A Creative Passion

A Creative Passion:
Anarchism and Culture

Edited by

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CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS
P U B L I S H I N G

DEDICATED TO MOLLY AND SAOIRSE SHANTZ

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FOREWORD

These are tough times, which call for tough responses. There are so many state and corporate messes made round the world by outright brutality and/or by the devastating indifference of cutting corners and costs on so-called "regulatory standards" of either "human rights" or environmental protection. In the past few weeks for instance, I've fallen into a helpless rage over the murders at the Gaza blockade of the flotilla activists by the IDF, and a spluttering inefficient anger with the continuing sense of ecological doom over the ceaseless spilling of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. The ruling Liberal party where we live is pushing through a massive highway project which is paving over historic, incredibly diverse wetlands along the Fraser River in British Colombia (a key part of their "Gateway" push to open up Pacific Rim shipping ports to dirty Alberta tar sands oil.) War and occupation by Canadian forces in Afghanistan continues apace, propped up by a racist, patriarchal culture of violence here at home which glorifies war over there supposedly in the name of Afghani women, while ignoring—or as seen in the vicious sexual assaults recently in and around Canadian military bases, even instigating—rampant domestic abuse, rape, misogyny, and other attacks on women's health and safety right here at home, papering over the sad fact of hundreds of missing and murdered women, many Indigenous sisters. Politicians and developers bury the history of residential schools while building malls and subdivisions on unceded native land. All this banality of evil, murderously dragging on, this "modern, bereft, commodified life continu[ing] unaffected" (Zerzan 2002, 136)

Poet Maya Angelou was asked by comedian Dave Chappelle about growing up in the civil rights movement and what it meant to have experienced such intense marginalization based solely on the colour of her skin and if it ever made her angry. She answered

> If you're not angry, you're either a stone or you're too sick to be angry... [But] you must not be bitter. Bitterness is like cancer—it eats upon the host. It doesn't do anything to the object of its displeasure. So you said angry, yes. You write it, you paint it, you dance it, you march it, you vote it, you do everything about it. You talk it—never stop talking it.

It's a constant struggle, that directing of anger into creativity, rather than inward disappointed bitter nihilism. Propaganda is not enough and

token resistance—like walking around in circles outside closed embassies or worse, limiting one's political involvement to dropping a vote in a ballot box once every few years—is simply useless and further depressing. Propaganda of the deed is what's needed.

The forces lined up against us are formidable and complex, and thus are required close and true analyses of our situation, paired with these deeds of creative and purposeful direct action. It is in this regard that I really want to recommend this collection of essays for your use and pleasure, because it is not only chock-a-block with such analytical angles, but also puts forward many excellent ideas and possibilities for refusal and resistance, towards carving out alternative futures. Not content with lyrical lament, these authors are constructive, abrasive, some like a sort of punk rock whetstone sharpening a prod to society, many sparks to the imagination flying off.

This book races up and down history and pre-history, grappling with the "progress" of civilization, colonialism and capitalism's vicious claws dug into our backs. It flies across wide geographical spread, from the shittiest suburban terrain, grit of cities, to the wilds of the landscapes scheduled to be dammed. By sketching out lessons in the life experiences of these many artists and thinkers, it cries out to future pirates, poets & playwrights.

This helps in the honing of our demands, specific methods to fight for the expansion of the commons, rather than its enclosure and demise. The way the ice caps are melting by now, it's pretty clear that the only way to end the class war is to win it. But how?

I have been placing my hopes on the creativity of anarchistic past, present and future generations for many years now. Since when at a formative age I read some Emma Goldman and U.K. LeGuin's *The Dispossessed*, I have both secretly and publicly hoped in the liberatory potential of directly democratic, popular assemblies. In the anarchism of autonomous, direct action to get things done, in popular education and the kids breakfast programs to go with it, by any means necessary. Instead of little pockets of freedom, that we might one day live whole lives of self-determination, without landlords, bosses or borders. Hoped that eventually through more and more consciousness of this power, it would spread like wildfire, spread enough to grow our own food, and squat the world.

But hope is a funny word, like Naomi Klein quipped at the Klimaforum in Copenhagen, it can just be an expression for a holding pattern. It was sad seeing so many people so deeply caught up in their high hopes for Obama, now obviously disappointed, but Klein also dug up a great quote from Studs Terkel: "Hope has never trickled down. It has always sprung

up." I'm with her on that it's time to "hope less, [and] demand more."

Even a more liberal journalist like Ryan Lizza recognized back in 2008, "Perhaps the greatest misconception about Barack Obama is that he is some sort of anti-establishment revolutionary. Rather, every stage of his political career has been marked by an eagerness to accommodate himself to existing institutions rather than tear them down or replace them" (quoted in Street 2009, n.p.).

