Sascha Engel
Anti-civ Combat Reference Manual (Excerpt)
June 2024

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debtor, and is much more of a ransom than the "pay" as which it masquerades. In any case, though, there is no such thing as a "wage"; there is only credit, followed by repayment of (some of) the principal extended.

Existing critiques of wages therefore don't go far enough. The officially sanctioned, union-backed "ethics" of wages don't even see the real problem with them, as they refuse to admit exploitation as a category in general; but likewise the leftist critique of exploitation or surplus-value reinforces, by using these categories, the notion of wages as an exchange between labor and capital. By keeping this notion intact, this critique therefore unwittingly lays the emphasis on the unequal nature of the exchange, and doesn't question that there is one. In turn, this has the side-effect of allowing for the possibility of an at least in principle legitimate wage-labor-exchange. If the term "wage" goes overboard, however, this even just potential legitimacy disappears: labor is then no longer asking for anything, as it's not actually "labor" dealing with "capital". It's a creditor, and as such can rack up interest or choke off the whole enterprise altogether. Which is not to say, of course, that any individual can do so willy-nilly; but gaining an understanding of just how powerful "labor" really is when it stops being "labor" can still go a long way beyond unions and their complicity, beyond "social democracy" and leftism, and towards gestures such as general wildcat strikes, industrial sabotage, and zerowork – and perfectly legitimately so even within the categories of political economy. For these are, after all, just different names for credit withdrawal, demolition of instruments of credit, and abolition of credit…

phrased, of wages being unfair, but in the more general sense that there really is no exchange here at all, no "wage" being paid for "labor." Not that these two points are entirely unrelated. That a "wage" is not paid for a substantial amount of time and effort put into so-called "jobs" is patently obvious to anyone who considers how much they actually sacrifice for their "job" even when half-assing it; beyond the hours themselves, there is the adjustment of all behavior around them for their sake (coming down and unwinding, sobering up, commuting), plus the work that goes into begging for a job, also known as "getting hired", none of that is paid.

But there is also never a wage in general, and cannot be. And this is so even when ignoring the thorny issue whether labor is really ever a thing, both generally and in post-industrial society particularly. Even accepting literally every other economic category for the sake of this argument, there is still no such thing as a wage. What there is, if other economic categories are presumed valid, is credit: credit in the form of labor performed, and extended from the employee to the company each month, or week, or whatever the "pay cycle" is. This credit is repaid not only below its value, but also with negative interest, as the employee adds both fixed and variable capital to the company's stock, and both of those at a loss. (This last point again isn't necessary for the demolition, but adds insult to injury – certainly there are types of employees, like CEOs, who don't make a loss extending their credit to the company, but they too don't make "wages.") The so-called "wage" is thus not a wage or remuneration at all, but at best a repayment of (some of) the principal of the credit extended to the company. Each pay cycle the company enters into debt with its employees, and at the end of the cycle, pays off the debt. It doesn't purchase time, nor labor power. It doesn't purchase anything at all: the employee extends a credit to it and it repays the principal.

Moreover, since this debt-relation isn't entered voluntarily on the part of the creditor – all window-dressing to the contrary notwithstanding – the employee's credit is really extorted by the

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memory, and all are invalid too; and while the "normal person" may puff themselves up at this point and fancy themselves "down to earth" and "realistic," the validity of their observations is still by necessity purely probable, purely internal, and purely based on the subjective coherence between those two. Thus there is no validity of observations, and this removes the last possible source for any validity of anything whatsoever – including, of course, the very argument made here.

Not that this is particularly problematic. Unlike "critique," which relies on validity to make arguments against the status quo (and particularly unlike "immanent" critique, which uses that status quo's own conceptual resources against it), demolition uses arguments only as a stepping-stone. Its argumentative invalidity is one of its points; the demolition of rationality cannot itself be rational, that of logic not itself be logical, that of ethics not itself be ethical, and so forth. Like the unique one, if indeed there is such, demolition absorbs all such spooks and disavows what it uses as it uses it. Thus demolition uses elements of critique – its reflections, reflexivity, and irony; its focus on emancipation and articulation of ability and sensibility; its radicality and contempt for power and privilege – but uses them as against such elements as it knows are already refuted, already criticized to death, elements that are already beneath consideration and contempt, and are not to be denounced but to be eradicated. An eradication that, like an emetic, eradicates its demolition too, leaving words on paper like corpses on a battlefield; pastiches perhaps, like this one, of texts long since written by others whom I may owe thanks, but the demolition doesn't.

wage

All "wage slips" and tax forms notwithstanding, there is no such thing as a wage; not in the sense of exploitation or, more ethically

self in need of validity, and the validity of the form in which that validity is established is itself in need of establishing its validity, and so forth. Thus we have a vicious infinite regression leading to the impossibility of ever establishing validity, or else validity is implemented by mere assertion to stop it at some level. (A necessary side-effect of this is that metalogical considerations, if they are to make any arguments at all – and how could they not – implicitly have to rely on the very forms they are considering. As does this demolition, by the way, which is therefore like all of these a ladder to be thrown away once the corona muralis has been attained.)

Nor can the validity of logical form ever be derived from anywhere else. The only other sources for it would be linguistic rules or empirical observations of some kind. But it cannot be derived from linguistic rules, for this would be circular: the validity of linguistic rules is also in need of being established. And if this is to be established by argument, the validity of that argument is in its turn based on that of logical inference, while the whole question based that of logical inference on linguistic rules to begin with. Or else the derivation would be based on the observation of empirical language use, and as such would be inductive, which, apart from being impossible to establish, is also in need of validity of observation.

Which brings us to the latter, validity of observation. Here, the insurmountable difficulties are classically established by Hume: even if we assumed that there were certainties in language or nature or any other domain, observing them would still be done by our senses, which cannot possibly provide certainty (a future demolition), and particularly none of the logical kind. Thus any observation would have to be validated against all other observations (or more precisely: against the memory of all other observations), and this includes observations concerning supposed validities. Thus validity of observation is really probability of coherence between observation and memory, and as such without force outside of either; all observations are valid to the infant, who has no memory, or to dementia patients, who no longer have

Anti-civilization approaches, if indeed there are any, may appear well equipped with manuals regarding industrial sabotage, the making and use of incendiary devices, and the strategies and tactics of anti-institutional insurrection. Conversely perhaps, they may also appear to employ a wealth of works advising on withdrawal: guerilla planting, off-grid subsistence, and counter-economics. What might be missing is a reference manual gathering such insurrectionary ideas as are applicable to a demolition of contemporary Euro-American everyday life from within. The present pamphlet is an excerpt from, and preview of, such a manual, currently in progress and projected to be completed some time next year. It rests on a minimal amount of presuppositions, namely:

(1) everyday life is implemented by gestures,

(2) domestication / control / hierarchy / rule / domination / etc. manifest in these gestures, and

(3) consequently, combating them means demolishing those gestures.

Whether it is possible to maintain such presuppositions must be left open; the finalized manual will have further notes on this in its demolitions of "hypothesis" and "method." Likewise left open are here any further specifics as to what use is to be made of each of the below demolitions, or indeed the finalized work. I believe, as is evident in the first word of the title, that it behoves anarchists to hold a maximalist position as to the scale and scope of the attack on everyday life, including of course anarchists' own prospects amid such demolition (see "anarchist," below). But anyone who does not hold such a position will, one hopes, still find useful ideas for local insurrections.

