



EAST BAY  
ANARCHIST  
BOOKFAIR  
A READER



## Instead of an Introduction

The following texts were compiled for the amusement of all those participating in the *First Annual East Bay Anarchist Bookfair*. Each set of texts corresponds to a facilitated conversation. Those conversations will be held at the bookfair, on Saturday December 1st, 2012. It should be noted that all the following texts are excerpts or abridgments (unfortunately, the manner in which the texts have been excerpted is not always clearly marked). However, we tried to pull from texts that are already available, for free, online.

Note: some of these texts nuzzle and lean into us, and we weep with the joy of recognizing ourselves and our desires. In other texts, we find much to critique and to question. The hope is that these booklets will pop off, like little sparks from a fire, or perhaps float about town, like the parasol of a dandelion seed. If you catch one, mark it up with your number 2 pencil. Prepare questions. Let's unravel all the critical issues.

See you at the fairgrounds!

### Conversations & Time Slots:

	11.00 am
Stage	1a. The Event
Outside	1b. The Event
	12.30 pm
Stage	2a. Pleasure
Outside	2b. Pleasure
	3.00 pm
Outside	Violence versus Non-Violence: a Debate
	4.30 pm
Stage	3a. Nature
Outside	3b. Crisis
	6.00 pm
Stage	What is To Be Done?



You are waiting for the revolution? Let it be! My own began a long time ago! When you are ready (god, what an endless wait!) I won't mind going with you for a while. But when you stop, I shall continue on my way—toward the great and sublime conquest of the nothing!

– Renzo Novatore

# THE EVENT

## **The Anarchist Tension**

### **Alfredo M. Bonanno**

What is anarchism? It might seem strange that I should take up such a problem in this situation, since I know for certain that there are many anarchists here; I know them personally. And if nothing else, anarchists should at least know what anarchism is. Yet it is necessary to take up the question ‘What is anarchism?’ time and time again. Even in a few words. Why is that? This does not normally happen in other expressions of life, in other activities or ideas that define themselves to be something or other, with some foundation.

So anarchists keep asking themselves the same question: What is anarchism? What does it mean to be an anarchist? Why? Because it is not a definition that can be made once and for all, put in a safe, and then considered to be a heritage, to be tapped little by little. Being an anarchist does not mean one has reached a certainty or said once and for all, ‘There, from now on I hold the truth and as such, at least from the point of view of the idea, I am a privileged person’. Anyone who thinks like this is an anarchist in word alone. Instead the anarchist is someone who really puts themselves in doubt as such, as a person, and asks themselves: What is my life, according to what I do and in relation to what I think? What connection do I manage to make each day

in everything I do—a way of being an anarchist continually—not coming to agreements, make little daily compromises, etc? Anarchism is not a concept that can be locked up in a word like a gravestone. It is not a political theory. It is a way of conceiving life, and life, young or old as we may be, whether we are old people or children, is not something final: it is something we must wager day after day. When we wake up in the morning and put our feet on the ground, we must have a good reason for getting up. If we don’t it makes no difference whether we are anarchists or not. We might as well stay in bed and sleep. And to have a good reason we must know what we want to do because for anarchism, for the anarchist, there is no difference between what we do and what we think, but there is a continual reversal of theory into action and action into theory. That is what makes the anarchist unlike someone who has another concept of life and crystallizes this concept in a political practice, in political theory. This is what is not normally said to you, this is what you never read in the newspapers, this is what is not written in books, this is what school jealously keeps quiet about, because this is the secret of life: never ever separate thought from action, the things we know, the things we understand, from the things we do, the things with which we carry out our actions.

[...]

So that is why anarchists keep coming back to the question of what anarchism is. Because anarchism is not a political movement. Or rather it is, but only in a minor aspect. The fact that the anarchist movement presents itself historically as a political movement does not mean that this exhausts all the anarchist potential for life. Of course there are anarchists there, or at least one should assume there are, the kind of comrades who have begun their own insurrection individually, have become aware of the context of obligation and coercion that they are forced to live in. But anarchism is not just that, it is also a tension, the quality of life, the strength we manage to draw out of ourselves, the capacity to change the reality of things. Anarchism is the whole of this project of transformation linked to what we realize in ourselves when we bring about our own personal transformation. So it is not a quantifiable fact that can be historicized. Nor is it an event that will simply occur in the course of time, appearing through particular theories, people, movements as well as, why not, precise revolutionary acts. There is always something more than the sum of these elements, and it is this something more that continues to make anarchism live on in other ways. So we continually need to maintain a relationship between this tension towards something absolutely other, the unthinkable, the unsayable, a dimension we must realize without very well knowing how

to, and the daily experience of the things we can and do, do. A precise relationship of change, of transformation.

[...]

Can we wait for a day to come, a great day that will turn the world upside down? What the anarchists of the last century called ‘la grande soirée’? The great evening or the great day — ‘le grand jour’ — in which forces no one could foresee would end up taking over, exploding into that social conflict we are all waiting for, called revolution? So everything will change and there will be a world of perfection and joy? This is a millenarian idea. Now that we are reaching the end of the millennium it could take root again. But conditions have changed. This is not reality, it is not this waiting that interests us. What does interest us is another kind of intervention, a far more modest one, but one that is capable of achieving something. As anarchists we are called to do something. We are called by our own individual responsibility. From the moment the idea lights up our mind, not the idea of anarchy, but of justice, freedom, when these ideas illuminate our minds and we see the swindle before us — which today more than ever before we can define a democratic swindle — what can we do? We must set to work, and this setting to work also means organizing ourselves. It means creating the conditions of refer-

ence and relating between anarchists, conditions that must be other than those of the past.

For reality has changed. As I have said before, they are building a different man, a de-qualified man, and they are building him because they need to build a de-qualified society. They have removed the figure of the worker from the centre of the conception of the political society as it was, after de-qualifying him. In the past the worker bore the greatest brunt of exploitation. That is why it was thought that this social figure would necessarily give birth to the revolution. It is sufficient to think of the Marxist analysis. Marx's *Capital* is dedicated to the 'liberation' of the worker. When Marx speaks of man, he means the worker. In his analysis of value, he is talking of the work pace; in his analysis of alienation, he is talking about work. There is nothing that does not concern work. But that is because the worker was central to the Marxist analysis at the time when it was developed. The working class could be seen to be the centre of the social structure.

Using different analyses, anarchists also came close to a consideration that the worker's position was the centre of the social world. Think of the anarcho-syndicalist analyses. For the anarcho-syndicalists it was a question of taking the concept of trades union struggle to its extreme consequences, freeing it from the narrower dimension of trades

union bargaining and developing it right to the realization of the revolution through the general strike. So according to the anarcho-syndicalists, the Society of the future, the free anarchist Society, was to be nothing other than the present Society freed from power but with the same productive structures, no longer in the hands of the capitalists but in the hands of the collective which would manage them in common.

This concept is quite impracticable today for various reasons. First of all, because technological transformation has made it impossible for there to be a simple passage from the present society to the future one we desire to live in. A direct passage would be impossible for the simple reason that it is not possible to use information technology in liberated forms, in a liberatory way. The new technologies and computer technology applications have not limited themselves to bringing about certain modifications in particular instruments, they have transformed all the other technologies as well. The factory, for instance, is not simply a structure of the past with the addition of computer technology but has become a computerized factory, which is quite different. Bearing this in mind we can only mention these concepts in a very general way because it would take time to go into them adequately. So we must recognize that it is not possible to use this patrimony. This passage runs parallel

to the end of the myth of the centrality of the working class.

Now, in a situation where the working class has practically disintegrated, the possibility of an expropriation of the means of production no longer exists. So what is the conclusion? The only possible conclusion is that this set of instruments of production we have before us be destroyed. The only possible way is to pass through the dramatic reality of destruction. If the revolution we imagine and which moreover we cannot be certain will ever come about, it will not be the revolution of the past that saw itself as one single event that might even take place in a day or one fine evening but will be a long, tragic, bloody affair that could pass through inconceivably violent, inconceivably tragic processes.

All this is the kind of reality we are moving towards. Not because that is what we desire, not because we like violence, blood, destruction, civil war, death, rape, barbarity. It is not that, but because it is the only plausible road, the road that the transformation wanted by those ruling us and who are in command have made necessary. They have moved on to this road. We cannot change all that with a simple flight of fancy, a simple dream. In the past hypothesis where a strong working class existed, one could fool oneself about this passage and organize accordingly. For example, the organiza-

tional proposal of anarcho-syndicalism saw a strong syndicalist movement which, penetrating the working class and organizing almost the whole of it, was to bring about this expropriation and passage. This collective subject, who was probably mythical from the start, no longer exists even in its mythical version so what sense would there be in a syndicalist movement of a revolutionary nature? What sense would there be in an anarcho-syndicalist movement? None at all.

So the struggle must begin elsewhere, with other ideas and methods. That is why we have been developing a critique of syndicalism and anarcho-syndicalism for about fifteen years. That is why we are, and define ourselves, insurrectionalist anarchists. Not because we think the solution is the barricades — the barricades could be a tragic consequence of choices that are not our own — but we are insurrectionalists because we think that anarchist action must necessarily face very serious problems. These problems are not desired by anarchism but are imposed by the reality that those in power have built, and we cannot obliterate them simply by wishing them away.

An anarchist organization that projects itself into the future should therefore be agile. It cannot present itself with the cumbersome characteristics and quantitative heaviness of the structures of the past. It cannot present itself in a

dimension of synthesis like organizations of the past where the anarchist structures claimed to sum up reality in 'commissions' that treated all the various problems, making decisions at periodical congresses on the basis of theses that even went back to the last century. All this has seen its day, not because a century has passed since it was thought out, but because reality has changed.

That is why we maintain there is a need for the formation of small groups based on the concept of affinity, even tiny groups made up of very few comrades who know each other and deepen this knowledge because there cannot be affinity if one does not have knowledge of the other. One can only recognize one's affinities by going into the elements that determine one's differences, by frequenting each other. This knowledge is a personal fact, but it is also a question of ideas, debate, discussions. But in relation to the first points we made this evening, if you remember, there can be no going into ideas if there is not also a practice of bringing about actions. So, there is a continual reciprocal process of going into ideas and realizing actions.

