THE SOCIAL RELATION

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Anarcho-Communism: For Freedom & Community

"For years I kept showing up at all the right demonstrations & singing all the right songs, & one day I realized that the world still sucked & my own life was out of control. I'd done all these things to save the world, & I couldn't even save myself. I understood then that my real work was me, not the world."
- Arlo Guthrie

We are somewhat trapped by time travel paradoxes here and the anachronistic forms of rhetoric belonging to the old and the young (I think of Cat Stevens, Turgenev, and Wordsworth's 'The child is the father...'). I am trapped in the future ... A personalist/individualist revolt must encounter its limit in the society that it is a part-expression of, in that defeat it will fall back onto one of two positions, either it accepts its defeat and formulates a critique of its revolt from the perspective of one attempting to renegotiate a belonging in established social forms (this is the most usual response) or, more rarely, it will transform its revolt into new terms, 'new questions' and will thus pass on to 'another level' which views the (absence of) revolt of others to be of vital concern.

The problem is that the older impulse, the urge to establish memory and identified pattern, to contain youthful revolt in pre-established narratives, is essentially conservative and in constant danger of misrepresenting its own position with regard to the social relation (becoming a mouthpiece for certain received unconscious tendencies). It is this 'safe place' that the in-Itself youth flood and overwhelm. They are protected from our/my conservative error by their very inability to understand form, scales, orderings and sequences of human relations.

So, but even so, the message of experience to innocence remains the same: the terms of youthful personalist revolt will/must be defeated and that is very painful but it is not the end. It is possible to go on from that defeat, to recycle it and to socialise it. There is an other side located beyond the terms first set out. And even better than that, there is something to be drawn from such defeats, a concrete form which may be reflected upon and included which would not exist if the attempt had never been made. Whilst it is true that there is an injection-moulded mass production of 'individualism' there is also a genuine individuality that may be retrieved from personal revolt by communists. Therefore, so, even so, my position remains constant: we are in the business of establishing mesolimbic/reward pathways in communist terms in the preparation for our collective arrival at the same place at the same moment – Frere Dupont.
I always thought smart americans were the most proficient at seeing the world without any shades of grey. They are certainly among the most forgetful – yet another refutation of Lamarke’s position on the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Yes, John Wayne was the poster boy to teach us a freedom-loving rugged american individualism, but at some point following the second big war, collective disillusionment pasted itself right over that picture. Things were starting to look like this would transform into a collective disengagement up til the early ’70’s, but especially around 1976, when the disco-hedonistic age began, an age of mass conversion from private heroin seclusion among friends disappointed with "hippocrite" guru elitists running communes as little parliaments regulating community chores, and outspoken agitators & rock stars promising a big change which never seemed to come, to the lonely collective of the spectacular cocaine dance of complete strangers packed into noisy clubs and destined to always remain strangers.

Before this, american youth had begun to resemble their european cousins who always seemed so friendly and wise when they came to visit (although to be fair, Europe is the birthplace of "punk hooliganism"). Teen reactionary anarchism and an elder, laid back communism we thought somehow "French" and an even more laid back Eastern Zen were about to merge when we realized that even our beat heroes had sold out, had abandoned us to rake in bread from book contracts to fund their own extravagant addictions. Everything before had just been a fad. Suddenly, free stores were open to "business" in town. Our homes and apartments were left open for public inspection, community cigarettes, community pot, a community fridge in every kitchen, a complete abandonment of any notion of house rules. Our addictions were somehow less than extravagant. But Rolling Stone and High Times magazines re-introduced us to the commodity value overriding the social value of our drugs of choice. Growing more expensive with each passing day, we couldn’t quite break from a minimum of either criminal or "more respectable" employment to maintain them. Quality and community were again overwhelmed by quantity and appearance.

We had started to become a "we", an agreement, but were killed again by an overwhelming force of I’s before it could be decided what it was we specifically wanted. We only knew what we were against – the systematic destruction of any sense of freedom and community at home and lives and whole communities abroad (largely SE Asia) by "the establishment" (fat cats and their brown-nosed cronies and moralistic followers – "rednecks" who would cut your throat at the mere mention of "peace" and "hard-hats", charged with tearing down the abandoned buildings you were squatting to build a parking lot, menacingly swinging crowbars and shouting "Get a job!" ... and we were later criticized for not exhibiting solidarity with the workers!). Generally speaking, we all yearned for community, and of course, the ever present desire "to be left alone". We were confronted with accusations of idealism and utopianism – "Get a haircut, Pinko!". For the poor, one could only be what one could be in the army! Otherwise, it was on to college and the promise of "great jobs". Some choice! As our comrades succumbed to the enticement of the buck, is it any wonder many of us turned instead to the honest dependability of shutting the doors, turning on and tuning out – "Everybody must get stoned!" So went the revolution, as all great movements eventually go, down the toilet.

Freedom and community. I always thought the construction, "anarcho-communism", was redundant, that stripped of the political implications of party-line revolutionary state of the latter half, which seemed to underly all our wars for what seemed like forever, communism and anarchy were both the default position of humanity, not dialectically opposed, not idealist fantasy
... if we could only find the reset button. Isn't it what we witness forming over and again in the spontaneous communal behavior of folks temporarily abandoned by the state during periods of natural disaster? Hostile armed military presence is always the posture of of the state (always to the tune of maintaining order and protecting property) when they finally come to rescue us, but only after the calamity has subsided and folks start getting on fine, all on their own. Arrests before food ... looting is a capital offense not worthy of trial. Survival is only tolerated within the auspices of state and capital.

In our structured black and white world unwitting of any connection, much less balance between a self and an other, viewing communication as a state of mutual antagonism in a quest for power or sociality as a personal sacrifice for the greater good, anarcho-communism as a mutual relation between selves and others remains an impossibility, even if it is an unvarying, ever-present desire for those who don't dream of standing atop a pile of carcasses, taking in the rotting fragrance of death with a sense of personal accomplishment.

Today, we again seem to see anarchy as that teen-spirited american or americanized reaction of self-centered rebellion (this is why James Dean was so embraced, iconized and martyred by madison avenue as a necessary replacement for John Wayne – the function of all pop stars is to embrace potentially rebellious youth back into the loving arms of consumerism) opposed to the less reactionary or more settled down collective movement of smooth european left-communism, concerned for the other as a moving mass along predictable lines nudged here and there in the hope that a truly free individual will emerge at the other end and take over the factories. It seems to me rather more important to point out that it can only be free individuals who will *inherit* the factories when they become abandoned through a loss of interest in maintaining our place in them. What they do with them from there will be a matter for that future generation to decide – that will constitute the revolution, but first must come refusal.

Must it be a conundrum that it seems so obvious that mass change cannot come about through the single acts of an individual, yet it takes many individual actions to constitute one collective act? Does friction need arise because the young are impatient and don't want to wait for the proper historical conditions to come about before we can act as a group of free individuals, such that in the mean time the group over-rides individual desire, such that collective action seems like just so much more of the same old force putting limits to free expression, the individual always being cautioned: "patience"? Perhaps this is the attraction of nihilist solipsism and collapsism, hoping for a natural disaster or universal riot because we ourselves are powerless and can't seem to come together with enough others to make a difference, because we must wait for a mythical revolution before we can decide to live, because alienation, like the junky's rush, is the only promise we can depend on - it's a guarantee.

Is there some place we time travelers from the past and from the future can pause, get out of the twisted helix of a double blind double bind, meet and discuss this with the inhabitants of the present? Are we ready for such undertakings while we contemplate our over takings? Or have all our languages grown too distinct, a true representation of the either-or, black and white fragmented world we call the present? Perhaps I was wrong, and this death of memory and the resulting ignorance of pattern is the default setting, but I still have hopes that Lamarke wasn't totally mistaken, and, as Bordiga reminded us, it is only the disposition of bourgeois civilization itself, with modern capitalism as its van guard, toward murdering the dead on top

of exploiting the living, to keep us productive but forgetful workers committed to such concepts as "out with the old, in with the new" while we bury ourselves ever deeper in our toil, even though, from time to time, the words "This job sucks!" is surprisingly heard coming from our own mouth as if were afflicted with Tourette syndrome, and bending over to grab our ankles, we await our collective punishment before it's even offered. We seem to have had no trouble retaining the lessons of the capitalist social relation! The problem is not so much amnesia or the loss of imagination, but that our awareness of the present is so strong, it overshadows everything else. Burying one's head in the sand, taking the position of the three monkeys who neither see, hear nor speak evil, and indulging in the luxuries of immediate gratification or the obsessive-compulsive self-flagellation of workaholism are merely variants of the same choice – going with the flow. The current is just too strong, but it is our acquiescence, becoming a disposition which makes it so.

Is communism, then not possible, or is this only the voice of fragmentation, of alienation? After all, doesn't every utopian vision contain hidden traps? Could this be as easily said about revolution? Could it be that the thing which is impossible is the imagination of what it would be like without alienation and that itself is only a symptom? Revolution following communism is certainly possible. All it takes is a collective decision to give ground to thugs. Why is this always easier than the collective decision to stand firm? Is the quest for immortality too strong, especially since there have always been fewer thugs than thuggees? Our quandary must be an ideological one, a matter of learned and patterned resignation because there have always been equally fewer resisters than submitters (but there have indeed been resisters). What might be impossible is not communism itself, but communism as a result of revolution, meaning we might give too much credence to our own collective agency yet none whatsoever to individual competency. Sure, it's always argued that refusal is perhaps necessary, but not sufficient for revolution. May be it is revolution itself which is not sufficient. Don't the outcomes of past revolutions indicate it may not even be desirable? When Bordiga's floodwaters subside, we see some elements washed out to sea, but too often the left and right banks have only mixed in the turmoil and changed sides in the aftermath, even when the river has altered its course and the surrounding terrain has changed.

Bordiga said "the capitalist mode of production isn't eternal and it will collapse with the victory of the working class. It will have disappeared as soon as exchange values and commodities don't exist anymore, that's to say when there isn't either mercantile exchange of the objects of consumption, or money anymore." Obviously, alienation precedes capitalism, hence the anti-civ perspective – capitalism being only its latest phase, the latest "avant-garde of civi-

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2 "The huge river of human history also has its irresistible and threatening swellings. When the wave rises, it washes against the two retaining embankments: on the right the conformist one, of Conservation of existing and traditional forces; along it priests chant in procession, policemen and gendarmes patrol, the teachers and cantors of official lies and state-schooling prate.

The left bank is that of the reformists, hedged with "people's" representatives, the dealers in opportunism, the parliamentarians and progressive organisers. Exchanging insults across the stream, both processions claim to have the recipe to maintain the fast-flowing river in its restrained and enforced channel.

But at great turning points, the current breaks free and leaves its course, “shifting” like the Po at Guastalla and Volano onto an unexpected course, sweeping the two sordid bands into the irresistible flood of the revolution which subverts all old forms of restraint, moulding a new face on society like on the land." – Bordiga The Filling and Bursting of Bourgeois Civilisation
lization". I don't think alienation comes with the equipment. This suggests to me that the predicted victory is not so much military (a new regime – "dictatorship of the proletariat") or even materialist (new modes of production) as it suggests a needed change in values, perhaps the dadaist annihilation of value itself. Many hopeful ones (waiting for a savior) are starting to say the working class will only achieve victory (liberation) after a collapse of "civilization as we know it". Without a change of mindset and the social behaviors which follow (or maybe vice versa, but probably a dynamic interaction of the two), the big collapse will only produce a lot of little islands of "civilization as we know it". Both revolutionary and collapsist positions are messianic. It is the same whether we are the agents of change (revolution) or a catastrophic change annihilates the agents because their poor planning produces piss poor performance – the theory of 5 P's to which both sides ascribe. The difference is that between refuse and refused, quit and laid off or fired. Doing nothing assures us the ultimate crisis is certainly going to happen at some point. The question is whether there will be anyone left to witness it, whether the planet's own consumption will represent the final agency. This is why we maintain and expand our critique – we desire a different world, a different context, a new set of conditions whether we can imagine its form or not, and we wish to share that desire.

Communism has been repeatedly defined as a social relation wherein we share our creations and our memories rather than an economic relation wherein only the results of our production are divvied out equally (or not, as in our current situation) by a specialized class of divviers. Communism is said to be classless. We already know what we need to do to exhibit it in the close circles of everyday life. Keeping in mind past dead ends gleaned from social criticism as well as direct experience to mark roads we might not wish to travel, what needs added to refusal is a certain acting-as-if, as if an alternate future context already surrounds our everyday present. It is about standing one's ground. Do we really need to know in advance precisely what we will become before we start the process of being? History and futurology may be fine places to visit, but to take up permanent residence annihilates the present. On the other hand, to never visit these places assures only a continuation of alienated existence. Learning sequesters the past; mindful of history's mistakes, creative imagination appropriates the future. The question of possibility is whether we can do more than what we are doing now, which seems to be nothing at all but bide our time and wait for a reprieve, if only in death.
The Property Theory of Labour

Suppose John Locke got it backwards when he declared that property derives from labour (and from which were derived theories by both Adam Smith and Karl Marx, each of whom went on to talk about the labour theory of value)? Then, concerning labour, suppose Marx had made a species distinction between creativity and productivity rather than subsuming the both under one category (much as "nation" and "culture" are often forced in our language, creating a lot of political confusion and miscommunication)? As it is, we tend to see them as either synonym or in opposition requiring a transformation. The same can be said of use- and exchange-value.

Doesn't productivity also measure creativity? To say "she was a productive artist" is essentially an arithmetic value judgment, isn't it? Productivity here doesn't contain creativity, but quantifies it, as if that was a desirable characteristic were she employed as a painter. But then, as a 'professional' painter, she would have to leave out all the frills and whirllyquews. Just as fecundity must always outnumber fertility ("Only one sperm cell may enter this production facility! Go way!"), use-value inherent in the pragmatic denies the cosmetic whose "function" cannot be determined, like an invited guest who finds no empty chair waiting at the dinner table.

This is not to dichotomize them: productivity is creativity co-opted and then constrained and effectively reduced. That her art is "more or less creative" is also a value judgment, but is a qualitative rather than quantitative measure. It may be based on originality or many other qualitative criteria. Perhaps it is inspiring, and "produces" incentive in me to give it a try? But is this "product" a result of her creativity or my vicarity? Can vicarity be a creative process? Obviously, interpretation or reinterpretation necessitates some degree of imagination else Mozart would have to be called up from the dead every time the band plays one of his tunes. A performance by the London Symphony would be just another seance.

There is another sense of value, and that is "esteem" or what Jorn described as the "aesthetic" relation. It seems reasonable to me that production alienates one from unconstrained creativity, and in fact, much of what we consider is personally creative is just an illusion born of commodity fetishism, so the two (productivity & creativity) cannot be semantically equated or ontologically opposed. Otherwise Marx would not have proposed an ATR (After the Revolution) world where we are free to create rather than enslaved to the labour of production. Marx' label, "commodity fetishism" might be post-modernized by Baudrillard's "simulacrum".

What then would become of the idea of the development of productive forces beyond the notion that progress will save us, in which case liberation or revolution are always confined to the future? Was Marx thinking "creative forces" and marxians thinking "productive forces"? I'm not trying to resurrect Marx because I think his view of human nature is particularly civilized – his "species-being" is not a theory of human nature, but of the civilized, or as Cammatte would say, the nature of "domestication". To the defense of Marx, he avoided the problem by cleverly acknowledging that human nature is the nature of who we are at the time in which we are being human. But I'm thinking of this quote by G.A. Cohen:

Production in the historical anthropology is not identical with production in the theory of history. According to the anthropology, people flourish in the cultivation and exercise of their manifold powers, and are especially productive - which in this instance means creative - in the condition of freedom conferred by material plenty. But, in the production of interests to the theory of history, people pro-
duce not freely but because they have to, since nature does not otherwise supply their wants; and the development in history of the productive power of man (that is, of man as such, of man as a species) occurs at the expense of the creative capacity of the men who are agents and victims of that development. [from wikipedia.org]

Furthermore, it seems to me that property a priori accompanies the imposition of scarcity (rather than scarcity being an immanent quality of "nature" – an idea from Hobbes, Malthus & Spencer – that populations 'naturally' grow and are limited only through competition). The institution of property grants the owner authority. Institutionalized (central or otherwise) authority creates property through appropriative behavior or exclusion. One must appease the owner's "good favours" to gain access. One could as easily say authority (the behavior) and property (the reification) birth one another. I have said property and authority are two words for the same process – "bi-nominalized reification".