In any case, each of the demolitions below consists roughly of two parts, although their separation is never clear-cut. The first starts out with a term – a noun, a verb, an adjective, a pronoun – and shows, by various means inherent to that term's internal functioning, that it is meaningless; that is, that it does not actually work

as a term. Rather, it marks a site where gestures coagulate to implement a form of domestication or control or hierarchy or rule or domination or… Once uncovered as such, an analysis of the gestures involved, partial and tentative though it may be, can show avenues of contestation – if indeed anything is ever shown by anyone to anyone. It is evident, if anything ever is, that such ideas are only ever suggestions, and that the work begun here is sharply limited in various ways: first, because the present pamphlet is an excerpt; second, because even the completed work would be just one selection of so-called terms made by just one person in just one language; third, because one has to stop somewhere.

Thus the remainder of the present work's title hopefully describes exactly what it does and does not aspire to; for anything further, comments, suggestions, or demolitions are always welcome at uncivletters[at]gmail[dot]com.

anarchist

If this adjective served as a bona fide term, it'd be a predicate: one would, on its basis, be able to identify who is an "anarchist," or indeed who is a "real anarchist" and who only pretends to be one; and thus who, at minimum, is not one of those "real anarchists." That is, "anarchist," in sentences like "the anarchist destroyers of all social order"[1], or "anarchy exists wherever one finds true anarchists"[2], or "expressed in contemporary anarchist circles"[3] would denote an identifier quite analogous to others like "red" or "dry." One would expect to find in it a characteristic to identify people.

[1] Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, "Epistle on Politics," in Olchar Lindsann (ed and tr), The Acetylene Eye. Dada Texts 1915-1922 (Roanoke: Revenant Editions, 2020), 23.

[2] Gustav Landauer, "Anarchic thoughts on anarchism," in Gabriel Kuhn (ed and tr), Revolution and other writings (Oakland: PM Press, 2010), 86.

[3] Invecchiare Selvatico, Black Blossoms at the end of the world (LBC Books, 2021), 81.

is just the veto of one. Or else it must posit itself as identity. And sure enough, Bakunin does, in fact, posit identity for the anarchic society (society needs to be "in tune with the natural tendencies and the true interests" of the people, as established by "spreading science and the scientific spirit" among them[11], or else it cannot persist), and so does Marx for the "higher stage" (freedom of each being freedom of all, where "each" does the heavy lifting of ontological identity). However, this weakness is recognized by both, too, hence Bakunin's insistence on the creativity and primacy of destruction, and Marx's refusal to spell out just how freedom of each and freedom of all are related precisely.

A useful idea to deal with this particular problem, perhaps, isn't positing an ontological primacy of individuals (as this either skirts the problem or, as in portions of Stirner and Redbeard, affirms the unanimity of physically violent resolution), but to assay uniqueness within a more fluid framework (if indeed there is such a thing), based perhaps on demolitions of individuals, uniqueness, groups, decisions, and so on, as envisaged in some works of Rodgers, Langer, or Bennett.

valid

Nothing can ever be valid: neither logical form nor observations, nor anything else. For anything else is made up of those first two, and thus once those are incapable of implementing validity, so is everything else. And they are indeed incapable of doing so. The validity of logical form, to start here, of inference, reasoning, deduction, and so forth, is itself a matter of metalogical considerations. That is, whether the inference that "(3) B" follows from "(1) A -> B" and "(2) A" is valid is itself a question that first needs to be answered. Which means that the validity of logical form is it-

[11] Michail Bakunin, "Socialism and freedom," in G.P.Maximoff (ed), The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism (Glencoe, 1953), 300.

unity

The nearly insurmountable difficulties plaguing any kind of social organizer – anarchist or otherwise, and within so-called democracy, on either side of the aisle – are by no means empirical, let alone accidental; they exist and persist because unity is structurally and necessarily impossible. For unity of any kind whatsoever would only be possible as full unity. Partial unity is full unity for those parts that are unified, and none at all for those parts that aren't; and this of course assumes that there can be such a thing as a part. (Another demolition for another day.)

Thus unity, if it exists, is only ever full unity. But full unity in its turn is only possible if it is unity in all possible respects and characteristics of the group at hand. For if it isn't, then we have partial unity again, this non-entity that is really full unity for some characteristics and none for others. Which means that unity is only possible as absolute unity of all possible aspects of the group at hand, down to the very unity of its physical members – or else here again we'd have partial unity, which cannot be: it is full unity in some respects, no unity at all in others. Which means that unity is, and cannot but be, only ever identity. And apart from the question of whether identity is a meaningful term in its turn, this entails that "unity" is a meaningless one. For just identity is not what unity is; unity requires distinct entities, or else the question of unity would never arise in the first place. But just these can never be in full unity; only in partial unity which, again, would be no unity at all in some respects, and full unity in others.

Not only partial unity is therefore not a thing, but neither is full unity, and indeed any unity at all. And this is just where both Marxism and classical anarchism have their greatest weaknesses; to posit a revolt against this ugly civilization may well be possible and necessary, but to posit a society without government is a pipe dream because it requires unity, per impossibilem. Unity is thus either implemented as unanimity, but without underlying unity this

By using the term for a process of weeding out bad faith actors, too, or conversely by complaining that questioning it leads to too much navel gazing, one already uses the term as such.

And yet it can never be used in this way. For using it entails classification, and on what basis might one make such a classification? Who are these "anarchists," and who are "real anarchists?"

Certainly those who are imprisoned within the formal incarceration systems of the world for being anarchists would indeed first and foremost be classifiable as "real anarchists." It doesn't seem that anyone would question this. But this renders the term useless right away, for if we were to take it as our criterion, then we'd end up having "anarchists" defined by – the state, of all things, and its repressive institutions. The term would then be one that can only ever be applied to those convicted of "anarchist" activities, and would thus remain an empty epithet, as it is in the juridical system.

Going further, then: are anarchists those who dropped out of the rat race – the jobless, the homeless, those outside of "polite society?" Certainly material rejection of the social nightmare at large is a potential indicator that someone is living anarchically. But then there are plenty folks in those circumstances who aren't anarchists, or in any case don't profess to be. Nor does living in a commune, or an occupied building, or a rewilded guerrilla gardening homestead entail that one is an anarchist. Once again no defining characteristics emerge.

Conversely, how many compromises with society at large can one sustain and still remain an "anarchist?" Where, that is, is the point at which one becomes "anarchist," where does the term become a meaningful predicate? Can an anarchist own property? How big or small? Can they own bikes, cars, trucks? What about apartments, houses? What about phones, dumb or smart or in-between? Can they have jobs? How well paid can they be for them to still be anarchists? How much savings do they have to have before they no longer have a credible claim to the term? Does a pet make you an anarchist, or does it exclude you? How old can

you be and still be an anarchist? Does wearing a Hot Topic shirt with the circle-A entail that you are or are not a "real anarchist?" Why or why not? None of these provide characteristics by which the term becomes a predicate.

Or are people anarchist because they engage in direct action? Surely here's a way to agree! But alas, this too just leads to more questions, for what is direct action? The black bloc of your local demo-riot may be anarchist, but just as easily may not be, and so it's not joining in with their lines that makes you a "real anarchist." Likewise, plenty people blow up ATMs or rob banks without being anarchists. Further likewise, soup kitchens, solidarity rallies, fundraisers are in any case not in themselves anarchist. Nor are assassinations, or making flyers and zines.

So then, what is the difference between the call center worker wearing a hot topic shirt with a circle-A, and the homeowner cheating on their taxes, if both profess to be anarchists? How can we tell if the one is and the other isn't? And if we can't, is everyone who claims to be an anarchist? And if not, and if again we have no way to tell, are there any anarchists?