A small group of comrades, a small group who simply meet in the evening to have a chat would not be an affinity group but a group of friends, pub-mates who meet in the evenings to talk about anything under the sun. On the

contrary, a group that meets to discuss things and in discussing prepares itself for doing and through that doing contributes to developing discussion that transforms itself into discussion about things to be done, this is the mechanism of the affinity group. So how then can affinity groups enter into contact with others where the deepened knowledge that exists in the single group does not necessarily exist? This contact can be assured by informal organization.

But what is an informal organization? There could be relationships of an informal kind between the various affinity groups that enter into contact with each other in order to exchange ideas and do things together, and consequently the existence of an organization, also very widespread throughout the country, comprised of even tens, or why not, hundreds of organizations, structures, groups of an informal character based on discussion, periodic analyses, things to be done together, etc. The organizational logic of insurrectional anarchism is different to the organizations we mentioned earlier concerning anarcho-syndicalism. The organizational forms referred to here in a few words merit going into, something I cannot do now in the dimension of a conference. But such a way of organizing would, in my opinion, remain simply something within the anarchist movement were it not also to realize relations beyond it, that is

through the construction of external groups, external nuclei, also with informal characteristics. These groups should not be composed of anarchists alone, anyone who intends to struggle to reach given objectives, even circumscribed ones, could participate so long as they take a number of essential conditions into account. First of all permanent conflict, that is groups with the characteristic of attacking the reality in which they find themselves without waiting for orders from anywhere else. Then the characteristic of being ‘autonomous’, that is of not depending on or having any relations at all with political parties or trade union organizations. Finally, the characteristic of facing problems one by one and not proposing platforms of generic claims that would inevitably transform themselves into administration along the lines of a mini-party or a small alternative trades union.

### **The Revolution in Reverse** **David Graeber**

In retrospect, what seems strikingly naïve is the old assumption that a single uprising or successful civil war could, as it were, neutralize the entire apparatus of structural violence, at least within a particular national territory: that within that territory, right-wing realities could be simply swept away, to leave the field open for an untram-

meled outpouring of revolutionary creativity. But if so, the truly puzzling thing is that, at certain moments of human history, that appeared to be exactly what was happening. It seems to me that if we are to have any chance of grasping the new, emerging conception of revolution, we need to begin by thinking again about the quality of these insurrectionary moments.

One of the most remarkable things about such moments is how they can seem to burst out of nowhere — and then, often, dissolve away as quickly. How is it that the same “public” that two months before say, the Paris Commune, or Spanish Civil War, had voted in a fairly moderate social democratic regime will suddenly find itself willing to risk their lives for the same ultra-radicals who received a fraction of the actual vote? Or, to return to May ‘68, how is it that the same public that seemed to support or at least feel strongly sympathetic toward the student/worker uprising could almost immediately afterwards return to the polls and elect a right-wing government? The most common historical explanations — that the revolutionaries didn’t really represent the public or its interests, but that elements of the public perhaps became caught up in some sort of irrational effervescence — seem obviously inadequate. First of all, they assume that ‘the public’ is an entity with opinions, interests, and allegiances that can be treated as relatively consis-

tent over time. In fact what we call “the public” is created, produced, through specific institutions that allow specific forms of action — taking polls, watching television, voting, signing petitions or writing letters to elected officials or attending public hearings — and not others. These frames of action imply certain ways of talking, thinking, arguing, deliberating. The same “public” that may widely indulge in the use of recreational chemicals may also consistently vote to make such indulgences illegal; the same collection of citizens are likely to come to completely different decisions on questions affecting their communities if organized into a parliamentary system, a system of computerized plebiscites, or a nested series of public assemblies. In fact the entire anarchist project of reinventing direct democracy is premised on assuming this is the case.

To illustrate what I mean, consider that in America, the same collection of people referred to in one context as “the public” can in another be referred to as “the workforce.” They become a “workforce”, of course, when they are engaged in different sorts of activity. The “public” does not work — at least, a sentence like “most of the American public works in the service industry” would never appear in a magazine or paper — if a journalist were to attempt to write such a sentence, their editor would certainly change it. It is especially odd since the public does appar-

ently have to go to work: this is why, as leftist critics often complain, the media will always talk about how, say, a transport strike is likely to inconvenience the public, in their capacity of commuters, but it will never occur to them that those striking are themselves part of the public, or that whether if they succeed in raising wage levels this will be a public benefit. And certainly the “public” does not go out into the streets. Its role is as audience to public spectacles, and consumers of public services. When buying or using goods and services privately supplied, the same collection of individuals become something else (“consumers”), just as in other contexts of action they are relabeled a “nation”, “electorate”, or “population”.

All these entities are the product of institutions and institutional practices that, in turn, define certain horizons of possibility. Hence when voting in parliamentary elections one might feel obliged to make a “realistic” choice; in an insurrectionary situation, on the other hand, suddenly anything seems possible.

A great deal of recent revolutionary thought essentially asks: what, then, does this collection of people become during such insurrectionary moments? For the last few centuries the conventional answer has been “the people”, and all modern legal regimes ultimately trace their legitimacy to mo-

ments of “constituent power”, when the people rise up, usually in arms, to create a new constitutional order. The insurrectionary paradigm, in fact, is embedded in the very idea of the modern state. A number of European theorists, understanding that the ground has shifted, have proposed a new term, “the multitude”, an entity that cannot by definition become the basis for a new national or bureaucratic state. For me the project is deeply ambivalent.

In the terms I’ve been developing, what “the public”, “the workforce”, “consumers”, “population” all have in common is that they are brought into being by institutionalized frames of action that are inherently bureaucratic, and therefore, profoundly alienating. Voting booths, television screens, office cubicles, hospitals, the ritual that surrounds them — one might say these are the very machinery of alienation. They are the instruments through which the human imagination is smashed and shattered. Insurrectionary moments are moments when this bureaucratic apparatus is neutralized. Doing so always seems to have the effect of throwing horizons of possibility wide open. This only to be expected if one of the main things that apparatus normally does is to enforce extremely limited ones. (This is probably why, as Rebecca Solnit has observed, people often experience something very similar during natural disasters.) This

would explain why revolutionary moments always seem to be followed by an outpouring of social, artistic, and intellectual creativity. Normally unequal structures of imaginative identification are disrupted; everyone is experimenting with trying to see the world from unfamiliar points of view. Normally unequal structures of creativity are disrupted; everyone feels not only the right, but usually the immediate practical need to recreate and reimagine everything around them.

Hence the ambivalence of the process of renaming. On the one hand, it is understandable that those who wish to make radical claims would like to know in whose name they are making them. On the other, if what I’ve been saying is true, the whole project of first invoking a revolutionary “multitude”, and then to start looking for the dynamic forces that lie behind it, begins to look a lot like the first step of that very process of institutionalization that must eventually kill the very thing it celebrates. Subjects (publics, peoples, workforces...) are created by specific institutional structures that are essentially frameworks for action. They are what they do. What revolutionaries do is to break existing frames to create new horizons of possibility, an act that then allows a radical restructuring of the social imagination. This is perhaps the one form of action that cannot, by definition, be institutionalized. This is why a number of revolutionary think-

ers have begun to suggest it might be better her to speak not of “constituent” but “destituent power”.

### **What is the Contemporary? Giorgio Agamben**

The poet—the contemporary—must firmly hold his gaze on his own time. But what does he who sees his time actually see? What is this demented grin on the face of his age? I would like at this point to propose a second definition of contemporariness: The contemporary is he who firmly holds his gaze on his own time so as to perceive not its light, but rather its darkness. All eras, for those who experience contemporariness, are obscure. The contemporary is precisely the person who knows how to see this obscurity, who is able to write by dipping his pen in the obscurity of the present. But what does it mean, “to see an obscurity,” “to perceive the darkness”?

The neurophysiology of vision suggests an initial answer. What happens when we find ourselves in a place deprived of light, or when we close our eyes? What is the darkness that we see then? Neurophysiologists tell us that the absence of light activates a series of peripheral cells in the retina called “off-cells.” When activated, these cells produce the particular kind of vision that we call darkness. Darkness is not, there-

fore, a privative notion (the simple absence of light, or something like non-vision) but rather the result of the activity of the “off-cells,” a product of our own retina. This means, if we now return to our thesis on the darkness of contemporariness, that to perceive this darkness is not a form of inertia or of passivity, but rather implies an activity and a singular ability. In our case, this ability amounts to a neutralization of the lights that come from the epoch in order to discover its obscurity, its special darkness, which is not, however, separable from those lights.

The ones who can call themselves contemporary are only those who do not allow themselves to be blinded by the lights of the century, and so manage to get a glimpse of the shadows in those lights, of their intimate obscurity. Having said this much, we have nevertheless still not addressed our question. Why should we be at all interested in perceiving the obscurity that emanates from the epoch? Is darkness not precisely an anonymous experience that is by definition impenetrable; something that is not directed at us and thus cannot concern us? On the contrary, the contemporary is the person who perceives the darkness of his time as something that concerns him, as something that never ceases to engage him. Darkness is something that—more than any light—turns directly and singularly toward him. The contemporary is the one whose eyes are struck by the beam of darkness that comes from his own time.

I myself am war.

– Georges Bataille

PLEA-  
SURE

## **On the Genealogy of Ethics** **Michel Foucault**

### *History of the Project*

Question. The first volume of *The History of Sexuality* was published in 1976, and none has appeared since. Do you still think that understanding sexuality is central for understanding who we are?

Michel Foucault. I must confess that I am much more interested in problems about techniques of the self and things like that than sex . . . sex is boring.

Q . It sounds like the Greeks were not too interested either.