The "dictatorship of the proletariat" is merely the return of ownership to the author. One might be surprised to find Marx' reticence to embrace Stirner's "Egoism", and in fact, his demonstrated hostility (obvious in Saint Max). Both would maintain property in one form or another. This is why I do not distinguish politics from economics beyond that, in the context of production, it is the former which is the forceful means to maintain the latter. The end is the regulation of scarcity to maintain the status of the property owner. The resulting behavior is seen in systems of exchange (developing out of bribery) and work/services performed in exchange for the crumbs of existence. Thus we are called "wage slaves" for a reason. (In a truly spectacular society like that imagined by multinational corporations and their advertising executives, government could be completely abolished with no perceptible change to our daily lives. There is also a theory that we already experience this and that the government is only another corporation interested only in maintaining its brand name).

Proudhon and Stirner both had a critique of property yet both are claimed as heroes of the [american] libertarian and anarcho-capitalist cause which maintains property – possession maintained by "might" or "right". What's the difference? Such thinking is commodity fetishism – more concerned with commodity than community, more focused on subsistence (as in the sub-existence of "just getting by") than sustenance, or alternately, competitive accumulation rather than mutual aid. Our culture requires this lead to labour fetishism and is reinforced by increasing levels of debt: the perceived need to preserve 'jobs', as the products of labour are seen as the only means of survival (even after a successful revolution). The conclusion is that as property is freedom, we should all want more. The double-bind of vicious cycle is rationalized into a win-win scenario.

Could we conclude that productive labour (opposed to aesthetic creativity) can only derive from property? Then value (seen as anything other than the simple measurement of the perpetuation of cruelty – the stress level of domination) derived from labour would be absurd. Property and exchange value are the same thing, and the sequestering into labour, placing a body on one side of an equation with property on the other is only the means by which we are allowed to acquire it and hence measure ourselves.

It's often considered that laziness is the opposite of labour. It appears to me that laziness would provide excellent personal motivation to call for a slave society. It seems we have yet again two definitions for a single term, labour: 1) the job we go to (or disagreeable job, as a less disagreeable one euphemistically warrants a new term – "career", "profession", "calling", "pursuit"), and 2) any physical exertion. Creativity and play can be extremely physical. The
usual comment about its productive potential is concerned with how useful it is to someone else – In a fit of rationalization, it is called "altruistic". Productivity demands a marriage between use-value and exchange value to the point that they merge. For the body engaged to labour, one's body is only another commodity or product. Henceforth, all relations are really productive relations with property. Play is abolished in favour of productive games. We now have an option between mind-games and body-games.

I suppose the lazy approach to sex would be artificial insemination, something neither too exhilarating nor pleasurable. Passion & physical desire are rendered academic. We are only concerned with a product. Institutionalized sex, whether at the chapel, sperm bank or whore house, metamorphoses pleasure and desire into commodity, just as publishing houses commodify communication and the telling of tall tales, just as institutionalized sport transforms physical pleasure into laboured use-value.

Some take the yuppie route, proclaiming they'd "never stoop to manual labor". In their leisure time, they play extreme basketball or roto-till the yard for a garden which never seems to appear. After all, payment received for physical labour indicates a low social position – mental labour requires a positive quality which that other kind of worker does not possess: "intelligence"! Sports celebrities counter this law by commanding exorbitant salaries which render all other considerations moot. The value of a "celebrity's" product is "entertainment value", commodified pleasure through vicarity. Like the theatre-goer, sports fans are all peeping toms at the window if they are not prisoners peering out through the bars.

Clearly the abolition of work does not imply the end of physical activity, and just as clearly, the preferable solution is not volunteerism. The technological solution has always attempted to end physical activity, with the hopes of constructing another slave-based society where machines are at our beck and call, ready to do our bidding. Now they even do our thinking for us, stripping intelligence of it's own commodity value.

Technology: My neighbor came across a hydraulic log splitter and we are sharing it around the area. One can split a cord of wood in no time at all. However, all that bending, stooping and lifting involved in operating it, not to mention pulling the start cord, nearly killed my already ailing back. I'm back to swinging my trusty old maul ten minutes a day (I split wood for two households). Still, five guys with a case of beer could out do the gizmo with little exertion and less time spent. What's the hurry? The reason such "labour-saving" devices were invented in the first place was to increase production with a decrease in labour cost (that is, the number of employees to be paid), by someone in an engineering firm who only remembered the toil when the old man said "Do the chores or else!" or perhaps would never stoop to swinging an axe to see the fun it might provide and creative uses it might take on, like hacking out your sweetie's initials in an old stump. So we're back to the question "But how productive is that shit!?" Often the prior knowledge of the "labour-saving quality" helps to sell miniaturization of industrial machinery for "home use". Productivity in this sense is only concerned with creating property, not practicality and it is the "job" of the advertiser to create a desire for it. Desire is in fact the product of the salesman, for this is the machinery of commodification.

I do think a discussion of technology is relevant here, as it is still the main product of labour in industrial as well as post-industrial society, even though today it is only a digitized miniature of what was before grand and scarce, or it is a technological (virtual) replacement for everyday life. Please allow me to ramble a bit, as technologists have been making the same
promises of liberation through advances in technology since Johaan Ploughman invented the plow.

I worked in a highly automated dairy and another which utilized archaic (almost medieval) machine works which served to negate the extreme effects of gravity on the worker. I can tell you that the new technology actually increased both physical and "mental" labour. Modern technological solutions serve to decrease the number of employees (labour saving) but all those ancillary tasks are now imposed upon one person, and anxiety levels skyrocket in the name of efficiency. Unfortunately, quality of product also decreases due to the necessity to cut corners for the same reason. In our culture, efficiency wins hands down over quality every time. There is also the problem that the more automation tries to eliminate the "disagreeable" aspects of labour, the more mundane, boring, and unimportant is our perception of our work and in fact, of ourselves. Increased detachment replaces pleasure.

The argument is always presented, "there will always be disagreeable chores". As Bob Black explained, one needn't expect to get all orgasmic from every activity. Sometimes it's hard to distinguish chore from play, other times a distinction is appropriate. Splitting wood is enjoyable to me. Doing it eight hours a day would be murder. Doing it in a blizzard at 30 below is particularly offensive. You'll notice that in the latter two cases, it is not the wood-chopping which is objectionable, but the conditions which surround it - employment and bad weather.

It might also be argued that a sense of ownership is all that protects product quality, giving us an additional sense of personal responsibility. Ownership implying taking on responsibility only means you are alone: you made your bed, now you have to lie in it! For those attracted to ownership of the means of production, I'd remind them of the rationale behind the old Gypsy curse, "Be careful what you wish for, you may just get it". No one will come to your aid if you fuck up. I'd also remind that, together with the tools of the trade, workers are the means of production. Fortunately, many radicals today oriented toward "workplace struggle" are more concerned with taking back their lives through the expropriation of their livelihood (the workplace) than the ownership of their product. Their utopian futures center around ideas of distribution rather than accumulation.

An important distinction underlying a creation-production dialectic is that between property and possession. Possession is what you have here and now without proprietary considerations. The only things which might be considered "owned" or more-or-less permanently held (like my shirt or pocket knife) are those things which should be available to all or reproducible with ease. We can appreciate this in our own language with phrases like "he'd steal the shirt off your back" or "he'd dig out his mother's gold fillings in her sleep" to describe antisocial characters. Sharing those harder to get items reduces the need for mass production and eliminates commodification. There are many other things (like waste and pollution) sharing reduces.

Relationships based on production and it's property are not social relations in the strict sense (beyond the mechanical notion of society being nothing but an assemblage of component individuals). Social relations entail giving or sharing. I don't think Stirner went far enough in his critique of property. His solution was possession through might. Sorry, but this is how property was created in the first place – either appropriation from others through force or exclusion of others through force. Above, I didn't get the difference between possession-
through-might and property, and therefore, Stirner’s solution was no solution at all. Mark Twain and Guy Debord illustrated how illusion and deception can replace the need for constant force, to the point that some of us freely give up our own children (for example, to the military) and pat ourselves on the back for a job well done, as if our children are something which is owned by way of the responsibility we take in having them. Parenting becomes nothing more than a duty. Children are production units molded and shaped for the market. As Tina Turner said, "What's love got to do with it?"

Finally, I’m not against having technology. I’m against it having me. Technology is absolutely not neutral! This does not mean we should abandon all technology! That would hardly be possible. We need to be able to rein it in from time to time. The highly mechanized dairy I mentioned had to step back and bring back some old methods. A breakdown in any area meant the cows didn’t get fed because the system was too highly integrated. The institution of redundant systems only made navigation more cumbersome. Human (muscle) backup was impossible because most of the staff had been laid off in the mechanization process, the big bosses couldn’t stoop to pitch in and wander from their job descriptions, and there was too much work involved anyway because the machines were just simply in the way. You’ll find that in the long run, mechanical slaves end up enslaving us because we grow too dependent on them. In fact, without a class system of have-mores and have-lesses only possible with the imposition of property, (and this is applicable to any proprietary system serving to regulate scarcity, not just capitalism), most of the so-called labour saving gizmos would in fact be unnecessary.

But that’s another story. I’d like to rephrase my original thesis. Property historically precedes production (a euphemism for forced labour). If property derives from exclusivity, then there is no liberation by transforming private property into communal property nor exchange-value into use-value (both conceptions of value can only conceive/birth production and property). I think the abolition of work must entail the abolition of all forms of property. I don’t see that property is a necessary concept at all. If community autonomy is desired, the very idea of "community property" reduces the word "property" to a meaningless linguistic appendage. If property and work are maintained, what is the objective of the revolution? If the objective is only the end of capitalism, we are companions to many who would maintain the state. If we are anti-state, we are in league with corporatists who see government as a hindrance to their business of accumulating even more capital. This is a misunderstanding, since corporatism is just another state, and global corporatism is in fact the final goal of the bourgeois revolution.

There is a certain attraction toward nihilists who want to "destroy the totality, liberate desire", but then that’s only a slogan. It begs the question, "what is the totality?" To put all this another way, while most see alienation as the direct outcome of capitalism, that it was given birth by capitalism, could it be that alienation sets us up to become capitalistic in our relations? If, along the lines of Cammatte, alienation is rather the result of our own domestication, then it is the civilizing process itself proceeding from the creation of property which gives birth to alienation, and the anti-capitalist approach to Nirvana falls short of the anti-civ perspective (which must, of course, also include the former).

In other words, capitalism is a problem, no doubt. But it is not THE problem. It is only one among many methods of exploitation states have utilized. Clearly, the state is a problem. But it is not THE problem. There have been systems of class exploitation without the state political organization. Economic class division is a problem. But it is not THE problem. Individuals exploit (capitalize) each other on a daily basis regardless of class composition of the one or the
other. Civilization itself is a poorly defined category signifying a different idea within a large territory of meaning by every user of the term. It is a syndrome, not a disease. But the relation which underlies all these problems is property. What is property but a way we treat each other? We withhold favors. We buy and sell our lives. We play games of one-upmanship won or lost according to how much we accumulate. We compete and name our prize "property". We whore ourselves to accumulate more (or even enough!). We kill each other to protect property belonging to another who considers us his own. All this is opposed to sharing, cooperation, mutual aid and reciprocity, practices which annihilate that which is owned as much as do subversive acts of vandalism. Is there a difference?

Non-neutrality & Technological Solutions

Neutrality as to space (/time):

Neutrality is said to be neither here nor there. That leaves two options for our little cartography. It is either placed somewhere between here and there, or it is nowhere at all. If it is in between, then when I move to that middle spot, it now becomes here and neutrality must instantaneously move or cease to exist. It moves to nowhere and our two options disappear. This is backed up by Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy.

Neutrality as to objects in space (/time):

Neutrality ultimately suggests a state of detachment without consequence or implication - the neutral one adheres to objects on neither side. Neutrality always stands alone. It follows that if all objects are connected, which is to say that changing the conditions of existence concerning one has effects upon everything it is connected to (that is, everything) as chaos theory and just about every other line of thinking outside of aristotelean, enlightenment discourse suggests, then neutrality as a quality of existence is pure absurdity.

Therefore, the question of the neutrality of technology is also pure absurdity and should be treated as such. The posers of such questions are exposed as either disingenuous sophists or inebriated by massive opiates, which may also be said, are religiously dogmatic.

Doesn't it seem so many problems which we ask technology to solve are often unintentional ramifications of earlier technologies, and we're always asked in return for patience: "We just need to work out a few more bugs and ..."? This is the trap which produces an escalating positive feedback cycle, kind of like the self-replicating patterns of child abuse.

There is a freudian argument suggesting we should be mean parents so that our children will be reactionary and perhaps change the world. Of course, this is bullshit. There was a similar thought that the daily threat (back in the day) of nuclear annihilation would produce enough outrage (and that it did!) that the technology would be discarded. Instead, the media simply stopped talking about it and now we are all "no worries". The threat has not diminished. In fact, technological progress has made the "War Games" scenario even more likely.

It is, however, very impressive that some technologists are looking toward sharing and gifting their creations, but this is to the credit of the creator, not the fault of the technology. I'd hope that ending motives of profit and accumulation with generalized gifting/sharing might reverse this effect (runaway technology). We do need a different level of thinking. In the mean time there is sabotage and property destruction – excess, that which can not circulate, the toy
no one wants to play with, is returned to the earth. This attitude doesn't mean the nihilistic end to all technology by any means, but we need to be able to side-step the persuasions of the advertisers, taking charge of our own desires rather than having them inflicted upon us. In fact, I think it is an ethical call for folks to take some personal responsibility for the implications of their behavior and endorsements and a concern for the desires of those others around them as well as their own desires/interest/aesthetic. I think sharing, which is implied in circulation, is an improvement over the gift, which suggests a point of origin and a terminus, even an investment and a return – the machinic laws of tit and tat.

The idea of creation itself is often perceived as a point-of-origin to terminus linear process starting with the "creator", or alternately, "producer" and ending with a product passed on to the distribution network. This is the result of the illusory separation, the detachment we feel from the rest of the world. Everything is connected! But that is a secret. Instead, we are offered truth: a serene but disconnected landscape visible only from the basement of an ivory tower.

Not to be confused with invention or discovery of the novel and unique, modern technology is craft and its aesthetic is co-opted, de-personalized and fragmented. Technological invention has historically been the result of accident (for example, photographic processing) or a long process of trial and error. Technological progress is the systematic production of new ways to do the same old things. A bullet is a glorified arrow or spear point with an explosive energy driving the projectile replacing muscle power and whose use-value is only measured by mortal efficiency and the distance between the killer and the victim). A backhoe is a glorified mechanical pick & shovel. Obviously, the glorified versions require more in the way of miners, oil riggers, food producers, transport workers, managers, bureaucrats, all providing services, all who's lives and relationships are focused on production which then produces even more of the same. And that is the point. Change & obsolescence in technological product is ever required, and we are told that this is not only natural evolution (always invoked to suggest the inevitability of progress), but that we can eliminate all the 'bad' conditions which go into producing technological progress and go on producing new and improved machines which are said to save us from labour and property. After all, technology is neutral. My ass! Unsurprisingly, we look at the distributive aspects of "the productive relation" in the same way.

In the context of my original interpretation, product (or commodity) can only be the result of providing a service for others in exchange (and in fact, only and necessarily in exchange) for (or "as") the means to survive. Survival is thereafter called "the means of production"! In our system, this survival-product is itself a commodity, and in fact, the laborer is also a commodity. "Workers rights" is only a veneer which, at first glance, puts limits on the owner, but on

3 I use the archaic sense of technology as the modification of a "natural resource" for a special (or even general) use or purpose. Ethologists include finding a purpose for an object even if it is unmodified, such as the chimp's use of a stick to get bugs out of a log. I think of technology as what one does with tools, or even the fact that one uses tools in the first place. The 'anti-tech' "tools"-"technology" dialectic is equivalent to my "technology"-"modern/industrial technology" distinction. What I find puzzling is their prohibition against pottery. Pottery does not imply agriculture or a division of labor (for that matter, neither does melting a piece of ore picked up off the ground in the peat campfire and proceeding to shape it into a pretty or useful design before it cools). The oldest known pottery dates from paleolithic Japan, with a largely gathering type "economy". Would basketry present a problem, since it is a much more complex creative process? Or are some anti-techs merely misinformed on their archaeology? Clearly, the problem is "a particular set of social relations arranged for production ... directed at modern industrial technology, but critique of technics certainly doesn't exhaust the merely modern". – Zerzan
closer inspection, only demonstrates to the worker that this is a "civil" process and in fact, keeps labour "voluntary" and abundant.

Mr. Strawman: "Okay, but what about barter! We will need to establish some sort of trade networks in order to distribute needed goods!"