At the end of the day, "anarchist" doesn't actually work as the predicate it purports to be. If we don't try to establish who is an anarchist and who isn't, we have to accept that everybody who says they are one actually is one. Yet if we do, we end up without criteria. In that case, either everyone who says they are one actually is one, or else there aren't any. So as "anarchist" does not, in fact, serve as a predicate, what does it do? For it continues to be used, and quite rightly; the gestures it implements aren't classificatory in the sense of applying a name tag to an entity, they're classificatory in the sense of establishing a pathos of piety. To be "anarchist" is a quadruple act of piety. As a "social anarchist," it is remaining faithful to revolt despite two centuries of failures, or indeed because of them; as an "individual anarchist," it is remaining smugly indifferent to revolt despite two centuries of evidence for its irrepressible existence, or indeed because of them; again as a "social anarchist,"

told us that "they're all trees", would we have put yews, palm trees, redwoods, and baobabs all in the same category? And moreover, aren't there other things too that are called "trees", such as "banana trees", "tree graphs", and "decision trees"? We might say that these latter uses are metaphorical, as these have only some, or perhaps none, of the characteristics of tree plants. But the same applies, as we have seen, to the very plants that we called trees! Is the usage of the term for those "trees" which don't fit under the definitions of "tree" metaphorical, too? And if it is not, how are the plants distinct from the metaphors? The term "tree" cannot function as a predicate – a name tag, marker, selector – even among plants, let alone other kinds of so-called trees. It cannot function as such at all.

Nonetheless, "tree" is fraudulently used to posit the existence of a discrete and supposedly well-defined specimen of plant, subject to gestures of 'forest management' that, even if they don't consciously produce cheap monocultures like Ireland does all over the island, are ultimately exercises in producing and maintaining lumber only. Under the regime of the notion of "tree", barbed wire poisoning an elm becomes a nuisance threatening lumber quality, rather than an attack on a living being's unfolding.

Secondarily to this, but still economically relevant and lucrative, "tree" serves to maintain 'landscapes', that is, pathways through supposedly pristine "forests" made up for man to walk in, or populated with just enough mammals to engage in "hunting", or other types of slaughter or poisoning, from dirt bike rides to poison dumps. Here too, the barbed wire cutting into the elm is an issue, but merely an aesthetic one, threatening simulated 'wilderness' (see on this also "nature," above).

Either way, "trees" are merely their wood, not foliage, roots, mycelian societies, birds, fruit, grasses, bushes, worms,… nor indeed oxygen or water or shade; unconnected inert things, decoration by the road; romantic backdrop and renewable resource at most.

sais? If we see two shrub-looking plants of exactly the same height, how will we know the one is a tree and the other is not? There must be additional characteristics, and it seems that indeed there are. What about the main trunk of a tree, characterized by a more or less straight growth without branches for some distance above the ground before the branches begin with their foliage, making the crown? Here we surely have a distinguishing characteristic that separates trees from bushes, shrubs, and weeds! – But this begs the question. If a shrub has more than one larger branch from which others shoot off, and if this larger branch is rooted directly into the ground and doesn't have branches for a distance moving upward, does this make the shrub a tree?

Trees, we might say, will have unbranched trunks without foliage. How many is irrelevant, but this is how we can tell there are trees. – Yet this doesn't hold up either. Numerous beings typically identified as trees, in fact the majority of them, branch very early on (some just above or even slightly below the ground), with branches sometimes just as thick as the main trunk, and plenty foliage too. Sometimes foliage grows right out of the trunk, and again it does this sometimes just above the soil! How many branches do there have to be, then, and where must they be situated, before a tree becomes a bush? Moreover, does a tree cease being a tree if it has more than one trunk? How many trunks does it take to become a bush? Two, three, five? Where does "one tree" end, where do "two trees"?

Granting all this, however, one might nonetheless say that we can tell what is a tree, as trees will still only have one crown. But this is not true, as several examples do not, and the older a tree is, the more its branches and leaves come in growths and regrowths, forming multiple distinct crowns. Conversely, too, a number of trees don't have crowns at all, nor even any branches. Coconut or pole trees typically have none.

So how can we be sure that what we're looking at is a tree, if none of its defining characteristics actually defines it? If no-one had

it is to remain faithful to a distinction of anarchy from chaos on the one hand, leftism on the other, despite two centuries of absorption into both; and again as an "individual anarchist," remaining smugly indifferent to such conceptual trifles despite two centuries of evidence that they are anything but.

The pious structure of "anarchist" classification thus works precisely because of the vacuous nature of the term around which it coalesces; "anarchist" fighting and infighting operate on the same plane and cover the same ground; the adjective does not so much denote a rigid belief system as a bundle of gestures continuously paralyzing both the belief and the ability to break free from it. It may therefore well be that "anarchists" are the main obstacle on the path towards anarchy, but the reason for this is the complexity of their piety, not its supposed simplicity.

awake

No being of any kind – human, animal, or for that matter plant – is ever awake. Given such phenomena as sleepwalking on the one hand, locked-in syndrome on the other, the term only ever works properly in the statement "I am awake," and this statement, as we shall show, is meaningless. For it is either uttered by a being who has a criterion by which to say that it is awake, or it is uttered by a being who does not. But if the being doesn't have a criterion, the statement is a mere assertion. And while it doesn't seem like anyone has ever said "I am awake" in a dream, nonetheless the mere assertion that one is awake says nothing about whether one is actually awake.

Nor, however, can there actually be a criterion by which one could say that one is awake. For this criterion is either based on a distinction between being awake and being in a dream or hallucination, or again it's mere assertion. (In the third option, when one is asleep and not dreaming, the question does not come up whether

one is awake or not.) But if the criterion is based on comparing being awake with being in a dream, as it classically is in Cicero or Descartes, it's viciously circular because it takes for granted that being awake means nor dreaming, and devises characteristics of being awake from this. Thus, for example, being awake is said to be a more coherent experience than being in a dream. But why would this be so? Because a more coherent experience means being awake. Or else being awake means being able to do the present kind of coherent questioning. Why? Because nobody dreams coherent questioning. But how do we know this is the case? And moreover, before we even get to such empirical questions, this again presents the same circular argument: I am awake because I am coherent, I am coherent because I am awake.

Or else the criterion is simply asserted, and this brings us back to the previous problem: mere assertion does not actually say anything about whether one is awake. Thus the statement "I am awake" means nothing.

Now of course this does not mean that there's no difference between waking and dreaming. It only means that the term "awake" is insufficient to implement this difference. And as this is the only use it has as a term, it does not in fact work that way. Rather, "awake" persists by denigrating alternate states of existence or consciousness, if indeed there are any; labelling them mere dreams or hallucinations to remove their validity, if indeed that is a thing (see "valid," below). It is thus not merely used against the validity of dream experiences, but also against that of trances, hallucinations, premonitions, etc. Their denigration is twofold. First, the validity of such alternate states as experiences is refused: the narrative import of a dream, a trance, a hallucination, or a premonition is assigned an at best derivative status, ranging from pure garbage to "unconscious desires" to electromagnetic imbalances. The experience as experience thus disappears behind a pathology, it becomes a mere medicalized sign. Secondly, the validity of such experiences for the "waking world," for changing and arranging individual and

could never conclude, its deferral is infinite; "this" would never be able to become "this." We once again need F, or a pointing finger, or both.

Thus "this" cannot fulfil any of its purported functions; it doesn't anchor its F in space-time, nor does it select it within the vicinity, nor does it select it at all; its usage is meaningless and its verbal invocation is useless. The same applies to its usage in writing, if there is any, where the F can be a sentence, a word, an argument, if there are any; here too "this" fails all of its assigned duties. Nonetheless its usage persists in both forms because "this" isn't actually a term with linguistic functions at all, but a gesture, namely, that of carving out pieces of the continuous unfolding of the world. It marks the middle ground between the pointing finger's incision into the world – relatively easily healed perhaps, as it is unspecifically echoing through the depths of hues and shadows, refractions and reverberations – and that of the "F," the identifier, selector, marker – whose damage is perhaps irreversible. With "this," deixis begins to give way to repetition, uniqueness to substitution, unfolding to exchange, deferral to presence. Here we touch on the innermost layer of the imperial order, to which belong also "here," "we," "touch," and so forth; here silence beckons us, if indeed there is an "us" and a "silence" that can "beckon," to relinquish the pen and to return to the -

tree

There has never been, nor will there ever be, a single tree in the world. For how would we be able to tell that something we point at, see, hear, or touch, really is a tree, if we can't say what a tree is? And just this we cannot.

