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Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies

Anarchist Cultural Politics in Latin America

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Contents

Articles

Book Reviews

Anarchist Cultural Politics in Latin America: An Introduction

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When I first began writing on the history of anarchism in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1990s, interest in radical socialism was just emerging as the failed Communist experiments in the USSR and Eastern Europe had recently collapsed and many on the left (activists and scholars) began to look anew at radical, stateless, horizontal forms of socialism both within their midst and as historical subjects. The histories of Latin American anarchism were not new by any means. Since at least the 1960s, historians across the Americas had written about anarchism. Yet, these histories tended to focus on the labor and organizational dimensions of anarchism within one country. While insightful, it seemed that such foci were limited to old-style labor histories. Thus, in the late-1990s, I began to explore cultural politics to see anarchists in early twentieth-century Cuba as actors more interested in the larger world than just union organizing, strikes, and such. By exploring their schools, health clinics, and liter-

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ary productions (novels, plays, poetry, short stories), a new perspective emerged in which anarchists became cultural warriors who used often non-labor focused tools of insurrection to challenge the elite while fostering images of a new way of life that people in the here-and-now could emulate as they prepared for that coming New Dawn. In short, anarchist culture was prefigurative politics.

Now, this revelation came about quite accidentally. One day while doing archival research in Havana in the mid-1990s, my mentor and guide on the ground—the late Dr. Alejandro García Álvarez—met me in his office near the University of Havana. He walked me to the Institute of History to introduce me to scholars there and facilitate my work in those archives. At this point, I was conducting what was largely a labor-oriented history of Cuban anarchism. But on the way from the university to the institute, Dr. García Álvarez said, "Let's stop in here." "Here" was the Institute of Literature and Linguistics— a beautiful old building with courtyard, fountains, and a music school next door from where lovely live music wafted through open windows and serenaded people reading in the institute. My mentor urged me to look at the old wooden card catalogue while he met with someone. To my amazement, the institute included the vast literary output of key anarchists in Cuba, especially Adrián del Valle and Antonio Penichet. Until this point, I had never really considered Cuban anarchist fiction's existence—I was not the brightest grad student—but here was something new and exciting written by key activists in the Cuban movement. I soon discovered as well that Del Valle had been an important librarian there when the building was known as the Sociedad Económica de los Amigos del País. Let's just say that at that moment, my research agenda changed, and a focus on anarchist cultural politics emerged—something I've continued to explore in the Caribbean for almost thirty years.

The essays in this volume are part of a two-issue series that explores anarchist cultural politics in its many dimensions, and which emerged in part from panels at the European Social Science History Conference in Gotenborg, Sweden in April 2023. This volume focuses on Latin America, with essays on Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Peru from the early 1900s to the 2010s. The second volume will

explore research on anarchist cultural politics in Europe and the United States. In thinking about cultural politics, I keep it relatively simple for simplicity allows for a breadth of topics: we're examining how politics impacts culture and how culture impacts politics. Scholars of Latin American anarchist cultural politics have focused on how anarchists used culture to attack governments (both authoritarian and democratic), racism, gender roles, nationalism, xenophobia, anti-immigrant stances, and capitalism in its various forms from the industrial level to the small-scale. At the same time, scholars have emphasized not only what anarchists were against in these works but also what they were for: social revolution, egalitarian societies, living in harmony with nature, decentralization, harmonious social relations, social justice, and more.

From the late 1880s to the present, anarchists have embraced numerous cultural insurrectionary weapons at their disposal. During the surge of anarchist movements before and in the years immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution, newspapers were key. Besides news, analysis and opinion, newspapers published images, poems, artwork, short stories, plays, and serialized novels that attacked or lampooned their opponents—be they dictators, democrats, priests, capitalists, and more—while promoting an anarchist future. Newspapers became "texts" to educate and entertain audiences of both supporters and potential supporters. In addition, poems published in newspapers or as stand-alone poetry collections offered lyrical anarchist insights for the individual reader as well as audiences who heard poems read aloud at anarchist gatherings. Public events and picnics were anarchist attempts to take over private and public spaces—again, to entertain but also to educate non-anarchists into different, egalitarian ways of viewing the capitalist world. Besides poetry readings, these gatherings included musical performances and plays performed by the local community of anarchists and their families.