So we are reminded that as we go about building alternative infrastructures and organizing the battles to win our specific demands, the state is not just withering away. Jeff Shantz writes (later in this book) that, as "the anarchist Bakunin famously proclaimed: 'The urge for destruction is a creative passion also.' So it is with [African poets] Ogun and Atunda. In both, 'the act of creation is locked in dialectical combat with the act of destruction'" (Osundare 1994, 84 as quoted by Shantz in this work). Collectively, we have a lot of work ahead, and no doubt maintaining that dialectic balance will further assist our survival.

Our fullest ingenuity and resourcefulness will also be necessary. As political prisoner Seth Hayes once said, "Only through our involvement will we become free." We must be wary of reliance on "the master's tools" like so much of the privatized internet, which can so easily be wielded against us in surveillance, exploitation and repression. Green anarchist John Zerzan argues that "[t]echnology, and it's accomplice, culture, must be met by a resolute autonomy and refusal that looks at the whole span of human presence and rejects all dimensions of captivity and destruction" (Zerzan 2002, 204).

Rather, it is more likely that history will judge us by the extent to which we can, as Nigerian environmentalist activist and poet Nnimmo Bassey cried out, "Leave the coal in the hole! Leave the oil in the soil! Leave the Tar Sands in the land!" How high can we raise up our collective humanity, defend and arm our desires?

So, please, read on, and go flip through the index (the making of which was some of the most fun I've had yet in my brief foray into indexing); make some time to follow up on some of the fascinating authors, poets, artists, musicians, pirates, actors (and their various bands and collective projects) which can be found in the many notes and references attached after each essay. May you find much fuel for your own creative passions, and may it burn long. All the while, as Zerzan said (to end his cut-up of Chomsky), "It is past time to go forward and engage the real depths of the disaster facing all of us." (Zerzan 2002, 143).

—P.J. Lilley, Surrey, BC (on Kwantlen & Semiahmoo territories)
June 14, 2010

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As an active anarchist for several decades, I have had the great opportunity to participate in a number of diverse projects that have been initiated, undertaken or inspired by anarchist organizers and activists, performers and artists. I have been involved in activities ranging from workplace organizing to guerrilla theater, in settings as diverse as union meetings and infoshops. I have been involved in anarchist federations and affinity groups, organized punk shows and street blockades. In each of these efforts I have benefited from the real world examples of anarchy in action. In all cases I have learned something worthwhile. I would like to thank everyone who works so hard to develop these projects and keep them going. Thanks particularly to those who worked with me in noteworthy cultural projects such as the roving anarchist salons of Coffeehouse 36, the critical pedagogy of Critical[2], the Who's Emma infoshop and zines such as *Agent 2771*. Your efforts continue to bring anarchy to life.

I would like to thank all of the contributors to the present project for their timely reflections and commentaries. As anarchist movements develop, enjoying a remarkable resurgence in the twenty-first century, such contributions become part of an important conversation. As an editor, the thoughtful and direct responses to my questions and queries were much appreciated. A special thank you to P.J. Lilley for contributions to this collection.

Thanks must go to Saoirse and Molly Shantz, the truest anarchists I know, for their ongoing patience and support. They generously allow me to take time to do this work. Their creativity is truly inspiring. This collection is dedicated to them.

INTRODUCTION

JEFF SHANTZ

Anarchism—the idea that people can organize their lives on the basis of justice and equality in the absence of economic and political elites—perhaps more than any other political or philosophical movement, has formed the specter that has haunted the dreamscapes of capitalist and statist authorities. Certainly no political or social movement has enjoyed as much of a resurgence, some would say resurrection, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries as anarchism. Indeed, since the rise of the alternative globalization or global justice movements in the early 1990s, anarchism, as a self-aware political force, has become perhaps the dominant social vision and mobilizing inspiration of the global movements against neoliberal capitalism in the Global North. Waves of young activists and community organizers seeking a world free of domination, exploitation, repression and oppression have found in anarchism a vibrant and practical alternative to both the current systems of late capitalism and the erstwhile alternatives of previous generations, most notably statist communism and socialism.

Not surprisingly, corporate media and government representatives have gone out of their way to portray anarchism as a purely destructive, negative phenomenon, a force of evil, chaos and harm. Anarchism is presented as something akin to nihilism or, even more, terrorism. Mainstream accounts of anarchism focus on acts of property destruction during political protests, vandalism, supposed calls for the overthrow of society (when really it is the state and capital that are opposed), and acts of political violence attributed to anarchists, without regard for whether or not those involved are actually self-identified proponents of anarchism. Contemporary anarchists are identified as terrorists and reference is made to political assassinations carried out by anarchists during the 19th century. Waves of academic "research" have appeared suggesting that anarchism is the precursor to present-day terrorist movements and activities (see Bergesen and Han 2005; Jensen 2009).