What criteria could we use? How much larger than a shrub does a tree have to be to classify as a tree? And if size alone determines the difference between the two: are saplings trees? What about bon-

yell of "this!" in a crowded room (or an empty one, for that matter) would still stand a chance of being intelligible. But it does not, and that again is not the case empirically but in principle: it can never work on its own. Thus "this F" tries to indicate "the F that is in position X at time Y," but cannot ever do so, as "this" never implements "in position X at time Y."

Thus "this" doesn't implement a spatiotemporal position for F, and always fails to do so. Nor, however, can it work as a selector indicating "this cat," or "box" or "shoe." For this selection is either a selection against all items in the space-time vicinity ("the room," "the situation," "the country") or against all other instances of F (cats, shoes, boxes). Yet it can be neither.

A selection against all other items in the vicinity isn't actually implemented by "this," but rather by "F," for the identification of something as F (as a cat, a box, or a shoe) is already an identification of it against all other items in the vicinity; it is therefore implemented by the "F," not the "this." (Or rather, it too can never really be implemented, a difficulty unrelated to "this" and thus tackled in the demolitions of "reference" and "predicate.") Nor can "this" reinforce the selection process in cases of referential doubt ("the shoe" – "which? There are two" – "this one"). For this would either be based on spatiotemporal identification, which as we have seen above never works with "this" alone, or it'd be based on a second selection process, that against all other instances of F.

But this isn't possible either. For the selection could only be successful if "this" F is truly selected from all possible instances of F; not just all in the present vicinity, but all that have ever existed and will ever exist, in any form whatsoever (thus not just all physical cats, but also all future cats, cartoon cats, literary cats, plush cats, and so forth). For the term "this" does not and cannot in itself specify the kind of F, nor again its position in space-time, nor any characteristic of the F in question. Which means that its work as a selector between, say, two identical black cats, only ever works if each is uniquely identified already. But this identification in turn

social relations, is disavowed altogether. Even beyond medicalization, dreams and trances, hallucinations and premonitions are here dismissed even as phenomena, and anyone who allows one of them to influence their behavior even in the slightest – or in any case, who allows others to see that they did – is consigned to the loony bin. And so it may well be that the loony bin is perhaps not where all creativity can be found, but certainly where a lot of it is vaulted.

bank

There can be no such thing as a bank, and it is an absurd fraud for any institution, assuming there are such, to call itself one. For a so-called bank consists of nothing other than a group of people providing funds that other groups of people are allowed to draw on: savers and borrowers, respectively. Everything else, from "credit creation" to "draft facilities" to "interest terms" is just smoke and mirrors. There are neither multipliers nor guarantees nor "vehicles": the provision of credit is exclusively due to savings. For a so-called "bank loan" of whatever kind is in the final analysis nothing but the borrower's collateral monetized and returned to the borrower in liquid form – and usually much less than the collateral's value, too. The liquidity needed for this operation stems from savings paid into the so-called bank, and stems from them exclusively; the monetization rests on the borrower's collateral, and rests on it exclusively.

First, all liquidity comes from savings, and exclusively so. If the bank borrows from somewhere else, be this the so-called financial market or another bank, including so-called central banks, this is in reality so much hocus pocus to hide that these, too, consist of savings from somewhere else, but ultimately equally in a bank: nothing actually ever creates money ex nihilo. Even the so-called central bank really only provides savings made by the taxpayers, and then called government funds.

Second, all credit is monetized collateral. If a bank is able to issue "credit" to a borrower, this isn't due to "good faith" of "credit scores" or anything else, but merely returns the borrower's collateral to them in the form provided by the savers. This is regardless of whether collateral is physical, like the house, insurance, and firstborn child for so-called mortgages, or vampiric, like labor power for a so-called pay day loan. In either case, the value of the collateral claimed exceeds the credit issued, and thus there is no credit at all. A so-called bank does nothing; debtors receive their own property or labor back in liquid form, and the funds by which it's liquidated come from savers. And for this the borrowers pay a premium, too!

But that is not all. Not only does a bank no do anything; on the basis of this analysis there are no banks at all. For what takes place is simply an exchange (equivalent for savers, extortionate for borrowers) of liquidity for collateral, or rather, of money for goods. And moreover, being a bank is not a matter of size: neither staff size nor building size decide what a bank is. Which means that everyone who monetizes an asset and provides the money to someone else is a bank – including of course every single wage laborer, who monetizes their labor power and provides money to the grocer etc. Therefore, either every wage laborer, if there are such (see "wage," below), or anyone at all who offers money in exchange for goods, is a bank – or else there are no banks at all. That is, either the term means nothing, or it – means nothing.

Nonetheless, so-called banks continue to flourish as legal monopolies for turning collateral into liquidity; a "bank" is a bank because it says it is, and is the only institution that gets to say that it is. With this monopoly, banks not only get to fraudulently assert their existence, but swallow up everything else, too. Acting as gatekeepers for all businesses (if there are such things), banks hold unique power: "the establishment of a monopoly of money is also equivalent to a prohibition upon all businesses, except such as

refers to that box, cat, or shoe, without immediately and necessarily adding "cat," "box," or "shoe," or by adding physical gestures like nodding or pointing towards the intended object. It's not that saying "this" without predicate accidentally or empirically fails to work, the term is in principle not capable of doing so. The F to which "this" refers is indispensable for the functioning of "this," and "this" is nothing without such a reference to a predicate.

Now, the previous argument entails that "this" in "this F" can only ever do one of two things: first, to identify the space-time position of F ("this F right here") or, second, to identify which of all F ("it's this one here, not that one"). But "this" fails to do both, and thus has no function whatsoever.

It may seem otherwise, for the function of F as a predicate (name tag or identifier) in turn seems to depend on configurations in space-time; that is, it seems possible to identify F by relying on space-time identification alone (here is a cat, here is "to the left of a cat," and so forth). And this would seem to mean that "this," within "this F," denotes only space-time positioning, and that space-time position would be primary; that it would be like a pointing finger. One could go even further and assert that "this," seen this way, cannot ever fail: an F can be present or not, but "here" and "now" always work.

But all of these are false. First, "this" does not do the same work as "here" and "now," as it trivially also refers to entities that are neither the one nor the other. Second, even if it did, "here" and "now" can very much fail to work, as neither is able to delineate how far its application expands – without an F to do the job. (Though this is just mentioned in passing, as those are demolitions for another day.) Third, the pointing finger does not establish sufficiently what it is pointing at; it too needs the "F" that "this F" also requires. But most importantly, fourth, "this" does not actually refer, but only works to refer, and does not refer to a space-time position at all, but rather only ever works to refer to F in that space-time position. If "this" would actually work to refer to a space-time position, the

hurled as free and 'unattached' discrete units onto newly established markets."[9] Countering the force of "property" is thus to prevent absentee possession, to squat, steal (although of course this is then no longer stealing), appropriate, expropriate; to "claim as possession everything I feel myself strong enough to attain" (if indeed anyone ever attains anything), and "extend my actual possession as far as I entitle, that is, empower myself to take."[10]

this

Despite overwhelmingly frequent usage, if indeed there is such a thing, and usage even within these very lines, "this" is not actually a term that does what it purports to do, and moreover cannot do so: its invocation is impossible. Uncontroversially, "this" cannot denote a property of things, but purports rather to be a demonstrative pronoun; it would seem to be verbally invoked while pointing at a position in space-time and to fulfil a more abstract version of the same gesture in writing (if there is any). In both cases, and indeed in all of its uses, "this" alone is incomplete; it stands together with any predicate F, and always has to stand together as "this F," where F is a name tag or referent of some sort, such as "cat," "shoe," or "box." Only as "this F" does "this" fulfil any function at all.

