

LIBERATION NOW:
PRESENT-TENSE DIMENSIONS OF CONTEMPORARY ANARCHISM

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"Anarchy is not a thing of the future, but of the present; not a matter of demands, but of living".

Gustav Landauer

Summary

Anarchism, in its re-emergence as a movement over the past decade, has been the site of manifold reconfigurations that distinguish it from previous cycles of left-libertarian political expression. Networked structures replace formal federations and unions, a stronger emphasis is given to direct action and cultural experimentation, and the target of resistance is generalised from state and capital to all forms of domination. Yet another reconfiguration, less often mentioned by activists and commentators, is the unprecedented grounding of anarchist political commitments in the present tense. Having by and large abandoned the imagery of a “future anarchist society”, contemporary anarchist political culture focuses its discourses of resistance and liberation on the here and now. This paper examines several dimensions of this present-tense orientation, with the view of strengthening our understanding of the relevance of anarchism to contemporary political theory.

Keywords: Anarchism, Utopia, Prefigurative Politics, Direct Action, Individualism

1. Anarchism as a political culture

Let me begin by clarifying a few baseline understandings about what I mean by “anarchism”. I view anarchism first and foremost as a *movement*, whose form can today be described as a decentralised, diverse and evolving network, providing communication and active solidarity among autonomous nodes of social struggle. This anarchist movement is “new” in the key respect that it does not owe its roots solely to the historical anarchist movement, but rather represents the revival of anarchist values in a broader intersection of movements, e.g. radical ecology, feminism, black and indigenous liberation, anti-nuclear movements and, most recently, resistance to neoliberal capitalism and the global permanent war. Because of its mongrel genealogy, anarchism in the age of globalisation is an immensely diverse movement, open to many fresh ideas and experimenting with the possibilities and challenges of a shifting landscape of struggle.

What animates this movement, the real *ontos* of anarchism, is anarchist political *culture*. Political culture can be explained as a set of shared orientations towards “doing politics”, wherein issues are framed, strategies are legitimised and collective interaction takes on enough regularity to structure members' mutual expectations. For heuristic purposes, we can view these orientations as they relate to anarchism in four broad categories: organisational practices, methods of action, political language and mythology. Organisationally this culture is manifest in network- and affinity group-based forms of political mobilisation, displaying horizontal coordination among autonomous direct participants, consensus-based decision making, and the ideal of the free and open circulation of information. In terms of action repertoires, anarchist political culture emphasises a “Do It Yourself” approach of direct action, disinterest in operating through the system or building political power within it, a dual strategy of confrontation to delegitimise the system and grassroots alternative-building from below, and a commitment to “being the change” on any level, from personal relationships that address sexism and racism to sustainable living and communes. Shared political language has to do not only with common terms and expressions in the activist “jargon”, but also with the way these and other concepts are thought to be related and connected to each-other. In other words, different political cultures have different epistemologies – ways of organising their understanding of politics and making sense of them. Mythologies, in the current sense, are the movement's orally transmitted stories (about past mobilisations and the like), through which collective identity is reproduced and which function also as a mobilising resource. Such are the narratives that spin a thread leading from Chiapas to Seattle, or from Greenham Common to Porto Alegre.¹

This familiar political culture is what animates anarchism in the present day, and gives it unity. It is

1 See Notes from Nowhere, eds. (2003), *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible rise of global anti-capitalism* (London: Verso)

impossible to fully pin-down in universalist, philosophical formulations. If, however, we wanted for practical purposes to express its “political” basics more concretely, we could look at the type of language used in the various “hallmarks” and “principles of unity” that are clearly agreeable to anarchists, such as those of the Peoples' Global Action and Indymedia networks, or of any number of local groups and collectives. All of these emphasise two things. First, a rejection of all structures of domination and systemic violence such as capitalism, the state, patriarchy and racism. Second, a “prefigurative politics” that involves constructing concrete alternatives, especially in terms of social relations. Prefigurative politics thus combines reference to both dual power strategies and to realising a libertarian and egalitarian ethos in the movement's own structures, social dynamics and lifestyle.

2. Future? What future?

Now both these moments of anarchism partake in the mainspring of anarchism's strong proposal for a “present-tense” politics. Anarchism is unique among political movements in emphasising the need to realise its desired social relations within the structures and practices of the revolutionary movement itself. As such, prefigurative politics can be seen as a form of “constructive” direct action, whereby anarchists who propose social relations bereft of hierarchy and domination undertake their construction by themselves.

