequent among most philosophers of radical democracy, such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, whose major work is titled *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, Verso, 1985.

[27] Tang states this on their profile on the platform *Medium.com,* where they regularly publish article-manifestos.

[28] In a TED talk titled "How the Internet will (one day) transform the government," scholar Clay Shirky explains what "the world of *open source* programing can teach democracy": TEDGlobal, September 25, 2012.

they have nonetheless erupted into discourse as constructions *ex nihilo*, without a past, mute on the theft by which they are procured. By dissociating anarchy and anarchism, the philosophical critique of domination has involuntarily opened a space of complicity between conceptualization and repression, dismantling metaphysics and colonialism, ethics and defense of the state, difference and mastery, *parrēsia* and (self-)government, "politicity" and semantic repression, politics and police... This complicity reveals too the extent of the philosophical bonds of subordination to the logic of government.

Thinking anarchy philosophically consisted largely in subverting the legitimacy of anarchism, subverting the subversion of power in a gesture that has never perceived itself and has therefore never analyzed itself either. A gesture both hegemonic and subservient that will remain unthought so long as anarchy as a concept is not confronted with the anarchist radicality of that which does not (self-)govern.

The deconstruction of metaphysics was evidently not enough to dismantle the archic paradigm, it was no more effective than the ethical injunction, the critique of subjectivity, the deconstitution of the sacred or the unrepresentable. Even if radical movements today, especially post-anarchist movements, identify with the major figures of poststructuralism, this does not fully mask their lack of a political commitment that doesn't temporize and makes no compromise whatsoever with the governmental prejudice.

The reason for this is that, contrary to all expectations, philosophy has not fully grasped the ontological meaning — that is, the philosophical meaning — of anarchism. By declaring that only anarchy can and must become the Ariadne's thread for the deconstructive questioning of ontology, thus, in a sense again, of ontological questioning; by excluding anarchism from this circle of investigation; by detecting the arrival of an ontological anarchy, an ethical anarchy, a critical anarchy, a theological

anarchy, a democratic anarchy, in the fabric of the theoretical and political events of the second half of the twentieth century, but only at the expense of a break with all real links with anarchism; by emphasizing over and again that being an anarchist is impossible, philosophers have failed to perceive the anarchist dimension of being.

The question of being is overlooked because its meaning is anarchism. If being has a meaning, it merges with the non-governable, with radical foreignness to domination. *Being could care less about power.* The real anarchist is being itself.

With impressive acuity, Schürmann sensed this and went so far as to claim that the question of being finds in anarchy its transfiguring future, the place of expression, the tattoo of its indifference to power. But by putting up a wall between anarchy and anarchism, by hiding behind ontological difference as if it were a sufficient guarantee against substantialism, he was unable to give sufficient weight to his assertion of the need to rethink practice. He did not cultivate his problematizing of "action." To think the anarchist being — not just (or perhaps not at all) the anarchic being — requires the invention of activist discourse, not just contemplation; it takes a contemplative-activist discourse that opens up to philosophical action its alternative commitment to horizontality.

*

Philosophers of anarchy have some excuse. We must concede that all attempts to think being and politics together have been a disaster. From Plato's "communism" to the mathematical totalitarianism of some forms of Maoism, through the Heideggerian night, the elaboration of connections between ontology and politics authorized by the originary bricolage of *archē*, which, as we have seen, extends its reign in both fields, have given rise to nothing but terrifying dead-ends. This is probably why philosophers of anarchy have insisted on making a

oikos, house, even though it also refers to an entirely different thing — something that is the very opposite of the economy — specifically, home economics? Who's paying close attention to the fact that "ecology" is a "discourse of the abode" battling against domestication? The Earth is a habitat without domesticity, without master or center, absolutely non-governable, yet devasted by power games.

Many critics have attacked traditional anarchism for being a vitalism or a biologism, which is an absurd accusation. The question of anarchist being is the question of life as survival. Survival on Earth, even inscribed in the biological memory of individuals, is political from the start. In the solitude of vast Siberian steppes, under the pale gleam of the winter sun, watching animals help each other, Kropotkin concluded that mutual aid deposes natural selection from its status as principle. Mutual aid is the social response of nature, and is thus a key example of the death drive turning back on itself.

*

Anarchism — so diverse, so difficult to reduce to one authority, including its own — is the privileged theoretical and practical constellation of a situation in which the non-governable bears witness everywhere in idioms unknown to the language of principles. Everywhere, from the massed populace to the individual, people bewail their lassitude, their weariness, their anger in the face of ecological and social devastation of the world by governments that offer them no support. But they also speak, without contradiction, of their lassitude, their weariness, their anger in the face of the absence of any effective governmental regulation of the uberized jungle in which they have to orient themselves alone as they look for support.