Saying "this" by itself cannot successfully identify anything; we must always say "this cat," "this shoe," "this box," and so on. We can easily confirm this by yelling into a room full of people: "this!" For even the best case scenario here is that someone will reply "this what?" or else we just get blank stares of incomprehension. And even if the room is almost completely empty, and there is just one item in it – a single box, a single cat, a single shoe – we'd nonetheless be unable to guarantee that saying "this" alone

[9] Karl Marx, "Capital. Vol I," in Robert Tucker (ed), The Marx-Engels Reader (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1978), 433 (with some changes).

[10] Max Stirner, The unique and its property (Berkeley: Ardent Press), 242.

the monopolists of money may choose to license."[4] Conceptually, there are no banks because the entire economy consists of nothing but banks; and precisely because of this in turn, the monopoly of certain actors to call themselves banks works all the better. For it is thereby not a functional monopoly – it only looks like one – but one implemented entirely by licensing.

Undermining such licensing through "free credit" is thus still, even after two hundred years of mature capitalism, very much a viable act of sabotage. This does not refer to crowdfunding, blockchains, or onlyfans financing; these three, all possible protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, still rely on banking to provide the liquidity needed for their operations. It refers, rather, to counter-economies on everyday life; advances in goods rather than money; negative-interest circulation of non-bank money; cooperative or guerilla production; and ultimately forms of individualist subsistence altogether beyond the economy that incorrectly assumes – and thus implements – that there are such things as banks. There are not, and this realization can be implemented by bypassing, subverting, or on occasion even just ignoring the institutions that claim to be.

boundary

There can be no such thing as a boundary. For this cannot be anything but a geometrical line, a one-dimensional entity that has length but neither width nor depth, and no such line can ever be. Any supposed boundary of another kind, such as a fence or a wall or a river, is actually not a boundary but a body of its own, an entity in itself that has boundaries of its own in turn. Nothing that is three-dimensional can be a boundary, as each of these has its own boundaries, namely, surfaces. But surfaces, two-dimensional enti-

[4] Lysander Spooner, Our Financiers: their ignorance, usurpations, and frauds (Boston: Williams & Co, 1877), 12.

ties with length and width but without depth, cannot be boundaries either, for they too have their own boundaries, namely, lines. Only lines, therefore, one-dimensional entities, could ever be boundaries in the sense of the term. If any boundaries were construed as a body or a surface, therefore (even just for argument's sake), they wouldn't be a boundary but an entity of their own, which would have their own boundaries; a boundary can only be what strictly delimits something, perhaps partitioning it from something else, but never constituting an entity in itself. For that boundary would then have boundaries of its own, which is absurd, and even if it wasn't, would still mean that the first boundary isn't really a boundary, but only the second one. But just this is the problem, for there is no geometrical line (a demolition for another day), and there can never be one. And this means that there can be no boundary either.

Nonetheless, maps fraudulently present "boundaries," and this reflects the daily plebiscite of usage by which walls and fences and rivers are construed and treated as though they were boundaries, and not entities unto themselves. Contrary to the impossibility of boundaries of any kind, that is, the everyday compliance of pious respect converts what is made to traverse, tear down, and disregard into pseudo-boundaries implemented to rule and divide. Yet there is no boundary and there is no possible justification of anything "being a boundary"; mere imposition, they are brute positivity rather than negative delimitation. There is no trespass (a demolition for another day) and there can never be; everything is open to everyone who empowers themselves to act on the impiety of recognizing this.

A boundary is a boundary only if it is respected as such, and once the respect disappears, so does the boundary (see also "overcome," below). And this does not just concern walls, hedges, and rivers. Boundaries of all kinds are imaginary and do not in fact exist as such. The ramifications of this go far beyond lines on maps or scaling fences. The absence of boundaries in general also means that there are no things of any kind, as each of them is delimited

houses. Hiding behind meaningless babble about "property rights" to cover up this fact does not change that here, too, "property enforcement" remains all about possession, not about property. See what happens as you take possession of the empty buildings! The "property rights" others have in them will certainly not stop you. As long as you can stave off or outsmart the cops and thus remain in possession, the building is yours, and property changes nothing about this. And if you get chased out? The landlord retakes possession, to be sure. But don't worry; the cops can never afford to be watchful for very long… "Property" is and remains as vacant as those houses are, an empty term altogether.

Nonetheless, "property" is implemented, and typically quite transparently so, as just such a gesture, a purely negative type of possession, an exclusion of others without directly possessing oneself. Thus the good itself is used by not being used, by preventing others from using it. Where "property" is identical with possession – which is the case for the vast majority of goods for which there is no distributive conflict – "property" is also used, but in these cases it is possession, not "property", which keeps others away. "Property" asserts its supposed meaning only when possession is not the case – though, as we have seen, incorrectly so.

This allows "property" to fulfil a precise function within the order of capital accumulation despite being a meaningless term. Remote possession, prevention of others from usage without using oneself, generates scarcity and thereby allows valuation to occur, and markets to consolidate. It's deliberately wasteful and upholds wasteful practices ("property rights", i.e., absentee possession, enforced against wildcat housing or dumpster diving); it kills and is used to kill (patents preventing medicines from being used). Enclosing the continuous unfolding of the world, "property" generates artificial scarcity and allows, again and again, the resurgence of primitive accumulation, where "great masses of men and things are suddenly and forcibly torn from their continuous existence, and

sess something and someone else (supposedly) has property in it, this also doesn't change your possession of the thing in the slightest. Is this not what many a TED talk and much folksy wisdom tell us we should accept, and what empirical reality everywhere confirms, and thus what we can and need to implement ourselves: that possession is not, as they say, nine tenths, but rather ten tenths of the law?

So, if you possess a thing, property in it doesn't change this possession at all, regardless of whose property this supposedly is. But what if "property is enforced" and the person whose stuff you stole from comes to get it? To be sure, this may well happen. But what they're after in this case is not their property in the thing – after all, this they already have! What they want is rather to possess the thing, to return it into their immediate possession. "Enforcing property" and "property rights" have no relation whatsoever to property but are in fact all about possession. Here again, possession is ten tenths of the law and property in something is either possession of it, or else it's a meaningless term adding nothing to a situation.

One might reply, though, that there is property that isn't currently and directly possessed by its owner but that is nonetheless effective in that it prevents others – you, for example – from possessing it. Aren't there empty houses everywhere, supposed property of absentee landlords, that these landlords don't possess (they are absent after all) but that they nonetheless keep empty? Doesn't this make the concept of "property" the key ingredient of absentee ownership?