From a strategical perspective, the pursuit of prefigurative politics indicates most clearly a politic of the here and now, and is seen by many anarchists as an inseparable aspect of their projects. This is informed by a critique of reformist and authoritarian revolutionary models of social change. For the latter to be successful, anarchists believe, the modes of organisation that will replace capitalism, the state, gendered divisions of labour and so on need to be prepared alongside (though not instead of) the attack on present institutions. On such a reading, if people want a society that is characterised by non-hierarchical cooperation and the erosion of dominatory institutions and behaviours, then such a society directly proceeds from the realities that present-day movements develop. “The very process of building an anarchist movement from below is viewed as the process of consociation, self-activity and self-management that must ultimately yield that revolutionary self that can act upon, change and manage an authentic society”.²

Anarchists by and large no longer tend to understand revolution, if they even use the term, as a horizon event but as an ongoing process. This, as opposed to traditional anarchism's political imaginary which unmistakably included the notion of revolution as an event, a moment of large scale

2 Murray Bookchin (1980), “Anarchism Past and Present”, *Comment* 1:6

qualitative change in social life. Bakunin spoke of “a universal, worldwide revolution...[the] formidable reactionary coalition can be destroyed only by the greater power of the simultaneous revolutionary alliance and action of all the people of the civilized world”.³ It is certainly true that anarchists carried this view of revolution one step away from gross millenarianism, by insisting that the revolutionary horizon can be and was traversed during exceptional moments. The Paris Commune of 1871, the Italian factory occupations of 1919-1920, the Spanish Revolution of 1936 and the French May 1968 uprisings are the most obvious examples of events that were interpreted by anarchists in this way, with their transience and localisation doing nothing to diminish their qualitative significance.⁴ Still, these were exceptional moments. The ultimate failure of these events and the deterioration of rare revolutionary “successes” into authoritarian nightmares debased the coin of Revolution for anarchist movement. With the re-emergence of anarchism in later decades, the revolutionary horizon would become more and more attracted into the present tense, culminating in its complete absorption as a potential dimension of everyday life. Colin Ward’s focus on the pedestrian interactions which function without hierarchy and alienation, and the many Situationist-influenced explorations of an anarchist micro-politics of resistance and reconstruction in everyday life, are prominent contributions to this process.⁵

In the words of U.S. anarchist publishing collective CrimethInc.,

Our revolution must be an immediate revolution in our daily lives; anything else is not a revolution but a demand that once again people do what they do not want to do and hope that this time, somehow, the compensation will be enough. Those who assume, often unconsciously, that it is impossible to achieve their own desires – and thus, that it is futile to fight for themselves – often end up fighting for an ideal or cause instead. But it is still possible to fight for ourselves, or at least the experiment must be worth a try; so it is crucial that we seek change not in the name of some doctrine or grand cause, but on behalf of ourselves, so that we will be able to live more meaningful lives. Similarly we must seek first and foremost to alter the contents of our own lives in a revolutionary manner, rather than direct our struggle towards world-historical changes which we will not live to witness. In this way we will avoid the feelings of worthlessness and alienation that result from believing that it is necessary to “sacrifice oneself for the cause”, and instead live to experience the fruits of our labors...in our labors themselves.⁶

3 Mikhail Bakunin (1866), “The Revolutionary Catechism”, in Sam Dolgoff (ed., 1971) *Bakunin on Anarchy* (New York: Knopf)

4 Mikhail Bakunin (1871), *The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf); Errico Malatesta (ed. Vernon Richards, 1965), *Life and Ideas* (London: Freedom Press), p. 134; Murray Bookchin (1994), *To Remember Spain: The Anarchist and Syndicalist Revolution of 1936* (Edinburgh: A.K. Press); Roger Gregoire and Fredy Perlman (1970), *Worker-Student Action Committees, France May '68* (Detroit: Black & Red), §§14, 16, 22; Murray Bookchin (1971), “The May-June events in France I: A Movement for Life”, in *Post-scarcity Anarchism* (Montreal, Black Rose Books).

5 Colin Ward (1973), *Anarchy in Action* (London: Allen and Unwin); Raoul Vaneigem (1983), *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (London: Left Bank Books and Rebel Press).