M.F. No, they were not much interested in sex. It was not a great issue. Compare, for instance, what they say about the place of food and diet. I think it is very, very interesting to see the move, the very slow move, from the privileging of food, which was overwhelming in Greece, to interest in sex. Food was still much more important during the early Christian days than sex. For instance, in the rules for monks, the problem was food, food, food. Then you can see a very slow shift during the Middle Ages, when they were in a kind of equilibrium . . . and after the seventeenth century it was sex.

Q. Yet Volume Two of *The History of Sexuality*, *The Use of Pleasure*, is concerned almost exclusively with, not to put too fine a point on it, sex.

M.F. Yes. One of the numerous reasons I had so much trouble with that book was

that I first wrote a book about sex, which I put aside. Then I wrote a book about the self and the techniques of the self; sex disappeared, and for the third time I was obliged to rewrite a book in which I tried to keep the equilibrium between one and the other.

You see, what I wanted to do in Volume Two of *The History of Sexuality* was to show that you have nearly the same restrictive, the same prohibitive code in the fourth century B.C. and in the moralists and doctors at the beginning of the empire. But I think that the way they integrate those prohibitions in relation to oneself is completely different. I don't think one can find any normalization in, for instance, the Stoic ethics. The reason is, I think, that the principal aim, the principal target of this kind of ethics, was an aesthetic one. First, this kind of ethics was only a problem of personal choice. Second, it was reserved for a few people in the population; it was not a question of giving a pattern of behavior for everybody. It was a personal choice for a small elite. The reason for making this choice was the will to live a beautiful life, and to leave to others memories of a beautiful existence. I don't think that we can say that this kind of ethics was an attempt to normalize the population. The continuity of the themes of this ethics is something very striking, but I think that behind, below this continuity, there were some changes, which I have tried to acknowledge.

Q. So the equilibrium in your work has shifted from sex to techniques of the self?

M.F. I wondered what the technology of the self before Christianity was, or where the Christian technology of the self came from, and what kind of sexual ethics was characteristic of the ancient culture. And then I was obliged after I finished *Confessions of the Flesh*, the book about Christianity, to reexamine what I said in the introduction to *The Usage of Pleasure* about the supposed pagan ethics, because what I had said about pagan ethics were only clichés borrowed from secondary texts. And then I discovered, first, that this pagan ethics was not at all liberal, tolerant, and so on, as it was supposed to be; second, that most of the themes of Christian austerity were very clearly present nearly from the beginning, but that also in pagan culture the main problem was not the rules for austerity but much more the techniques of the self. Reading Seneca, Plutarch, and all those people, I discovered that there were a very great number of problems or themes about the self, the ethics of the self, the technology of the self, and I had the idea of writing a book composed of a set of separate studies, papers about such and such aspects of ancient, pagan technologies of the self.

Q. What is the title?

M.F. *The Care of the Self*. So in the series about sexuality: the first one is *The Use of Pleasure*, and in this book there is a chapter about the technology of the self, since I think it's not possible to understand clearly what Greek sexual ethics was without relating it to this technology of the self. Then, a second volume in the same sex series, *Confessions of the Flesh*,

deals with Christian technologies of the self. And then, *The Care of the Self*, a book separate from the sex series, is composed of different papers about the self—for instance, a commentary on Plato's Alcibiades in which you find the first elaboration of the notion of epimeleia heautou, "care of the self," about the role of reading and writing in constituting the self, maybe the problem of the medical experience of the self, and so on. . . .

Q. And what will come next? Will there be more on the Christians when you finish these three?

M.F. Well, I am going to take care of myself! . . . I have more than a draft of a book about sexual ethics in the sixteenth century, in which also the problem of the techniques of the self, self-examination, the cure of souls, is very important, both in the Protestant and Catholic churches. What strikes me is that in Greek ethics people were concerned with their moral conduct, their ethics, their relations to themselves and to others much more than with religious problems. For instance, what happens to us after death? What are the gods? Do they intervene or not?—these are very, very unimportant problems for them, and they are not directly related to ethics, to conduct. The second thing is that ethics was not related to any social—or at least to any legal-institutional system. For instance, the laws against sexual misbehavior were very few and not very compelling. The third thing is that what they were worried about, their theme was to constitute a kind of ethics which was an aesthetics of existence. Well, I wonder if

our problem nowadays is not, in a way, similar to this one, since most of us no longer believe that ethics is founded in religion, nor do we want a legal system to intervene in our moral, personal, private life. Recent liberation movements suffer from the fact that they cannot find any principle on which to base the elaboration of a new ethics. They need an ethics, but they cannot find any other ethics than an ethics founded on so-called scientific knowledge of what the self is, what desire is, what the unconscious is, and so on. I am struck by this similarity of problems.

Q. Do you think that the Greeks offer an attractive and plausible alternative ?

M.F. No! I am not looking for an alternative; you can't find the solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another moment by other people. You see, what I want to do is not the history of solutions-and that's the reason why I don't accept the word alternative. I would like to do the genealogy of problems, of problematiques. My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism.

I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger. Take as an example Robert Castel's analysis of the history of the antipsychiatry movement. I agree completely with what Castel says,

but that does not mean, as some people suppose, that the mental hospitals were better than antipsychiatry; that does not mean that we were not right to criticize those mental hospitals. I think it was good to do that, because they were the danger. And now it's quite clear that the danger has changed. For instance, in Italy they have closed all the mental hospitals, and there are more free clinics, and so on-and they have new problems.

Q. Isn't it logical, given these concerns, that you should be writing a genealogy of bio-power?

M.F. I have no time for that now, but it could be done. In fact, I have to do it.

**To Destroy Sexuality**  
**Guy Hocquenghem**  
**Translated by Tom Gora**

*To Put*

Although the capitalist order appears to be tolerant, It in fact has always controlled life through its expressive, sexual, emotional and affective aspects, constraining it to the dictates of its totalitarian organization based on exploitation, private property, male dominance, profit, and profitability. It exercises its control under all of its various guises: The Family, schools, the work place, the army, rules, discourse, it unfailingly pursues its abject mission of castrating, oppressing, torturing, and mangling the body, all the better to inscribe its laws upon our flesh, to rivet into our unconscious its mecha-

nisms for propagating slavery. The Capitalist state uses retention, stasis, scarification and neurosis to impose its norms and models, imprint its characters assign its roles, promulgate its programs... it permeates our bodies, forcing its roots of death deep into our smallest crevices. It takes over our organs, robs us of our vital functions, mutilates our pleasures, harnesses all of our "life" productivity under its own paralyzing administration. It turns each of us into a cripple cut off from ones own body, a stranger to ones own desires.

### *An End*

The forces of capitalist occupation continually refine their system of aggression, provocation, extortion so as to use it along with a massive reinforcement of social terror (individual guilt) to repress, exclude, and neutralize all those practices of our will that don't reproduce these forms of domination, and so this thousand-year-old reign of unhappy gratification, sacrifice, resignation, codified masochism and death perpetuates itself. Here reigns castration, reducing the "subject" to a guilt-ridden, neurotic, industrious being, little more than a manual laborer. This old order, reeking of rotting bodies, is indeed horrifying, but it has forced us to direct the revolutionary struggle against capitalist oppression there where it is most deeply rooted – in the living flesh of our own body.

### *To The*

We want to free the space – to context, the locus of the body – and it's own spe-

cific desires from this "foreign grips". It is along this "path" that we propose to "work" towards the liberation of social space. There is no separation between the two: I oppress myself because this "I" is the product of a system of oppression operating across all forms of experience. A "revolutionary consciousness" is nothing but a chimera as long as it remains outside of a "revolutionary body," a body which generates its own freedom.

### *Slaughter of*

Here we find people who have short circuited the hackneyed separation between "politics" and lived experience, a separation bringing generous returns to the managers of our bourgeois society as well as to those who pretend to represent the masses and to speak in their name. Here we find people preparing a great uprising of life against all of the manifestations of death which continually insinuate themselves into our body, ever more subtly binding our energies, desires, reality to the imperatives of the established order.

They form the contours of a new fissure, a more radical and definitive confrontation, according to which these revolutionary forces are "necessarily" arranging themselves. Here we find women, revolting against the male power that has been inseminated in their bodies for centuries; homosexuals, revolting against the terrorizing fascism of normality; Adolescence, revolting against the pathological authority of adults. They have begun, collectively, to open up the body's

space to subversion and to open up the space of subversion to the “immediate needs of the body.” Here we find people beginning to question and investigate the various modes by which desire is produced, the links between *jouissance*<sup>1</sup> – the height of cognitive and sexual fulfillment – and power between the body and subject as consciousness, as they exist everywhere throughout capitalist society, even among radicals.

### *The Body*

We can no longer stand by idly while we are robbed of our mouths, our anuses, our sexual members, our guts, our veins . . . just so they can turn them into parts for their ignominious machine which produces capital, exploitation and the family. We can no longer stand by idly while they control, regulate and occupy our mucous membranes, the pores of our skin, the entire sentient surface of our body. We can no longer stand by idly while they use our nervous system as a relay in the system of capitalist, federal, patriarchal exploitation, nor while they use our brain as a means of punishment programmed by ambient.

We can no longer “come” or hold back our shit, our saliva, our energy according to their laws with their minor, tolerated infractions. We want to explode the frigid inhibited, mortified body that capitalism wants so desperately to make out of our living body.

### *To escape from the sedentary*

Wanting the fundamental freedom to enter into these revolutionary practices entails our escaping from the limits of our own “self.” We must turn the “subject” within ourselves upside-down; escape from the sedentary, from the “civilized state” and cross the spaces of a limitless body; live in the willful mobility beyond sexuality, beyond the territory and repertory of normality. This is how some of us have come to feel the vital need to be free ourselves “together” from the grip of the forces that oppress and repress our desires. We strive to take our personal, intimate life experiences and confront them, explore them, live them collectively. We strive to break down the concrete walls that serve the dominant social order by separating being from experience, spoken from unspoken, private from social. We strive to elucidate in common the mechanisms behind attraction, repulsion, resistance orgasm; to make the universe of our representation, fetishes, obsessions, phobias. The “unmentionable” has become our preoccupation, our message, our political time bomb since in the realm of social interactions politics exhibits a fundamental wish to be “alive” We have decided to explode the unbearable secret that power uses against everyone whose lives include any sensual, sexual or affective involvement whatsoever – the same kind of control it exercises over any real social interaction that produces or reproduces any forms of oppression.