It's not true, however, that these empty houses are not in possession of their landlords. Empty real estate properties, as the phrase is, are in fact being defended, and thereby kept empty, by just those absentee landlords, and thus are in fact in their possession. The landlords may not defend the houses personally – why would they – but they do have the state's goons or privately hired thugs to so for them. Therefore, these landlords do, in fact, possess those

by surfaces and thus by lines, i.e., by boundaries – and since those are not, neither are things. The same applies to so-called boundaries of imagination, will, or thought; these too are upheld merely by piety and do not actually exist; there is no limit to any of them. Finally, too, there can be no multiplicity whatsoever if there are no boundaries: only by delineation are there things, i.e., is there more than one, and since we have established that no delineation can take place, there are no multiples, and no things whatsoever, except one that has no boundaries, no limits, and no delimitations of any kind. Losing the pious respect for so-called boundaries, then, radically changes the world as a whole, for indeed it turns all of it into one… assuming, of course, that "one" is in its own turn a meaningful term (a demolition for another day). Here, dreams, trances, hallucinations, premonitions all come weaving their webs against everyday life in a world where more than one entity exists.

change

The term "change," as in "A changes into B," is meaningless for any A or B whatsoever, and no change of any kind has ever taken place. For change would either change all of A into B, or some part of it, or none of it. Now obviously, "change" can't mean that none of A changes into B, for then no change has taken place. But it can't mean that all of A changes into B either. For then there's no connection whatsoever between the two that would allow anyone to say that A has changed into B. Any such connection would need to be unchanged so that it can be recognized that A changes into B. Suppose there is a red circle before me, and suddenly a blue square appears. The only way I could meaningfully say that the red circle has changed into a blue square would entail noting that some part of it has not changed, e.g. the surface on which they appear has not changed, or the position they are in. Otherwise there is no con-

nection and thus no change; the one is gone and the other is there, that would be all.

To speak of a "change" of any kind requires some connection, then. Two totally unconnected events cannot be related to one another as a change, or else they are just thereby connected. Thus the remaining option of our initial three is really the only one: some part of A changed into B, while another stayed the same. And the parts of A that allow me to assert this are the ones that have not changed. So for those parts, change is really not change at all. And the parts of A that have changed – supposedly anyway – are again identifiable as having changed only by virtue of parts of theirs that have not changed. Thus we may say that the red circle is identifiable as having changed into a blue square by being on the same surface (non-change). But the color is now different, and so is the shape (change). Yet this is in its turn identifiable only because the position of the color within A, for example, is the same as in B. And these latter parts are in contradistinction to such that have changed. But then these in their turn can also be identified as such by those that haven't changed, and so forth. The parts of a A that supposedly change thus get smaller and smaller and smaller, approaching total non-change. Where does this end? At subatomic level, where the void doesn't change and particles don't either? Or is there another change there? But this in turn leads us below Planck-length, where it is good & proper science to say that "change" means nothing. Thus the last "change" disappears, and all is unchanged: A never changed into B. The term is thus not applicable to any events at any level of observation, and really means nothing at all.

Any talk of "change" whatsoever is thus entirely illegitimate. Nothing ever changes. But that does not mean that everything is static and nothing ever goes anywhere, but on the contrary that nothing is ever connected with anything else in such a way that "change" would be a meaningful verb or recognizable process. Which means that everything is always radically new; constancy and temporal delimitation cannot exist; anything can be in any

a feature – a function of their social, economic, racial, gendered disadvantage in society.

Thus naturalized, the "obstacle" and its "overcoming" are also individualized because, as an obstacle, it can always be overcome, if the individual just has enough strength, ability, or determination to do so. Thus, "obstacle" posits that the issue at hand is with the individual and nobody else's responsibility, and "overcome" posits that its remaining an obstacle is irreducibly the individual's fault. (Nor are these configurations specific to "neoliberalism"; they are inherent in any perspective based on these gestures – regardless of the character of the "social movement" invoking them.)

De-naturalizing and de-individualizing social harm doesn't just lead away from the terms "obstacle" and "overcome," therefore, but from the gestures implemented by them, and despite their meaninglessness. Though of course what would first need to be addressed is that the primary site for the invocation of these gestures is now social media, whose logics and fault lines are the primary reinforcement for naturalization and individualization of al sorts. Here, overcoming "overcoming" is a start, an injection, though perhaps no more.

property

This is a meaningless term. For it is either possession, i.e., that which you can defend against someone else's acquisition or attack, or it is something else. And if you possess something, the notion of "property" in the thing is either a meaningless addition to it (if property and possession happen to be congruent), or it's someone else's claim against the possession (if property and possession are at odds). Thus if you possess something – a piece of cake, a phone, a loved one, a pet – and you have property in it, the latter doesn't change anything. Your property in it doesn't affect your having the thing at all, and indeed has no effect whatsoever. And if you pos-

stacle no longer constitutes an obstacle. Thus the example of Star Trek's Kirk evading the Kobayashi Maru trial, or for that matter, any time anyone in the present world buys a way out of exams, interviews, tests, and so forth. The obstacle disappears before it can become an obstacle, and is thus not overcome but never actually was an obstacle.

But this doesn't mean that an obstacle remains and can be overcome when it is not evaded by fraud. Even if it's not evaded, an obstacle does not actually exist and thus cannot be overcome. For an obstacle is only an obstacle if it is genuinely in the way, whether physically or otherwise; that is, as long as there isn't enough strength or ability or determination. Which means that, as soon as there is sufficient strength or ability or determination, the obstacle is likewise not an obstacle any more. And so once again there is nothing to overcome.

Thus in the former case where the obstacle is evaded, it is not overcome as it's simply not an obstacle any more, and in the latter case where there is sufficient strength or ability or determination to overcome it, it is thereby likewise no longer an obstacle, and again there is nothing to overcome. Using the term "overcome," therefore, achieves the opposite of what its seemingly empowering gumption seems to provide. The continued import of using it is to continue using methodologies based on obstacles, which entails a gesture individualizing their "overcoming," and a related gesture naturalizing the "obstacle." By the latter, anything in the way of someone's or something's unfolding can be posited as something that just happens to be in the way, obfuscating that (now more than ever) any such impediment is socially, and that is, deliberately placed. This is not, to be sure, necessarily by deliberate individual will, but the obstacle is nonetheless structurally contingent: none of them must be so. Papering over this, the continued use of "overcome" implies the continued use of "obstacle," something that just happens to an individual without anyone's fault, when it is actually not a bug but

way at any moment and totally different the next, and nothing ever need be in any specific way in any specific moment. Not only glib talk of "change you can believe in" is thus null and void, but equally so is any "pressure to change" or "incentive to change," and nothing is ever "prone to change," nor successfully changing or failing to change. Nobody can ever be obligated to implement any change, because change cannot be implemented and there is no "they" that remains for change to register: not perhaps the event (if there is such a thing), but its ontological carrier is simply not there. Changing direction, tack, behavior, style, approach, personality, policy, anything at all, are all equally impossible; what remains is perhaps inexpressible, but is always already implemented in the radical contingency not just of any actor, goal, situation, or outcome, but of a world that has no actors, goals, situations, or outcomes. Perhaps what remains is "gesture sound / rhythm movement," if indeed any of those terms is meaningful; something akin to "a direct nonconceptual experience of reality / rooted in the perpetual moment of instant anarchy."[5]

cloud

Suppose that there is an area X filled with a water vapor dense enough to constitute a cloud; perhaps we can spot it because it looks different from the supposed rest of the sky when viewed from the ground. But how do we know this area is a cloud, and is distinct as such from the surrounding sky? What about area Y just outside of area X, which also has water vapor in it? By what criteria do we establish that water molecule m1 in area X is within the cloud, while molecule m2 in area Y is outside of it? Where does area X end exactly, and where does area Y begin?

Perhaps we could try to establish this by the density of the water vapors we observe, which is higher in area X than in area Y.

[5] John Moore, Anarchist Speculations (Berkeley: Ardent Press, 2016), 310.

But empirically, vapor density in clouds is not uniform throughout, so does area X have to broken out into many smaller clouds? If so, what about the regions between them: are they clouds of their own? This alone would be sufficient to dissolve any supposed cloud, for each smaller region thus has areas of different density within as well, and each of those is a cloud, which has its own areas, and so forth – until "cloud" comes to denote each individual droplet of water, rendering the term absurd. But even if this is not the case, what about the border region between area X and area Y, where density gradually lowers: is this region part of the cloud? Moreover, if the water vapors move, as inevitably they must when even the slightest wind comes up, does molecule m2 move from area Y to area X and thus become part of the cloud, or else does molecule m1 move from area X to area Y, thus no longer being part of the cloud? Or do both areas just change their density in this case? If so, how does their delineation hold up? Does the cloud now consist of area X and area Y, or just area Y, or neither?