Anarchist movements in Latin America subsided in their influence by the 1930s as new avenues for mass mobilization emerged. Populism and Communist parties sucked away potential followers. However, as the Cold War began to engulf Latin America, anarchists

remained active as they continued to vie for influence within labor movements in countries with political systems ranging from the populism of Peronism in Argentina to the dictatorial oversight of mafia-controlled Cuba in the 1950s. But again, anarchist cultural politics expressed more than just labor politics. The use of public space, picnics, fiction, excursions, and discussions of race, gender, and sexuality continued through this era as anarchists reached audiences both inside and outside of labor organizations. While images had long been cultural weapons in the anarchist press, the growing publication of photographs beginning in the early 1920s exploded as publication of these images became cheaper by the 1950s. The reinforcing use of photos and text allowed anarchists to pursue intra-textual activity that visually represented the descriptions of anarchist projects and anarchist opponents while also giving the reading public of these newspapers a look into the men and women—often of many races and ethnicities—who attended events, thus creating the perception that anarchists represented all walks of life.

Anarchist Cultural Politics and Dominant Cultures

On the surface, anarchist cultural politics appears to completely reject countries' dominant cultures that were influenced or controlled by what anarchists saw as the state-capital-religion unholy trinity. Anarchists used culture as a force to oppose and hopefully bring down the power structure where they lived and agitated. At the same time, as noted earlier, they used culture to forge a libertarian consciousness of individual and social freedom rooted in egalitarianism and social justice. Yet, as Geoffroy De Laforcade notes in his essay in this volume, anarchist cultural politics shared some of the same cultural attributes as the dominant culture. Of course, they utilized the same cultural tools: novels, theater, artwork, poetry, short stories. Yet, they could also incorporate themes shared with non-anarchist organized labor, Socialists, and even Catholics. In addition, as De Laforcade notes here and others have likewise shown, anarchist cultural politics could take local and national realities and "anarchize" them. The same local settings, national politics, and social realities that comprised the nation-state could be included and reworked into anarchist cultural politics. Fiction in Cuba could

build off race and immigration politics particular to the island. The famous Argentine *gaucho* so fundamental to turn-of-the-century Argentine culture writ large could find anarchists celebrating the *gaucho* as an anarchist figure.

This use of the "national" in anarchist cultural politics reflected at least two noteworthy issues. First, anarchists—native born and immigrant—incorporated the local and national cultural symbols with which they interacted daily and brought an anarchist sensibility to them, then used these anarchized cultural signs to challenge the dominant culture. Second, this hybridization/creolization process reflected a larger transnational dimension to anarchism generally and anarchist cultural politics specifically.

Both features—using cultural symbols and signs originally employed by nationalists and understanding the hybrid dimensions of these cultural politics—also reflected and shaped anarchist understandings of "revolution." While anarchists rejected most aspects of the reigning dominant culture and its economic, political, religious, racial, ethnic and gender constructions, anarchists grasped that revolution had to be different than the traditional political sense of the word. Rather than fight for "revolution," they pursued a "social revolution." The former was premised on the seizure of state power as one saw in the anticolonial wars of the nineteenth century, the Bolshevik Revolution and its many imitators, and nationalist movements in the twentieth century. In each of these, the goal was acquisition of the state as the first step in a larger societal and economic overhaul. Yet, anarchists rejected—except for a brief period just after the Bolshevik Revolution—taking control of the state apparatus, believing that states never disappear and just become new hierarchical tools to oppress.

Thus, anarchists saw little or no value in acquiring state-based political power. Sense the state was the signifier of the nation-state and thus of a nationalist agenda, again, the state and all it represented was antithetical to anarchist goals. Instead, anarchists pursued a social revolution that rejected centralized state power and fought for decentralized, popular, and what we today call "horizontal" power

relations. Anarchist cultural politics over the course of anarchist history from the 1800s to today, continue this distinction as anarchists utilized and continue to utilize culture to oppose the state, to harness the forces of consciousness raising, and to inspire people to develop horizontal social and economic relations (municipal-level cooperatives, e.g.) as the goals of social revolution. Again, the use of culture and cultural politics were and remain key tools for bringing this about.

A Brief Historiographical Review of Anarchist Cultural Politics in Latin America

Histories of anarchism largely revolved around labor and working-class issues until the beginning of the twenty-first century when studies of Latin American anarchist cultural politics began to grow. Those of us who pursued this cultural angle have much to thank to the few historians who early ventured into the largely unexplored world of anarchist cultural politics in Latin America, especially the Argentine historian Dora Barrancos.[1] Her pioneering works explored anarchist culture, educational experiments, and the roles of gender in anarchism. They helped to launch a broader understanding that anarchism was as much a social movement as a labor movement. Cultural studies of Latin American anarchism surged in the early 2000s—interestingly, just as a revived global anarchist movement arose largely beyond organized labor but still battling the growing dominance of the Washington Consensus of capital-state linked neoliberal capitalism. The "Battle of Seattle" against the World Trade Organization meeting in 1999 might be a visible sign of anarchism's resurrection in North America, but in Latin America, anarchism's resurgence was about more than Black Bloc tactics or marches against neoliberalism and US imperialism. In 1994, the Zapatistas of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista Army of National Liberation—EZLN) rose in armed revolt in Mexico against the most blatant expression of neoliberalism to that point: the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. In the first months of 2000, largely indigenous protestors rebelled against the privatization of municipal water supplies in Cochabamba, Bolivia—a privatization scheme the government had launched due to IMF

neoliberal structural adjustment demands. Then in December 2001, as its economy fell into a death spiral, workers in Argentina began to take over abandoned factories, running them through worker councils that made decisions and where everyone was paid the same, i.e., equal say, equal pay. These expressions of popular power saw everyday people fighting for freedoms and to end their exploitation by taking up arms, demonstrating, attacking political and economic symbols, and taking over the means of production—but none sought state power, and none were explicitly linked to organized labor.