*To destroy sexuality.*

In order to explore mutually our individual histories, we undertook to determine how our lives as reflected through our desires were entirely controlled by the basic laws of our bureaucratic, bourgeois, and Judeo-Christian society, and how they were subsumed under its rule of maximum profitability, surplus value, and reproducibility. We confronted our individual “experiences” by recognizing that, however “free” they may have appeared to us, we continually conform to stereotypes of an official sexuality that controls every sexual experience from the conjugal bed to the bordello to say nothing of public toilets, discos, factories, confessionals, sex shops, prisons, schools, subways, etc. We're not concerned with simply breaking down this official sexuality as one would break down the conditions of one's imprisonment within any structure; we want to destroy it, to get rid of it because in the final analysis it functions as an infinitely repeating castration machine designed to reproduce everywhere and in everyone the unquestioning obedience of a slave. Sexuality is just as monstrous in what it “permits” as in what it restricts; clearly, “liberalized” sexual mores and the extension of “eroticism” through advertising to all social life structured and controlled by the managers of “advanced” capitalism do nothing more but increase the efficiency of the “reproductive” function of the “official” libido. Rather than reduce sexual discontent, these practice in fact extend the realm of frustration and “lack” that facilitates the transformation of desire into a compul-

sive consumerism and guarantees “the creation of demand,” the driving power behind capitalism's apologies. There is no fundamental differences between the “immaculate conception” and the publicity minded prostitute, between conjugal duty and the “enlightened” promiscuity of the bourgeoisie; the progression is unbroken. The same restrictions apply. The same fragmentations of the body as a source of desire continues unabated. Only the strategy changes. What we want, what we desire is to kick down the facade over sexuality and its representations so that we might discover just what our living body is.

*To get rid of programmed training*

We want to free, release, unfetter and relieve this living body so as to free all of its energies, desires, passions crushed by our conscriptive and programmed social system. We want to be able to exercise each of our vital functions experiencing their full complement of pleasure. We want to rediscover sensations as basic as the pleasure in breathing that has been smothered by the forces of oppression and pollution; or the pleasure of eating and digesting that has been interrupted by the rhythm of profitability and ersatz food it produces; or the pleasure in shitting and pederasty that has been systematically assaulted by the capitalist establishments opinion of the sphincter. It inscribes directly upon this flesh its fundamental principles; the power lines of exploitation, the neurosis of accumulation, the mystique of property and propriety, etc. We want rediscover the pleasure in shaking ourselves joyously,

without shame, not because of need or compensation, but just for the sheer pleasure of shaking ourselves. We want to rediscover the pleasure of vibrating, humming, speaking, walking, moving, expressing ourselves, raving, singing – finding pleasure in our bodies in all ways possible. We want to rediscover the pleasure in producing pleasure and in creating – pleasure that has been ruthlessly straight-jacketed by the educational system in charge of producing workers-command consumers.

*To liberate energies.*

We seek to open our body to other bodies, another body; To transmit vibrations, to circulate energies, to arrange desires to that each is free to play out its fantasies and ecstasies, so that we might live without guilt and without inhibiting all the intra- and interpersonal practices we need so our day to day reality won't turn into the slow agony that capitalism and bureaucracy project as a model existence. We seek to rip out of ourselves the festering rumor of guilt that for thousands of years has been at the root of all oppression.

Of course, we realize how many obstacles we have to overcome to make our aspirations into something more than the dreams of a small and marginal minority. We are keenly aware that liberating the body for sensual, sexual, affective, and ecstatic relationships is inseparable linked to liberating women and destroying male dominance and role models – especially sexual role models. It is likewise linked to destroying all forms of

oppression and “normality.” We want to be rid of all roles and identities based on the phallus. We want to be rid of sexual segregation. We want to be rid of the categories of man and woman, gay and straight, possessor and possessed, greater and lesser, master and slave. We want instead to be genderqueer,<sup>2</sup> autonomous, mobile and multiple human beings with varying differences who can at interchange desires, gratifications, ecstasies, and tender emotions without referring back to tables of surplus value or power structures that aren't already in the rules of the game. We have begun and shall continue to produce a new societal reality in which the greatest ecstasy combines with the greatest consciousness. We have begun with the body, with the revolutionary body, the productive space of “subversive” strength and the effective space of all oppression. Consequently, we have reunited “political” with the reality of the body and its functions by collectively investigating all the various modes of liberation. This is our only chance to fight against the oppressive capitalist state where it works directly. This is the only approach that can truly strengthen us against a system of domination that continually expands its powers of “weakening” and “molding” the individual to its axioms, affiliating him to its order of dogs.

*Citations*

1. Jouissance, for Lacan, is not a purely pleasurable experience. Instead, it arises through the augmentation of a sensation, to a point of discomfort (as in the sexual act, where the cry of passion is at

times indistinguishable from the cry of pain). Jouissance also seems to imply a desire to abolish the condition of lack.

2. Genderqueer was used to replace the word Transsexual, which we feel is closer to the idea Hocquenghem was positing. Genderqueer is a way to describe being both man and woman, neither man nor woman, or falling completely outside the gender binary.



Now I am an outcast. I loathe my  
country. The best thing for me is  
a drunken sleep on the beach.

– Arthur Rimbaud

NATURE

## **One Shot Left**

### **George Monbiot**

Is it too late [to prevent runaway climate change]? To say so is to make it true. To suggest that there is nothing that can now be done is to ensure that nothing is done. But even a resolute optimist like me finds hope ever harder to summon. A new summary of the science published since last year's Intergovernmental Panel report suggests that - almost a century ahead of schedule - the critical climate processes might have begun.

Just a year ago the Intergovernmental Panel warned that the Arctic's "late-summer sea ice is projected to disappear almost completely towards the end of the 21st century ... in some models." But, as the new report by the Public Interest Research Centre (PIRC) shows, climate scientists are now predicting the end of late-summer sea ice within three to seven years. The trajectory of current melting plummets through the graphs like a meteorite falling to earth.

Forget the sodding polar bears: this is about all of us. As the ice disappears, the region becomes darker, which means that it absorbs more heat. A recent paper published in *Geophysical Research Letters* shows that the extra warming caused by disappearing sea ice penetrates 1500km inland, covering almost the entire region of continuous permafrost. Arctic permafrost contains twice as much carbon as the entire global atmosphere. It remains safe for as long as the ground stays frozen. But the melting has begun. Methane gushers are now gas-

sing out of some places with such force that they keep the water open in Arctic lakes, through the winter.

The effects of melting permafrost are not incorporated into any global climate models. Runaway warming in the Arctic alone could flip the entire planet into a new climatic state. The Middle Climate could collapse faster and sooner than the grimmest forecasts proposed.

Barack Obama's speech to the US climate summit last week was an astonishing development. It shows that, in this respect at least, there really is a prospect of profound political change in America. But while he described a workable plan for dealing with the problem perceived by the Earth Summit of 1992, the measures he proposes are now hopelessly out of date. The science has moved on. The events the Earth Summit and the Kyoto process were supposed to have prevented are already beginning. Thanks to the wrecking tactics of Bush the elder, Clinton (and Gore) and Bush the younger, steady, sensible programmes of the kind that Obama proposes are now irrelevant. As the PIRC report suggests, the years of sabotage and procrastination have left us with only one remaining shot: a crash program of total energy replacement.

A paper by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research shows that if we are to give ourselves a roughly even chance of preventing more than two degrees of warming, global emissions from energy must peak by 2015 and decline by between six and eight per cent per

year from 2020 to 2040, leading to a complete decarbonization of the global economy soon after 2050. Even this program would work only if some optimistic assumptions about the response of the biosphere hold true. Delivering a high chance of preventing two degrees of warming would mean cutting global emissions by over 8% a year.

Is this possible? Is this acceptable? The Tyndall paper points out that annual emission reductions greater than one per cent have “been associated only with economic recession or upheaval.” When the Soviet Union collapsed, they fell by some 5% a year. But you can answer these questions only by considering the alternatives. The trajectory both Barack Obama and Gordon Brown have proposed - an 80% cut by 2050 - means reducing emissions by an average of 2% a year. This program, the figures in the Tyndall paper suggest, is likely to commit the world to at least four or five degrees of warming, which means the likely collapse of human civilization across much of the planet. Is this acceptable?

The costs of a total energy replacement and conservation plan would be astronomical, the speed improbable. But the governments of the rich nations have already deployed a scheme like this for another purpose. A survey by the broadcasting network CNBC suggests that the US federal government has now spent \$4.2 trillion in response to the financial crisis, more than the total spending on World War Two when adjusted for inflation. Do we want to be remembered as

the generation that saved the banks and let the biosphere collapse?

This approach is challenged by the American thinker Sharon Astyk. In an interesting new essay, she points out that replacing the world’s energy infrastructure involves “an enormous front-load of fossil fuels”, which are required to manufacture wind turbines, electric cars, new grid connections, insulation and all the rest. This could push us past the climate tipping point. Instead, she proposes, we must ask people “to make short term, radical sacrifices”, cutting our energy consumption by 50%, with little technological assistance, in five years. There are two problems: the first is that all previous attempts show that relying on voluntary abstinence does not work. The second is that a 10% annual cut in energy consumption while the infrastructure remains mostly unchanged means a 10% annual cut in total consumption: a deeper depression than the modern world has ever experienced. No political system - even an absolute monarchy - could survive an economic collapse on this scale.

She is right about the risks of a technological green new deal, but these are risks we have to take. Astyk’s proposals travel far into the realm of wishful thinking. Even the technological solution I favor inhabits the distant margins of possibility. Can we do it? Search me. Reviewing the new evidence, I have to admit that we might have left it too late. But there is another question I can answer more easily. Can we afford not to try? No we can’t.