Distinguishing area X from area Y by density of vapors, therefore, renders both undefined, and no real distinction between areas X and Y can be made. Thus area Y is either part of the cloud after all, and molecules m1 and m2 are both parts of it, or area X is not a cloud after all as it's indistinct from area Y, which is not a cloud, and thus neither m1 nor m2 are parts of the cloud. In the former case, the cloud is bigger than it seems, now comprising areas X and Y; in the latter case, the cloud isn't there.

But we saw from the ground that there is a cloud. Therefore, area X is a cloud, and area Y is part of that cloud, too. But if we thus include area Y in the cloud, what about area Z? This new area is just a bit further out and currently appears to be a bit less dense in water vapor. The same issue arises here again: shifting densities, border areas, and molecular movement render areas X, Y, and Z indistinct. Is area Z therefore now part of the cloud? Indeed it would have to be: since we had to include area Y in the cloud – or jettison the cloud altogether – on the basis of the same gradient which now

that are deterrence machines, such as new age stores of self-help spirituality, exalting the meliorist liberalism of "natural solutions" to dissimulate that there is neither nature nor are there solutions.

Secondly, "nature" persists in archaic residuals, as a resource whose abundance is to be plundered and whose cunning is to be tamed. This implementation is slowly receding in its open and vulgar form now that the global climate catastrophe proceeds, except in enclaves that are themselves dissimulations, such as the Alt-Right or Paleolibertarianism. But it still implicitly governs the "technology is the solution" mindset of 'city tree' algae tanks, or so-called scientists looking to pump particles into the atmosphere to dim sunlight.

Finally "nature" remains a convenient short-hand for so-called ecology, this amalgamation of mathematical models and 'complexity' that implements "nature" as a set of discrete processes. With this, "nature" makes ecocide simultaneously "manageable" (thus reinforcing the notion of "nature" as a resource for the taking) and "ethical" (thus reinforcing that of "nature" as positive wilderness). In the form of ecological consciousness, this reinforces especially the liberalism that comes with either of these positions – the idea that one could vote oneself out of "climate emergency," or changing its "tech stacks."

overcome

No obstacle is ever overcome; not because there isn't perhaps overcoming, but because there is not actually anything to overcome: there can be no obstacles, and thus the term "overcome" is meaningless. For overcoming something is done either by strength or determination, or it is done by cunning. That is, the supposed obstacle is either overcome on its own terms or by fraud. But if it's overcome by fraud, it's not in fact overcome but evaded. That is, the parameters of the situation are changed such that the supposed ob-

nature. "Nature" is a cultural designation, and isolating natural parts of cultural processes is a cultural activity.

Now surely it's a cultural activity that you can only perform if your natural being is taken care of: you can't classify when you're dead. – True, but your natural life, as it stands, requires cultural support systems, and thus all that this argument shows is that culture remains always rooted in nature, not that it is all nature. The lawn is created by nature but also wouldn't be a lawn without cultural demarcation.

Nature is thus not-culture, created as such by culture (through demarcation and domestication), and culture is not-nature, created as such by nature (again, through demarcation and domestication). Thus nature is neither separate from culture, such that they are mutually exclusive, nor is nature cultural (as culture remains based on nature) or culture natural (as nature is created as such by cultural processes). Circularities beset all three of these options. And as there is no other but these three options which we set out at the beginning to make sense of the term, "nature" is as meaningless a term as "culture" is.

Nonetheless, "nature" is fraudulently implemented in three interlocking ways, even though the term is meaningless. First, it functions as a simulation in much the same way as Jean Baudrillard's Disneyland, which is "presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real," and which is "neither true nor false" but is rather a "deterrence machine."[8] In the same way, "nature" is implemented as 'wilderness' to dissimulate that there is no more wildness. Presenting camping adventures as part of that leisure which is merely the determined negation of 'work' (the 'weekend', the 'vacation'), "nature" persists to dissimulate that there is no escape from domestication. As part of this, "nature" also implements other simulations that are neither true nor false but

[8] Jean Baudrillard, Simulations (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1983), 25.

separates areas Y and Z, by what criteria could we now separate area Z from areas Y and X? And so area Z becomes part of our cloud, and molecule m3 in area Z is now joining with molecules m2 and m1 in areas Y and X, or else again there isn't a cloud after all.

But again there is a cloud, we have seen it. So what about the border regions of area Z, and what about its own shifting density and molecule movements? What, that is, of areas AA, BB, and CC, nearby and more or less densely filled with water vapors of their own? And then what about their own respective border regions, density shifts, and molecular movements? Eventually we will find that there are varying degrees of water vapors in the air everywhere, and there is no air which is completely devoid of them; wind constantly mixes them everywhere, too. So now, either we jettison the cloud that we started out with – but it's so clearly there in the sky! Or we accept that every bit of air everywhere around the world is part of just one gigantic cloud, omnipresent and persisting everywhere around the globe.

Either way, there is only the air, full of water vapors; the term "cloud" is rendered absurd and unusable by either of the above options. Thus the term has no meaning, and whatever we may have seen, none of us have ever seen a cloud in the sky. Nonetheless, the term "cloud" continues to be used fraudulently, as a technocratic signifier, and works all the better because it has no meaning of its own. A "cloud" is thus not a water vapor at all, but an operative sign: a predictor of "rain" to be avoided for family picknicks; a harbinger of "pressure zones" to be tracked by satellite and to be accounted for in the daily "forecast". In other words, a "cloud" is a disturbance of technocratic "normality", of programmatic implementations; it isn't a phenomenon in the sky but a technical error that must be handled.

A cloud "ruins the lighting on my wedding photographs." It means that "I have to buy new umbrellas, shoes, coats…" A cloud "makes me stay inside as it's cloudy out and could rain any

minute." Countering "clouds" thus means countering the error correction logic from which that term stems, and conversely, removing "cloud" behavior from one's repertoire goes some way towards dismantling that error correction logic. For what is disturbed is planning – programming – of one's works and days, not the flow of free activities, as these can, and often do, take place in the rain just as well. De-programming one's day, de-planning, de-technicizing, de-instrumentalizing, not only goes against "leisure" and "relaxation" (i.e., of free time as the determined negativity of "work"), but also against far more seemingly innocuous implementations of that same logic, such as "clouds."

crime

Even outside of a project explicitly concerned with demolition, like this one, this term has no meaning at all. Legal text, the edifice of "criminal law," purports to give it meaning, of course, and official discourse pats itself on the back about such supposed "rule of laws and not of men." But this really just obfuscates that the "rule of law" is in reality rule of the interpreters of law, and thus that crime, quite literally, is whatsoever judge and jury say it is. "Words are the tenure by which everything is held by law, and words are subject to different interpretations, according to the views, wills, or interests of the judges, juries, and other functionaries appointed to execute these laws… To possess the interpreting power of verbal institution is to possess unlimited power."[6]

"Crime" does not denote a category of behavior at all, except insofar as interpretation is a behavior. That is, it doesn't denote something that the "criminal" ("subject," "accused") does, it denotes something a judge or jury do. Thus "crime" isn't even something as loosely defined as "aberrant behavior" or "outlawed behavior" on the part of the criminal. It's neither that the behavior in ques-

[6] Josiah Warren, Equitable Commerce (New Harmony, 1847), 23.

area, the forest, is also cultural. For the trees there, the shrubs and wolves and voles, are likewise allowed to live there but not on the lawn, and are therefore arranged in the forest and allocated to the forest by the same human hand that arranges and allocates grasses and flowers on the lawn. Nature is parcelled out as culture is parcelled out, at the same time and by the same gesture. Which means that any demarcation between the two doesn't work, whichever way one looks at it. Culture remains always based on nature and is merely an arrangement of nature. Nature likewise always emerges together with culture, as an arrangement defined and delineated by culture.

