

Paedophilia and American anarchism

the other side of Hakim Bey

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Sometimes, when I turn on a radio or open a magazine, I remark “these are strange times for an anarchist.” Year after year in both mainstream and alternative Media, millions of people all over the world are led to believe that an internationally known, public pedophile apologist is also a popular anarchist. This is a terrible distortion. In fact, most anarchists do not understand his writings because they do not know his motivations. I offer this essay so they might be better informed.

There is an American anarchist named Peter Lamborn Wilson, who uses the pseudonym Hakim Bey for some of his writings. He is best known as the author of TAZ: The Temporary Autonomous Zone. I have never considered his work to be serious anarchist thought, but many others take a different view, and his work is available in at least a dozen languages. The issue I find worth discussing is that for over twenty years, Wilson/Bey has used anarchist arguments to promote pedophilia in his published work. This is no secret in North America, although his anarchist career is not in jeopardy.

Born in 1945 at New York, Wilson became involved in a revival of “Moorish Orthodoxy” at age twenty. He has a trust fund by way of his affluent family, and traveled to the Middle East (especially Iran) from around 1970 until 1978, and then from around 1980 through the mid-1990’s, he wrote poetry, prose fiction, philosophy, and literary criticism conjoining pedophile sexuality with anarchistic ideology and with Islamic mysticism. His venues include the NAMBLA Bulletin (organ of paedophile organisation the North American Man-Boy Love Association), Gayme, and the Acolyte Reader. Books by Bey on this thread have been published by Semiotext(e), Autonomedia, NAMBLA, Entimos Press, and Coltsfoot Press.

Hakim Bey has been recommended in many American media outlets, including “All Things Considered” in 2003, on National Public Radio. On 28 October 2004, Europe’s ARTE television network, on the show “Tracks,” broadcast an interview with Hakim Bey to tens of millions of viewers in both French and German. When I learned of the TV interview, I contacted ARTE and the small company that made the film. Both companies carefully acknowledged their error and regret. They intended no harm, but as a result of this sort of favorable exposure, Anarchist Pedophilia becomes more popular, its star philosopher more famous. Every December for at least ten years, New York’s Libertarian Book Club has sponsored Peter Lamborn Wilson’s annual “Chaos Day Lecture.” He now lives in New Paltz, New York, north of the city. I have met him on a few occasions, and I even arranged a lecture by him when I was new to anarchism, around 1992. In early November 2004 he led a workshop at a conference on secession in Vermont, where leading radicals of that state gave lectures against the Bush government.

Within the anarchist world, there has been a pedophile thread in evidence for over a century. The journal *Der Eigene* published at Berlin from 1896 until 1933, was pedophile and anarchist, with contributions from Adolf Brand, Edwin Bab, Elisar von Kuppfer, and John Henry Mackay under the pseudonym “Sagitta.” Mackay was a respected anarchist writer, and some of his books (both pedophile and not) are in print today in several languages. Outside of his own circle, however, the anarchists of his time were unaware of his “secret life.”

The anarchist-pedophile thread has never disappeared, but remained discreet until the 1970’s, when pedophiles emerged alongside the struggle homosexual rights, using friendly terms like “Pederasty” and “Man-Boy Love” for their ideas. Almost all gay and lesbian groups firmly disavow any connection between their activism and pedophile tendencies. Pedophilia is a separate issue, and it occurs just as frequently among heterosexuals as it does among homosexual people. As far as the question itself is concerned, let’s walk through what is obvious: knowledge is power,

and children know almost nothing. People who know so little cannot give meaningful consent and are extremely vulnerable to exploitation. The use of anarchist philosophy to reverse this is opportunistic.