**Desert**  
**Anonymous**

*Forward!*

Something haunts many activists, anarchists, environmentalists, many of my friends. It haunted me. Much of our subcultures tell us it's not there, that we can't see it, hear it. Our best wishes for the world tell us not to see it. But for many, despite their best efforts — carrying on with the normal activism, the movement building, living both according to and as an expression of their ethics — despite all this, the spectre gains form. The faint image grows more solid, more unavoidable, until the ghost is staring one in the face. And like many monsters of past tales, when its gaze is met — people freeze. Become unable to move. Give up hope; become disillusioned and inactive. This malaise, freezing, not only slows 'activist workload', but I have seen it affect every facet of many of my friends' lives.

The spectre that many try not to see is a simple realization — the world will not be 'saved'. Global anarchist revolution is not going to happen. Global climate change is now unstoppable. We are not going to see the worldwide end to civilization/capitalism/patriarchy/authority. It's not going to happen any time soon. It's unlikely to happen ever. The world will not be 'saved'. Not by activists, not by mass movements, not by charities and not by an insurgent global proletariat. The world will not be 'saved'. This realization hurts people.

They don't want it to be true! But it probably is.

These realizations, this abandonment of illusions should not become disabling. Yet if one believes that it's all or nothing, then there is a problem. Many friends have 'dropped out' of the 'movement' whilst others have remained in old patterns but with a sadness and cynicism which signals a feeling of futility. Some hover around scenes critiquing all, but living and fighting little.

"It's not the despair — I can handle the despair. It's the hope I can't handle."

The hope of a Big Happy Ending, hurts people; sets the stage for the pain felt when they become disillusioned. Because, truly, who amongst us now really believes? How many have been burnt up by the effort needed to reconcile a fundamentally religious faith in the positive transformation of the world with the reality of life all around us? Yet to be disillusioned — with global revolution/with our capacity to stop climate change — should not alter our anarchist nature, or the love of nature we feel as anarchists. There are many possibilities for liberty and wildness still.

What are some of these possibilities and how can we live them? What could it mean to be an anarchist, an environmentalist, when global revolution and world-wide social/eco sustainability are not the aim? What objectives, what plans, what lives, what adventures are there when the illusions are set aside and

we walk into the world not disabled by disillusionment but unburdened by it?

### *1. No (Global) Future*

*Religious myths: progress, global capitalism, global revolution, global collapse*

The idea of Progress was central to the modern Western paradigm and the presumption that the entire world was moving ever onwards to a better future was dominant. The idea of the inevitability or possibility of a global libertarian future originates from that belief.

In many ways Anarchism was/is the libertarian extreme of the European Enlightenment — against god and the state. In some countries such as turn of the Twentieth Century Spain it was the Enlightenment — its militantly pro-science anti-clericism being as much an attraction as its anti-capitalism. Yet the rubbish of history is not so easily discarded and ‘progressive’ revolutionary movements have often been, in essence, form and aim, the continuation of religion by other means. As an example, the belief that universal peace and beauty would be reached through apocalyptic tumults of blood and fire (revolution/the millennium/the collapse) indicates firmly that as an enlightenment ideology, Anarchism has been heavily burdened by its Euro-Christian origins. John Gray was talking about Marxism when he said it was a “...a radical version of the enlightenment belief in progress — itself a mutation of Christian hopes... [Following] Judaism and Christianity in seeing history as a moral drama, that’s last act

is salvation.” While some anarchists never fell for such bunkum, many did, and some still do.

These days Progress itself is increasingly questioned both by anarchists and across society. I have yet to meet anyone today who still believes in the inevitability of a global anarchist future. However the idea of a global movement, confronting a global present and creating a global future has many apostles. Some of these are even libertarians and look hopefully to the possibility of global anarchist revolution.

The illusory triumph of capitalism following the destruction of the Berlin Wall lead to the proclamation — more utopian than real — of a New World Order — a global capitalist system. The reaction of many to globalization was to posit one from below, and this was only re-enforced by the near simultaneous public emergence of the Zapatistas and the invention of the Web. The subsequent international action days, often coinciding with summits, became the focus for the supposedly global anti-capitalist ‘movement of movements’. The excitement on the streets enabled many to forestall seeing the spectre by looking in the direction of the ‘global movement’. But there never was a global movement against capitalism, then, or ever, just as capitalism itself was never truly global. There are many, many places where capitalist relations are not the dominant practice, and even more where anti-capitalist (nevermind anarchist) movements simply don’t exist.

Amidst the jolly unreality of this period of ‘Global Resistance’ some could get really carried away: “We have no interest in reforming the World Bank or the IMF; we want it abolished as part of an international anarchist revolution.” Such statements are understandable if written in the drunk-like exuberance one can sometimes feel on having defeated the police, but they are found more commonly. The self-description of one Anarchist Federation reads: “As the capitalist system rules the whole world, its destruction must be complete and worldwide”.

The illusion of a singular world capitalist present is mirrored by the illusion of a singular world anarchist future.

*I love us, there's so much we can do and be, but there are limits*

Anarchists are growing in number. Groups and counter-cultures are appearing in countries where there were few, or no, social movement anarchists previously. Yet an honest appraisal of our strengths and prospects, and those of the communities and classes we are part of, would show clearly that we are not growing “the new society in the shell of the old”, that someday will liberate the world in a moment of rupture. The earth has a lot of places with a lot of people; a reality that can increasingly easily get lost in the web-encapsulated global (activist) village. To want to rid the world of capitalist social relations, or further still civilization, is one thing. To be capable of doing so is something else

entirely. We are not everywhere — we are rare.

Actions, circles of friends, social centers, urban guerrilla cells, magazine editorial groups, eco-warriors, housing co-ops, students, refuges, arsonists, parents, squats, scientists, peasants, strikers, teachers, land based communes, musicians, tribespeople, street gangs, loving insurgents and so, so much else. Anarchists can be wonderful. We can have beauty, and self-possessed power and possibility in buckets. We cannot, however, remake the entire world; there are not enough of us, and never will be.

Some may argue that a global libertarian revolution can succeed without being made, or significantly aided, by overt anarchists so ‘our’ present numbers and resources are null and void. While it’s a given that social crises and revolt are regular occurrences in societies based on class warfare; to put ones faith in the ‘revolutionary impulse of the proletariat’ is a theory approximate to saying ‘It’ll be alright on the night.’

There is unfortunately little evidence from history that the working class — never mind anyone else — is intrinsically predisposed to libertarian or ecological revolution. Thousands of years of authoritarian socialization favor the jackboot...

Neither we, nor anyone else, can create a libertarian and ecological global future society by expanding social movements. Further, there is no reason to think that in the absence of such a vast expansion,

a global social transformation congruent with our desires will ever happen. As anarchists we are not the seed of the future society in the shell of the old, but merely one of many elements from which the future is forming. That's ok; when faced with such scale and complexity, there is a value in non-servile humility — even for insurgents.

To give up hope for global anarchist revolution is not to resign oneself to anarchy remaining an eternal protest. Seaweed puts it well:

Revolution is not everywhere or nowhere. Any bioregion can be liberated through a succession of events and strategies based on the conditions unique to it, mostly as the grip of civilization in that area weakens through its own volition or through the efforts of its inhabitants... Civilization didn't succeed everywhere at once, and so its undoing might only occur to varying degrees in different places at different times.

Even if an area is seemingly fully under the control of authority there are always places to go, to live in, to love in and to resist from. And we can extend those spaces. The global situation may seem beyond us, but the local never is. As anarchists we are neither entirely powerless nor potentially omnipotent, thankfully.

## 2. *It's Later Than We Thought*

*Observed climate change is faster than expected*

One recurring theme in environmentalism is that the apocalypse is always imminent but forever deferred. Every generation seems to have one last chance to save the planet. Biologist Barry Com-

moner said back in 1970: “We are in a period of grace, we have the time — perhaps a generation — in which to save the environment from the final effects of the violence we have already done to it.” Similar pronouncements can be heard today but the period of grace is probably over. Back in 1990 the editors of *The Ecologist* set out a general evaluation of the state of the earth in *5000 Days to Save the Planet*:

Today we are told that our planet is in crisis, that we are destroying and polluting our way to a global catastrophe... We may have as little as fifteen years, perhaps as short a time as 5000 days to save the planet... One of the major concerns arising out of the Gaia theory is that we are pushing natural processes beyond their capacity to maintain an atmosphere fit for higher forms of life. Beyond a certain point, the system may flip to an entirely new state which would be extremely uncomfortable for life as we know it... once triggered, the change to the new state could occur with extreme rapidity.

By 2005 the countdown envisaged in the title had reached zero and the originator of the Gaia theory, James Lovelock, was writing *The Revenge of Gaia* where he would state that he thought the living earth was probably now moving irrevocably to a hot state. Lovelock came to this conclusion primarily as a result of seeing scientific observations of climate change surpassing what most predictions said was meant to be happening. In an address to the Royal Society he stated:

The positive feedback on heating from the melting of floating Arctic and Antarctic ice alone is causing an acceleration of system driven heating whose total will soon or already be greater than that from all of the pollution CO<sub>2</sub> that we have so far added. This suggests that implementing Kyoto or some super Kyoto is most unlikely to succeed... we have to understand that the Earth System is now in positive feedback and is moving ineluctably towards the stable hot state of past climates.

Lovelock's public advocacy of nuclear power, disbelief in wind farms as a panacea and his clear statements that massive climate change is now probably inevitable has made him unpopular with many greens. He's definitely 'off-message'. It's rather inconvenient, then, that he's got such a good environmental and scientific pedigree. As a polymath in his nineties he has worked in many fields. Notably, he invented the Electron Capture Detector that made the discovery of the Ozone Hole and the writing of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* possible. His initially heretical Gaia hypothesis, of a self managing living earth, is now widely accepted under the title Earth System Science. He's long argued for wild land expansion and been sympathetic to ecological defense actions. As an avid hiker he even carried out a personal bombing campaign around the right to roam way back in the 1930s! His detractors often admire his pioneering work but say (in a somewhat ageist manner) that he has now gone a bit batty. The real problem, though, is that he has made a professional career of being beholden to no-one else's ideology or pay-packet. As such he has the capacity to say what many in scientific and envi-

ronmental institutions are thinking but are afraid to say so directly in public. Lovelock thinks that a range of factors have led to a consistent under-diagnosis of the extent of human effects on the earth. These factors include:

A speed and complexity of change which research/publication schedules cannot keep up with.