The idea of a distribution network (outside of an ethnographic picture of existing social institutions) often presumes some kind of pre-existing system of exchange. In other words, as distribution implies a functional role for the distributor, that distributor is in fact a labourer – there is a service not only rendered but institutionalized. As to exchange or trade, many people across the world quite adept at distributing needed goods have offered the sentiment, "trade is what we do with our enemies!"

Revolutions Politics:

just as (with Marx’s projected narrative) the development of productive forces encounters the fetter of capitalist production as ‘socialisation’ of production and communist society becomes possible so the theory of revolutionary workers’ councils encounters the fetter of a belief in objective historical development.

... If the workers’ councils that establish themselves within the crisis of capital are to aid the objective formation of conditions favourable to communism they will have to understand two crucial elements of their position: (1) they are not a communist formation but only a (potentially) for-communist formation, in fact they express the crisis of capitalism in terms of maintaining the coherence of production; (2) As they attempt to organise the lived activity of society as an end in itself they should not forget that the technology they are deploying in the attempt to realise this end is also moving but in the opposite direction as it seeks to re-establish the economic relation, the rhythms, the cybernetics, the exchanges, most appropriate to its functioning – the return to capitalism is always undertaken for ‘practicality’s’ sake. For both of these reasons the lived activity directed by the workers’ councils should be engaged as much in the decommissioning of inherited technologies and instituted relations as it is in the realisation (and realignment) of productive forces. – Frere Dupont

Two other premises seem to me underlying not only councilism, but most of the solutions we come up with.

The first and most important is restated as "The people will need to be fed!". From here, we arrive at "What must be done?" and "Who will feed them?" Our own ego-involvement suggests WE come up with a plan. Our own helplessness suggests SOMEBODY OUGHT TO DO SOMETHING! This is the birth of the politicisation of revolution.

The problem, of course, is that "the people" are not "children". For that matter, children are not children from this perspective. The new-born infant is an accomplished eater at between two minutes and twelve hours, depending on the ease or difficulty of birthing.

Just thinking of food production, the "socialization of production" is doomed from the get go. I'll try to explain with a scenario of possibility. Councils are set up as philanthropic institutions. With all the best intentions, we have already divided society (it is already divided) into producers (farmers, in this case) and management (councilors). A major function of the councils will be to coordinate distribution so that everyone's nutritional needs are met – farmer, trucker, assembly-person, everyone. The goal is equality of access and opportunity. Even though needs are dictated "from the bottom up", they are satisfied from the top down. The "people" now achieve guaranteed survival through dependence on the system. The theoreticians are, of course, the system-designers of an autonomous self managing provider class. Class has in no way been abolished, it has been automated. The system becomes rigid and specialized. Interdependence is forced in the name of egalitarianism. This is not a society but a machine.
The state is also a machine. The state thrives even if capitalism is relegated into the shadows. This is not communism even if drudgery is minimized to three hours a day and everyone is fed. It is still a prison, but this time without wardens and guards. Personal agency has given way to dependence for one and all. The people will die from boredom and kill from a sense of stiflement. We will need a police force and better drugs from the "People's Revolutionary Pharmacy". Well, maybe direct democracy with recallable delegates can rectify this little matter, but then again ...

What if we changed this first premise to the more realistic "People need to eat"? Duh! Kropotkin in fact phrased it somewhat similarly: "The revolution will need bread", and concluded that anything folks do in satisfying this requirement will be preferable to what "hide-bound theorists" come up with simply because it is a matter of spontaneous self-organization. This is what is meant by freedom. The premise is now able to transform into "Some people will need more help than others in satisfying their needs". What this amounts to is the setting up of mutual aid societies. This is in fact the guts of First Nations Warrior Societies (cf., Taiaiake Alfred and Lana Lowe), folks who can help search out those who need it. There's an old Chinese proverb which goes something like this: "Folks who are given fish become hungry when the river changes course or when the giver goes away. Folks taught to fish will follow the river and cause the giver to go elsewhere".

The second premise concerns the function of the revolution itself. This is the transformation of exchange-value into use-value. Both of these are forced juxtapositions so joined in order to give birth to economic manipulation. If we were to separate them back into their original territories, we come up with three independent (but not isolated) fairly harmless notions: exchange, use and value. Let's look at "value". Value has only two basic senses: measurement and emotional attachment. One can, it's true, be fond of measurement (the value of the sum of two and three is five), but it is very hard to quantify emotional attachment. The best we can come up with is "a bunch" and "hardly at all". Our attempts at quantification pigeon-hole this into "love", "hate" and "apathy".

Use-value tied to needs or desires seems to me a matter of estimation only as it refers to esteem, not actually measurement. We use things because we are fond of them or the other things which they help to achieve. For example, I love my guitar probably more than the product of my interaction with it (I'm not very good), yet I still love the interaction as well. There are many other things I love as well, some I detest. The revolution says "these are personal matters I am not concerned with ... this is liberty. The revolution is only concerned with the production and equal distribution of food, shelter, medicine and such". The revolution will only interfere in personal life if it's function of coordinating production and distribution in the philanthropic interest of "the people" is hindered. My question is how "interference" comes to be measured and how far it will be allowed to extend.

Yes, this is only a possible scenario, but it does have some historical precedence. By all means let's not throw out the baby with the bath water. Communication is essential. Authentic communication (dialogue rather than debate) is the basis of community and therefore of communism as well.

The Labour Theory of Power: Our culture tells us that nothing is ever good enough, there's always room for improvement. We are presented with the biggest problem of all (that we must work toward self-improvement), and technology and politics are always ready to give us a so-
lution. This is equally not to suggest that technology is the root cause of all our problems, but that it is a mutually influenced interplay of the state, industry, capitalism, class structure, etc. in a perpetual positive feedback spiral. Accelerate any function, and the whole also accelerates. We need to get out of the spin cycle of promises from each sector that the beast can be tamed with a tweak here and an twist there.

The negative critique is not toward all technology, but toward political and technological (particularly modern, high tech) solutions to what are invariably social problems. Certainly, even primitivists are not against all technology, which would, as you know, include a carved stick to dig roots from the earth (but see note 1). The anti-tech position has always been directed at modern, industrial technology and all those ancillary techniques (and their tools) which require a class society of workers and "the privileged". The redefinition of the word to refer only to the modern world we experience does not change the relation or our objection to it. Dictionaries may disguise, but do not negate history nor prevent its recurrence in the future.

How can dead labour, machinery, reassert its domination over lived activity within conditions where lived activity is institutionalised as the aim and means of communist society?

Many technologies that work for capital do not work for communism. They do not work because bound up in their coding is a reliance on conditions in which they dominate lived activity – the worker under communism feels the same sense of boredom, alienation and exploitation as he does under capitalism, because the activity that is demanded by the machine he's operating is exactly the same.

... Once a barrier to development is defined by activity as a barrier, it is 'overcome' and that is the end of it... there is no ‘going back’. But even the latest of Marx’s writings were written 30 years before Freud’s theories of the ‘return of the repressed’. There is no anticipation in this narrative of productive overcoming that ‘objective labour’ materialised within the capitalist social relation might be capable of biting back against a move towards communism. And yet regression to capitalist forms within communist terranes has occurred within all revolutionary attempts. – Frere Dupont

There seems to be a large consensus that technology is the primary product of labor in a linear relationship. It was premature to suggest that property precedes labor, because I see them as two sides of the same process of exchange backed by force, threat of force, or blind accommodation to spectacular force, which are all other ways of saying "involuntary deprivation". I'm here forced to supply operational definitions of both property and labor in relation to the element of force itself, and of both product and technology as results of this process. All product is property when others are prevented access to it, whether it is held by an individual or community. Many here are against the idea of individual (private) property. I would be among them. But this is not entirely what we experience. Our system is in fact also one of community property, (how else would one describe corporate assets, property taxes or insurance premiums?) but we generally think of this in terms of class struggle and have coined a plethora of names to describe the two ends of a spectrum of haves and have-nots and of course, the mysterious middle, always uncertain as to which side they are on or on who's side they would take in a crisis.

For the have-nots to have anything, they must provide services to the have-mores in a highly imbalanced exchange. The more unbalanced, the more we are likely to call the situation "capitalist" rather than "barter", but of course, capitalism is not necessary to labour and the production of property the situation entails. Slavery is the condition with no concern for "balance" whatsoever, yet the slave still needs housed and fed. This is not an exchange – it is purely one-directional. By "labour" then, it should be obvious I'm not thinking of chopping wood for the home fire-place here, but chopping another's wood so the latter doesn't get dirt
under his fingernails and so that one's self & family can eat. Neither am I thinking of chopping wood for your old granny because her arthritis and brittle bones prevent her from doing it herself nor by chopping wood for a friend who seems busy changing the spark plugs in your car. There is no force or fear of deprivation nor even exchange necessitated by these examples. By product, I wasn't thinking of the particular feelings which are 'produced' in me when I think of an old high school sweetheart nor the fine clay figurine I might mold in her honor. I shouldn't have to do this, but those using sophistry and deceptive rhetoric utilize any ambiguity in the language and demonstrate a lack of understanding for such topics as evolution or physics, yet go on to proclaim the "laws of science" (or "nature") to meet the challenge of a threat to their notions of progress and the neutrality of the technology which allows them more and ever "improved" sparkling and shiny toys. Luster was once a distraction away from the realities of the world of work, it is now paradoxically invoked to bring down the world of work rather than reclaimed and returned to its original field of aesthetics.

I think some of the resentment over post-modernism concerns the mistaken idea that it brings on the death of cosmetics. This is only its historical, architectural aspect, which I don't see as anything beyond very-modernism. I want my gargoyles, and I want to watch them piss on passersby below when it rains! Although that is a function, a valued use, the death of gargoyles is the victory of use-value. Interesting how much modern buildings resemble modern headstones -- monolithic, cubist slabs possibly erected to simulate a defiant stand against gravity (that is to say, "nature"?), but for the most part carrying the message "Nothing to see here, go about your business!"

I get the suspicious feeling that ever since the situs began with their critique of the spectacle, radicals everywhere have become frightened of putting time and effort into that -- gasp -- spectacular element of the product, as if we shouldn't be allowed to focus on this element of pleasure until we reach utopia. It's a superficial concern – Emma Gee.

Is it always necessary to distinguish intention and discovery, to separate learning from instinct, rigid organization from spontaneity, especially considering the common dictum on "the best laid plans"? Should we persist in our mistakes, should we not learn from chance happenings? The pursuit of predictability in the world is at the same time the elimination of chance. An impossible project as such, if it could be carried through, this would only culminate in the end of surprise, the end of aesthetics, and in fact, the end of science itself. As the situationists said, "we will all die of boredom".

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4 This is not to suggest that Victorian architecture, or even Gothic cathedrals bear any resemblance to "natural" phenomena. The point is in the so-called "aesthetics of absence", that use-value is the only value. It is actually the absence of aesthetics. If there is any other semiotic intended or inferred, it is the picture of a dead and buried world.
Most of us in the modern world come to think there is something fundamentally wrong with human relations in this day and age. Many have turned to the authority of religion or psychiatry: "Will someone please tell me how to act?" Some are more philosophical about this mess; we turn the "other" into a dialectical opposition and attempt to annihilate it through a competition of accumulation and consumption and rationalize the process with a 'libertarian' egoism. They used to call this "greed and pure-D selfishness". Others try to annihilate the self in ways Freud labeled "neuroses", the old tried-and-true suicide, use of intoxicating substances, or even "pure-D socialism" - the sacrifice of the self "for the greater good". Of course, this is all predictable when we think of the other as not only disconnected, but in opposition, and is only 'natural' in a world view informed by aristotelian logic. Every option seems to put the self and other into a dialectic friction - conflict and competition - and the world view is reinforced through self-fulfilling prophecy, even if the self is left more than a bit confused.

"I hold a beast, an angel, & a madman in me, & my enquiry is as to their working, & my problem is their subjugation & victory, downthrow & upheaval, & my effort is their self-expression." – Dylan Thomas

Life, as we find it, is too hard for us; it brings us too many pains, disappointments and impossible tasks. In order to bear it we cannot dispense with palliative measures. 'We cannot do without auxiliary constructions', as Theodor Fontane tells us. There are perhaps three such measures: powerful deflections, which cause us to make light of our misery; substitutive satisfactions, which diminish it; and intoxicating substances, which make us insensitive to it. Something of the kind is indispensable. Voltaire has deflections in mind when he ends Candide with the advice to cultivate one's garden; and scientific activity is a deflection of this kind, too. The substitutive satisfactions, as offered by art, are illusions in contrast with reality, but they are none the less psychically effective, thanks to the role which phantasy has assumed in mental life. The intoxicating substances influence our body and alter its chemistry. It is no simple matter to see where religion has its place in this series. – S. Freud, from Civilization and its Discontents

It would almost seem we are built to dissect and categorize. It is obviously related to our special knack for comparison, even of each other. We "recognize". Somewhere along the way we've been domesticated - seduced to give up comparison and replace it with contrast. Instead of asking on similarities, we are content with opposition: "what's the opposite of _____?" (fill in the blank) - and so we come to think we "know". We label things and then we measure, rank, or even negate them. Concentrating on differences, ever searching out conflict, we distance ourselves from connection - we witness alienation. When we do experience 'sameness' we consider it a profound revelation - "ah-haa!" - or a matter of "synchronicity" - surely evidence of the "supernatural"! It is a "warm" feeling. But we cannot escape similarities in the world: every equation must have an 'equal' sign. This we call "cold logic" - the sterile domain of the mathematician.

This is how we construct the world and our shared construction is why we can even talk about it. That we impose a logical grid on reality neither suggests that there is no 'order', nor does it say that the world does not exist outside of our constructions or only comes into being because of them (the notion of the early 'idealists'). Rather, we cannot directly 'know' the world except through metaphor - poetic or mechanical, this is symbolic thought. Anything outside our metaphor is therefore considered "chaos", "criminal" and "insane". Thus, our own categories are felt by many to be overly restrictive, even suffocating.
Human beings are not absurd, and the world is not absurd, but for humans to be in the world is absurd. Human beings, recognizing the limitations implied in being human in this world, cannot create another world which ignores the absurdity of this existence – Albert Camus

This metaphorical categorization or "symbolic thought" has led some, like John Zerzan, to consider it the source of the absurdity of living in this world. Source, it may be, but this draws away from the crux of our discontent – the social relation of power (one-upmanship) producing atomization, alienation and separation; the social relation of power (exclusion) producing property, poverty, illness and wars of conquest and annihilation. Metaphorical categorization also allows language, art, trust, comradery, community and festivity. There has never been a revolution against these things, only their deflection, substitution and denial (repression).

The divergence might just be as simple as categorization based on differences (discrimination) as opposed to that based on similarities (generalization) – they tell us we have passed intellectual "milestones" when we are able to make fine distinctions, when we can throw out the triangle from a box of squares. They tell us that intelligence is the mastery of information, and that information is "that which makes a difference". We have achieved this grand intelligence at the expense of the child's ability to generalize, to see how things are similar, to see connections, to create poetry. We supersede rather than accompany generalization in our all-or-nothing, either-or world. Discrimination outranks generalization – we must choose the more efficient to raise our children to become successful time-and-motion engineers.

Freud told us the first categorical distinction a child makes is between the self (ego) and the other (mother). This he labeled "the reality principle" which comes to gradually supersede the "pleasure principle" – the pursuit of happiness or the avoidance of unhappiness which is, for Freud and most psychologists after him, the attempt to satisfy our personal needs or desires. This supersession is also the foundation of society. It sets up the social relation beginning with the immediate family and extending to the local group. The 'undomesticated' child, interested in his/her own needs comes to know s/he requires aid from others as soon as the self-distinction is made.

But a society or community or family requires that the self-other distinction not be complete – the child still shares a bond with the mother, and this comes to extend to others. Where the so-called "reality principle" accompanies rather than supersedes the "pleasure principle", the social relation of mutual aid sets in quite rapidly – there is no one more giving than the undomesticated child. As we extend this self-other logic, we come up with the notions of us and them ('group solidarity' and its civilized cousins, 'patriotism' and 'bigotry') and eventually the collective species or superordinate/generic category, 'mankind' (humanism), which distinguishes us from all other existence. Without the balance of generalization, we instead become alienated from all other existence.

The fact is that we are social beings and, in evolutionary terms, the species cannot survive without a social relation. The 'social' individual cannot 'live' without others (although s/he can 'struggle' and 'survive' for a time). Eastern mysticism (Tao) sees a logic or connection between the self and the other which should be in balance, (harmony, equilibrium) rather than display the politics of antagonism and control by superior forces (the winners, parents, teachers, cops and even colleagues) of which we are all well familiar (dialectics is the warfare of ideas). It is appropriate to suggest that there is a war between the individual's construction of his/her world and the society's construction of the individual, but this only continues our no-
tions of all against all - competitive democracy.