The term anarchy itself continues to strike fear in the hearts of politicians and bosses of various stripes. Since the early days of the Industrial

Revolution, anarchy has been portrayed as a wild beast that inspires people to evil deeds and threatens the very destruction of capitalist societies. With the rise of the alternative globalization protests of the twenty-first century, startling media coverage of property damage and clashes between police and protesters during demonstrations against corporate institutions has been manipulated to suggest that the stirring anarchist movements represent the return of political monstrosity. For defenders of states and capital, anarchism is presented as the antithesis of culture and civilization. Anarchism is portrayed as the expression of the supposedly crass, base urges of the "dangerous classes," the inarticulate rage of the mob. Anarchism is said to be the creed of the assassin, the bandit and the pirate. Only bourgeois civilization and culture, with respect for laws, contracts and private property can contain the wild animal desires supposedly expressed in anarchism.

    None of this is atypical of authority's response to oppositional movements and groups that seek alternatives to state capitalist domination and exploitation. Such dismissals and condemnation have been directed at anarchists and socialists during the various Red Scares, communists during McCarthyism and environmentalists under Reagan and the Bushes. Such attacks on anarchism and anarchists have been a constant and predictable part of state capitalist containment of movements that call for and seek the abolition of both.

    Yet these attacks serve to erase the vital, creative heart of anarchism, presenting as a negative reaction, or mindless lashing out, what is, in fact, a rich, thoughtful and articulate constructive movement. Anarchism, while calling for the destruction of political domination (in states, governments, political parties and traditions) and economic exploitation (in private property, capitalist markets and monopoly control of productive resources), has always produced reflective, courageous, inspiring and inspired visions of social alternatives, not in a detached realm of fantasy or "art" but in the here and now of the real world. Unlike state capitalism, anarchist visions stress mutual aid, solidarity, conviviality, participatory decision-making and sharing. Distinct from other social reform visions, anarchists and anarchist perspectives do not stress the capture and use of the state, in reforms or revolutions, or the violent imposition of new social relations from above, through political or social vanguards. Instead anarchists stress voluntary participation, the creative capacities of all, and do-it-yourself (DIY) approaches to economic, social, political and cultural life. As they oppose political vanguards, so too do anarchists oppose cultural vanguards and the separation of "the artist" from society. Rather than a special figure, shrouded in creative mystery, anarchists proclaim that all are artists, all

can make art. In opposition to those who counter-pose anarchy *against* culture, in a dualism that constructs anarchism as the antithesis or, or as a threat to, culture, anarchists emphasize the creativity and innovation of experience freed from institutions of authority and domination, convention and tradition.

Movements for social change cannot provide a radical alternative by operating strictly as negativity, by asserting anti-systemic demands alone. However, as the anarchist Bakunin stated in the last century: "The passion for destruction is a creative passion, too" (1974, 204). Anarchist movements respond to the processes of social exclusion and cultural alienation currently associated with global processes of governance by challenging the global order and asserting their own autonomous identity. Attempts are made to (re)construct cultural meaning through specific patterns of experience in which participants create meaning against the logics of global intrusions that seek to render them meaningless. Anarchist movement activities are largely engaged in transforming the normative cultural and political codes of emerging global relations.

Anarchists confront and contest not only exploitative material relations and authoritarian state practices but have developed sustained, holistic opposition to cultural production within capitalist societies. Locating hierarchy, authority, oppression and repression not solely in economic or political institutions, anarchists have launched devastating criticisms of a range of civilizing practices within capitalist modernity and post-modernity. Key among the disastrous characteristics of capitalist civilization are ecological destruction, at local to biospheric levels, the mechanization of social life, alienation, the pacifying effects of consumerism and the anonymity of social life in mass societies.

Numerous commentators (Klein 2002; Heller 2005) have expressed concerns about the seeming lack of cultural developments within the contemporary alternative globalization or global justice movements, particularly in the Global North. While the social upheavals and communist mobilizations of the 1930s were associated with various cultural developments, such as socialist realist art, folk and jazz music and proletarian fiction and the New Left of the 1960s and 1970s was accompanied by the counter-culture, and experiments in art, music, the underground press and literature, the alternative globalization movement has seemingly lacked any unique associated cultural manifestation. Yet other commentators have noted that anarchism has provided something of a cultural force within alternative globalization movements, particularly within North America and some parts of Europe. Part of the character of the alternative globalization movements, and part of their anarchic

structure, is that there is no cultural (or political or economic) center.

Anarchy

The word "anarchy" comes from the ancient Greek word *anarchos* and means "without a ruler." While rulers, quite expectedly, claim that the end of rule will inevitably lead to a descent into chaos and turmoil, anarchists maintain that rule is unnecessary for the preservation of order. Rather than a descent into Hobbes' war of all against all, a society without government suggests to anarchists the very possibility for creative and peaceful human relations. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the first to identify positively his theory as anarchist, neatly summed up the anarchist position in his famous slogan: "Anarchy is Order."