A failure to see and comprehend the living earth as a dynamic self-regulating system.

A lack of joined up thinking due to academic compartmentalization.

Governmental pressures on the writing of IPCC synthesis reports.

The possibly considerable masking of present heating by global dimming.

It's beyond the scope of this text to give an overall summation of Lovelock's thinking, never mind the wider science around global heating. Part of the nature of the problem is that by the time you read this the science will have moved on considerably. If you are interested have a look at the sources I have referenced and read wider yourself. However while the details may vary the inexorable direction of much of the science seems to be that we are probably heading to a considerably hotter earth, and fast. Recent observations put us further down the road than many of us thought even a few years ago. Decades later down the road. Combined with inertia around reducing carbon emissions this makes the chances of 'stopping' massive climate change probably rather slight.

While NGOs are still babbling about stopping a two degrees warming, increasingly many climate scientists are discussing a four degree warming by end of the century or even as early as 2060. This is by no means a fringe worry. The 2007 IPCC report predicted a rise of between 2 and 6.4°C this century. Bob Watson, its former chairman has warned that the “world should work on mitigation and adaptation strategies to ‘prepare for 4°C of warming.’” This is bad enough but Lovelock goes further and cites a number of feedback mechanisms he thinks are already moving us to an even hotter state, of which the melting of sea ice mentioned above is the most well known. What could this new hot state look like? Some highlights:

Hot deserts spreading over much of the global south and into southern and even some of central Europe.

Cold deserts predominantly in the global north retracting to leave new frontier land in Siberia, Scandinavia, Canada, Greenland, Alaska and even to a certain extent in the Antarctic.

Mass attempts at migration from arid zones to the still habitable areas.

Mass human die-off coupled with accelerating species extinctions.

Lovelock puts it rather bluntly:

Humans are in a pretty difficult position and I don't think they are clever enough to handle what's ahead. I think they'll survive as a species all right, but the cull during this century is going to be huge... The number remaining at the end of the century will probably be a billion or less.

Of course, I don't know this is a true picture of present and future climate change . The true complexity of the Earth System (and human social dynamics within it) is probably beyond our comprehension (definitely beyond mine) and models should not be confused with reality. My informed hunch (that's all one has in the fool-making business of describing the future) is that the picture painted is probably a reasonable approximation. You may not think so, but I would ask that you run with me as it's a possibility worth considering. That hunch is as much informed by an anarchist critique of capitalism as it is a reading of climate science. Looking around me, it's a lovely bright day and the leaves of the trees are almost shining; but little in the society in which I live indicates to me that a problem of the scale and complexity of climate change is going to get fixed. Given that, I feel that the big question posed is not so much if we will reach a world somewhat resembling that outlined above but when.

Lovelock is seriously proposing that such a world (or to be more accurate, such worlds) will emerge by the end of this century, and that emergence trends will start to become obvious by mid century. It could take longer, but either way it may be advantageous to take such shifts into consideration when thinking about what we want to achieve in our lives.

Here, to be clear, we are not talking about a millennial apocalypse, though it may feel like that to some caught in its more horrible or exciting moments. Rather we are talking about massive ac-

celerating change. James Hansen (NASA) comments:

If we wish to preserve a planet similar to that in which civilization developed and to which life adapted, Palaeolithic evidence and ongoing climate change suggest that CO<sub>2</sub> will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm to at most 350 ppm.

Chances are it won't be. The environmental niche that civilization (class divided agriculturally-sustained city culture) developed in is on the way out. With it will probably go many of civilization's citizens. And there are many, many citizens.

*Climate change brings possibilities as well as closures*

Global heating, population growth, peak oil and other environmental limits are probably not the apocalypse that will end the reign of capital and the state everywhere. The global collapse is probably no nearer than the global revolution. Nevertheless it does mean that a totalized global capitalism, enclosing all relationships within it, becomes even less likely. The Western project of cultural expansion faces its limits. As part of that, the libertarian movements which capitalism has carried on its coat tails also face the real limits to the growth of Anarchism. Yet just as the establishment of a one world of Anarchism is foreclosed so the possibilities of many new/old worlds — some anarchies — becomes widespread. Some of these possibilities will be opened up by conflict, some will be closed by conflict.

The very nature of states is to control populations, but many of the billions will not hunger quietly. Yesterday the late Victorian holocausts triggered millenarian uprisings amongst those being swept away by the spreading flood waters of the 'world system'. Tomorrow, as the tide retracts and surplus populations are left on the (desert) sand, we seem set for yet another, if anything more brutal, century of wars and insurrections.

At a time when profound technological changes are pushing production towards a state of chaos, we are forced to ask ourselves: are the old revolutionary theories still valid? I do not think they are.

– Alfredo Bonanno

# CRISIS

## **What Is to Be Done?** **Paul Mattick**

Governments find themselves today between a rock and a hard place. The rock: a continuing descent into depression will bring enormous risks for social stability, as large numbers of people find that the existing social institutions are unable to take care of their most basic needs. Last winter's riots in Greece have already demonstrated a high level of opposition to the political and economic status quo; France has already seen two nationwide demonstrations of nearly three million workers protesting job cuts and proposed changes in pension laws, and demanding government action. Popular protests drove the bankrupt Icelandic government from power, while angry workers have occupied closed factories in Ireland, Ukraine, and even the normally quiescent United States, where local organizations have also prevented housing foreclosures or occupied vacant buildings in a number of cities. True, the most publicized expression of popular anger so far has been that directed at financial executives rewarded with bonuses paid out of government funds issued to their near-bankrupt companies—anger rising from people earlier unfazed, so far as we know, by the astoundingly unequal distribution of income achieved by the wealthy, with government aid, over the last 25 years. If that anger gets channeled away from particular instances or individuals to a social system based on inequality and oppression, things could get quite constructive indeed. Hence the need to keep gov-

ernment funds flowing to prop up business institutions.

The hard place: the idea that companies like A.I.G., the Bank of America, or Citicorp are “too big to fail” amounts to a declaration of the failure of the market economy—that is, of capitalism in its classical, or ideal, form. Competition was supposed to eliminate the weak, leaving the most productive (of profits) to prosper, thereby optimizing social well-being. Blocking competition's operation amounts to admitting the obsolescence of capitalism itself. Even more important, government action in the form of stimulus plans, bailouts, or nationalizations threatens the private enterprise system not only symbolically but practically, as money is taken from the circuits of the capitalist market and used by the state for objectives defined politically rather than by the criterion of profitability.

Furthermore, the situation today is rather different from that at the outset of the last depression. The United States had a government debt of \$16 billion in 1930; today it is \$11 trillion and climbing. In terms of percentage of GDP, the federal debt had already reached 37.9% by 1970; in 2004 it was 63.9%. The federal government is already responsible for about 35% of economic output (as measured by GDP, the value of all goods and services produced in a year). When this number hit 50% at the height of the Second World War, the growth of private capital came more or less to a halt. All of which is to say, the Keynesian means for depression-fighting have been

largely used up, unless the state is to displace private enterprise completely to create a state-run economy like that of the old Soviet Union, a goal favored by no actual political force (despite Newsweek's early February cover story declaring that "We Are All Socialists Now"). It's only twenty years since Russia and its satellites embraced the free market, or at least some highly restricted version of it, but even those governments show no interest in returning to the centrally-planned system of yore. The Chinese state too has clearly thrown in its lot with the market, even while its economy is being dragged down by the global collapse. And even Sweden, long the Western standard-bearer for "socialism" in the eyes of American conservatives, is letting Saab go broke with the announcement from enterprise minister Maud Olofsson that "The Swedish state is not prepared to own car factories."

The upshot is that governments will continue to be largely paralyzed, just hoping—bolstered by economists' psychic predictions—that it will all be over in a year or two. Hence, in the U.S., the unwillingness of the Congress, so far, to allocate more than a fraction of the estimated \$2 trillion in troubled assets held by American banks; hence the immediate opposition of Democratic as well as Republican politicians to the proposal of the Obama government to limit tax deductions for the wealthiest 1.2% of taxpayers, limit climate-changing gas emissions, or cut subsidies to agribusiness; hence the Treasury Department's unwillingness to interfere seriously with bankers' decision-making about the

funds shoveled in their direction; hence the seeming schizophrenia of Obama's statement to reporters on March 14 that "we've got to see worldwide concerted action to make sure that the massive contraction in demand [in consumer spending] is dealt with" while "signaling to Congress," as he was reported doing a day later, that he "could support taxing some employee health benefits," thus decreasing wages and contracting demand. And hence the unwillingness of European governments even to follow the Americans very far down their half-hearted road, leaving the stimulus exercise (with its hoped-for benefits to European exporters) to the United States while concentrating on limiting their budget deficits and tightening their citizens' belts.

But if, as I have been arguing, we are now in the opening stages of a Greater Depression, it's hard to expect anything but worsening economic conditions for decades to come, requiring increased assaults on the earnings and working conditions of those who are still lucky enough to be wage earners around the world, waves of bankruptcies and business consolidations throughout the economy, and increasingly serious conflicts over just who is going to pay for all this. Which automobile companies, in which countries, will survive, while others take over their assets and markets? Which financial institutions will be crushed by uncollectible debts, and which will survive to take over larger chunks of the world market for money? What struggles will develop for control of raw materials, such as oil or water for

irrigation and drinking, or agricultural land? All governments attack protectionism today (or at least they did yesterday) and call for mutual support and free trade, but in practice even a relatively integrated economic union like Europe is breaking down under the strain of divergent interests, while yesteryear's global cheerleaders today solemnly intone the need to Buy American.