That we can share our construction of the world via language allows us to help or hinder each other. When the child comes to see the parent as a source of control rather than aid, individuality is suppressed and resentment (or even neurosis) sets in. This is the civilized social relation of domestication/control which prepares the child for submission to social institutions (school and thereafter, work). Throughout life, the individual both feels and is hindered and isolated. The task of the social institutions is to repress this natural resentment, but it is never eliminated. It always resurfaces as a quest for power (the so-called "black seed" of "human nature") among the successfully socialized, and aberrant behavior (crime, madness, eccentricity, rebellion) among the less so. For the successful domesticate, one's own progress is derived from the hindrance of others, and this is called "healthy competition". All domesticates seek to express their individuality since this is the first thing (self-expression) taken by 'society'. The psychopathy of the serial killer is not so far removed from the warmongering politician. The difference is a matter of cultural sanction or social convention – the former conveys too much individuality. Exploitation under feudalism or capitalism is also not so far removed – the former allows too much locality and therefore, multiplicity. The movement of civilization has always been toward universality and away from multiplicity, whether through conquest or conversion.

As civilization itself progresses, dissent grows with our struggle to assert our individuality. In civilization, Maslow's "self-actualization" always grows from a sense of dissent or rebellion. It must. We think of this as a quest for freedom because in our situation, we do not experience freedom – we hardly know what it means. Romantic utopianists try to imagine a social relation based on helping rather than hindrance. Both Kropotkin and Marx fall into this 'category'. Marx felt the state could be transformed into a 'helping' institution through a natural revolt of the discontented. The opposing anarchists following Bakunin thought we could in fact do quite well without the state altogether. Individualists or 'illegalists' have influenced the modern day insurrectionists. Concentration on the state apparatus or economic institutions distances us from our own participation in the process of domestication which starts with the incredulous social relation between parent and child:

Traditionally this (basic distrust) orientation has encouraged attention to latent tendencies to "naughtiness", which have sometimes been seen as actively present in every young child. The theory influences the way an infant is perceived, and once this point of view is adopted it tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more infants sense a danger that their biological needs may not be supplied, the more their biologically-determined survival mechanisms prompt them to seek to control their mothers, apparently confirming the view that they are naturally too selfish, "manipulative" or aggressive. Thus, exaggeration and distortion of necessary biological mechanisms may encourage the perception of the infant as a potential "monster". When naughtiness is seen as the result of failure to control natural tendencies which are considered to be primitive animal, and therefore bad, her conviction may be reinforced that these must be eliminated by appropriate training, lovingly if possible, but coercion and threats may be needed if resistance is encountered. If this becomes pronounced, violence is justified in what is, after all seen as a good cause. If this doctrine and the related training processes produce a "naughty" or "disturbed" child, this can still be seen as confirming the premise that the original tendency to naughtiness was strong, and the difficulties may be attributed to insufficient training and punishment.

The emphasis (in an orientation of trust) in the parents' basic goal is to enjoy a good relationship with the child, and help to produce a "whole" healthy person who is also likely to be sufficiently "good". The quest for obedience and conformity is not a prevailing emphasis as in the basic distrust orientation.
(This) method of childrearing aims to satisfy the young child's needs and develop a cooperative, mutually satisfying, affectionate relationship, in which the potentialities of the child and parents unfold, blossom and gradually mature. The developing capacities for self-regulation are respected and encouraged ... The parents teach avoidance of common dangers and gradually encourage a disposition to consider and respect the needs and feelings of others' through experiencing this consideration within the family ... Thus when confronted with an infant displaying a strong urge to do something or have it done for him, it can be illuminating to consider whether this urge may have some genetic component, being adaptive and of value for the child's development. This point of view is neatly expressed in the saying: "A baby's wants are pretty much the same as its needs".

The child's point of view is more likely to be understood, and parental requests take into account the child's feelings and capacities so that hostility and negativism tend to be minimized. The child's feelings are accepted in the expectation that sufficient self-control will be achieved as appropriate to the child's age. (The options of exercising authority and sufficient force are still available if essential.) Inconsiderate behaviour is discouraged but the quality of relationships tends to make punishment inappropriate and it may be seldom or never needed.

This approach is based on a different view of the nature of the child and is more in accord with modern understanding of child development. It appears less alien to the traditions of many non-Westernised societies, including those of hunter-gatherer groups whose mother-infant interactions have been studied ... In Western societies a partial breakdown in these natural processes of mothering behaviour appears to have occurred on a considerable scale ... it is not generally understood that this does not require the parents to strive for early versions of the finally desired behaviour since infancy is not so much a prime opportunity to mould the child but rather a time to seek to satisfy the infant and enjoy the unfolding of many built-in qualities in the setting of trusting and mutually rewarding relationships. – Peter S. Cook, Childrearing, Culture And Mental Health

Raised as "naughty" children, we cannot imagine an alternative to mistrust and competition, so we remain at odds with each other. Individualism and collectivism have no common ground for the "democratic" collective still out-ranks individual expression and a world of "free" individuals is thought to deny community. In either case, the self is atomized, alienated, separated. Many cannot imagine the individual's pleasure other than at the expense of the other, and others cannot imagine the helping of others as anything beyond personal sacrifice. This aristotelian struggle between the individual and collective, the self and the other, will not be eliminated until our child-rearing techniques eliminate the ideas of entrenched power and competition and replace them with an orientation of trust and inclusion – Heidegger's "openness to being" rather than Nietzsche's "will to power". But we are caught up in a vicious cycle starting with the wrenching of the new-born from the bonding physical contact with the mother the moment s/he is born, given a swift slap on the ass and sent off for sterilization.

Because of our lack of community or even the extended family, the only option for the civilized parent is to prepare the child for institutionalization – school. S/he is informed and aided by the television. In the past, any number of parenting 'mistakes' could be counterbalanced by kin and in fact, the entire community with their diversity of experience as opposed to our uniformity of cultural expectation. Today, a 'mistake' perceived by the state results in the state appropriating your children. This is why the state has always relied on the ideological destruction of 'community' over and above the physical destruction of communities. Only state institutions are to provide community – whether as soldier, teacher, cop or social worker, "the policeman is your friend".

The appeal of the 'barbarian' was the original revolutionary subject – the threat to the civilized/domesticated social relation. With it's destruction by empire, the 'peasant' became the only stronghold of community. With the commodification of food, the only threatening subject left is the child and those "child-like" qualities of the improperly socialized – the "mentally ill"
[please see *Alien Subjectivity*]. Today, among the few places to witness community are the street and the mental ward – the "no-go zones" of the urban world, the places of play and imagination.

Living free within community is thought a logical contradiction and is perhaps the most difficult concept for the domestic adult. It makes quantum mechanics look like child's play. Yet child's play looks an awful lot like living free in community. It's undomesticated. It's savage! To slightly détourne Stephen Stills excellent song, "Children, teach your parents well!" What we 'grups' don't understand is that the child comes to us already on a path of knowledge, but for them, "to know" is always in the biblical sense – a passionate or even orgasmic engagement, generating all sorts of fantastic discriminations and generalizations. Sometimes dissidents who adopt this attitude call it "revolutionary praxis" to escape the judgment or accusation of "tree-hugging idealist punk!" In my day it was "long-haired pinko-commie fag!"

**Abundance and Relativity:** In my writings, I've dealt over and again with the notion of "primitive" abundance in contrast to our system of imposed scarcity. Abundance is not a necessarily quantitative concept but a matter of freedom of access or the absence of fixed limits [*abound*: 'over-flowing'; 'without binds'; 'unlimited']. Something in small quantity may be made abundant through unrestricted cooperation or sharing, while a large quantity will represent scarcity for some under the alienating influence of competition and control.

For illustration, let's go back to the beginnings of agricultural civilization, which popular legend tells us started with abundant grain harvests supporting population growth and settlement in permanent cities. A large grain harvest does little to assuage the hunger of peasants when it is stored in a fortified granary and fed to insects, rodents, and those in turn to the fowl which ultimately make it to the priest-king's table. It is small amounts of what grain is left after the other 'livestock' are fed which is divvied out to the peasants and which keeps them employable. The difficult work-load to supply abundance to the aristocracy dwelling in the city makes large families an amenable idea. Traditional limits to population growth are abandoned, familial patriarchy and sons are favored, and the role of parent transforms into that of boss. This seems a much more reasonable beginning of agricultural civilization and its rural/urban dichotomy and other economic and political class distinctions than that glorified myth which we are taught in school. Civilization is the birth of the slave class – domesticated man.

Grand artifacts from the early civilizations such as granaries and pyramids are venerated and referred to as beneficial "public works". What this really means, from the vantage point of the aristocracy, is that "the public is working and we are not!" The old chicken-or-egg argument has always been fore front in the mind of the priest-king: "Today, shall I eat the chicken or the egg?" His choice is informed by the bureaucrat/grain inspector who has had the house-slaves make a proper count of the boll weevil population in the granary. A high count means "egg", a low count means "chicken".

This situation, of course, is the source of the popular phrase, "there is no war but the class war!" Unfortunately, as simple as our social organization is, it is no longer so simple as to clearly distinguish a "them" and an "us". What radical theorists struggling with the concept of class are basically saying is: "After the revolution, who do we line up against the wall?" This is not so far removed from what the "powers-that-be" are saying: "To prevent revolution, who do we line up against the wall?"

I cannot over-emphasize the point made by Gustav Landauer, which I paraphrase:
We are all the state and will continue to be so until we learn to form real human communities.

"Real" human communities, as with all animal communities, are always based in mutuality or cooperative social relations – not in conflict, competition, coercion and struggle (and to appease those aristotelian 'either/or' critics, this is not to say that competition, coercion and struggle never occur in "real" communities – they just don't define them). To place "cooperation" and "civilization" in the same context (of imposed scarcity) is to portray oxymoronic logic at its finest5. If we, the civilized, cooperate at all, it is because it is somehow an instinctual drive which must surface now and again (especially during courting rituals), and felt pleasurable because hormones are put into play which haven't been active since childhood, or it is an ancient artifact held over from more primitive times. Not a few dystopian sci-fi writers have imagined civilized worlds where cooperation is not necessary at all except in the sense we mean when we use such phrases as "cooperate with the authorities". If Boas was correct when he implied that habit and tradition outweigh conscious rationality underlying human actions and institutions, these 'fictions' may well turn into prophecy. In fact, there has always been much discussion of their prophetic value.

Einstein popularized the notion that all existence is subject to relativity. Even existence as mass or energy is relative to speed, and that itself is relative to distance traveled as witnessed by another at a different vantage point. With the relativist point of view, it matters not whether the chicken or egg came first – the focus is on the process or relation between the two. Epicurus said something not too dissimilar 2500 years ago, and even Socrates invoked relativity to point out the absurdity of Greek slave-based social stratification. The absurdity is found in the question of origin itself. As Samuel Buttler noted, "A hen is only an egg's way of making another egg".

But, with the help of a good dose of hemlock, the notion of class superiority still reigns. Of course, there is certain adaptive 'value' to a feeling of cultural superiority (ethnocentrism) when it maintains solidarity – what sociologists call "group cohesion". Some anthropologists have referred to it as a group isolating mechanism, maintaining local autonomy and therefore, helping to maintain conditions of abundance in each group.

Relativity is always the question of standpoint. Any ism which is invoked to further expansion, annihilation or conquest and exploitation of the "other" can only be of value to the conqueror, and in our day to day existence, we 'others' call such people assholes, bigots, racist, chauvinist, or just down right psychopathic. If we considered Kant's categorical imperative in searching for a universal morality (that our assessments must be equally valid across all categories), the proponents of "class war" have every justification for their position, seeing everywhere around them evidence of this misplaced superiority in the exploitation of their fellow humans by what they perceive as the "ruling" or "capitalist class". Boas would see this "class" as merely better programed in their culture and driven by the forces of custom. From this vantage point, who is lined up against the wall after the revolution will be a matter of deducing who is better enculturated into capitalism or even civilization, and the revolutionaries might just find themselves standing in line as well. This was clearly seen in the "Reign of Ter-

5 You may be thinking, "A wee bit of overgeneralization here, no?", and of course you would be right. The encouraging point is that civilization has never been (nor will it be) particularly good at what it attempts. For example, as much efficiency as is ever inserted into bureaucracies, bureaucracy itself always comes off as probably the least efficient means to any end. Another example is that, relatively speaking, the more force any state tries to exert, the more ubiquitous becomes dissent. Civilization itself is an oxymoron when set alongside anything natural.
ror" after the French revolution and many other post-revolutionary purges. I think if we are against traditions or customs (and their resultant institutions) maintained by emotional attachment and habit (which we often refer to as "mindset"), then clearly the guillotine or firing squad is not the weapon of choice. What is needed has been no better said than by the Youngbloods: "Blow your mind, turn your head around. Don't let the rain, don't let the reign bring you down!"

"Virtue," "duty," "good for its own sake," goodness grounded upon impersonality or a notion of universal validity – these are all chimeras, and in them one finds only an expression of the decay, the last collapse of life, the Chinese spirit of Königsberg. Quite the contrary is demanded by the most profound laws of self-preservation and of growth: to wit, that every man find his own virtue, his own categorical imperative.[...]

Reciprocity and the Mechanistic World View: Without mutuality and sharing, we are nothing but parts in a machine. It is no wonder that we, the civilized, have a mechanistic world view. Mutuality cannot be reduced to the "self" and/or "other". It is the connection, relation or process between them. Reciprocity is not a matter of tit-for-tat or give-and-take. These economic ideas spawn such alienating fields as academic economics, political science, and the psychology of motivation. They are alienating in that they seek to discover universal, rational laws which justify our own alienating behavior. Poets have called the idea of symbiotic connection (which is reciprocity) "love". I think Kropotkin and John Lennon were on the same wavelength when the former said, rather not conflict and competition, but mutual aid is the driving force of evolution; the latter said "love is all you need" and "give peace a chance". I think a fellow a few thousand years ago, who got himself nailed to a tree said much the same.

Franz Boas explained why such sentiments never caught on – they merely went against the grain of custom:

It is not any rational cause that forms opposing groups, but solely the emotional appeal of an idea that holds together the members of each group and exalts their feeling of solidarity and greatness to such an extent that compromises [or cooperation or even communication] with other groups become impossible.

As Elvin Hatch noted (in Theories of Man and Culture).

[Boas] held that political segmentation and competition cannot be viewed in terms of competing interest groups rationally calculating advantages in relation to others ... Much of the political strife in the world, Boas thought, is due to an emotional opposition to foreign ways of behaving and thinking, together with the belief that one's own culture is superior to all others.

To Boas, only a limited degree of understanding can be achieved if behavior is viewed as the manifestation of conscious, willful thought. Far more important for assessing the meaning of human action is the concept of custom. Man's behavior is dominated by unconscious, customary patterns to which emotional associations have become attached.

For this, Boas is considered an "anti-intellectual" and we continue to ridicule the "primitive" who explains his behavior with "this is how it's always been done". When you get right down to it, how are we any different, except that we add "but it's just gotta get better!"?

Where rationality and creativity and imagination come to play is in the modification or expla-
nation of pre-existing phenomena or behavior (this would include revolution or any other "goal-seeking" behavior). But creativity and toleration of the novel are still limited by custom or tradition and their emotional attachments. The civilized engineer is forever modifying the mouse trap, yet it took a "savage barbarian" to invent it. This is why, the more society infringes on individual expression in the child as well as adult (rationality and creativity and imagination as opposed to universal algorithms of thinking and behaving), the most creative artists must come from the fringes of society - the "wingnuts" of civilization, the fringes of socialization, not necessarily the fringes of the economy. The surrealist movement as well as Tim Leary's promotion of LSD attempted to "blow your mind" with novel juxtaposition in order to break the ties of unconscious preconceptions (custom) - the necessary precursor to any kind of revolution, be it political, cultural or scientific. But I digress.

And so it never occurs to us to wonder why the early followers of a symbiotic social lifestyle (communalism, reciprocity, "love"), a message spread by word-of-mouth over vast areas of the globe after much Vandalism and, ultimately, Attila had put enough pressure on Roman 'global' control, the followers who rejected civilization and went on to form autonomous living communities, were persistently hunted down and executed for the next 1500 years or so by the good civilized "christians" for "heretical" notions - all "in the name of jesus-mary-&-fockin-joseph" (to invoke a particularly apt ancient Irish-catholic curse).