Faced with this lassitude, weariness, and anger, many theorists and political activists propose "solutions." It strikes me as

origin cannot remain a question unasked. It is inevitable that we search for what precedes principle. This retrospection "does not engender a return to a state prior to evolution, but rather to one that comes after it, a state that was previously inexistent."[25] The return to before *archē* invents that to which it (itself) turns back toward. The anarchist drive is a regressive energy shaped by a future-facing dynamic. It is the withdrawal that makes the non-place exist, not vice versa. To come back amounts to inventing. Not finding anything in the place one comes back to, not taking anything to the place where one is going. This nothing toward which the future turns back before projecting itself forward is anything except a virgin island or a haven of peace — since it is nothing.

The non-governable is revealed after the fact, like the counterproof of this nothing that is the impossibility of all government. As Proudhon put it, the "anarchist being" will forever be a neologism.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

One of the great philosophical challenges of our time is to put an end to the competition between being and life — and this requires a rethinking of the death drive. Whether it is the Heideggerian alliance between being and death, sealed by the privilege granted to existence over life, or whether it is the sudden revalorizations of life that believed they have finished with Heidegger by (poorly) substituting precarious modes of life on existents, or whether it is a supposed ancestralism of being, its fossil, neither living nor dead, dehumanized and decorrelated, always older and more real than life: it must be said that none of these versions is up to the urgency of the task.

The sore spot in relations between being, life, and death cries out its name every day: ecology. Who's paying attention now to the fact that the word "ecology" also derives from

_____

[25] Zaltzman, *L'Esprit du mal,* L'Olivier, "Penser/Rêver," 2007, 20.

clear distinction between the "y" and the "ism" and have kept from rushing the ontological content of anarchy into a possible "staging," preferring, as in the case of Agamben, impotence to a forced pragmatism that might be even more sectarian and dominating than all "governmental prejudices." And Rancière is quite right: these prejudices have not all disappeared from historical anarchism.

Why risk a new impediment? Wouldn't it be better, far better, to make a cut between being and anarchism, to stop ontologizing politics and politicizing ontology, to deconstruct the archic paradigm without transforming it into an anarchist paradigm and thereby to respect the varied battles against domination by refraining from unifying them in a shared destiny that also makes domination uniform? Wouldn't it be better also, as Schürmann suggests, to drop the question of being, which seems to have totally disappeared from the philosophical scene since the banishing of Heidegger, as if in the end this question were his alone, and erased along with him? As if philosophical anarchy were not only the mourning, but also the amnesty of this line of investigation?

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

But how can we seriously entertain the thought that we can be done with being? How can we think that life — form of life — has in some sense *replaced* being? That the only politically correct, ethical, presentable, and representable anarchism is, to put it bluntly, the anarchism of a way of life, a style of living, or living the quiet life of whatever remains of democracy in parliamentary democracies?

For the moment, it must be said, anarchism has not provided an answer to this ontological and practical watering-down of itself. At least not a satisfactory answer. Anarchism is evidently also a philosophical archipelago that claims it flees all properly conceptual elucidation and is a refusal of responsibility. Vivien García writes: "For a large part, anarchist

theories have developed outside of philosophy," since philosophy "is none other than the avoidance of an-archi[sm]."[6] As we have seen, this is true. Yet must we respond to this avoidance with yet another avoidance? Can anarchism really get out of explaining its ontological dimension?

Daniel Colson argues that "anarchy is not a metaphysical concept; it's an empirical and concrete concept."[7] That's all well and good, but, contradictions aside, what does "an empirical and concrete concept" mean exactly? Bakunin sought to resolve the oxymoron by proposing that anarchism be defined as a "veritable plastic force,"[8] in which "no office petrifies, becomes fixed and remains irrevocably attached to a single person; order and hierarchical promotion do not exist, so yesterday's commander can become today's subaltern; no one is above anyone else, or if they rise, it is to fall in the next moment, like waves on the sea."[9] This must be the direction of the analysis, so that to state "I am an anarchist" is no longer a matter of logic. Subject, copula, predicate all lose their function immediately in the statement. If predicative logic, its incline, the governmental diastema can all disappear from "I am an anarchist," it is because the anarchism of being relieves the anarchist from having to become the subject of its anarchy. As the only political form that is always to be invented, to

_____

[6] Cited by Vivien García, *L'Anarchisme aujourd'hui,* L'Harmattan, 2007, 18.