Does it follow that nature is meaningful still, but is "just culture"? Some have argued that it is, and coined the term "second nature" for this argument. With the last supposedly untouched parts of the planet disappearing under piles of plastic trash, it may almost seem this way. After all, what are national parks, wilderness zones, and areas "managed for wildlife" other than zones of nature, demarcated by culture? But this argument doesn't hold sway, as the very forces that create this culture on a planetary scale are everywhere forces of nature – human beings themselves, all silliness about "augmentation" notwithstanding; solar, wind, coal energy; the air we breathe and the soil we raid; the lithium for our batteries and the microbes for our yeast are all not man-made, and are thus all nature, not culture. The lawn is not created by humans but arranged by them, and is thus the same nature as the forest is, which is likewise not created but arranged by humans.

Nor does it follow that everything is nature, and there really is no culture at all; this too does not hold up. Designating all of the above as "nature" requires that we abstract from the cultural processes that they're a part of. The microbes may be natural, but the oven is not. Lithium is natural, but extraction and refinery are anything but. Human beings are natural, but the societies, cities, lawns that they spend their lives in are not. So all that we've done by pointing out nature within culture is pointing out culture within

made, is part of nature), or a separation between realms. Remaining as agnostic as possible as to what these "realms" consist in – so as to strengthen the argument for a meaningful term "nature" as much as possible – this separation could either be conceived in time (anything before a certain point in time is nature, anything after that is culture), or in space (anything around here is part of nature, anything over there is culture).

Properly analyzed, though, the latter two separations in space and in time really come down to the first. If we say, anything in this region that existed before 1800 AD is nature, anything after is culture, as we might do for example for old growth forests as opposed to well-manicured lawns, we really say that the forest emerged without human intervention, but the lawn didn't. And of course this entails a geographical notion, whereby the lawn belongs to culture because it's man-made, and the forest belongs to nature because it isn't man-made. Ultimately, the process of ascertaining what is nature and what is culture is a labor of rendering each thing unto the one or the other.

Yet this individual mode of demarcation doesn't hold up either. If the lawn is part of culture as opposed to nature, how does its grass emerge, how the dewdrops and flowers, how the birds and earthworms, how the soil itself? No human put them there (apart from isolated exceptions that prove the rule). So by definition, they are put there by nature, and are part of nature. Pesticides, lawnmowers, water hoses may not be natural in that they are man-made, but the plants themselves, and the animals, surely are natural. And so are the chemical effects of pesticides, and the mechanical effects of lawnmower blades.

One might counter that, while this may well be true, the arrangement of plants and animals nonetheless isn't natural; how they form the lawn, how they grow, where they are allowed to live, is the work of culture. And there is reason to grant this given the definition of culture as the realm of all things man-made. But then asserting this also entails that the other, supposedly "natural"

tion is outlawed nor its being aberrant from society's norms (however established) that renders something a crime, but merely the interpretation of the situation considered by whosoever accuses and whosoever judges. Were this not the case, there could be no "mitigating circumstances," nor any exceptions to the applications of laws; they would be simple programs executed in both senses of that term. But the same mechanisms by which exceptions apply are also those that make "crime" a non-entity. Namely, that the basis of its assessment as a crime is a retroactive interpretation of a situation as a "crime scene," which is to say, the retroactive creation of both situation and crime. Neither exist prior to the stipulation of the "crime," and neither can, as it's not the law that creates a crime, nor the defendant's behavior, but solely and exclusively the judge's or jury's interpretation of the situation. And both of these, judge and jury, are in any case part of the same collusion towards a regime of interpretation that produces so-called "crime" to begin with. So even if there was such a thing as behavior (a demolition for another day), and even if social standards thereof could somehow be established, its being "criminal" is inherently meaningless.

And deliberately so. For this term is of course specifically designed to have no meaning, and is straightforwardly strategic to such an extent that mainstream sociologists writing about it have a hard time not sounding like anarchists. The difference is that the former (though to some extent the latter, too) assume that the term has meaning, i.e., that it works as a term. But just this it does not. All crime is post facto, and cannot be otherwise, for the "law," if it is anything at all, is a dead letter until it is implemented by judgment and execution. A person shooting another person dead is not a crime until it's judged to be – otherwise how could we award medals to mass murderers in uniform? Clearly, then, prison abolition is entirely on the right track, and perhaps what needs to be added is merely a bit of argumentative oomph exposing, as above, the utter fraud of the so-called "due process of the law."

hard

The primary sense of this term is physical; for the derivative metaphorical use of this term, and how it's senseless, see "overcome," below. - In the primary, physical sense of the term too, though, nothing is ever hard. For being hard, not budging or giving way, resisting pressure and not breaking, is an absolute property. That is, things cannot be "harder" or "hardest" except in a very specific sense. If something budges only very little, and only against extreme pressure, it might be said to be hard. But if something else gives even less way, or does so only against more extreme pressure, it is thereby not actually harder than the first thing; rather, it is thereby closer to being hard. "Harder" thus means "closer to the property of being hard", not "harder on a scale of hardness." And that which budges really not much at all, perhaps only at the atomic level, is "hardest" only in the sense that it is "closest to being hard," not in the sense of "being furthest on a scale of hardness."

But this entails that nothing is ever hard, that the term never applies to anything. For "hard," like any other absolute adjective, can only be applied to something if it is known with absolute certainty that the object in question is, in fact, hard. And this knowledge, if indeed any knowledge is possible at all, and if indeed sufficient certainty is possible in principle, must include that there is not, and that there can never be, anything that could possibly budge any less, break less easily, resist pressure more, or give any less way than the object characterized as "hard." Only then can the term apply to it correctly, fulfilling its function as an absolute adjective indicating that what is "hard" cannot ever be surpassed by something else even closer to being hard. And since this is trivially impossible, things might have all sorts of consistencies, but none of them can ever be hard.

Like "boundary" above and "this" below, combatting the gestures behind the now-demolished term "hard" takes the anarchic quest, if indeed this is one, for "an exponential eradication of all

mechanisms and forms of power from the largest through to the most intimate and mundane."[7] A world, if indeed there is one, without hardness is not only a world without the omnipresence of toxically masculinist gestures likes "hard evidence," "hard facts," "hard character," and of course the hard penises from which all these are derived. Hardness goes further. It is thingness. Hardness reinforces the notion of brittle, lonely, unconnected, brute blocks of matter colliding in a void; the world of eternal atomist civil war from which the Leviathan arises. If nothing is ever seen as hard, nothing is ever implemented as hard, and thus everything becomes permeable, interdependent, continuous. No longer forced to be hard, things become beings that are free to neither be there not to be not-there nor to be not not-there; to no more adhere to X – any X, any characteristic affixing them to hardness – than not adhere to X, or both adhere to it and not, or neither adhere to it nor not. Nor does the world without hardness need to be a "soft" world; if the one term is senseless, then so is the other. Beings may well still be firm, but the metallic surfaces of hard machinery and the straight lines of programming brutalism recede.

nature

This term has no meaning and never had any meaning. For nature is either opposed to culture, such that the two are mutually exclusive, or it is not. And in the latter case, the relation is either such that nature is a part of culture, or that culture is a part of nature. Perhaps one might say that the first of these three is true, that nature and culture are mutually exclusive; it may appear that this is often how these terms are used. Starting there, then, we can ask further in what the separation between nature and culture consists. Now this would have to be either a separation manifest in individual things (man-made stuff is part of culture; what man has not

[7] Moore, Anarchist Speculations, 13.