These same righteous ones who called themselves "persecuted" went on to kill Jews and Muslims and all other "heathens and atheists" in the name of their god, (who is "love" – see Mark Twain, The War Prayer), and who in great philosophical works pride themselves as the guardians of reason, logic and enlightenment. Of course, today, and because of this very rational enlightenment, we all know that Bishop Berkeley's god (or Hegel's "absolute") is a vast well oiled machine and we all go on to perform specific functions (work our jobs) in his service. This was the message of those anti-papists such as John Calvin or Martin Luther, (who's church reformation set the stage for the bourgeois revolution), but the message of the machine works equally well with or without god. Judging only by the treatment given those early 'feral' communities, I submit to you that jesus was not only an anarchist, but, relative to those "good christians", an atheist as well! The "empire" falling all about them, there was a significant threat of cogs just up and dropping out of the machine, leaving behind their own message, "Gone to Croatan".

Is there a less mechanical (structural-functional) way of viewing the world than our own? Like Irving Goldman's interpretation [in The Mouth of Heaven based largely on Boas' own notes] of the Northwest Coast Indian cosmology where the potlatch recapitulates (echoes, harmonizes) notions of cosmic circulation, Mary Richel-Dolmotof pointed out (in Amazonian Cosmos) that for the Amazonian, the variable connections between all things (reciprocity) is timeless and universal. It is the cause of motion and circulation throughout the universe. They are (were, actually) nightly reminded of this, gazing upon the milky way which they metaphorically referred to as "the great seminal flow". (Epicurus had this relationship reversed, suggesting that random motion, or "Swerve" causes inadvertent "collisions" which account for material formation and change). From the point of view of the intrepid semen (or Epicurus’ "atom"), he is not, like Alexander or Odysseus, rowing out to sea to conquer and administer the world, but to impregnate and merge with it and create something new and unique.

This is also the attitude of the child at "play"; who's science as well as rebellion is found
only in direct engagement (collaborative adventure, exploration, festivity); who's questions are solved through living the answers; who's own uniqueness is reinforced through exploration into a world of diverse fantastical beings within earshot of mother's worried voice. The distinction between "play" and "getting down to serious business" is one of the hardest tasks for the child undergoing domestication, and for many, the latter completely negates the former so that a sense of play, that reciprocal engagement with the world (which, of course, includes not only "the other", but a multiplicity of novel others), is forever lost. On the other hand, the psychologist tells us the only important point is that "the child, through play, learns to control and manipulate his/her environment".

An interesting Native American notion [ - B. Martin] describes this engagement as a matter of "harmonics" rather than "balance", "equilibrium", "reciprocity" or "feedback-control loops". This alternate view presents a flowing, merging, impregnating, world of living synthesis as harmonics, not the rectification of conflicts of immanent oppositions or the mechanical connection of dead matching components in a machine - that we are variable "features" of a living organism, not discrete cogs in a dead machine bent on control. The musical metaphor (wave theory?) is completely appropriate in 'traditional' communities. I would say the economic metaphor (particle theory?) is not.

"But", you might ask, "let's get back to concrete reality; how would you account for cheaters in this 'romantic' world view you present?". Modern notions such as "reciprocal altruism" (tit-for-tat) and "strong reciprocity" (the calculation and punishment of cheaters or "altruistic punishment paving the way to cooperation" [ - Benoît Dubreuil] - maybe it's just me, but that seems a contradiction in terms!) completely miss the point of "the gift" as well as the idea of sharing. "Reciprocal" is not a modifier of "altruism", it is the effect when altruism is a 'shared' practice, and the punishment or even calculation of "cheaters" would, in most "primitive" systems of etiquette be highly rude and impolite. These modern notions can only be generated where there is a political (authority) or economic (ownership, property) system in place and, like cheating itself, derive from basically egoistic, not altruistic motivation.

For example, even after hundreds of years of exposure to western civilization, it would be highly impolite to suggest trading a round of wood chopping in exchange for a meal from a Navajo grandmother. First off, it suggests she would not normally feed you if she determined you were in need. In the same way, you would not just chop the wood for her and "hope for the best" without asking if she thought it would be a good idea to bring in her wood in the first place. This suggests you consider her helpless, another insult, and therefore 'antisocial' [ - Uncle Jake].

We are so conditioned to thinking of "balanced" exchanges and retaliatory dispensation (feedback) of "justice", we take for granted that these ideas are human universals. In fact, the very presence, or at least preponderance of so-called "cheaters" would suggest a breakdown of cultural conditioning (enculturation, socialization, social learning, etc.) in most societies. As locally defined, cheating goes against the grain of custom in 'egalitarian' societies and would be dealt with no differently than any other perceived 'antisocial' behavior. Following after Dunbar, Benoît Dubreuil has gone so far as to define "social intelligence" as "our capacity to keep track of who is doing what to whom in the context of the group" and bases the development of language itself on such calculating, rational behavior. "Keeping up with the Joneses" is basically a paranoid outlook on sociality. Finally, would an "unsuccessful" hunter be left to die on the ice for "not carrying his own weight" in the food quest among the Eskimo/Inuit?
Such would not be described as "cheating" any more than would a star hitter "in a slump" be fired by the manager of a baseball team. Natural selection could not make a distinction between the extended "slump" and the "lazy asshole trying to get out of work" - the effect is the same. "Cheating" is ultimately a question of morality imposed by the researcher. It may or may not be meaningful to those researched, and if it is, is undoubtedly measured differently. The problem with all these lines of thinking about "cooperative" behavior is that they have never left the realm of a "competitive context" they themselves are ensconced in.

Love, mutual aid, symbiosis, cooperation, reciprocity, sociality, altruism - my dictionary informs me that these are all synonyms - might be seen as connections or relations without rational motivation. Purpose is only a functional explanation and always *ex post facto*. The so-called primitive might see reciprocity as "qualities of existence", but even this is to impose a western 'structuralist' philosophical notion into their minds. "It just is", they might say.

Reciprocity requires a certain "openness". In *Being and Time*, Heidegger proposed that the pre-socratic world view considered the essence of being human as an "openness to being", opposing Nietzsche's "will to power" of *modern* humans, who subordinate all existence to our own ends rather than letting them "be what they are". Our present destructive treatment of the earth as "resource" and our treatment of each other are only mirror reflections. A certain subjective relativism gave way to specific anthropocentrism with the rise of civilization. Use value itself is a modern notion. This is not the same as saying "use previously had no value". Because it has to be subjective, it cannot be measured beyond the individual or shared habits of custom. From the view of subjective/cultural relativity, any other sense is pure reification and sophistry.

Ours is a mechanistic (dead, even if dynamic) and economic world view alienating the self and other which forces the semantics of the above synonyms of sociality into "what one does to/at another" or "what the other does to/at you". Without an isolating self-other dialectic, these words escape into the semantic realm of relationship and connection, but not necessarily in a mechanistic or even algebraic fashion. That it's all a matter of flow is what the Amazonians have gathered. This provides the same distinction between sharing and exchange (give-and-take, which is also to say "a balance between sacrifice and theft"). As Kroeber noted, the one notion shared by primitive (ie., not-civilized) peoples was reciprocity. In such a system, a gift is never thought a sacrifice, negotiated because of a calculated future advantage, or purely out of a sense of moral obligation or duty. Gifting may be a matter of recapitulating cosmic circulation - a celebration of life, the universe and everything, but it's also just a habit. When this habit is shared (custom, tradition), all can see that "what goes around comes around" - the circularity of self-fulfilling prophecy. The very notion of "economic system" has very little meaning, and even less necessity.

Without this flow "all bleeding eventually stops" [*Auntie Dave' Brown*]. This is mortality. Reciprocity, the sea quest of impregnation, ensures that life continues. In any electrical device, all current eventually goes to ground and returns through that device until you pull the plug. Otherwise, there is no circuit, no current, no flow. A direct short renders death to the machine. All dams eventually burst - all water returns to the sea. We agree with these notions (physicists have told us so!) yet we ridicule the ignorance of the primitive who's "mythology" focuses on the notion of "eternal return". Freud, of course, thought this "savage" thinking an example of neurosis.
Reciprocity allows multiplicity which in turn demands relativity (but not in a chicken-or-egg logic or dialectic). Unlike competitive economy, the tit-for-tat civilized social relation, reciprocity is the functional relationship which maintains multiplicity (diversity) – it is the source of non-hierarchical interaction. Rather, it is non-hierarchical interaction. Relativity is the 'rule' derived from multiplicity and logically necessitates individual 'freedom' (autonomy), without which, multiplicity would become unity – evolution by means of natural selection would thereby be negated. The resulting harmonic resonance of multiplicity, reciprocity and relativity applied to human beings generates language, song, community and culture. There is more to life than "mechanical systems of the eaters and the eaten", "production and consumption", "struggle and survival", but the rational and enlightened civilized on the road of progress toward universality (unity or global conformity) may never know it.

"All bleeding eventually stops". In our alienated existence, the mechanical world in which we are only cogs wearing human masks, only struggle continues. Many of us consider that we do our children an injustice by even giving them birth in the first place. From the point of view of the child, the mother, and in time, the kin group is supposed to be the source of tenderness and nurturing and even a source of structure – local traditions give the 'local' world of 'everyday life' a degree of predictability and therefore trust. We can even see this operating all around us among all other social animals. It's amazing so many of us even survive our parents and educators, let alone to go on to form our own relationships. We do so largely because of tradition, custom, habit and the emotional adherence to it (and sometimes, if our bullshit detectors are strong, in spite of these!). We become conditioned to living in shit – "It happens!" From the point of view of the primitive, reciprocity is not an economic system. It is a much more encompassing semantic realm than even our "cooperation". Because it tears away at (or prevents) the self-other dichotomy, it is the essential condition of community, and for this reason, communities cannot be planned and organized any more than a new species of animal can. Communities are organic (equilibrium or harmonic) systems, but sometimes "shit happens". Until annihilated by the force of empires and missionaries and economists, primitive tradition, custom, habit and the emotional adherence to it, ensure that this organic condition survives the shit. Probably Franz Boas' greatest contribution is the basic premise of cultural relativism: "people are the same everywhere, cultures are different" [ - Mark Fleisher ]. Of course, Boas himself has largely been neglected and forgotten because relativism itself "flies in the face of reason" (or rather, "custom").

Most European thinkers in pursuit of the truth have found the prospect of relativism, whether it is connected to Einstein's Theory of Relativity or not, where the majority imply that it is, to be the single most troubling development in the history of Western philosophy. As Heidegger suggests here the ideology positively threatens Eurocentric discourse in a way that few ideas ever have. The "specter" of "relativism" raises questions on one ground or another, furthermore, that have so far resisted rational analysis due in part to the fact that they remain so highly charged emotionally that few thinkers since the appearance of Einstein's Theory have been able to deal with them rationally, if at all, simply because they challenge the core issues that define the essence of what makes European ideology what it is. Heidegger's sentence is a case in point, since he dismisses "multiplicity" as something that necessarily leads to "relativism" without engaging the issue directly or indirectly, believing, apparently, that no one will disagree with his position simply because the "specter" of it has been evoked.

... (The) warning against "multiplicity" and "relativism" is much less concerned with truth than it is with maintaining an essential ground for the implementation of hierarchical structure in Eurocentric discourse. What is a stake here is nothing less than equality and freedom

... where an inevitable hierarchy of assigned value necessarily dominates the structure, and where the One answer is predetermined as the "best," as opposed to the Many as the "worst," there is abso-
lutely no possibility whatsoever of "relativism." At the same time, all sense of equality and freedom are necessarily banished. [ - B. Martin]

Reciprocity, cooperation and sharing represent a horizontal relationship which, by its very nature, reproduces itself. The flow of 'goods' might be modeled as a system of feedback loops, but a more colloquial perspective would be "self-perpetuating" or "self-fulfilling prophecy": "What goes around comes around". Physicist's laws of thermodynamics which describe complex self-regulating equilibrium systems work precisely the same way.

Competition is also a horizontal relationship, but one which attempts to turn this relationship on end – it is the source of hierarchy and progress. It replaces the circle with the line. What started as circulation or "flow" is interrupted by a temporally circumscribed transaction – direct exchange, tit for tat, sacrifice and theft, the beginning and the end. While seemingly harmless, advantage and leverage are given birth, and politics raises its nasty head.

A self-maintaining horizontal social relation (reciprocity) is the source of what we label "freedom" and "equality". Although we still use these terms, the modern semantic realm is most often limited to "freedom to compete" or "equality in opportunity" (to acquire, manipulate and control – that is, to be domesticated and to domesticate in turn). Any broader meaning of "freedom" and "equality" is negated by the vertical social relation established through competition. The self and other cannot be other than at odds. We see again the notion of self-fulfilling prophecy:

"If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" [ - Thomas Theorem, 1928].

No libertarian struggle can succeed which maintains the self-other dialectic, established very early in childhood, reinforced (positive feedback) and reproduced as a self-fulfilling prophecy (or vicious circularity) through habit, custom and emotional attachment. Reason itself is circumscribed within the realm of explanation, or more often, justification.

Radical or Schizophrenic? - Excerpts from The Politics of the Mind: "By politics, as I pointed out earlier, (R. D.) Laing means the ability to validate or invalidate experience. The struggle, then, is the struggle to control behaviour by defining experience. Society does this through its various agents by defining "reality" in terms of norms and then using those norms as ideal standards. The primary agent is the family. It is, Laing says, "in the first place, the usual instrument for what is called socialization, that is, getting each new recruit to the human race to behave and experience in substantially the same way as those who have already got here". As social agents, the family reproduces in the child a set of attitudes that will outfit him for life in what Herbert Marcuse calls the "one-dimensional society".

"The family's function is to create, in short, one-dimensional man; to promote respect, conformity, obedience; to con children out of play; to induce a fear of failure; to promote a respect for work; to promote a respect for respectability.

... From the moment of birth, when the Stone Age baby confronts the twentieth-century mother, the baby is subjected to these forces of violence, called love, as its mother and father, as their parents and their parents before them, have been. These forces are mainly concerned with destroying most of its potentialities, and on the whole this enterprise is successful. By the time the new human being is fifteen or so, we are left with a being like ourselves, a half crazed creature more or less adjusted to a mad world. This is normality in our present age.

... Society highly values its normal man. It educates children to lose themselves and to become absurd, and thus to be normal. Normal men have killed perhaps 100,000,000 of their fellow normal men in the last fifty years."  – laing
"But some cannot adapt to this imposed normality. They break down. Instead, they devise a strategy to deal with their inability to hold their invalidated experience and their sense of themselves together. As Laing puts it, "it seems to us that without exception the experience and behaviour that gets labeled schizophrenic is a special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation".

"The schizophrenic may look like someone whose "logic" is "ill", he is, in reality, someone, who has been made an invalid because his experience has been invalidated. For Laing and Cooper, schizophrenia is not "something happening in a person but rather something between persons". Thus when one psychiatrist calls schizophrenia "a failure of human adaptation", Laing responds that it may as well be "a successful attempt not to adapt to pseudo-social realities".

"The validity of a definition is ultimately determined by the identity of the one who is defining: There is no such 'condition' as 'schizophrenia,' but the label is a social fact and the social fact a political event. ... What we call 'normal' is a product of repression, denial, splitting, projection, introjection and other forms of destructive action on experience ... It is radically estranged from the structure of being. ... the condition of alienation, of being asleep, of being unconscious, of being out of one's mind, is the condition of the normal man." – Laing

"On the other hand schizophrenia may be seen as an alienation from this alienation, where, "even through his profound wretchedness and disintegration", the patient may be "the hierophant of the sacred".

"madness need not be all breakdown. It may also be break-through. It is potential liberation and renewal as well as enslavement and existential death." – Laing

"They (psychiatrists) will say we are regressed and withdrawn and out of contact with them. True enough, we have a long, long way to go back to contact the reality we have all long lost contact with. And because they are humane, and concerned, and even love us, and are very frightened, they will try to cure us. They may succeed. But there is still hope that they will fail." – Peter Levine

*Yes, this is the description of child-rearing in civilization. The military metaphor is appropriate: "chain-of-command" = "hierarchy"; "game" = "superficial capitalist social relation" (the competition for property and privilege); "cammo" = "spectacle" or "illusion". The second word a child learns, after "no!" is "mine!". Then comes "that's stupid!", "I hate you!" and finally, if the institutions of socialization have accomplished their task, "Yessir, Boss!" The family may be the primary agent, but the age at which media and educational institutions take over is increasingly younger. We are all the offspring of institutions. The agent-role of the family may soon be completely unnecessary if the sci-fi writers are on the right wavelength (and it would seem that they are). We are all "agents" of institutions. Here I think the military analogy begins to wither. As you say, the biggest cops are placed in our own heads - the guardians of experience, the creators of uniformity, the destroyers of multiplicity, relativity and reciprocity - the propensities with which every child comes to us, demolished with the violence of civilized love and concern. The result is that both individuality and sociality are reduced to illusion; the*
possibility of community is negated. The possibility of freeplay is denied; the individual disappears.