However, the distinction is not so clear among anarchists (at least in the United States), and Hakim Bey is very clearly a guru among those who understand sex between adults and children as a legitimate lifestyle choice, rather than as sexual abuse. When the editors of anarchist magazines have been approached with articles about Bey's pedophile side, there has been an almost uniform resistance to any discussion. This has been explained in different ways, including that the issue was imaginary; that it would be too controversial and disruptive; that it was no more than a personal attack, and therefore without merit. The internet has been more open to the subject, but the general response is consistent. Anarchists leap into a debate about censorship when no censorship was suggested; they are generally unable to discuss the ethical ramifications of Bey's use of anarchism to justify something that is exploitative and predatory; they often already know that Bey is pedophile, never deny it; some readers appreciate that the discussion of Bey's pedophilia is exactly as relevant to discussing his work as any other part of the subject. The majority take the time to state their disapproval of pedophile sexual abuse, but the point does not occur in their minds as automatically as would the disapproval of other social problems, such as sexism or racism. Sometimes the matter needs to be explained. This writer has been in the awkward position of defending freedom of the Press, but then being unable to discuss literature that's already printed. There seems to be a vaguely-defined code of silence, preserving the safe space for pedophile culture while pretending that it's not there, mostly by means of the volunteer labor of anarchists.

The former curator of one anarchist archive acquired pedophile periodicals, presumably because Hakim Bey was writing anarchist literature in the pages of the magazines. The Labadie Collection at University of Michigan has carried the NAMBLA Bulletin and a few similar titles since the 1980's. Anarchist bookstores in the US almost always carry Hakim Bey titles, but not the ones which can be understood only as pedophile material. One exception is Bound Together Books (San Francisco), which carries the Prison Diaries of NAMBLA Members and other NAMBLA literature. One member of the collective was quoted as saying that "to force the issue would destroy the bookstore." I do not condemn the preservation of any literature, but I do observe that the anarchist scene provides venue and distribution for pedo-anarchist material and simultaneously refuses to examine the phenomenon.

In this writer's opinion, the pedophile writings of Hakim Bey indicate a general deceit in his philosophy, and are evidence that his concept of the Temporary Autonomous Zone is inspired by opportunism, not by good will. He presents arguments for human freedom while actually wishing to create situations where he is free to put his deranged sexuality into practice. This is an abuse of anarchism, and new readers of Hakim Bey should take the pedophilia into consideration before being led "down the garden path." Once the awkwardness has been overcome and we look at pedophilia as an item for discussion, we will make very short work of it. All attempts to justify the practice are morally idiotic, and the TAZ is no more than a "Neverland" on the anarchist landscape.

Noisy-le-Sec, France
January 18, 2005

Subject : Peter Lamborn Wilson

Peter Lamborn Wilson, a.k.a. “Hakim Bey” founder of Semiotext(e) magazine (now known as Autonomedia). Student of Sufi philosophy through Walid al-Taha a.k.a Warren Tartaglia. Studied heretical Islam in Iran, North Africa in the late 1960’s. Traveled in India and Asia. [Disinfopedia]

Pseudonym: Hakim Bey (catalog of Library of Congress, Washington DC)

Founder of the “Moorish Orthodox Radio Crusade” on WBAI (95.5 FM, NYC, Pacifica Radio). [Disinfopedia]

In 1965 a “brilliant junky 350-pound jazz saxophonist poet” named Walid al-Taha introduced him to the Moorish Orthodox Church, after which he disappeared into far-flung wanderings across the Muslim world soaking in all the classical texts and tattered heretics and local scenes he could find. In Iran he applied for a two-week visa and stayed for seven years, leaving when the Revolution came. He has become something of a living myth, an Old Man on the Mountain for numerous intellectual circles. Peter has written scores of books and articles (sometimes going by Hakim Bey), hosted his own radio show, “Moorish Orthodox Radio Crusade,” and was a founding member of the Ibn ‘Arabi Society (he remains an honorary fellow). [Sakhra-l’Assal, 2002]

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- *Weaver of Tales. Persian Picture Rugs* (with Karl Schlamming), Callwey, Munich 1980.
- *The Drunken Universe. An Anthology of Persian Sufi Poetry* (with Nasrollah Pourjavady), Phanes Press, Grand Rapids 1987.
- *Scandal. Essays in Islamic Heresy*, Autonomedia, Brooklyn, NY 1988.
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- (editor with Robert Anton Wilson) *Semiotext(e) Science Fiction Anthology* (Semiotext(e) n.d.)
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Articles in the NAMBLA Bulletin

[NAMBLA Bulletin is published by the North American Man-Boy Love Association. This is a partial list of Bey’s articles for the magazine. Original copies were examined by me at the Special Collections Department, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (United States).]