[7] García, *L'Anarchisme aujourd'hui,* 110

[8] García, *L'Anarchisme aujourd'hui,* 87, 194; cited from Mikhail Bakunin, *L'Empire knouto-germanique et la révolution sociale, Œuvres,* vol. II, 52.

[9] See also Sébastien Faure: "Due to its plasticity, and as a result of the free play of all the elements, both individual and collective, that it assembles, this type of organization grants each of these elements the entirety of the forces that belong to it, while through the associating of these forces, it achieve the maximum vitality for itself": "Anarchie, anarchisme, individualisme anarchiste," in *Encyclopédie Anarchiste*, Vol. 1, La Librairie internationale, 1925–1934, 74.

leaves raw edges and crevasses, those mineral landscapes, so austere, arid, and ever cruel to human life."[22] Yet, "there is nothing forcing these nomads to live on the edge of the Arctic. Like the Sami, one of the Arctic peoples who used to be hunters like them, they could undergo a mutation by abandoning the frozen sea to raise domestic reindeer."[23] But it's precisely domestication that the Inuit don't want. They don't want reindeer domesticated any more than they want domestication themselves. Their freedom comes at this price, the price of a battle of death against death — against dependence, subordination, training, against "all relations fixed to a unifying identity."[24]

*

What about the supposed naive goodness of anarchism then? The non-governable — the place without a place where the death drive turns back against itself, the frozen polar rock, the solitary, floating path of the geographers, the jungle of insurgents — can this "a-socialness" be equated with an origin untouched by power, a sheltered isle? Does the uncoupling assume the return to a state preceding hegemony? To childhood?

Freud does indeed describe thanatological unlinking as a return — but a return to the inorganic state. What kind of return is this other than, quite literally, a *return to nothing*? The "there" to which the return comes back *doesn't exist*. The prelude to the origin *doesn't exist*. The prelude to command *doesn't exist*. There's no State of the inorganic state.

Anarchism always assumes a retrospective glance. I have sought here to retrace some of the many ramifications for which the dismantling of the archic paradigm is first a "returning back toward." The question of the provenance of

_____

[22] Zaltzman, "La pulsion anarchiste," 63.

[23] Zaltzman, "La pulsion anarchiste," 63.

[24] Zaltzman, "La pulsion anarchiste," 53.

death drive."[17] The anarchist drive erects a wall of impassivity against narcissistic petrification and its authoritarian incarnations.

Thus, in the same way that Eros is not *always* in the service of life — as we have already seen, Zaltzman criticizes the compounding tendencies of "ideological love" — Thanatos is not *always* in the service of death. The tendency of calling for freedom experiences "a mental destiny distinct from a direct inclination to death."[18] A destiny "other than deadly."[19]

If there is a tendency within anarchism to undo what Eros binds to excess, then the anarchist drive is, in a sense, "antisocial," if by "social" we understand community fusion. Insofar as it undoes this fusion and is wary of any idea of unified human nature, the anarchist drive makes room for another opening to alterity.

"To be an anarchist" initially implies an experience of unlinking as lifting anchor, enabling absolute resistance to *archē despotikē*, that is, to *domestication*.

Celebrating the memory of anarchist geographers, Zaltzman cites Élisée Reclus writing to his brother Élie Reclus from Louisiana: "I need to die of hunger for a bit, sleep on stones, sell my watch (a souvenir of eternal friendship) for a piece of howler monkey."[20] She also mentions Jean Malaurie's book on the Inuit, *The Last Kings of Thule*.[21] The Inuit live in "hyperborean landscapes of nothing but ice and stone, with a ground that is always frozen and never the tenderness of friable earth or a gentle rain, snow always blown about by the wind that

---

[17] Zaltzman, "La pulsion anarchiste," 54.
[18] Zaltzman, "La pulsion anarchiste," 50.
[19] Zaltzman, "La pulsion anarchiste," 53.
[20] Élisée Reclus, "À Élie Reclus," undated, in the countryside around New Orleans, in Élisée Reclus (1830–1905), *Correspondance*, Vol. 1: *Elisée Reclus 1911–1925*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Gallica.
[21] Jean Malaurie, *The Last Kings of Thule: With the Polar Eskimos as They Face Their Destiny*, trans. Adrienne Foulke, Jonathan Cape, 1982 [1955].

be shaped before it exists, precisely because it depends on no beginning or command, anarchism is never what it is. That's where its being lies. This plasticity is the meaning of its being, the meaning of its question. If we fail to see this meaning, or if we move too quickly over it, we risk reducing its plasticity to the most simple "empirical and concrete" apparatus, no longer able to distinguish it from a sales pitch, a symptom of de facto anarchism and cyber-power — everything's plastic, away we go.