For the project of civilization, there is an advantage in going from freeplay (natural to children) to structured gaming. Bonnano suggested that work is merely a game with rules. I'm sure Baudrillard would agree. Rules with games are thought to ease the movement from the condition of living (in the world) to surviving (in an illusion). Still, there is difficulty transisting from freeplay to game to work. Initially, of course, this is school work – in kindergarten, 'work' is still fun; by 1st grade, it starts to become tedium; in later years, when it is struggle and toil willingly engaged, it is said we are ready for "the real world" so we are graduated. The goal of education has always been to corrupt and transform children into "productive citizens", not human beings. Freeplay is regulated to the point of extinction. All social relations thereafter become economic and political – they become productive. "Productive forces" are nothing if not the "force of production" regimenting armies of producers.

Let us not become trapped by phraseology. The social relation of production can only mean that our human relationships are mediated by products and production or work – that is, by things, property, value, and their creation and maintenance. The value is not that of things, but of ourseives as measured by those things, their creation, maintenance and growth – the perpetuation of an illusion (actually, "delusion") insistently mistaken for reality. If we are alienated from "reality", we are also alienated from the illusion, for it appears to have magically taken on a life of its own, beyond our grasp and control. Like the television which is defecated from the bowels of a factory, the illusion is a group effort which no member of that group is capable of (re)producing. It is only passed on along the assembly-line to each new generation of workers, trained to proudly reject any allusions to a similarity to the ant.

These millions of abnormally normal people, living without fuss in a society to which, if they were fully human beings, they ought not to be adjusted, still cherish "the illusion of individuality," but in fact they have been to a great extent de-individualized. Their conformity is developing into something like uniformity. But 'uniformity and freedom are incompatible. Uniformity and mental health are incompatible too ... Man is not made to be an automaton, and if he becomes one, the basis for mental health is destroyed. [ – Fromm]

What then is society? I think it is an inadvertent agreement among folks to share our metaphors – a "pantomime". This allows, or more properly, is communication of experience. The result is local culture. Laing spoke of 'experience' as our expectations and our metaphor for interacting with the world. 'Politics' is the control of experience which restricts our interacting, our behavior. Thus, we can use such phrases as "the authority of custom", and our aristotelian logic informs us that society itself is the 'enemy'. By agreement, I don't mean we sit around a table and come to a collective decision. That is a "contract". If there is a table, it is the metaphor for locality both as "place" and "situation". Isn't individuality just a matter of one coming up with novel associations even within the program? This also defines 'creativity'. Then an appropriate definition of schizophrenia would be the illusion of individuality taken to extreme – the abandonment of the "social" metaphor altogether – 'a-social' rather than 'antisocial', with the effect of reclaiming free-play. Many so-called radicals take the opposite tact. This would make "nihilism" (or even its opposite – "Everything is!") the ultimate "insanity" as well as most radical approach, and also explain why it has such great appeal, especially when society is increasingly political.

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6 This should not be taken to deny the terror which may also accompany so-called psychotic episodes.
There is a fuzzy line between the "mentally ill" and the "radical dissenter". Both illustrate programming gone awry. Maybe the radical wants to defeat society militarily or by analogy, through persuasive discourse; the so-called "wingnut" may want to ignore it, or even disappear it through magical incantation. But it can hardly be ignored that civilization creates both the radical revolutionary and the mentally ill in precisely the same way. This is politics, but it has also been referred to as the self-negation built into the system - dissent is the natural response to politics just as defense is the natural response to attack. Maybe it is appropriate that the DSM-V (coming soon to a psychotherapist near you) is said to contain a diagnosis (based on oppositional defiance disorder) for politically incorrect thought (radical dissent) which the governors can use to chastise all activists and dissenters - as they used to chastise Stalin for doing that very thing - in order to show how "we're the goodies" and "they're the baddies".

Yes, the goodies and the baddies - we're all prone/programmed to think in these terms. Choose your enemies carefully - they may one day save your ass while your allies try to assassinate you!

Underneath the war game of psychiatry (and other social sciences allowed to be established), there *is* a human being with good intentions; it's just that the institutional imagination compels them to become something more along the lines of assassins of sanity. – NP

Do we have a long, long way to go? I think yes and no. I dig the idea that we try to make things more complex than they need be, and so for anyone (the left?) wanting to reform this absurd system, this pseudo-social agreement we have, they will probably never get there. I also have concern for the militant revolutionaries and insurgents who think we need only fight our way to sanity, (although I admit we may have to fight now and then along the road in getting there). One of my favorite commentaries on this is in *We go on* by the paraplegic street-fighter and sometime public orator, Albert (libertad) Joseph. The message is eerily matched in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*: It's not so much our destination which is most paramount, but what we do along the way. Yes, we go on, but we might also be mindful of the ancient Chinese proverb:

"Unless we change direction, we are likely to end up where we are headed"
"Under the regime of the norm, nothing is normal and everything must be normalized" – Tiqqun

"Centralized Organization?"

1. Self-reproduction of a monopoly on error crouching above a buried mosaic of motive.
2. A regenerative cycle, or system in runaway, within the bounds of which the multiplying external disproofs of claims are assessed internally as negative validation for the said claims' already established 'truth'.
3. A statistical reduction, on the basis of keeping all their eggs in one basket, of the chances of a correct analysis.
4. A hidebound refusal of the greater formal effectiveness of spontaneous improvisings upon events occurring on an as and when basis.
5. The instituted forgetting that position exists in advance of plan. – frere dupont

From an anthropological perspective, a cultural institution is nothing but a set of social behaviors reproduced over time, and abstracted from their cultural context by curious onlookers questioning their "purpose" or "function". The driving "mechanism", at least from a Boasian point of view, is habit, custom and tradition, not planning, organizing and implementing. In fact, rational decision-making on a cultural level need not even be invoked. With tradition, circumstances alone should be sufficient to provoke a spontaneous response. Institutions need not be hierarchical nor authoritative. This habitual behavior is something we see ourselves on a daily basis, but are uncomfortable when it is pointed out because our culture is oriented around traditions of rational social engineering relegated to so-called experts – politicians or their so-called revolutionary counterparts. We live in a culture with oppressive institutions which everyone agrees need fixed (or abolished), but few would take on the responsibility to change their own behavior – it's much easier to leave it up to the group. For a culture of anarchy (or 'freedom', if that is your bent), I would think democracy (demi- 'half, partial, division' + -ocracy 'rule')7 would be seen itself as an oxymoron. This does not rule out consensus. Con-

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7 The more common etymology (adapted from www.etymonline) suggests demos 'common people', but this itself formerly referred to district 'administrative division, area of jurisdiction (market, industrial park, ghetto?)':

**democracy**: 1574, from M.Fr. democratie, from M.L. democratia (13c.), from Gk. demokratia, from demos 'common people', originally 'district' (see demotic), + kratos 'rule, strength, power' (see -cra-cy).

**demotic**: 1822, from Gk. demotikos 'of or for the common people', from demos 'common people, the people'; originally 'district', from PIE *da-mo- 'division', from base *da- 'to divide'.

Also

**demi-**: early 15c., from O.Fr. demi 'half', from L.L. dimedius, from L. dimidius, from dis- 'apart' + medius 'middle'.

**-(o)cracy**: from M.L. -cratia, from Gk. -kratia 'power, rule', from kratos 'strength', from PIE *kratus 'power, strength'.

The etymology of the sometimes platonic, often gnostic concept of demiurge, a synonym of proletariat, is also illuminating:

**demiurge**: 1678, from Latinized form of Gk. demiourgos, lit. 'public or skilled worker' (from demos 'common people' + ergos 'work'). The title of a magistrate in some Gk. city-states and the Achæan League; taken in Platonic philosophy as a name for the maker of the world. In the Gnostic system, "conceived as a being subordinate to the Supreme Being, and sometimes as the author of evil" [OED].

In any sense, the very word "democracy" acknowledges and contains within itself the division of society, is literally equivalent to "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" and it is this which is as well deconstructed above to "Regime of the Norm".
sensus need only imply simple agreement, but that is a personal, not a social decision and therefore need not manifest itself as "group-think". Personal, consensual relations (often referred to as "voluntary association") do, however, have important social implications. Democracy, on the other hand, produces a synergistic authority – what is decided by the group is also mandated by the group: a model, a golden statue of the golden mean symbolizing normality.

Democracy answers the question "What is normal" and as such is truly the greatest form of social control – we stop thinking as individuals in favor of the statistical probability of group-think. Democracy keeps up with the Joneses. Dissenters can't understand the so-called "sheepish" nature of the "masses" in their compliance, their refusal to refuse: we cannot proceed until everyone is of like mind. When we seek approval, we are actually asking for permission; after all, we wouldn't want to appear "abnormal". "Quit shit-stirring and go with the flow, man! Can't you see the logic of our proposition?" The mere possibility of revolution is denied, for contrary individual action is forbidden, not by the so-called powers-that-be, but by the individual her/himself. When an authentic individual thought resides in some foreign land (is perceived by others as "radical"), the individual becomes an outsider.

Democracy is always a system of control, a regime whose very organizing principles establish conformity, and it is this conformity which defines normality, and in fact declares the metaphysics of reality itself. "Normal" and "natural" are one and the same. If not persuaded by soothsayers, naysayers will always be banished if they do not split off of their own accord. Under any democratic regime, the regime of the norm, whether it be representative or consensual, an outside and an inside is established, with the former always subsumed under some such categorization as "enemy". Democratically formed collectives seek autonomy, but they will always be (literally or metaphorically) at war with any other collective whose paths they cross unless they can form utilitarian alliances for specific purposes. If they find generalized agreement, an extra-local democratic kingdom-like state (the federation) is given birth, but civil war is always waiting on the horizon.

Imaginative social planners promoting democratic assemblies and councils (tweaks and adjustments to models from history) as foundation blocks for a new society, criticize those other social planners, the primitivists, for using prehistorical models to build and manage their "new society". The latter remind us, and historical example illustrates that even simple and seemingly harmless delegation of responsibility involved in "collective" decision-making has often fueled increasing specialization and therefore complexity when efficiency is desired and fragmentation is to be avoided – as if fragmentation is a bad thing. The conundrum for direct democracy on a grand scale is that increased complexity necessarily entails secrecy and even democracy dies, superseded by bureaucracy.

Perhaps democracy, even direct democracy is not the historical road to egalité we once thought it was? Seeking majority or even total consensus to restrict or modify behavior sets up conditions of the permit. It is the birth of authority and the death of spontaneity. One's pleasure is no longer allowed to inform one's behavior. Beyond the individual, joining in with another because their behavior (idea, etc.) looks attractive is not enough reason to engage. We require approval from the group. When practice is so divorced from theory, action from desire, we are no longer responsible for our own behavior. When the group is elevated above the individual, when it is so reified, permanent organization is born and any sense of personal ethics or even desire is tossed into the garbage bin of history or is set on hold, awaiting the
decision of the collective tribunal.

Many democratically run collectives demonstrate their lack of leaders and proclaim anarchy: after all, all their decisions are made collectively. They proclaim synergy, that the whole is more powerful than any individual part or member. It is a machine. The individual is nominally valued in case some spark of creativity survives which might be of value to the group. If not, creativity is instantly renamed and re-defined in the same language inherited from "abnormal psychology". Humanist groups will try to rehabilitate the offender – to help somebody return to normal life, a creature of habit, worthy of cohabitation. For the most part, democracy attempts to establish the death of the individual, even as it proclaims tolerance or even respect for the autonomy of other individual collectives. The "live and let live" attitude only refers to relations between allied groups and between 'normal' members – the rank-and-file. We must be on the same page to make sense, as if the individual is the same as the written word in a book – a single word is nothing, a misplaced word is easily given a blind eye with no damage to our comprehension of the total "work", but for later editions, scratched out and replaced. This attitude depends on the civilized notions of truth, (that there must only be one answer to any question), conformity to truth, coherence and efficient precision (that agreement must be based on utility) and that groups, which is to say, affiliations center around "projects" – we've never left the mind-set of production and the social relation remains the social relation of production.

The beauty of Hegelian, and phenomenological thinking in general – taking the figurative metaphor (that is to say, "symbol") as the literal thing – is found in its reification or sacramentalization of the leftist (or any other) project and giving birth to self-fulfilling prophecy The whole is more important than any of the attributes which give it the appearance of life, and hierarchy is reborn beyond anyone's awareness, and then beyond their control. The subtlety of it is beautiful, but the essence of the matter is that hierarchy never left in the first place. We come to demand that anarchy and direct democracy are synonymous, and that the structure of anarchy is a well regulated, scrupulously managed machine. We must be ever on guard, vigilantly concerned that it not cease to function. We must concern ourselves with projects, to make an impact: "Anarchy is not chaos, anarchy demands order, we must protect our freedom!" The whole becomes a runaway machine precisely because of overspecialization and complexity of its constituent parts – those living individuals who think they have achieved freedom. The abolition of masters has produced an autocracy of self-control – for the project of world peace and justice, one must not make waves, everyday life is p.c..

One might come to the conclusion that I am against this idea of synergy, that synergy is an enemy or even that it is not real. I think this would be the wrong conclusion. What I do insist is that synergy is a result of our actions and thinking, our modes of relating we bring into our situations and is nothing but the set of all unforeseen implications – we give it a name (like "capital", "leviathan", "law", "democracy") and then set about to worship or fear it. To ignore it or to set it aside as a separate entity operating by its own rules proclaims predestination or helplessness and particularly, either irresponsibility or devotion to the rule of law. Even illusion is real in its consequences.

But synergy does not have to become godly; its outcomes depend on what we, as individuals bring into it. Synergy is deified when we choose to win life rather than live it. I am thinking of the gifting kind of relationships seen in the game of basketball of the 1960's and '70's (and which has been in decline since the mid to late 80's). Whether a winning or losing result, the
most applauded teams actually demonstrated teamwork (sharing) combined with an individual openness to (or awareness of the possibility of) infinite possibilities. This is to say, spontaneous actions in relation to ones comrades and opponents go beyond the game-plan or "play", an admission that the future cannot be accurately forecast and responses to circumstances planned in advance and religiously carried out. This bending and breaking of "rules" was not only more pleasurable to witness, but also in which to participate. Novelty is seen each time the ball is brought down the court – there is no place for zombies and boredom. An openness to being presents a critical awareness of all that is going on around us such that our responses are seen as spontaneous adjustments to our changing circumstances, not adjustments to the elected or dictated norm. Our experience might provide algorithms, but these are not rules which must be planned, coordinated, dictated and obeyed. This sort of display, in fact, led the Portland team to the world championship, outplaying teams with more individual talent but little teamwork (cooperation) – highly competitive but ultimately boring displays of individualist showboating we see in the spectacle the game presents us today – as well as teams which demonstrated "teamwork" (rigid and regimented followers of rules) but no individual spontaneity or creativity (abandonment of the game-plan when the need arises).

Because the individualist position goes against the grain of the collectively inclined, it is considered anti-social. Among outspoken individualist anarchists, nothing could be further from the truth, else we would not even hear from them. Instead we would only hear proponents of hermitage, seclusion, isolation. Perhaps we would not even hear that, but rather rumors of isolated wildmen, feral hermits living in caves on the outside of our civilization, perhaps shunning all contact – tales of sasquatch. Perhaps we would send missionary explorers to seek them out, determine their humanity, and if that is decided upon, bring them back into the fold. Perhaps we would have to kill them if we found they were sitting on some resource we could utilize more efficiently or which would ensure our collective survival if we felt it threatened. Ends always justify, especially when we have reached consensus.

Consensus has come to mean democracy par excellence. But there is another kind of consensual agreement which is born of concern or empathy for the other and underlies what has in the last few years been labeled "affinity group". This consensus "doesn't seek to impose uniformity, but foster and create alliances which celebrate differences" (– Regina de Bray).

"One trusted comrade is worth a thousand revocable delegates!" (– Wildcat). The basis of democracy is self-sacrifice, "compromise". The basis of affinity group is friendship – displays of mutual trust. The former celebrates unity, the latter not only respects, but demands diversity. Diversity removes the sense of banality from communication, and the goal of communication is not necessarily agreement. As Alan Watts said, "Unless you disagree with me, how will I know what I am thinking?"