6 CrimethInc. (2001), “Alive in the Land of the Dead”, <http://www.crimethinc.com/library/alive.html>

Is such an approach sustainable? What kind of political understandings can ground it, beyond just “explaining” it on the level of social movements' construction of “collective action frameworks”? And what significance does this present-tense orientation have for the concrete choices that anarchists make about their political projects, as well as about the sensibilities ?

3. Two pessimistic arguments against Utopia

Let me then examine what I believe is the mainspring of anarchism's present-tense orientation: an open-ended tendency, one that eschews the rhetoric of a post-revolutionary resting point. Now the basic idea is not new, and was expressed with increasing strength by anarchists throughout the twentieth century. To Landauer's epigram in the opening of this essay may be added this statement by Rudolf Rocker:

Anarchism is no patent solution for all human problems, no Utopia of a perfect social order, as it has so often been called, since on principle it rejects all absolute schemes and concepts. It does not believe in any absolute truth, or in definite final goals for human development, but in an unlimited perfectibility of social arrangements and human living conditions, which are always straining after higher forms of expression, and to which for this reason one can assign no definite terminus nor set any fixed goal.⁷

Rocker bases his anti-utopian stance, on the one hand, on the refusal of absolutes, and on the other on the assertion that social arrangements display an inherent proclivity for change. For him, however, the change in question is regarded in optimistic terms – it tends towards improvement, and for this reason cannot be limited in scope. What I want to do now is to offer two different arguments, of a more pessimistic character, which I think substantiate the anti-utopian stance that animates the contemporary movement. Both arguments are geared towards an understanding that even the most thoroughgoing realisation of anarchist social transformation does not amount to a culmination of the anarchist project.

It should be clarified that the pessimism of these arguments is *not* related to the oft-forwarded claims that anarchism is impossible due to an inherently selfish, competitive and/or malevolent human nature. To this anarchists need only reply with their own familiar arguments, referring to the complexity of human beings and to the importance of social relations for shaping our behaviour and selfhood, as well as in-your-face “state of nature” arguments drawing on anthropological evidence. However, by invoking an inherent instability of individual human behaviour, or by anticipating a

7 Rudolf Rocker (1938/1989) “Anarchism: Its Aims and Purposes”, in *Anarcho-Syndicalism* (London: Pluto), p.30

constant flux of relationships between diverse and decentralised communities, anarchists are in fact also denying their project the possibility of utopian stability. Here the first pessimistic argument can be forwarded: it is impossible to be sure that even under whatever conditions anarchists would consider as most fruitful to sociability and cooperation, some individuals and groups might not successfully renew patterns of exploitation and domination in society. This type of argument has long been evaded by many anarchists, who have endorsed the expectation inspired by Kropotkin, that a revolution in social, economic and political conditions would encourage an essentially different patterning of human behaviour – either because it would now be able to flower freely under nurturing conditions, or because revolution would remove all hindrances to the development of human beings' cooperative / egalitarian / benevolent side. Peter Marshall has argued in this vein that "it is not only the mind but also our emotional and sexual drives which regulate themselves when not interfered with by artificial restrictions imposed by coercive institutions"⁸.

Others, however, have heeded the warning and internalised it to a certain extent. Let me look at two examples of recent anarchist-inspired works which have done so. The first is Ursula Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed*, perhaps the most honest attempt at portraying a functioning anarchist society. Referring to the work as an "anarchist utopia", however, is misleading precisely for this reason, since the society it deals with is far from perfect or unproblematic. The protagonist, Shevek, is driven to leave his anarchist society on the moon of Anarres, not because he rejects its core anarchist ideals but because he sees that some of them are no longer adequately reflected in practice, while others need to be revised in order to give more place to individuality. In the hundred and seventy years since its establishment, following the secession of a mass of revolutionary anarchists from the home-planet of Urras, Anarresti society has witnessed the growth of xenophobia, informal hierarchies in the administrative syndicates, and an apparatus of social control through custom and peer pressure. All of these contribute to a conformity that hinders Shevek's self-realisation in his pursuit of his life project, the development of a ground-breaking approach in theoretical physics. Shevek embodies the continuing importance of dissent even after the abolition of capitalism and government. Through his departure and founding of the Syndicate of Initiative, he becomes a revolutionary within the revolution and initiates change within the anarchist society:

"It was our purpose all along – our Syndicate, this journey of mine – to shake up things, to stir up, to break some habits, to make people ask questions. To behave like anarchists!"⁹