For anarchists, the regulatory and supervisory mechanisms of the state are especially suited to producing docile and dependent subjects. Through institutions like courts and prisons, but also social work, authorities extend the practices of ruling from control over bodies to influence over minds. Moral regulation provides a subtle means for nurturing repression and conformity. It results, in relations of dependence rather than self-determination as the external practices of the state increasingly come to be viewed as the only legitimate mechanisms for solving disputes or addressing social needs. For anarchists the "rule of law" administered through the institutions of the state is not the guarantor of freedom, but, rather, freedom's enemy, closing off alternative avenues for human interaction, creativity and community while corralling more and more people within its own bounds.

What characterizes anarchism is its holistic critique of, and opposition to, institutions and practices of hierarchy, domination and authoritarianism. While other movements emphasize, prioritize or privilege economy, politics or culture, anarchists have always identified the broader, interconnected systems and practices articulating these diverse spheres. Anarchists often identify capitalist civilization itself (the surround of capitalist economics, statist politics, imperial territoriality and cultural and social domination) as integrated systems of power, control and regulation to be challenged, dismantled and replaced. It is not enough to dismantle economic relations, for example, if institutions of cultural domination or destruction of wilderness remain as grounding principles and practices of social life.

Since the earliest days of industrial capitalism, the morality of the ruling classes, what is often called bourgeois morality, has suggested that only civilization (or liberal democracy), the civilizing practices of

bourgeois society and culture, with the rule of (capitalist) law and (state) order, can tame the urges and desires of the dispossessed, working class and poor, which if left unchecked would bring about the destruction of bourgeois liberal democracies and free markets. For anarchists, capitalist civilization, rather than the securer of freedom, has become freedom's enemy, contributing to relations of tyranny and despotism, economic exploitation and the taming of resistance to exploitation and perhaps fatally the destruction of vast ecosystems and the biosphere on which all life depends.

A key document in developing the radical critique of capitalist civilization within anarchism is *The Ego and Its Own: The Case of the Individual Against Authority* (1844) by Max Stirner (Johan Caspar Schmidt, 1806-1856), a colleague and critic of Karl Marx. Stirner, whose *non de plume* means "Max the Highbrow," studied under G.W.F. Hegel at Berlin University, becoming one of *Die Freien*, "The Free Ones," the so-called "Young Hegelians" who sought to make Hegel's philosophical works suitable for the real world of politics. In his polemical attack on all institutions of authority Stirner rejected domination not only by states and capital, but also the domination of the mind by ideas, including ideas of socialism and justice within supposed liberation movements. So seriously did Marx view Stirner's philosophy of radical individual liberty, that he spent a full two-thirds of his bulky text, *The German Ideology*, on a condemnation of Stirner. For Stirner, as for many anarchists, the unique must struggle against capture by the fixed idea. Bourgeois morality, and the stifling centralism of majoritarian democracy represent the impositions of the fixed idea.

For contemporary anarchists, the critique of bourgeois civilization, culture and morality has taken on central significance, becoming even a factor of survival in the current period. Fully urbanized landscapes, concrete and steel with no green life remaining, technology becoming out of control as a result of unchecked progress, alienation of people from each other (and other living things), total control of human societies by authoritarian governments—science fiction authors have long envisioned this dystopian future. In opposition to this long feared future, now realized, the anarcho-primitivist critique has risen. The work of John Zerzan exemplifies this kind of thought—an understanding of civilization itself as the cause of oppression, the cause of the ills of modernity, based on interdisciplinary studies and research, drawing especially from anthropology. The anarcho-primitivist critique allows for the creation of an indictment against civilization itself as the root of the problems that inevitably create such worlds; this critique deconstructs all that civilization

encompasses, beginning with its very origins in domestication and agriculture. Writers and theorists such as Zerzan do not simply attribute blame to some singular "evil," such as government or technology or religion, but instead show these oppressive systems and structures as an inherent part of civilization, going well beyond the social critique of any science fiction narrative.

Cultures of Resistance

Previous social movements, particularly communism and socialism, were marked by related developments in culture and art that inspired, animated and reinforced those movements. Too often these developments were driven by the ideological needs of political parties and governments that mobilized and gained power during intense periods of revolution and war. Such movements in culture and art were often overtaken or used by the political masters, their vitality reigned in and put in the service of state reconstruction and nationalist mythologizing. Such was the case in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba and Mozambique. Contemporary socialist commentators, such as Boris Groys, even eliminate anarchism from discussions of contemporary politics and culture. For Groys (2010), today's political and aesthetic strategies are limited to notions of unified Europe, political Islam and mass culture, and these, in his view, have some communist heritage.