The goal of the affinity group is community, which is an expression of friendship or kin-ship. It is truly a mutual social relation, not a permanent organization of like-minded opinion. Among the civilized, sharing is only seen within families or among friends. Mutuality is isolated and impounded. That is why potential friendships must be surveilled (or even prevented) and child-rearing institutionalized. The search for truth demands only one answer to any question. Childhood is thus seen as a disease of ignorance which must be overcome, cured – we must, out of love, protect them from suffering unwanted consequences which only we best know how to avoid. Friendship is antithetical to the true spirit of competition which, we hear shouted from the balconies, "produces excellence". To allow conditions of 'childlike'
spontaneity or subversive friendship would threaten any democratic arrangement proclaiming *equality*. Democratic liberty is the freedom from individual responsibility for the consequences of our behavior. Thus, to live and let live is a criminal offense when the paramount goal of the civilized is production, efficiency and organization – even when that organization is called "The Revolution". A brief look at Ambrose Bierce' *Devil's Dictionary* illustrates that this is also the definition of "CORPORATION, n.  An ingenious device for obtaining individual profit without individual responsibility".

Perhaps our social planners could question their notions of efficiency and organization (management) and reformulate them in terms of a spontaneity and mutual aid as a consequence of giving rather than the mutual punishment implicit in "reciprocal altruism" as envisioned by *avant-garde* social psychologists. But then they'd be out of a job and so would be the entire tit-for-tat economic order! Of course, "planners" and "organizers", "administrators" and "managers" are themselves only meddlesome oxymorons in the context of egalitarian social relations. There are no specifically anarchist strategies of collective decision-making. This does not mean anarchists do not make decisions and come to agreement. A decision must ultimately be personal and made in the context of the satisfaction of desire. Otherwise it is an edict. Arming desire replaces meddling with merriment.

There has recently been some discussion among academic sociologists about swarm behavior which, even on a large scale, seems to achieve a beautiful order out of chaos, a networking with no central planning, group decision-making, nor any other organizing principle beyond the individual going along with the 'comrades' next to her/him. This is seen among schools of fish, flights of geese, buzzing bees and swarms of activists such as was seen in Seattle '99, something Dr. Graeber described as the most advanced organizing principle the police had ever had to confront. Spontaneity is a requirement. Planning and democratic consensus is obviously cumbersome and dangerous as insurrectionary strategy, beyond establishing familiarity with routes of potential escape or dispersal (or in fact, sources of nourishment or replenishment) in one's own territory or trust in the territorial intimacy of one's neighbor displayed by the newcomer. This is in fact, also a requirement in any community.

The issue here is whether social institutions, like communities can be planned, coordinated and implemented – constructions requiring architects and tradesmen to bring the architect's dream to life. I would say that, unlike the chain gang, the social relation cannot be planned, constructed, coordinated and implemented no matter how collectively or democratically decisions are made. This is social engineering, not cultural tradition based on affinity or consanguinity – desire, engagement, connection and reproduction.

The radical dissenter might be mindful that the most out-of-control fires are those created from small, spontaneously forming wildfires. If you have a mass of institution-hilating napalm, use it, but don't discount the value of a single spark from individual refusal, the subversive power of comradery, or the destructive force of the gift. When ridiculing simple-mindedness, don't forget that compliance shares the same root as complexity, and in social relations, complexity generates at least miscommunication, at most bureaucracy, and certainly the end of what most consider beneficent democracy.

*Demand the time to think, form meaningful relationships, and enjoy the journey. For any chance at success, we must love each other more than our enemy hates us. To these ends, our inefficiency is our weapon – curious george brigade.*
Altruism: Love, Economy & Egoism or Love is Business and Business is Bullshit!\(^8\)

everywhere the hypocrisy, or rather self-deception, of an "unselfish love," an interest in the object for the object's sake, not for my sake and mine alone ...

The possessedness of love lies in the alienation of the object, or in my powerlessness as against its alienness and superior power ...

[On the other hand,] the egoist's love rises in selfishness, flows in the bed of selfishness, and empties into selfishness again. – Max Stirner

So is 'love' itself something one can possess? We're often said to be possessed by it, but for Stirner to suggest that "true" love is always selfish sounds harsh to us. But love is possessed, ("my own") only in the sense in which my hunger is also "my own". It is the subject/noun only in the sense in which 'hunger' is. This is a statement of a process, and the process is only a relation between objects (or subjects), not a thing in itself. Nominalized love is reification in the colloquial language, deification in the poetic. 'Love' and 'hunger' are 'things' only to satisfy the linguistic or even more specifically syntactic requirement that we can further refine or communicate our feelings of arousal, nourishment or connection between the self and other, between the self and food. Love, of course, is also a verb: we live to love, we love to eat and we eat to live.

As deprivation from food transforms epicurean pleasure into hunger, desperation, competition, theft and prostitution (or self-employment), alienation turns the lover into sacrificial victim or a slave to passion. It is not hypocrisy but polyphony which brings on confusion. It is not a logical contradiction to be simultaneously a slave to the other's and enslaved by our own passions. It is only a derogatory remark applied to one who loves to live as well as to one alienated from living – epicureanism and poverty are equally criminalized. Our categories of absolutes confine us to to a small terrain of meaning, unaware of shifting levels of abstraction. We are confused when the fence has fallen and the cattle have gotten out. We are called to action, fencing pliers at the ready. Psychologists used to tell us hunger is only the state of arousal, the condition who's only function is to motivate us to eat and is brought on by scarcity or alienation. If we eat too much or too little, it is seen as an impairment, something like a grammatical error or a flu bug. It did not occur to them that eating is enjoyable in itself and like love, hunger is only a relationship. Those who have a zest for life, a will to live rather than a will to power, are said to live passionately, and we call them artists. If poets and painters did not starve in attics, we could not love them. That is the hypocrisy.

Love has no meaning without the object or referent, for then, like the hunger of starvation, it is unrequited and becomes a different "thing" entirely – it is sadness and remorse or longing. Hunger and love merge. It is no longer the relation between the subject (ego) and object of love (other). When I say "she stole my heart, then broke it", I have in fact lost nothing, not even my feelings. A relationship was denied. I have become alienated even from myself, since in this case, the self is not felt complete without the other, the one time when the mathematical equation, \(2 = 1\) is correct. One can indeed die from a "broken heart". And so Browning asked "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways".

Love then is also the behavior between lovers – the praxis of our feelings, the relationship

\(^8\) Originally titled "Toward a Theory of Why-Can't-We-Just-Learn-To-Get-Alongism"
(or its potential) demonstrated. Unlike the dimensions of a particular rock, relationships are infinitely variable because they are creatively, subjectively, emotionally valued. How indeed does one measure love? In the behavioral context of "lovers", love almost invariably implies sex. Through multiple entendre, the confusion between indice and unit of measure raises the spectres of both comedy and revulsion, and taboo and the allied joking relationship between in-laws are born. The Greeks were ahead of us, dividing the semantic territory of love (relations of attraction, desire, care etc.) into four autonomous states: eros 'sexual love;' philo 'have affection for;' agapao 'have regard for, be contented with;' and stergo, 'familial love' of parents and children as well as that of a ruler and his subjects. Philosophers ('lovers of knowledge') well noted the larger territory, and glossed the generic Eros (with a capital "E") 'relationships', the source of universal flux rationalized in logos. Empedocles may have given birth to western dialectics when he divided all process into relations of love and strife: the smooth and the rough, flow and friction, life and death. Prior to the 17th century (that is, abandoned with the onset of the industrial revolution), lief was a word which bridged the semantic territories of live and love. Today, strife is often a synonym for (or at least a symptom of) marriage, a relationship bound only by monogamous sex and often a familial monopoly of cruelty -- the tabooed "extramarital affair" (but not "strife") is sufficient grounds for divorce.

Sex is human. But biologists tell us it's also animal and in fact, vegetable. It is this generic sex which still reflects the universal cooperative relation which makes living possible, yet we speak of our employment as "how we make our living". We used to talk about gravity in terms of "laws of attraction", and chemists still use this metaphor from time to time. Those we're attracted to are said to have magnetic personalities. Or we say "it's all just a matter of chemistry". Poets tell us sex is the climax of love. Both medieval christians and pagan gnostics agreed, back when orgy referred to a profound and ritualized religious experience. As we get a bit of experience under our own belts, we see that, like all sharing relationships, sex and love actually enhance one another. Even our language demonstrates this: "It's pretty fucking important stuff!" But the very topic of sex in 'polite' conversation is taboo for a good reason: the taboo keeps us from seeing how connected life, the universe and everything just really is. It keeps us isolated. Even our "reactionary" endeavors in this forbidden territory serve to minimalize and superficialize sex. The separation of the behavior from the relation and equally, the supersession of the relation by the behavior generates the assessment "love is business and business is bullshit!" This fits well with the universalized prostitution of life revolving around the workplace in the interest of satisfying hunger. Unless egoistic ends are kept constantly in mind, an altruistic or "romantic" love only gets in our way and must be avoided or repressed. But doesn't psychic repression always seem to invite secret transgression?

Just as psychic repression should not be translated as 'oppression' so taboo indicates no more than limit and structure. Both of these aim to preserve coherence of identity, and retain sufficient energy within social activity so as to reproduce society in each successive generation. Just as structure is important in music, or so fendersen argues, so it is in other social activities.

The liberal critique of taboo is staged in terms of rationalisation, which aims to release all 'irrational' constraints on social relations. But in fact liberalism only manages to reassert a series of abstract irrationalities (based on infinite regress) but which are not accessible through lived experience. I think the liberal critique of primitive injunctions could not grasp their ambivalence -- taboo invites transgression and thus supplies energy to society at the level of a tension between a transgressive desire and the taboo that invites/codes such desire.

All pre-capitalist societies are confronted by the meaninglessness of existence but taboo imposes a scale in which meaning becomes applicable and meaninglessness (or terror) is refuted. The question
is, how to establish limits and form which must be experienced as real but at the same time which also must remain manipulable? [– Frere Dupont]

Sometimes psychic repression is merely oppression self-managed. Taboo is the scale which underlays our melody. My own song differs from that played these days, and I think in many ways mine is less healthy. My grandma, the monarch of our family, was twelve years old when Queen Victoria ended her reign and H. G. Wells had been questioning Victorian authority on sexual matters. Grandma was no fan of Mr. Wells. I still uncontrollably blush when confronting this topic, even though I understand the irrational nature of my reaction. If taboo (like any other cultural tradition) is not internalized, it always invites transgression. Some taboos have very good reason, for example restrictions against eating raw rabbit or post-partum sex taboos spacing births in situations where a rapid succession of births might impose on the ability to feed any. Constraints are viewed irrational when the conditions which brought them into being have changed, yet those taboos are maintained and reproduced by the "forces" of custom or tradition. To question the rationalizations behind restrictions on social relations should not be viewed as promoting the release of all so-called "constraints". This is not possible. There's nothing wrong with custom and structure. It need not be constraining. For example, polite discourse (rather than political correctness which today is replacing it), was not a bad idea. Custom and structure make us who we are. They do not need to inhibit improvisation, which is art. Sometimes they enhance it – harmonic structure differentiates music from the noise of fingernails on a chalkboard.

On the other hand, taboos which constrain public discourse on sexual matters may also help keep them private, and therefore more open to personal exploration or improvisation, without fear of other household members' inquisitions (e.g., nosy grandmas).

On yet another hand, we very often have taboos against behavior few would engage in anyway, "just in case". Such might be taboos against eating human flesh, particularly your grandmother's. Sometimes our personal taboos (a sense of 'revulsion' at our own imaginings) just happen to be everyone else's. For the analyst (psycho or otherwise), it could be argued that this only reflects the success of internalization – repressed desire. That is sophistry based on a view of human nature which is rooted in moral, ethical and legal transgression and must therefore be controlled. The circular reasoning here must be obvious – there must be rules imposed prior to their transgression. In the territory of sexual relations, such "transgressions" might be cross-generational incest or bestiality which are probably universally taboo. Another sort of analyst might as easily suggest that, like all societal rules, we only impose taboos against the unexpected or unlikely when there are obvious negative implications (functions) of its transgression. Ultimately, our analyses depend on our views of human nature. This is not to suggest phenomenological essence, but our generalizations attributed to the other (actually, to all others), based on our experience and education ("just so" stories told by teachers).

Only a paranoid culture would actively search out novelty and then proceed to criminalize it. Such is the basis of democracy – "keeping up with the Jonses". The complete and unabridged Oxford Dictionary of the English Language is dwarfed by the United States Criminal Code. Such a system of democratic constraint gives us the philosophy of pessimism of Schopenhauer, who in 1818, wrote "A man can be himself only so long as he is alone; ... if he does not love solitude, he will not love freedom; for it is only when he is alone that he is really free." Interestingly, "eros" and "freedom" are etymologically cognate in Greek and Old Norse
(in as much as the goddesses Aphrodite and Freya/Frigg are cognate), but their semantic divergence had already paved the way for Schopenhauer's pessimism and later, Stirner's "selfish love". To their defense, *private* and *peace* also share in this etymology (from Proto-Indoeuropean *prijos* 'dear, beloved').

When societal rules do inhibit, we are frustrated and prone to resist, or if well socialized, we feel guilt at the merest desire to live (freeplay?). Some taboos were created not by the conditions of lived experience, but to enhance alienation from lived experience. They are no longer called "taboo" but "edicts", "grammar", "the rule of law", even "nature". In this case, voyeurism and vicious are our only [other] option, and we are denoted spectator and imitator. This is also the basis of spectacular democracy. Critique allows transgression to reformulate itself as liberation, rather than transgression for its own sake. We simply cannot "destroy everything" and start over *tabula rasa* as some nihilist insurrectionists would have it: a five thousand year history of universal prostitution enframes all discourse. The word "discourse" itself inhabits the semantic terrain of strife – "competition".

In our language and culture, even clichés of human relationships must be expressed in terms of economics and politics (and utility). It's basically a mathematical simplification of human relations to those of give-and-take or one-upmanship and one-downmanship. It is about exchanges and equivalences – the game has annihilated play. Is it even possible to imagine a merging or communication without the notions of addition, subtraction and subduction? A union or conciliation or interaction which does not entail dominance, theft, compromise and sacrifice? Perhaps our dialectical approach (that is, "conflict resolution") to social relations is why we have so much problem with the concepts of 'mutuality' and 'reciprocit' and even respect for 'diversity'. We bandy about the words, but only in relation to a sense of moral obligation or the management of our utopias and other fantasies. Although we might tolerate diversity, do we ever actually celebrate it? It would seem we are attracted to the safety and security of a transubstantiation of 'love' to mathematical (or chemical) reduction. We call this the application of 'reason' – our source of knowledge. This is a recipe for all behavior, accounting for our own separation and domination/subjugation as well as that of the other. My question: "Isn't there another kind of relationship?" In fact, don't we often embrace love, like an engrossing fantasy novel or chemically induced dream-state, as our only waking escape from the alienation of the world of time and motion engineering and cost-benefit ratios?

If love is maintained as possessedness, which is to say "my love which I am free to share with whomever I please", then how are we to get around issues of competition and therefore domination between lovers? Suppose we were instead to consider love as a form of non-mathematical value – what our friend Mr. Marx might call a use value sans instrumentalism? The "egoistic" relation can only be seen as a subjective relationship. Love realized then describes the relationship as a mutual value – a mutual appreciation more in tune with the archaic definition of "love". Value de-mathematized becomes "esteem". Without the notion of property, the zeitgeist which possesses civilized man, then marriage can only be seen as a community event. The community acknowledges and eventualizes the relationship with a feast, the sharing of "goods" – a sharing westerners have translated as "dowry" and "bride-price". When some thing is given "as a token of our appreciation", it is not the token (as "property") which is important. In fact it is *no-thing* beyond a reminder (symbol) of our esteem, or in the case of a marriage between families, our mutuality. But the spirit of economics demands that this is an "exchange" enforced by the authority of patriarchs, the community,
the state. It is not too far a jump to consider our spouses – loved ones – also as property. It is only through property and its measure that we are bound.