*

A rigorous reading of the remanences of the governmental prejudice in contemporary philosophy has enabled me to negatively outline the space of the non-governable, allowing certain voices stifled within it to speak — the voices of the colonized, the slave, the witness — but it has also led me to address a question to anarchism that it has not yet answered satisfactorily: how should we interpret its plastic ontology? This is the task dawning in anarchism.

*

Traditional critiques of anarchism are based on two contradictory arguments: a benevolent confidence in human nature and a logic of violence and death. But on reflection, there's nothing specific in these two arguments that could not also be ascribed to any radical political movement — communism as much as anarchism, for example. It's a quick fix to the problem to make anarchism the exclusive symptom of this two-headed, pacifist-criminal monster. Far more important is to decide instead how anarchism can deploy, in a way that is entirely its own, an exit strategy from this dual trap.

For lack of sufficient examination, the anarchist meaning of being and its indifference to power have been equated

too quickly with virginity, innocence, lack of corruption. For instance, Saul Newman writes: "Anarchism therefore has a logical point of departure, uncontaminated by power, from which power can be condemned as unnatural, irrational, and immoral."[10] But if we don't even try to show that the non-governable has nothing to do with an intact, untouched, and untouchable origin, philosophers will always be right to suspect that behind the plasticity of the anarchist being sits the persistent presupposition of an incorruptible nature and adherence to a metaphysics of purity. They'll be right in their perception that there is an archaic ontology in anarchism.

The anarchist meaning of being — its indifference to power — has also been taken as a terrorist license, a "poetics of the bomb,"[11] or what Mallarmé described as the fury of "devices whose explosion lights up the houses of Parliament with a summary glow, but pitifully disfigures the passers-by."[12] Here, too, if there is no attempt to show that the non-governable is not the forebear of violence, philosophers will always have grounds to denounce a deep complicity between anarchism and the death drive.

<div align="center">*</div>

Situated somewhere between a treatise on ontology and a revolutionary manifesto, the quotation from psychoanalyst Nathalie Zaltzman's text, "La pulsion anarchiste" [the anarchistic drive], heading this chapter helps us perceive the shared source of these two pitfalls.

Violence first. Evidently there are intimate relations between anarchy, anarchism, and death — relations sewn together with the thread of the black flag. The problem is that while control, *Bemächtigungstrieb*, along with all its destructive variations, is certainly the offspring of the death drive, the battle against domination and control must also draw its energy from this drive. To fight domination is to assume that fixed nodes will be dissolved. Now, what Zaltzman claims is that, while a destructive, dominating, and aggressive uncoupling exists, there is also a "liberational" uncoupling that detaches itself from the other — one that unbinds itself.[13] So, there's death drive and then there's death drive, which is why she refers to death drives in the plural. Anarchism "draws its force from the death drive and turns its destruction back against it."[14] Strangely, this turning of destruction back on itself is not a dialectical construction, but is instead an expression of indifference.[15] An unconscious indifference unlike the compulsive love of power, often hidden behind the love of humanity. For Zaltzman, "all libidinal bonds, even the most respectful, include the goal of possession that annuls alterity. The aim of Eros is annexation, up to and including the other's right to live as they wish."[16]

This is why "the revolt against the pressure of civilization, the destruction of an existing social organization that is oppressive and unjust, can be enlisted under the banner of love for humanity, does not draw its force from this ideological love. It draws its force from the unbinding activity of a liberatory

[10] Saul Newman, *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power*, Lexington Books, 2001, 5; cited by García in *L'Anarchisme aujourd'hui,* 47.

[11] Uri Eisenzweig, *Fictions de l'anarchisme,* Christian Bourgois, 2001, 161.

[12] Stéphane Mallarmé, "Accusation," in *Divagations*, trans. Barbara Johnson, Harvard University Press, 2009, 257.

[13] Zaltzman, "La pulsion anarchiste," 56. See also the published proceedings of the conference: Jean-François Chantaretto and Georges Gaillard, eds., *Psychanalyse et culture. L'œuvre de Nathalie Zaltzman*, Ithaque, 2020.

[14] Zaltzman, "La pulsion anarchiste," 57.

[15] See my own analysis of the death drive in *The New Wounded: From Neurosis to Brain Damage*, trans. Steven Miller, Fordham University Press, 2012, 121–41.

[16] Zaltzman, "La pulsion anarchiste," 54.