The biggest unknown, however, is the tolerance that the world's population will show for the havoc that resolving capitalism's difficulties will inflict on their lives. Whatever mix of stimulus and respect for market freedom governments decide upon, the working-class majority will pay for it, with greater unemployment or lower wages and benefits—in fact, as we can already see, it will be with both. Will people be willing to march off to war again, as in the last great crises, to secure better terms for national businesses? Europeans, whatever their governments may be planning, show every sign of having finally learned their lesson in this regard, while the American popular acquiescence in war seems to have been weakened by the series of defeats and stalemates suffered in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq, and soon in Afghanistan.

Will people instead turn their attention to bettering their own conditions of life in the concrete, immediate ways an unraveling economy will require? Will newly homeless millions look at newly foreclosed, empty houses, unsaleable consumer goods, and stockpiled government foodstuffs and see a way to sustain life? No doubt, as in the past,

Americans will demand that industry or government provide them with jobs, but as such demands come up against economic limits, perhaps it will also occur to people that the factories, offices, farms, and other workplaces will still exist, even if they cannot be run profitably, and can be set into motion to produce goods that people need. Even if there are not enough jobs—paid employment, working for business or the state—there is work aplenty to be done if people organize production and distribution for themselves, outside the constraints of the business economy.

When the financial shit hit the fan last fall, everyone with access to the media, from the President to left-wing commentators like Doug Henwood of the *Left Business Observer*, agreed that it was necessary to save the banks with infusions of government cash lest the whole economy collapse. But, aside from the fact that the economy is collapsing anyway, the opposite is closer to the truth: if the whole financial system fell away, and money ceased to be the power source turning the wheels of production, the whole productive apparatus of society—machines, raw materials, and above all working people—would still be there, along with the human needs it can be made to serve. The fewer years of suffering and confusion it takes for people to figure this out, the better.

## **Identity in Crisis**

### **Baedan**

#### *Contention One: A Crisis of Reproduction*

##### *1.i*

While economists, politicians and technocrats of all varieties endlessly speak of this or that detail of the crisis, they remain caught up in diagnosing what they perceive as a periodic crisis of the capitalist mode of production. What goes unspoken is that all the various crises of production, consumption and accumulation are simply minor breakdowns within a systematic process that confronts us as the domination of our very lives. This latter is itself a great crisis, one born from the moment we were dispossessed of our ways of being and accumulated as workers, and which in our view constitutes the fundamental crisis of alienation and production within industrial civilization.

The same process which removes us from the world and makes us into workers also renders us irrelevant as workers. Through generations of violence, our ancestors were destroyed as living beings and recreated as a pool of labor-power. The products of the labor of each successive generation form the structures that affirm capital and render future labor-power redundant. And thus, the so-called industrial reserve army becomes a Lazarus layer of surplus population, irrelevant to yet hopelessly reliant on the means of production for survival.

To put this yet another way, the current crisis cannot be viewed as a result of the actions of a class of greedy bankers, unscrupulous lenders or even a result of the concentration of fortune in the hands of a ruling class. Rather, we have to view our current situation as the inevitable outcome of alienated labor—the process by which our activity and ability to reproduce ourselves is taken from us and used to dominate our lives. All of the energy that is routed into production that is not our own congeals to form a system of apparatuses that become the only—and increasingly alienated—means by which reproduction is possible, alienating us from any possibilities to live outside the capitalist system. The continued existence of the capitalist mode of production is contingent upon the reproduction of the alienated self. While the analysis of reproduction by Marx (and by many Marxists) focuses on this as taking place in the sphere outside of work where the various activities necessary to sustain the workforce's lifeforce are carried out, we will argue that the relative disappearance of labor from the industrial sphere coincides with the appearance of work's logic in every aspect of life. The reproduction of the self, then, becomes a primary productive operation rather than a mere secondary support to the productive process.

We'll quote Marx in writing:

“Proletarian” must be understood to mean, economically speaking, nothing other than “wage-labourer,” the man who produces and valorises “capital,” and is thrown onto the street as soon

as he becomes superfluous to the need for valorisation.

The primacy of this throwing-on-the-street exposes the fundamental crisis of subjectivity under capital: the collapse of the worker's identity. It is from this position—that of the street—that we will begin our analysis.

*1.ii*

Though we are continually further removed from the means to provide for ourselves, we cannot view this situation as simply a crisis of this particular mode of production, when it is the very crisis of living within class society. Our irrelevance in the process of production and the misery of self-reproduction is not an abstraction, but a reality that haunts and animates our daily experience.

In Wisconsin's anti-austerity struggle of early 2011, we can witness a particularly apparent aspect of the process of expulsion and immiseration that has been unfolding across the globe for decades. Politicians are quite honest when they claim that the system can no longer afford to care for the growing surplus populations without the means to care for themselves. Union contracts are dissolved so as to more easily cast out irrelevant or unnecessary workers. Funding for services, education, housing, food, and health are devastated. Teachers vote for their own pay cuts in order to preserve a dying system. Union bureaucrats offer to concede every possible aspect of their constituencies' livelihoods in a desperate attempt to cling to their

own positions in the bureaucracy. "Representatives" flee their positions because they can do nothing else.

Policing is expanded and prison terms are dramatically lengthened in order to quarantine surplus populations. At all levels, the state is reduced to and exposed as its primary function—the management and discipline of the growing population of bodies who are entirely unnecessary to the continuation of the economy. In order to prevent the chaotic revolt of these bodies, more diffuse and sinister forms of policing are deployed. Through a whole series of mystifications, police-logics are internalized within the protest body. The ideals of democracy, non-violence, and civil disobedience serve to re-route popular rage as a desperate plea for the continuation of a system that first exploits us and then, when we are no longer necessary, leaves us to die.

To this deeper crisis, there is no reformist or progressive answer. Progress itself has only meant an intensification of the alienation and the division of labor at the heart of the fundamental crisis of class society. A renewal of the workers' movement would be meaningless for those who might never be able to even be traditional workers—a status quickly becoming the norm. An expansion of the welfare state can only act as a band-aid fix, a ploy for social peace. Even if the solutions offered by the Left were tenable, they'd be entirely undesirable all the same. When protesters say "this is what democracy looks like" they are entirely correct—this situation is exactly

what democracy looks like: a shit sandwich, without the bread. For those who constitute the ever-growing and intrinsic outside to the economy, there is no integrated operation or mode of protest that can save us. Our choices are obvious— austerity and the continued immiseration of our daily lives, or the immediate destruction of the means of production and the class society they produce.

*1.iv*

The disintegration of the guiding narratives of futurity and social expectation marks a real crisis in our own reproduction as subjects. One was told that on the trajectory of the locomotive of life would be suburban homes on mortgage, white picket fences, marriage, 1.5 children, comfortable unionized jobs, two automobiles, a big television. One was told to view his family, his home, his very life as the future product of his own “hard work.” But none of this will exist for us. For many of us, it never did and we would never have desired it. And yet, the period marked by the industrial revolution of daily life and the real subsumption of daily activity through machines (dishwashers, automobiles, microwave ovens) has come to an end. Forget the suburbs. This is a crisis of the individual atomized reproduction of the capitalist family unit. People are being forced out of their homes and their union jobs in droves. What is a family, even? The regime of hostile privatism is in crisis. We are seeing all its hallmarks disappear as the ideology of whiteness is thrown into crisis. The middle class, and with it,

middle class subjectivity are disappearing from the face of the earth.

The construction of the middle class had as its foundation the home mortgage. Home ownership on mortgage effects several things at once: a shift from working-class identity to middle-class identity, a change in the alignment of actual class interests (insofar as one’s interests come to involve the value of one’s home), and the weight of life-long debt (necessitating more and more work in order to pay it off). Additional markers of middle-class position were a stable career and ownership of small amounts of stocks. The collapse of the housing market, the loss of any reality of stable employment in all but a few sectors, and the collapse in the stock market (severely cutting into the financial basis for retirement in 401K plans, etc.) all add up to the massive looting of the middle class. This process cannot, however, be simply described as widespread proletarianization, nor does it signal the inevitable collapse of the capitalist system. On the contrary, the current crisis is a crucial battle in the struggle between the potential for insurgency on one hand, and the potential for another restructuring of class society on the other.

The crisis of whiteness bears with it a set of unique opportunities, but also a set of crippling limitations. The limits: Those who are recovering from middle class delusions can be seen en masse concerning themselves with what brand of tape to use so as not to hurt the walls of the capitol building, or thanking the armed police officers about to arrest them, or

believing that the police and the union leadership is on their side, or having a whole range of absurd ideas that the problems they face can be fixed by a recall election. Never mind a whole mythology of non-violent resistance and civil disobedience. Some rather large pushes, activists, if you wish to become dangerous.

The opportunity: Those for whom any event was always experienced as something that happened to other people are beginning to see themselves as the people they read about in the news: unemployed, homeless. Those for whom history was thought to have ended have found themselves the victims (and agents) of its ceaseless progression (and potentially its explosion). Divorced from a past, from any means to reproduce themselves, from any of the fictions promised to them as children, people are beginning to call into question all the assumptions and narratives upon which our social order is based. Those who months ago could never have seen themselves occupying buildings or sabotaging their workplaces have begun to find new ways to act together. To a certain degree, people are positioned to see that their own survival will be predicated on their own self-activity to destroy the conditions that have shaped their abysmal future.

The collapse of traditional subject positions begets the emergence of new class positions of exclusion: on the one hand total abjection and unwaged labor and on the other a diffusion of technologies-of-the-self constituting a global petite

bourgeoisie. More realistically there will be a complete indistinction and oscillation between these positions. The grim reality is that each individual will have to bring continually-innovated and newly-commodified aspects of her existence to sell on the market, or else starve.