The lack of engaged analysis of contemporary anarchist politics has meant that the practices and intentions of this major, and growing, contemporary movement remain obscured. Lost in sensationalist accounts are the creative and constructive practices undertaken daily by anarchist activists and artists seeking a world free from violence, domination, repression and exploitation.

Through the deployment of dramatic symbolic practices, including developments in art, literature and performance, anarchists attempt to disrupt the efforts to circumscribe their activities and limit their critique of capitalist social relations. It is suggested that the concept *Bund*, expressing an intense form of solidarity which is highly unstable and which requires ongoing maintenance through symbolic interaction, better expresses the character of these forms of sociation than does community or movement. Expressive practices, often drawing upon punk styles, are crucial to holding these anarchist groups together. Cultural and artistic expression creates lifestyle solidarity among anarchists. Cultural experimentation and exchange are central features of anarchist gatherings such as the Active Resistance conferences and numerous anarchist bookfairs in Montreal.

Collectively produced and shared cultural practices represent attempts to break from the corporate re/production of culture and art, both aesthetically and materially, in terms of both consumption and exchange. Such symbolic elements are especially important for solidarity given the fragile character of sociation marking anarchist subcultures. At the same time many anarchist feminists, including working class women and women of color have challenged the predominance of punk-inspired clothing as representative of an exclusionary and even insular subculture. They have focused instead on the inclusive aspects of anarchism.

Such groupings have long offered highly original, creative resistance to corporatist articulations. Such creativity, largely ignored as modes or sites of consumption by sociologists, is expressed in Autonomous Zones (community centers based on anarchist principles, "rags" and "zines", self-publishing efforts) and varieties of do-it-yourself experimentalism in performance and art. The conservator lifestyles of these marginalized and precarious workers are built around practices of mutual aid, re-using and minimal purchase.

Much of cultural production within capitalist economies takes place within, and is dominated by, multinational, billion dollar corporate conglomerates that, in the pursuit of profit rather than human need, erase local cultures and impose a massifying culture that is not based in or responsive to the needs of real specific communities. More than this, individuals have little say or involvement in producing the cultural products, the commodities, that they consume. Capitalist civilization is based on the separation of people and their communities from means of subsistence and the capacities to care for themselves according to their own interests. Within capitalist economies the commons are rendered as private property, as people are made dependent, individually as well as collectively, upon commodity markets owned and controlled by the states and capital. This dependence provides the basis for exploitation and oppression along various lines of separation.

Beyond aesthetic issues much of anarchist concern with cultural practices represents attempts to produce and share beyond capitalist circuits of production and exchange. Culture, and its production and distribution, becomes an aspect of what some call "self-valorization," production for personal and community use, rather than profit. Shared as gifts rather than objects of commodity exchange.

Not surprisingly, and not without strategic significance, contemporary anarchism has turned to self-production, both collective and personal, in an effort to develop their own means of production and subsistence. This self-production extends beyond the meeting of base needs to create art and

culture. In order to bring their ideas to life, anarchist feminists create working examples. These experiments in social practice, popularly referred to as DIY (do-it-yourself), are the means by which contemporary anarchist feminists withdraw their consent from authoritarian structures and begin contracting other relationships. DIY releases counterforces, based upon notions of autonomy and self-organization as motivating principles, against the normative political and cultural discourses of neoliberalism. Anarchists create "autonomous zones" in which they can develop the experiences and resources needed to sustain communities that resist neoliberal capital.

Recognizing the limits of mainstream cultural channels from which they are, in any event, largely excluded, activists turned to symbolic politics, sensational activism and extreme forms of rhetoric. These actions can be understood as counter-articulations, largely through desecration and recontextualization within a context in which activists have little material strength. Consumer culture is also disrupted or subverted in a number of ways: exposing commodity fetishism, resisting capitalist development, do-it-yourself production and exchange outside of capitalist markets. As several of the authors show, there is a contradiction or turmoil in many subcultural anarchist projects and perspectives. This reflects, in part, the difficulties facing those who grapple with the practicality of maintaining anarchist lifestyles as part of "scenes" that are detached from community-based struggles of the working class and oppressed. This collection illustrates the possibilities and problems facing attempts to build DIY community-based artistic and political movements. The collection also engages theoretical developments around emerging anarchist practices.

Creative Passions

In his contribution, Roger Farr outlines the early dismantling of bourgeois civilization and art in the works of Dada poet Hugo Ball, using Ball's diary *Flight Out of Time* to recompose the Dada innovator's fragmentary writing on anarchism. This recomposition serves two purposes for Farr: first, to establish the nature and extent of Dada's entanglement with the European anarchist movement; and second, to demonstrate how Ball's attempts to articulate linkages between social and discursive orders led him to anticipate developments in poststructuralist theory. Having examined Ball's anarchic attack on bourgeois culture, Farr concludes with an assessment of Ball's work in relation to contemporary anarchist praxis.