- Bey, Hakim. “Japanese Scarf” (poem, reprinted from *Seditious Delicious*) NAMBLA Bulletin, Jul-Aug 1985
- “Poem” NAMBLA Bulletin, Jan-Feb 1986
- “Five Conceptual Art Projects” NAMBLA Bulletin, Apr. 1986
- “My Political Beliefs” NAMBLA Bulletin, June 1986.
- “Association for Ontological Anarchism, Communique #2.” NAMBLA Bulletin, Jul-Aug 1986
- “The Face of God” NAMBLA Bulletin, Dec. 1986
- “The Eroticism of Banal Architecture” NAMBLA Bulletin, Jan-Feb 1987
- “Chaos Theory and the Nuclear Family” NAMBLA Bulletin, Mar. 1987
- “China Sea Post-Card” NAMBLA Bulletin, Mar. 1987
- “Divine Folly Indulges Pagan Passion” NAMBLA Bulletin, Nov. 1987

Articles in Gayme

[This is a partial list of Bey’s articles for the magazine. Further citations are difficult to gather due to legal issues relating to its contents (Gayme was involved in obscenity lawsuits). The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives at Toronto preserves the title but will not allow scanning or copying of its pages.]

- Bey, Hakim. “Contemplation of the unbearded.” *Gayme* vol.1, no.1, 1993, pp. 16–21.

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- “What do we do now?” *Gayme* vol.3, no.1, 1996, pp. 8–11
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Reviews

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- Bleyer, Jennifer, “An Anarchist in the Hudson Valley” *The Brooklyn Rail*, July 2004
- Knight, Michael Muhammad, “Green Tea With Imam of the Age” *Muslim Wakeup!* January 2004 (“Michael Muhammad Knight is author of *The Taqwacores*, a novel available through the punk label *Alternative Tentacles*.”)
- Codrescu, Andrei “Location and Activities of TAZ and Tazzerites” (commentary) July 16, 2003, network ; National Public Radio ; program : *All Things Considered*. [Codrescu is a very well-known poet, definitely an anarchist, who teaches at Baton Rouge, Louisiana. *All Things Considered* is the leading radio news show in the United States, with many millions of daily listeners.]
- Davis, Erik (interviewer), “The Wandering Sufi: Introduction to the Mystic with Peter Lam-born Wilson,” *Voice Literary Supplement*, New York, February 1994

Sample text

My Political Beliefs

by Hakim Bey

This appeared in NAMBLA Bulletin, June 1986, page 14 (published by the North American Man-boy Love Association).

barelegged on his bicycle in the park he rides beneath
a children's fountain —droplets catch his hair which
the afternoon makes somewhat bronze, beaded with molten dew
—the sunset over Jersey like an industrial krakatoa:
Newark Gold, Secaucus Red, East Orange.
The button on his blazer: Anarchist Bicyclists
he's in the bathtub, I see
him through a crack in the door playing with himself, he calls me in, shows me
underwater push-ups and sit-ups, except for his gallic buttocks his skin is gilt as the
air over the Hudson. The touch of his wet, bath-wrinkled fingers in my hand...
but then...
one of his parents clumps down the hall... I suppose to make sure neither of us is
raping the other...
[chorus of groans] Ohhh! for a
Buster-Keaton-bomb all spherical & black as coaldust with sweet sparkling with
sweet sparkling fuse —a mindbomb to
Drop on the Idea of the Family! O for a libertarian isle of runaways! O goodnight
Moon, I am lost, actually lost without him
But I didn't want this to be
Just another poem about hopeless love. Pretend it's a manifesto instead. Down with
School! Boy Rule OK! In the land of dreams
No governance exists
But that of anarchs and kings, for dreamers have not yet learned to vote or think
past the unfurling of the moment. He touches my cheek, runs delicate fingers
through the hairs on my arm.
My liege shatters all Law for a triple kiss.

—Hakim Bey

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libcom.org/article/paedophilia-and-american-anarchism-other-side-hakim-bey
An article about the paedophilia of lifestylist, mystic, individualist “anarchist” Hakim Bey, aka
Peter Lamborn Wilson.

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