Shevek's project renews the spirit of dissent and non-conformism that animated the original creation of the anarchist society on Anarres in the first place. As Raymond Williams observes, this

8 Peter Marshall (1992), *Demanding the Impossible* (New York: Fontana)

9 Ursula Le Guin (1974/2002) *The Dispossessed* (London: Gollancz), p.316

dynamic portrays *The Dispossessed* as “an open utopia: forced open, after the congealing of ideals, the degeneration of mutuality into conservatism; shifted, deliberately, from its achieved harmonious condition, the stasis in which the classical utopian mode culminates, to restless, open, risk-taking experiment”.¹⁰

In addition to Le Guin's novel, we may look to evidence of this realisation in the anarchist-inspired vision of an alternative society forwarded in the book *bolo'bolo* by the Zurich-based writer P.M.. Again the application of the word “utopia” to this book is misleading, since it not only acknowledges but treasures the type on instability and diversity of social relations that can be ushered in by the removal of all external control on the behaviour of individuals and groups. The world anti-system called *bolo'bolo* is a mozaic in which every community (*bolo*) of around five hundred residents is as nutritionally self-sufficient as possible, and has complete autonomy to define its ethos or “flavour” (*nima*). Stability is afforded by a minimal but universal social contract (*sila*), enforced by reputation and interdependence. This contract guarantees, for example, that every individual (*ibu*) can at any time leave their native *bolo*, and is entitled to one day's rations (*yalu*) and housing (*gano*) as well as medical treatment (*bete*) at any *bolo*. It even suggests a duel code (*yaka*) to solve disputes between individuals and groups”.¹¹ However,

There are no humanist, liberal or democratic laws or rules about the content of *nimas* and there is no State to enforce them. Nobody can prevent a *bolo* from committing mass suicide, dying of drug experiments, driving itself into madness or being unhappy under a violent regime. *Bolos* with a bandit-*nima* could terrorize whole regions or continents, as the Huns or Vikings did. Freedom and adventure, generalized terrorism, the law of the club, raids, tribal wars, vendettas, plundering – everything goes.¹²

While most anarchists might not want to go that far, the point here is that if this is the case, then any anarchist theory which acknowledges the absence of law and authority must also respond to the possibility of a re-emergence of patterns of domination within and/or among communities, even if at a certain point in time they have been consciously overcome. Thus, on one interpretation, anarchists have been drawn to regard the ultimate *telos* of opposition to domination as utopian fantasy, accepting that “eternal vigilance is the price of liberty”.¹³

If the first argument challenges the *achievability* of an anarchist “post-revolutionary resting point”, the second one questions it on the *conceptual* level. It is close to what I think Noam Chomsky has in

10 Raymond Williams (1978), “Utopia and Science Fiction” *Science Fiction Studies* 5:3

11 P.M. (1985), *bolo'bolo* (New York: Autonomedia), pp.68-70

12 *bolo'bolo*, pp.77-8

13 This saying has been attributed, in various phrasings, to Edmund Burke, President Andrew Jackson and abolitionist Wendell Phillips.

mind with his remark that anarchism constitutes “an unending struggle, since progress in achieving a more just society will lead to new insight and understanding of forms of oppression that may be concealed in traditional practice and consciousness”.¹⁴ The generalisation of anarchist resistance to encapsulate not only the state and capital but all forms of domination in society – patterns of systematic inequality and exclusion such as patriarchy, racism and heterosexism – moves its notions of social transformation beyond their previous formulation as the replacement of institutions to the redefinition of social patterns in all spheres of life. However, such a generalisation also means a shift in the understanding of the horizons of the anarchist project. While it has been possible to speak within a coherent framework about the abolition of institutions, the way in which anarchists have come to conceptualise domination (under the influence of critiques emanating from radical feminist, anti-racist and queer liberation movements) presents it with a concept to which the idea of abolition is not so easily attached. On such a reading, in fact, a condition without any form of domination or discrimination in society is literally unthinkable. This is because in order to speak of the abolition of domination, we need to have access to its total picture, to the entire range of possible patterns of social inequality and exclusion – and we can never be sure that we have such a complete picture.