Science fiction authors have long portrayed dystopian futures that

resonate with the fears and concerns of anarcho-primitivists who see bourgeois civilization expanding ecological destruction (to biospheric, even universal levels), human misery and suffering, poverty and despair within authoritarian and increasingly tyrannical social arrangements. No longer are the imagined futures of these science fiction narratives far-distant repercussions of modernity; rather, industrial civilization seems to ever-increasingly resemble these narratives. The world is certainly facing ecological disaster; with ancient forests rapidly disappearing, dead zones developing in the ocean, and global warming threatening to melt the icecaps, this is undeniable. This is an observable problem, made obvious by looking out the window or picking up a newspaper; much more subtle and more difficult to identify are the psychological effects of living in such a world. For Max Lieberman, science fiction classics such as George Orwell's *1984* and Philip K. Dick's *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* present images of a future inalterably changed by the actions of humankind—what becomes the "world," as humans in these narratives have created it, is ugly and strange, devoid of other forms of life, lacking meaningful interactions between humans. Both *1984* and *Flow My Tears* examine questions of identity, questions of mental illness—paranoia and fear are rampant, substance abuse is common. Orwell and Dick's novels present characters that are psychologically damaged by their human-created environment. By using the narratives of science fiction and examining current events and thought in fields such as transhumanism, extropianism, biotechnology, psychology, and medicine, Lieberman illustrates bases in the real world for the possibility of the futures authors such as Orwell and Dick imagine. Through a critique of civilization, anarcho-primitivists also examine the psychological effects of humankind's removal from wilderness—the alienation, despair, and other psychological maladies found in the characters of Orwell and Dick's novels are present today. Lieberman's work shows that the anarcho-primitivist critique presents a compelling argument that these problems grow and become intensified with the progress of civilization, that the worlds imagined in *1984* and *Flow My Tears* are possibly the end result of the civilizing process.

Liam Nesson's chapter shows that radical eco-anarchists like Edward Abbey actually develop complex, even contradictory, approaches to ecological destruction and industrial capitalist civilization. Edward Abbey's approach to environmental defense differs significantly from Wallace Stegner's passionate, though moderate, appeal. Stegner adopts a bureaucratic approach to solving conflicts between environmentalists, policy makers, and industrialists. He urges people to consider many

perspectives on the utilitarian issues related to resource use and wilderness preservation. Alternatively, Abbey urges for wilderness preservation without compromise. The two authors' ideological and philosophical approaches to conservationism are apparent in their fiction and nonfiction. Nesson analyzes the differences between these approaches and assesses their effectiveness in reaching achievable goals. While Nesson argues for Stegner's more moderate and compromising move toward change, based on achievable reforms, his study, nevertheless, emphasizes the importance of each author's polemics with a specific investigation of Abbey's commitment to anarchist philosophies. Drawing inspiration from philosophers he interpreted as anarchistic, including Chuang Tzu, Plato, and Thoreau, Abbey glorified risk taking as means to resist authoritarian institutions. Abbey's work presents anarchist perspectives (particularly those of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Mikhail Bakunin) as providing inspiration for movements seeking to disenfranchise those who control the functions of nation states. Tempered by the controlling maxim that people should value all sentient life, Abbey encourages, often with humor, aggressive action to promote positive change—through the limitation of industrial intrusion on wilderness lands. He critiqued the interconnected corporate and military-industrial influence on American lives and government. In response to destructive development of wilderness areas for recreation and resource use, and in objection to exaggerated control of citizens' lives, Abbey's diverse writing projects scrutinized and challenged the techno-industrial greed and cultures of power underpinning modern civilization.

Concern with local knowledge in struggles against global institutions of capital animates the works of Wole Soyinka. While the influence of anti-colonial theorists and activists, including Franz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, and Julius Nyerere, on his work is well known, it is also the case that Soyinka has been inspired by the works of a range of anarchist and libertarian thinkers, such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Leo Tolstoy, and Albert Camus. In addition to these influences Soyinka's philosophical grounding draws richly from Yoruban culture and mythology. From the perspective of this complex intersection of Yoruban and Western understandings of African mythology, Soyinka locates an anarchist presence. His sharp analysis of postcolonial power dynamics and call for an "organic revolution" based in Yoruban cultural concerns has marked his work as incisive, unique, and challenging.

Focusing on cultural expressions of indigenous societies, Soyinka foregrounds the anarchic, communal nature of ritual dramas. He does so in both his literary works and his political commentaries. Soyinka's

endogenous anarchism offers a critique of politics and post-colonial revolutions, with reference to symbolic practices that preceded and survived, in varying forms, European colonialist impositions, and continue to sustain resistance to neocolonialism, in part through the deployment of myths and rituals.