But without the notion of property, where is there room in the world for the spirit of economics? Where also is there room for the spirit of politics, which gives rise to domination – force and withholding? What then would become of our relationships? Sharing is never an exchange, for nothing is lost or abandoned. Like the relationship between property and theft, could there be notions of piety, fealty or even adultery? If property can only be said to be that which is possessed, and is freely shared/circulated (rather than acquired, owned or given), then where is there room for competition? But property is more than mere possession. What can be the object of a "competition between friends" besides property or position, which is to say "domination"? Then 'friendship' becomes reduced to a master-slave relationship or sadomasochism:

\[\text{masochism n.}\]
1. A psychological disorder in which sexual gratification is derived from abuse or physical pain.
2. The deriving of pleasure from being dominated or mistreated. [After Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836-1895).]

\[\text{sadism n.}\]
1. Psychology. The association of sexual gratification with infliction of pain on others.
2. Delight in cruelty. [After the Marquis de Sade (1740-1814)]

There is no doubt that the tyrant is never loved, and loves nobody. Friendship is a sacred word, it is a holy thing, and it exists only between good people, it is kindled by mutual esteem. It is sustained not so much by favors as by a good life. What gives you confidence you can rely on a friend is the knowledge you have his integrity: the guarantors of that are his natural virtue, his trustworthiness and his constancy. Where there is cruelty, treachery and injustice there can be no friendship. Evil men are not companions of one another, they are conspirators. They have no mutual affection, but a mutual fear: they are not friends, but accomplices. – Boétie

Competition and domination, the two conditions necessary to each and every tyrant, can only be described in terms of scarcity, and it is the imposition of scarcity which creates property. The alienation of love itself, that mutual connection between the self and other, provides the ideological destruction of community. What sex is to love the gift is to altruism. "Giving it away for free" negates prostitution. It also negates economics. Like "the free market", a "gift economy" is an oxymoron – a phrase with no meaning.

The modern conception of altruism is bound up (enframed, if you will) by the language of economics. Everything is calculated according to a cost-benefit ratio, and that is our only concern. Economic justice is only a balance between sacrifice and theft. It's always a precarious balance. I much prefer language such as "radical empathy" (– orrrior), which refers to a system of spontaneous flux. Reciprocity is an effect of a gifting society, not a driving motivation subject to measured calculation and transaction. Even in the most complex and ritualized form of the potlatch in elder days, exchange value was not a consideration. It may be true for some, but mostly we don't help a drowning person out of concern for the tit-for-tat anticipated payoff, but concern for the individual, the other. I'd rather see this as driving force behind the circulation of goods or services in a system of mutual aid than the notions of duty and responsibility, notions which demand hierarchy or power relations, notions which stand alone quite well apart from any implication of "empathy". The retort that this is utopian idealism is nonsense. It described the situation for thousands of years before and outside of civilization, and
it was never associated with a nasty, brutal and short existence.

Heidegger's "saving power" for a world enframed by runaway technology (and, I would add, economy) is the world revealing itself between the lines. It is outside of the circumscribed avenues of logic, and that is in the larger territory of art. The praxis in the former is work; in the latter, it is play. I don't think there is a need to invoke human essence, humans are easy to spot. Humane, on the other hand, is a way of behaving or relating which is sometimes hard to spot and even harder to formalize, but it's lack gives us ample proof on a daily basis that something often called "humanity" is missing. We do, however, know it when we see it. Words such as "thank you" or "that was nice of you" are still meaningful to us, as are the actions which provoked those words, most notably, a gift.

By archaic definition, a proper gift has no strings attached. Anything else is a payment, a transaction, an exercise in authority. In modern usage however, "a gift" is "a good deal", and even "a steal". Walmart is our benefactor – everyday low prices. Today property is no longer theft but an essential attribute; it is the gift which represents anti-social behavior – getting "something for nothing". In accordance with the first principle of circumscribed logic (circular reasoning which underlies the self-fulfilling prophecy), "nepotism" and "corruption" provide all the proof we need! Therefore, all behavior is egotistically motivated and it is economic law and the police who would enforce it which protects us from the gift (it is, after all, in our nature as well as "our own best interest" to take!). So goes the standard argument of the kleptocracy.

For many, "gift" in its archaic sense is unthinkable outside the domain of sacrifice. It is only a synonym of transaction with the additional attribute of delayed gratification. It is an insurance premium. The same process of language-change over time concerning the terrain of "friendship" illustrates the primacy of egoism (more properly, "hedonism"). In modern usage, "friend" and "acquaintance" and "accomplice" are all semantically interchangeable. The archaic sense of "friend" implying a connection or bond of empathy is rapidly becoming unimaginable. And we wonder why our "romantic" relationships have no permanence (sex and love having merged semantically, the former colonizing the latter's territory). Economic thinking also saturates parent-child relationships.

My dad "sweat blood" (sacrificed) so that I wouldn't have to, or so he said (altruism can be a handy rationalization, a justification. A potent antacid, altruism relieves guilt: take two with meals for quick relief!). Because in economic relations, sacrifice cannot exist without theft, I became his property and this provided the basis for his authority, and so he also said. We are told that love is sacrifice, accommodation and compromise. When love is a payment and domination its return, love is theft. When this formula is transposed, love is guilt. Is it any wonder that love has become a four letter word amongst polite company?

The extreme reactionaries against this linguistic and cultural change some call the "Kumbiyah" crowd: altruistic hippy love, light and roses which often degenerates into the misery of democratic sacrifice via the destruction of the individual. This untenable position is why so many "flower children" went on to embrace smack from CIA factories in SE Asia in the '70's (and Afghanistan decades later). That these two sides (altruism and hedonism) result in "non-overlapping magisteria" (never the twain shall meet) is not due to an inherent contradiction and incompatibility, but to devotion to absurd Aristotelian logic on which modern language usage hinges. The very same logic which produces a george bush and his mother's "beautiful
mind" provides the irreconcilability of reformist socialists, libertarian communists and insurrectionary anarchists, each of whom would embrace a "communist revolution" – the possibility of living is superseded by its rationalization and we remain enslaved to the real consequences of our unrealistic categorizations. This is the essence of self-fulfilling prophecy, and as our frustration increases, the criminal code grows like runaway cancer.

Is it "Love is Business" or a matter of "Greedy (Total) Appropriation"? Comments on The Right to be Greedy

D.S This is an important discussion, and one I feel anarchists have dealt with in a very partial way. I think it's interesting to note that the limit of the sexual revolution occurred at that very point of capitalist transition from economies of scale. At a time when the atomization of the individual follows an increase in sexualization through film, we receive the free-love hippie. Here, at the climax, something goes terribly wrong. We lose what Zizek refers to as phantasmic desire, and we feel ridiculous. We are now only going through the motions. Love is not possible.

As Foucault and others have pointed out, sexuality is not latent, not actualizing through society as an orgone accelerant. Society and culture define sexuality. Sexuality is created from it's lack, not of itself. Fascism gives us the sexual poverty of 30 women sitting around Hitler, as children amidst a storyteller, jaws agape. The men have a different understanding of 'the violence that goes at it from the hip'. In democracy we have repressive desublimation and the desire for instant gratification. The desiring of desire. The desire of desiring. The opposite is received in the dumbed down versions of Reich's politics, so often touted by polyamorists. Lack of sex makes one a fascist. Love freely comrades! Love, freely.

Is the practical of polyamory so different from the hook-up culture? Comrades with benefits might we call it?

And let us not be misunderstood in this misunderstanding. Polyamory offers us much, but not all. Going too far often leaves one not very far. Emma Goldman told old man Kropotkin that sex is important to us youth. But I think she also meant love. The bound being of love and sex. Has this bind been lost in the transition to the practical world post-1960s? Is there all that much to celebrate?

Women in need of anti-psychiatrists to be taught the orgasm does not suggest how much has been gained, but rather how much has been lost. That feminism has been at times reduced to cheering on the mechanized G-spots of Carrie and her friends in Sex and the City and the City demonstrates not so much a triumph of feminism as a tension towards it's zero-point. It is afeminism. The denial of women's sexuality through women's sexuality. A powerful image that leaves Irigaray's rebuttals of Lacan out in the cold. This sex which is not one. This sex which is nothing.

The practical is already offered in intolerable doses. If we are to speak of polyamory and open relationships then we need to do so, not outside of the practical, but beyond it. Without this we are lacking what Wolfi referred to as a depth of relations. To have sex we need the practical, to have love we need the ideal. But to get away from this duality we need total appropriation of the other. It is only in this depth of knowing that we might wholly experience the
other. In sex. In love.

The author's of The Right to be Greedy, however, bring us to a double bind. We need this total appropriation, but it would seem there is little to appropriate. The individual is anamorphic. A process synthesis. If we are to be loved, and to love, then it is to be with Elliot's twin, or with Beverly's twin. The twin we can never know. As in Dead Ringers our total appropriation of the other is determined by our ability to exist aside a state of compounding reduction. Aside a collective of individuals who are not one. Who are one.

Feminists have told us that we are incapable of loving. I am unsure how I feel of this. It is true that current relations cannot continue as they are. So I am convinced. But the appropriation of Goldman's ideas, without ever knowing who she truly was, without ever trying to go beyond her, says to me that the feminists are incapable of loving. I am unconvinced. As Milena tells Vladimir Illych, you love all mankind, yet you're incapable of loving one individual. You love the world too much. You love yourself too much. You love neither...

F. Pretty awesome, D.S.. The one place I kind of got hung up on was the notion of appropriation of the other. I don't want to appropriate my other, I want to blend. But not to the point of one, of unity. That annihilation of the unique is impossible, or at least, highly undesirable. I dig the word, intercourse. Before it was defined in terms of sexual 'activism', it referred to an alternative to discourse, beyond mere dialogue or an exchange of words. It referred to folks walking the same path rather than knocking each other off it. This of course doesn't imply that those on the same path are the same person.

I'm unfamiliar with some of your references to television, but I get the point. Back in the 60's, when modern feminism was starting to get off the ground, there were two films, "Our Man Flint" and "In Like Flint", where the hero was asked how it was that women (even radical feminists) were so enamored with him. His answer: "Simple. I don't compete with them".

D.S I like the sound of this movie. Since this was short, i didn't get into what total appropriation was, perhaps i should have. It's in the right to be greedy. If this gets finished, hopefully there'll be some critique of that notion, or somehow a going beyond. In the sense of blending, i think total appropriation intends to know when to blend and when to diverge. Love as a process of becoming, for those involved, the couple/group, and for oneself. Knowing when to put oneself first, and how that affects the other. Taking all of the other, perhaps not in the sense of unconditional love. But something like it I think. An unconditional being. A togetherness which is a separateness.

But as you say, the point of one is undesirable. And i think this lack of the unique is part of the non-monogamy movement. The synthesis of the individual is self-accumulating. Can its politics be detached from the world that birthed it?

F. When I first read "Greedy", I was attracted to the idea of merging Stirner and Marx, but red flags started to go off right and left, suggesting to me the project was or could be used as an attempt to recoupereate (the ideology of) property and it's accumulation and insert them back into radical ideology - essentially reclaiming hedonistic desire in our "altruistic egoism" (ie., the anarcho/libertarian-capitalist project). I personally liked the approach of the old Feral Faun after Novatore who said everything should be treated like the stars: "All that is called "material property", "private property", "exterior property" needs to become what the sun, the light, the sky, the sea, the stars are for individuals ... only ethical and spiritual wealth is invulnerable. This is the true property of individuals". In this sense alone should we all want to be greedy. In
this sense too, we can appropriate/incorporate each other without any sense of ownership. Yes, I want it all. Needless to say, I will go over the greedy text again to see if my reaction was only part of my paranoia.

**D.S.** Well said. I can't say I understand property accumulation well enough. But there are parts in 'greedy' that are critical of hedonism. From what I can remember, they see the move away from altruism as a negative. Any attempts to go back, within the current landscape of partial appropriation and the accumulation of others, could only fail. The response is to instead take the other, appropriate them completely. In a Deleuzian sense this could be seen as becoming the other to reactualize oneself. This is more important than the greed over material things, it is the greed of self-mastery. For ethical and spiritual growth. Or as Lacan said, what does it matter how many lovers you have if none of them gives you the universe? I think feral faun pulled much from the greedy text.

**F.** Well, I've finally re-read *Right to be Greedy* with a more open mind. I see your point. My first reading years ago was terminated because I was stopped by the language of "greed". You might say it was no reading at all. It's an important piece but dangerous. I say dangerous because it's damn hard to get out of aristotelian thinking, especially for us older folks who have a lifetime of training in it. My original rejection was coloured by the fact that it was endorsed by folks I'd call anarcho/libertarian-capitalist, and I see why. The words the authors wish to win back are the very watchwords of capital. I thought this a doomed project. Property, power, exchange, greed, selfishness, etc. will never have a place in my *Reformed Dictionary of the English Language*. Needless to say, reading this time around proved more impressive.

One of my entertainments is researching etymologies and thinking about the context and varying levels of abstraction in language (narrow, broad, generic, specific). These terms (greed, etc.) have been so historically bastardized, I don't think they can be re-appropriated and fit back into their original context. I'm much more the sort who would prefer to bring back the earlier intentions and apply alternate, more neutral names: attribute, possession, energy potential, capability, reciprocity, feedback, transformation, desire, pleasure, etc. I say this not in support of a dry scientism, but in the sense of virginity and its potential. Extended use can give neutrality a sharp point – revolutionary creation growing from a banal void, not from the reappropriation of all stolen goods. I also say this in the sense of barbarianism. The effectiveness of barbarians is precisely that they do not speak the same language, so cannot be re-appropriated. They were never part of the fraternity to begin with.

Interestingly, the authors and I seem otherwise to be headed in the same direction. Total appropriation of the other (and its inversion) is precisely what I want. Without this, I feel any search for joy, love, euphoria falls short without heavy inhalation of nitrous oxide or other spectacular distraction. Unfortunately, chemical means to reach such a plateau provide short-lived enthusiasm and some are potentially fatal. The first and hardest task is the elimination of the self-other, individual-collective, subject-object dialectic from a reasoned and felt stance, not just via a level of incompetence induced by spectacular means. "Coming down" always seems to cancel any potential gains made and can lead to depression. Ours is a conceptual task, a revolutionary transformation in worldview, and cannot be furthered by simple lexical change or appropriation. Obviously those right-libertarians I find so offensive don't, can't and won't get it. There is a huge difference between "I want more (of what I don't now have)" and "I want everything (like the stars, sun, wind, oceans, life!)".
The "upside-down world of alienation", the "incapacity for pleasure" will not be reversed by mere linguistic force and dialectic exposition. That "will keep the personal world narrow and impoverished, and the social world menacing and alien." Put simply, the authors didn't go far enough in their juxtaposition of Marx, Stirner, Reich and Vaneigam to rid our thinking of self-other dialectic. Given the assumption that all things are connected, all being is social. This is not a call for democracy. I don't see how this appreciation is possible when the piece is laden with me, my, I, self, you, your, ego, society (as "the outside"), privacy. These words force the dialectic antagonism already forced on us precisely because historical connotation cannot be discarded except over eons of colloquial change in usage. I find it easier to restrict their usage. How authoritarian of me in the interest of communication!

Communism should ideally annihilate not only altruism, but egoism as well, and in that effort, support both: "Compassion doesn't need to be coerced out of us; it comes naturally. We feel others' suffering, as well as their joy, because we are open to feeling our own." Perhaps joy can only be achieved through vicarity: I can only feel it myself when I see it in others? Maybe the authors would agree that what is needed is not the synthesis of dialectic opposition, but the annihilation of oppositions altogether. But their language replaces narrow egoism with more egoism, the self as center of the universe. The social, or communist ego represents a universe of the future with multiple centers. If we were to abandon the very notion of center (with its implied boundaries), we could escape the confines of the dialectic and truly embrace (appropriate) the totality. A communist self would revert to merely a relative point of view amongst innumerable other such points. Without the center, self is redundant, society or commonality is academic, everything is unique, the universe is ubiquitous. Everything is recapitulated in everything else. Mathematical value disappears without the loss of comparison, trendiness, difference & similarity. I'd not stop at the end of exchange value, but use-value as well. Value use, end use-value. Embrace (paradox) and esteem (coherence) without calculation, except of course on tuesdays when contradiction is publicly celebrated and dutifully recorded on ledgers to be stored in library basements, if only to remind us later to not be too rigid in our thinking nor to take our own existence too awfully seriously.

Finally, the appendix situates the project with the situationists and every so-called radical line since in the call for direct democracy, recallable delegates and worker councils. Is this the furthest our imaginations can take us? If one is to refuse representation in the interest of unmediated living (total appropriation), how is one to authorize delegation, no matter how revocable? Democracy itself sacrifices self-will and responsibility to the collective will. Or is there a basic contradiction demanded by the need for digital watches (ca. 1974; 'cell phones' ca. today) making work one of those necessary evils, as long as someone else is agreeably performing it? I think I have to sway toward the primitivist critique of technology, such that our things must be freely reproduceable (and therefore freely available) in each community either through individual or collective effort and without specialization. Until then, there can be no abolition of work. After that, there will be no need for workers councils. I've said before, I think democracy is the strongest form of social control. Certainly, a loving relationship is not something we would want to go into via strategies of democratic decision-making left to the collective will.