*Contention Two: Re-creation  
and Technologies-of-the-Self*

2. *i*

The new middle class is a class divorced from the promise of steady employment, of stable home-ownership, burdened with ever-increasing debt and the ever-increasing necessity (since nothing can be taken for granted any longer) for self-upgrades in order to have a chance at continued employment. A middle class for whom the self becomes a zero-capital enterprise, a class of individuals who are at once utterly proletarianized (dispossessed, thrown into the street) and yet the pettiest of the bourgeoisie, managing their own beings as little businesses. This new disposition replaces the structural role of the older forms of middle-class subjectivity (namely, the suppression of class struggle through the bonding of workers' survival to the survival of capitalism, and the intensification of the necessity of work through enormous quantities of debt) by positioning the individual in conflict with himself. Class war becomes something that is waged internally between one's proletarian interests and one's "better interests," between self-management and unmanageability, between the refusal of work, the scarcity of work, and the im-

petus to work more and more... The struggle in Wisconsin saw slogans such as “save the middle class”—which meant to save its structural form—but what the current struggles are effecting (because of their positive character) is a restructuring of capitalism toward the global, virtual middle class.

We can give the name real subsumption to the process by which a world created and operated through our muscles becomes a world operated through energy in the form of fuel. Real subsumption marks the ability of dead labor to dominate the living. When we say dead labor, we mean a vast array of machines and apparatuses, produced by the living activity of humans that is taken from them and comes to mediate their relationship to their own survival. This is the ultimate achievement of capital: total alienation. The shift to privatized and commodified homes (made possible by the increasing centrality of machinery in our daily lives) marked the onset of what can be called the real subsumption of life under capital.

While the real subsumption of life under capital is taken for granted by many, we believe with the advent of a whole new set of machines and apparatuses, that we are now experiencing what could be called the real subsumption of subjectivity. By this we mean the colonization and economization of what it means to be alive at all—the totality of our features, looks, interests, relationships, dispositions, inclinations, sexuality, gender, tastes, body parts, physique, etc.

We can follow Foucault in his exploration of what he called technologies-of-the-self. It seems natural that after twenty-five years of inquiry into the production and disciplining of subjectivities (madness, deviancy, criminality, sexuality) Foucault would turn to the study of the ways in which people can deploy power to shape themselves. He named technologies of the self as the ability of individuals to effect, by their own means or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and ways of being so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of perfection or immortality. Through this analysis, we can begin to see the emergence of a situation wherein each individual body can become the capitalist—the entrepreneur—of itself and the very possibility of its life. For each entrepreneur of the self, the (supposed) entirety of his “being” constitutes his own private property, his own capital, his own profit-logic. This entrepreneurial subjectivity reveals the dreadful reality that we all have the opportunity to become whatever we can make of ourselves, and then to bring the product to market.

## 2. *ii*

Just as what we would roughly identify as formal subsumption is made possible by the production of certain machines at the business level (mining equipment, transportation infrastructure, factories) and real subsumption is enabled by the production of specific machines at the domestic level (household appliances,

personal transportation), the phase of real real subsumption is effected by the deployment of an entirely new set of machinery at the personal level—this time, the vast network of hardware and software that comprises the world of information technology.

Put another way, through the process of total subsumption, individuals have been deconstructed and concurrently reconstructed as a crossing of apparatuses and technologies of the self. It is now impossible to speak of an individual as being a body bound by flesh: instead, we have the intersection of Facebook profiles, smart phones, bank accounts, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, social security numbers, tagged pictures, health and criminal records, gym memberships, DNA profiles, fingerprints, lists detailing our tastes music/books/films, model portfolios, mug shots, fetish chat rooms, online hook-ups, typefaces, degrees, screen names, avatars, tablets, Twitter feeds, Grindr, Flickr, Socializr, Tumblr, iSnitch applications, GPS coordinates, risk statistics, drivers licenses, surveillance footage, blog entries, friend networks and whatever might turn up through the Google search of a name.

In the same way we are alienated from a life outside the machinery in which dead labor congeals, we are equally alienated from conceiving of our bodies or being called by our names outside of the innumerable apparatuses that conceive, identify, name, measure and track us as data points. The domination of machines over our lives is nearing perfection. These apparatuses alienate us from

our communication, relation, befriending, seduction. What's more, they now comprise the totality and the process by which we identify, name and constitute our (current and potential) selves and relationships. The individual is dead. Atomization proliferates forever.

## 2. *iii*

The combination of an ever-increasing lazarus layer of surplus population, the vast diffusion of technologies of the self, and the real real subsumption of life and subjectivity under capital coincide to produce a new economic-social terrain wherein every aspect of what could be called an individual has been fully integrated into their quantifiable market value. The collapse of traditional subject positions is managed through the proliferation of a new positions: app designers, graphic designers, cyber sex workers, queer theorists, feminist publishers, social network engineers, trend hunters, eBay sellers, social justice activists, performance artists, porn directors, spammers, party promoters, award winning baristas. We are forced to continually define ourselves, to enact countless operations upon ourselves so as to produce ourselves anew each day as someone worth taking to market—our basic survival depends on the ceaseless deployment of increasingly discreet technologies of the self. Everything is for sale: our sex appeal, our fetishes, our tattoos, our radicalism, our fashion sense, our queerness, our androgyny, our fitness, our fluidity, our abnormality, our sociability. Facebook and Twitter function as the new resume. We are caught in the

unending necessity to be continually educating, training, exploring, perfecting, and fine-tuning ourselves. Our continual self-invention is both economic imperative and economic engine.

*Contention Three: Serve / Negation*

3. iv

Some proposals:

The widespread practice of identity theft (which effects not only the expropriation of resources from financial institutions but also the unraveling of those institutions' ability to accurately identify individuals by linking with any degree of certainty an individual and his official identity—name, SSN, account number);

The rise of the Anonymous phenomenon that began with petty 4chan hooliganism and went on to “troll society” (launching attacks from the cover of internet anonymity through practices of trolling, slander, leaking of huge quantities of confidential information including personal accounts data, massive online piracy networks for software, music, films, porn, books, etc.—not to mention IRL piracy in Somalia or anywhere—DDOS assaults on various institutions and organizations, especially agents in information control and management, attacks and creation of counter-repressive technology networks in solidarity with North African rebels experiencing severe government repression of internet communication);

Total refusal of debt (giving the collectors the run-around);

Flash mob expropriations and attacks;

Pushing the inherent contradictions of identity politics towards their most extremist conclusions in order to undermine any logical basis that its circulation still retains (and outright attacking its priests);

Wearing masks and destroying things;

Squatting, looting, workplace theft and all forms of expropriation that make it possible for us to live in refusal of the apparatuses that produce us as workers or any other subject.

What these practices have in common is twofold: the sabotage of the systems of identification (by which we mean the technological networks by which an individual can be identified by financial, governmental, and social institutions as being his unique self—i.e. his social security number; as possessing certain attributes; and/or as belonging to a group, class, society, etc.), and some level of secrecy or anonymity on the part of the saboteurs. These latter practices (Anonymous, wearing literal or figurative masks, mobbing, secret societies, and so on) demonstrate that individuals necessarily take on, or emerge as, new forms of negative-being while assaulting systems of identification. Negative-being bears no relation to the forms of liberal, reductionist, being-in-common-at-the-lowest-common-denominator type of group mentality that is promoted by slo-

gans about sharing, consensus, direct-democracy, equality, nor to the hip performance-art-style production of new subjectivities, but rather enacts in-itself the negation of the subject (the refusal of obedience, of attribution, and of identification) and thus of the very foundation of liberal society.

[...]

This society is re-constituted in every moment of every day. All the normative gestures carried out by society's members reproduce the social relationship of capital, and the not-so-normative gestures have their niche markets too. All of us—and especially the hip and radical among us—are positioned as workers in a social factory with no outside that is busily churning out new subjectivities and methods of tracking, identifying, categorizing, and managing them, and whose machinery is ripe for sabotage. Subversion can only offer us a surface level restructuring, a re-arrangement of elements that has never been in any way related to the possibility of destroying capitalism. No, we need to recognize that sabotage remains our invariant task. We are speaking here of a sabotage of the technology and social networks that assign, monitor, classify, and designate subjectivity.

To [turn] to the figure of pornography: The dead labor of thousands of boys not unlike myself, extracted from them in the form of the capture of their image and the spectacle of their sexuality is put into service. I am structured, formed, constituted by the unending re-

production of these specters. I, like an innumerable population of bodies, am captured by these images and animated by them. If it would have ever been possible to separate my own desire from the desires of the apparatuses that shape me, it isn't any longer. Through a miserable range of techniques of the self, I am recreated like Adam in the image of the God commodity, the dead labor taken from bodies for the cost of a wage. Through the successful application of these techniques, my self also becomes a marketable commodity. My sex, my hips, my tattoos, my particular skill set is alienated from me as an image, taken, multiplied, deployed through an almost endless network of apparatuses (tablets, computers, iPhones, network cables, servers, wifi, memories, bodies, fantasies) so that my dead labor may infinitely haunt bodies in the way all of ours are haunted.

There is no subversive practice that can undo this haunting of the living by the dead. For the ceaseless reproduction and exploitation of my image, and all images that are put into the service of the commodity relationship to be halted in even the slightest way would require the total sabotage and destruction of every apparatus that acts toward this reproduction. We cannot orient ourselves towards the subversion of the cyborg network that enchants us as commodities. We have to take it all down.

*3. v*

We will end with an anecdote. With the vast depletion of disposable income and

the advancement of new technical forms, Borders has been the first major bookstore chain to need to close their doors. Walking through their stores before the massive closures, one found shelves entirely empty of books, genre signs hanging in disarray, security apparatuses unplugged and hoping to be bought. Even if one had wanted to purchase an item, it would have been utterly impossible since no employees could be found—they were all too busy smoking cigarettes and gossiping. In this moment of crisis, of restructuring, of re-creation we cannot be caught in the traps of glorifying either the dying forms, or the emergent new ones. We are not for the book as physical or electronic commodity. We don't care about Borders any more than we will care about whatever capitalist enterprise will replace it. Rather, we need to discover the truth hidden in plain site. One need only to look to the banners hanging above the doors of each closing Borders location to read, in bold-face text:

**Final Days**

**Everything Must Go**