To clarify this, think for a moment about the ideals said to have animated the U.S. Declaration of Independence, as present in famous passages such as “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal” etc. Even with “people” replacing “men”, this passage justly strikes us today as irredeemably hypocritical. Dr. Johnson was the first to puncture the pretensions of American revolutionaries when he pointed to the bitter irony “that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of Negroes”.¹⁵ Thomas Jefferson was, after all, a slave holder, as were many of the other signatories to the Declaration. They were all representatives of most prosperous section of the colonial elite, their wealth resting not only on slavery but also on the genocidal dispossession of North America’s indigenous peoples. And they had no intention of realising these “natural” to women.

However, while hypocrisy or voluntary blindness can seem to be obvious explanations in hindsight, it is not certain that everything is attributable to such factors. We can still ask with honesty whether the American “Founding Fathers” truly realised, amid their declarations of freedom and equality, that Africans and Indigenous Americans *were* human beings, and that slavery, genocide and the denial of rights to women stood in stark contradiction to their own declared principles. Even if it does seem impossible to us that they did not, can we safely say the same about their attitudes to other forms of discrimination that are blatantly evident to us today, such as those against children? Few people are aware that until the 1880s the age of sexual consent for women in the U.S. was *ten*, and that the first

14 Noam Chomsky (1986), “The Soviet Union versus Socialism”, *Our Generation* 17:2, pp. 47-52.

15 Samuel Johnson (1775/1913), “Taxation no Tyranny”, in *The Works of Samuel Johnson* (Troy, NY: Pafracts), vol.14, pp.93-144. Anecdotally, in the same essay Johnson refers to the American secessionists as “those zealots of anarchy”

state legislation in protection for children was passed only in 1875 (in New York). And what of the only recent recognition that “mentally disabled” people are not inferior, or that non-heterosexual practices are not sinful and unnatural? In light of what seems to have been an utter unawareness to such axes of inequality and oppression, it seems not entirely unlikely that such forms of domination as were entirely “off the radar” for people in the past.

This leads to the crux of my second argument: How can we know that there are no forms of domination that remain hidden from us today, just as some that we do recognise were hidden from our predecessors? If we are at least prepared to entertain doubt on this matter, then we can no longer put ourselves in a position from which we can speak with any coherence about the abolition of *all* forms of domination. Here the objection that the writers of the Declaration of Independence were far from anarchists is irrelevant, since the history of anarchist movement is just as embarrassing in this respect. Instances of outright bigotry surrounding racism, sexism and homophobia are more abundant in anarchist literature than many anarchists would care to recall. Pierre Joseph Proudhon was, on any modern assessment, a despicable misogynist and anti-Semite. “Man’s primary condition is to dominate his wife and to be the master”, he wrote, while “women know enough if they know how to mend our socks and fix our steaks”.¹⁶ “The Jew”, moreover, “is the enemy of humankind. It is necessary to send this race back to Asia, or exterminate it”.¹⁷ Bakunin’s writings are also famously rife with anti-Semitic and anti-German attitudes.¹⁸ Kropotkin and many other Russian anarchists supported the first World War.¹⁹ And as late as 1935 the prominent Spanish anarchist periodical *Revista Blanca* could still carry the following, typically homophobic, editorial response to the question “What is there to be said about those comrades who themselves are anarchists and who associate with inverts [*sic*]?”:

They cannot be viewed as men if that “associate” means anything apart from speaking to or saluting sexual degenerates. If you are an anarchist, that means that you are more morally upright and physically strong than the average man. And he who likes inverts is no real man, and is therefore no real anarchist.²⁰

Although nobody chooses their ideological ancestors, such statements should nevertheless compel

16 Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1875), *Pornocracy, or Women of Modern Times* – unpublished fragment, cited in Edward Hyams (1979), *Proudhon: His Revolutionary Life, Mind and Works* (London: John Murray), p. 274. On Proudhon’s vituperative replies to contemporary feminists Georges Sand and Juliette Adam see Antony Copley (1989), “Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: A Reassessment of his role as a Moralizer”, *French History* 3:2

17 Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1843-64), *Les Carnets*, in *Selected Writings* (ed. Stewart Edwards), p.228n

18 Mikhail Bakunin (1873), *Statism and Anarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.104ff and 175ff.

19 Paul Avrich (1967), *The Russian Anarchists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp.118-119

20 Cited in Richard Cleminson (1995), “Male Inverts and Homosexuals: Sex Discourse in the Anarchist *Revista Blanca*”, in Gert Hekma et. al. (eds.), *Gay Men and the Sexual History of the Political Left* (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press), pp.259-272

anarchists to endorse a healthy scepticism about the comprehensiveness of their own, contemporary accounts of domination. As a result, the idea of an end to all forms of domination becomes, to use a somewhat bombastic philosophical expression, an epistemological impossibility. We cannot think such a state of affairs since we do not possess the full list of features that are supposed to be *absent* from it, let alone being capable of speaking of the forms of social life that might replace them. Admittedly, we might have a better idea about forms of domination today simply because there are more voices expressing them. Movements endorsing indigenous, queer, and youth liberation have taken their place much more vividly in the public sphere over recent years, and thus contributed to the articulation of resistance to domination in forms that have not been explored before. But this is not enough to ensure us that all possible axes along which domination operates have been exposed.