In North America and Europe there is little question that the dominant influence on contemporary anarchist cultural production and distribution has been punk. Indeed there has been a mutual resonance between anarchism and punk, with each movement interacting with and contributing to the development of the other, since the beginning of first wave punk in the 1970s. Even more, punk has intersected with the other predominant cultural expression of contemporary anarchism, primitivism. In his chapter, Mark Wetherington examines the influences, interpretations and criticisms of anarchist and primitivist ideology within the punk movement. Although the Sex Pistols and their single "Anarchy in the UK" introduced many in mainstream society to punk, and in the perception of many linked anarchy and the punk movement, in the decades since the late 1970s the majority of punk music has lacked a coherent philosophy, with many arguing that one never existed. Focusing on the musical legacy of the San Francisco Bay area punk rock band Fifteen, Wetherington discusses how lyricist Jeff Ott succeeded at incorporating nearly a century of anarchist literature and primitivist concepts into many of the band's songs; ultimately creating powerful, simple, and humble prose that stands both within and without the punk subculture as presenting some of the most compelling arguments for viewing modern, organized society in a radically different way. Rather than merely condensing the works of Jensen, Zerzan, Abbey, Camatte, and earlier anarchist literary figures, Ott's works re-interpret their views, placing them in a personal context. Despite some overlapping ideology with the radical punk literary and social organization CrimethInc., Wetherington argues that Fifteen presented a more ethical and responsible approach to life and politics in society. Whereas CrimethInc. encourages people to be parasitic as a means of hastening economic and political changes, Ott stresses self-sufficiency and respect for nature and others as alternatives that would eliminate the need for government. In conclusion, Wetherington's chapter describes anarchism within the punk movement as being unique from traditional expressions of anarchism in literature as well as being a distinct, but often disjointed, part of that subculture.

Bryan L. Jones focuses on anarcho-punk challenges to capitalist control of cultural production. He suggests, for example, that anarcho-punk artists have consistently supported the downloading of MP3 music

files from free file-sharing websites even as the big five record companies work to make sharing a crime. One way the big five music companies legitimize their narrative is by framing the argument over copyright in a way that allows them to appear to help music artists, but a closer look shows that these companies do not have the artist's interest at heart. In fact, their understanding of copyright law only supports their ability to act as manufacturers of culture. Jones' analysis points out how the big five's framing of the argument rests on specific constructions of law in capitalist society. Specifically they assert that it is those who own the means of production that should benefit from the sale of a product and not the creators. By advocating online piracy, anarcho-punks have redefined the commodity and attempted to open opportunities for people to engage culture free from the grip of what Theodor Adorno has called the Culture Industry. In a sense, these punks have decommodified their work in a way that supports the radical message of their art and renders apparent the antagonisms in capitalistic society. In other words, piracy is consistent with anarchist conceptions of culture because it allows for the creation of culture from the bottom up.

For Jessica Williams, punk and anarchy are both ways of expressing one's free will and individuality, and of not giving in to the demands of the "system." In her autoethnographic reflection on her own punk anarchist experiences, Williams examines what she sees as reflections of her own personal development and that of characters in *SLC Punk*, a punk rock film written and directed by James Merendino. She outlines connections between anarchy and punk rock culture, and how, both separately and jointly, they influence individuals who have a penchant for violence, and a desire for acceptance into a clearly defined cultural subgroup. Williams argues that for many young people who identify with punk culture, lifestyles of sex, violence, and anarchy change as punk youths grow into adulthood. She sees an exemplary example in Steve-O, the rebellious, blue-haired hero of the film *SLC Punk* (1998) who allies himself with the punk rock scene and the anarchist ideals that come with it, and defines himself by the music and style of this subculture. His dramatic conflict is his struggle with the question: How do you give up without giving in? Or, in other words, how do you "grow up without selling out?"

One of the key issues is Steve-O's connection to a similarly minded subculture which revolves around music. Steve-O finds it is easier to move away from his "scene" and to grow up; it is part of the arc of participation in various subcultures, such as the hippie culture of the sixties. For Williams, as rebellious youth grow out of the punk rock lifestyle, so do they grow out of an idealized version of anarchy, even if they don't stop

listening to the music that fueled that rebellion in the first place. Williams explores, through a meditation on her own experiences, how punk rock and anarchy have influenced each another in the fictional realm.

Anarchists have long stressed performance and drama as means for sharing ideas and disseminating anarchist perspectives. Drama has also been deployed as a means to experiment with collective processes and social interaction. Anarchist organizer Emma Goldman gave great attention to drama as a vehicle for spreading revolutionary ideas in a popular way. The intersection of anarchism, performance and drama is shown powerfully in the works of Eugene O'Neill. Indeed anarchism represents the main overtly referenced ideological influence on O'Neill's perspective. More recently, the Living Theatre and the Trumbull Theater complex have used performance effectively to engage people and encourage critical debate and discussion more broadly. The final chapter provides an overview of anarchism, drama, and performance.