4. Anarchist Individualism Redux

As a closing thought, let me look at an important implication of this view for anarchist visions of social transformation. If we insist on the potential need for anarchist agency under any conditions, then the notion of an “anarchist society” as an achievable goal loses its meaning. To be sure, the frequency of the need to exercise such agency may hopefully diminish to a great extent, in comparison to what an anarchist approach would deem necessary in present societies, but we have no reason to think that it can ever be permanently removed. Where does such a state of affairs leave anarchists today?

The primary conclusion that I think anarchists can (and often do) draw from the dissociation of their project from a utopian horizon, and the transposition of their notion of social revolution to the present-tense, is to revitalise the individualist commitments of social anarchism, elevating projects of self-realisation and the liberation of desire to a pivotal place in the process of social transformation.

As the anarchist revolutionary horizon constricts itself into the present tense, revolutionary commitments, in turn, come to reflect and respond to the aspirations of living, experiencing individuals. Utterances that militate against the individual’s unfreedom and celebrate her or his self-realisation are no longer content to do so in the abstract. They must insist on the centrality of immediate liberation, to the extent to which it can be achieved, in order to have any relevance for an anarchist “revolution in everyday life”. At the same time, the re-contextualisation of anarchist individualism in the present tense and its concretion in empirical subjects reflects back on its (anti-)political content. An anarchist individualism which demands realisation within society as it exists today, rather than as it could be, defines its realisation as-against this existing society and serves as an immediate motivation for action.

Anarchists are increasingly stressing that the point of their struggles is not only to help bring about social transformation along anarchist lines, but also to liberate themselves to the greatest degree possible. On such a reading, a central motivation for anarchist action – not least so in its prefigurative idiom – lies in the desire to *inhabit*, to the greatest extent possible, social relations that approximate anarchists' ideals for society as a whole. Hence personal liberation and the confrontation with a homogenising and oppressive social order can be seen to each supply the other's motivation: the individual's own experience of restriction supplies a direct impulse for social action, whereas the experience of struggle itself becomes a site of present-tense liberation.

The revolution is now, and we must let the desires we have about the future manifest themselves in the here and now as best as we can. When we start doing that, we stop fighting for some abstract condition for the future and instead start fighting to see those desires realized in the present. Through this process we start pushing back the veil of submission and domination towards the periphery of our lives, we start reclaiming control over our own lives...Whether the project is a squat, a sharing of free food, an act of sabotage, a pirate radio station, a periodical, a demonstration, or an attack against one of the institutions of domination, it will not be entered into as a political obligation, but as a part of the life one is striving to create, as a flowering of one's self-determined existence.²¹

Feeding back into such an individualist grounding, we can say that anarchist modes of interaction – non-hierarchical, voluntary, cooperative, solidaric and playful – are no longer seen as features on which to model a future society, but rather as an ever-present potential of social interaction here and now. Such an approach promotes anarchy as culture, as a lived reality that pops up everywhere in new guises, adapts to different cultural climates, and should be extended and developed experimentally *for its own sake*, whether or not we believe it can become, in some sense, the prevailing mode of society. Also, it amounts to promoting the view of anarchy as a feature of everyday life, in mundane settings such as “a quilting bee, a dinner party, a black market...a neighborhood protection society, an enthusiasts' club, a nude beach”.²² The task for anarchists, then, is not to introduce a new society but to realise an alternative society as much as possible in the present tense.

21 Terrence Hodgson, “Towards Anarchy”, online at <http://groups.msn.com/AnarchistAlliance/towardsanarchy.msnw>

22 Hakim Bey (1991), “The Willimantic/Rensselaer Questions”, in Mike Gunderloy and Michael Ziesing, *Anarchy and the End of History* (San Francisco: Factsheet Five Books), pp.87-92