There is currently little work available that examines anarchy, literature, and culture within the context of contemporary anarchist movements. The present collection addresses the substantial gap in understanding overlooked connections between anarchist perspectives and cultural expressions, and in political theory and theories of contemporary cultural movements. It is hoped that this collection will prove of great interest for students of literature, politics, sociology, communication and cultural studies. As importantly, it is hoped that the collection will find an audience among activists and members of community movements for whom anarchism represents a vital, living movement of the present and future.

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CHAPTER ONE

POETIC LICENSE:
HUGO BALL, THE ANARCHIST AVANT-GARDE, AND US[1]

ROGER FARR

> I have examined myself carefully. I could never bid chaos welcome, throw bombs, blow up bridges, and do away with ideas. I am not an anarchist. (Ball 1974, 19)

Despite this apparent disavowal of anarchism, Hugo Ball occupies a pivotal, if somewhat conflicted, position in the history of twentieth-century anarchist thought. As a founding figure of Dada, one of the most notoriously iconoclastic movements of the Modernist avant-garde, Ball was a pioneer of performance art, sound poetry, concrete poetry and automatic writing. In his role as a scholar and intellectual, Ball was the author of several books and dozens of essays, dealing with contemporary issues in politics, cultural history, aesthetics and philosophy. As an activist, he was the driving force behind the establishment of the Cabaret Voltaire (Lenin's infamous rowdy neighbor in Zurich), which, like New York's celebrated Ferrer Center, has been described as 'an educational institution with anarcho-cultural aims' (Weir 1997, 233). He was also a contributing editor to some of the most important radical journals of his time, publishing his poetry and critical works alongside well-known anarchists Erich Müsham, Otto Gross, Gustav Landauer and Fritz Brupacher. And yet, despite these credentials, the contours of his work remain almost universally ignored in surveys of anarchism.

This lack of attention may be a consequence of the contradictory dimensions of Ball's thought: on the one hand, that of the young, anarcho-Dada poet, and on the other, that of the older, jaded reactionary. Indeed, it is not uncommon for studies of Ball's life and work to track a political narrative which begins with his early interest in Nietzsche and Stirner,

peaks with his involvement with the German and Swiss anarchist movements between 1915–1919, and concludes with mental illness, poverty, and religious conservatism (the last stage being a cruelly ironic fulfillment, one critic has observed, of Dada's anti-Art stance) (Weir 1997, 236). Curiously, with the notable exception of Philip Mann's *Hugo Ball: An Intellectual Biography* (1987), which dedicates an entire chapter to Ball's politics, Erdmute White's indispensable *Magic Bishop: Hugo Ball, Dada Poet* (1998) and David Weir's brief but astute discussion in *Anarchy and Culture: The Aesthetic Politics of Modernism* (1997), many of these studies adopt an apologetic tone when they turn to the questions of how anarchism inflected his work. For instance, in his forward to Ball's diary *Flight Out of Time* the respected Dada scholar John Elderfield acknowledges only a "general connection" (Ball 1974, xxxvii) between Zurich Dada and the anarchist movement, despite the clear evidence of direct connections in Ball's diary; in fact, Ball elsewhere had claimed that "anarchy in thought, art and politics" was the book's "main subject" (Quoted in White 1998, 181). In his overview of Ball's career, Elderfield writes that, despite its many flaws and contradictions, the one "positive aspect" of Ball's later work (which is marked by a rejection of radicalism in any form, political and aesthetic) is its "recognition that anarchy itself cannot be a goal—a necessary rebellion, perhaps, but no final solution" (Ball 1974, 39). Why this should be viewed as a "positive" development is not explained. Similarly, Gerhardt Steinke, in his otherwise informative *Life and Work of Hugo Ball* (1967), writes that while Ball's radical poetics "served to open up the path to the practice of anarchism, it also brought about a break with true reality, a spiritual derailment which meant living in a world that more closely corresponded to a dream reality" (Steinke 1967, 54). This unqualified and rather clichéd dismissal of anarchism as a kind of naïve "utopian socialism" leads Steinke to conclude that "[i]n the last analysis, Ball's vehement striving as a Dadaist was merely a secret subterfuge by which he meant to assert his own ego and to reinstate his own self" (Steinke 1967, 178). Yet Ball's demand was precisely the opposite: artists, he declared, must "Discard the Ego like a coat full of holes" (Ball 1974, 29), and further, sounding rather like an early Adorno,[2] poets must "give up [their] lyrical feelings," because "it is tactless to flaunt feelings at such a time" (1982, 27). To be fair to Steinke, Ball's diary entries on the ego and subjectivity are inconsistent, to say the least; nevertheless the inference of Steinke's and others' analyses is that Ball became more mature—more politically "balanced"—in his later years, when he withdrew from radical politics and art to embrace reformism and theology. At any rate, putting aside for the moment the question of political affiliations, the