What seemed to be emerging was a culture war in the broadest sense of the phrase that was not strictly based on working-class politics, but a larger struggle uniting different social groups against a common hegemonic entity. Yet, these were not just "national" struggles limited to Mexico, Bolivia, and Argentina. They were part of a transnational uprising—a counter globalization that used global communications systems to share content, global transportation systems for activists to travel, and global media to make films or produce theater or publish newspapers—all for global distribution.

I make this point to contextualize the turn in anarchism scholarship toward a cultural politics angle around the beginning of the millennium. Just as the rise in anarchistic movements against neoliberalism emerged largely outside of organized labor so too did the turn toward cultural histories and the cultural politics of anarchism emerge with a de-emphasized focus on organized labor in these histories. Now it's not that labor disappeared from histories of Latin American anarchism, but just as national studies of Latin American anarchism (i.e., the history of Argentine, Brazilian, Peruvian, Mexican, Cuban anarchism) turned toward transnational approaches c. 2010, so too did the long-established focus on the workplace and union politics begin to give way (though again not entirely) to a cultural focus.

We've seen this evolve across the hemisphere for the past two decades. Juan Suriano's work on Argentina expanded the study of anarchist culture, arguing that anarchists generally spurned other commercial forms of working-class culture and entertainment to create their own.[2] As De Laforcade argues in his essay in this volume, that

is a misreading of the record for while anarchist intellectuals might have talked and written this way, rank-and-file anarchists often had no problem enjoying both. While authors have challenged Suriano's take, his work nevertheless can be credited with helping to spur the new focus on and approaches to uncovering the history and dimensions of anarchist culture. Equally important to consider in this early turn toward research on culture, and which I admit does complicate and nuance the points I made above, is that when anarchists held picnics, public performances, plays, speaking engagements and more, they did so, notes De Laforcade, largely in spaces "where labor agitation and propaganda were staged" by the larger working-class.

The study of anarchist culture in Latin America has been prolific in the past twenty years. Most of these studies focus on the 1880s to 1920s period where we situate part of De Laforcade's essay. In the remainder of this literature review, I wish to highlight many of these and try to draw links between the histories of anarchist cultural politics during that era with studies that are tentatively looking at later eras such as Kirwin Shaffer's piece on Cold War-era Cuba, Beatriz Scigliano Carneiro's work on a family of anarchist artists stretching from the early 1900s until the 1970s in Brazil, and Naomi Shields' essay exploring a modern anarchist art collective's project in Peru.

We can consider anarchist cultural politics as embodying many different weapons in their battles against the unholy trinity and other hierarchical exploitations around race, ethnicity, and gender. Anarchist schools (generally referred to as "escuelas racionalistas" or rationalist schools) offered alternative education for children that followed the early-twentieth century precepts of Francisco Ferrer y Guardia while rejecting religious and public schools, seeing the former as tools of crafty monks, the latter as a state indoctrination centers. For education, see works by Barrancos on Argentina and Shaffer on Cuba.[3]

Anarchist alternative health centers, advocacy of farming and gardens, belief (among some) of the importance of vegetarian diets, and other food/nature-related efforts were designed to help rectify people's (especially workers') deteriorating health conditions in industrial environments where people were packed into unhealthy workplaces and apartment buildings. Anarchist approaches to creating healthy

societies and worlds either within the larger society or in utopian experiments have been explored for Cuba and Argentina.[4] Relatedly, anarchists, spiritists, and free thinkers frequently worked together on issues of free speech and anti-clericalism as in, for instance, Chile and Puerto Rico.[5]

The link between society, culture, and anarchism was especially prevalent when anarchists confronted national realities about race and gender. While anarchists opposed racism and sexism, many often brought racialized and patriarchal attitudes to their projects and cultural productions. Efforts to reach out to people of African descent, the indigenous, and women – and the problems this could face or that were overcome – have been addressed throughout the hemisphere. Barrancos' early study on gender in Argentina has been complemented by Maxine Molyneux, Laura Fernández Cordero, María Eugenia Bordagaray, and Nadia Ledesma on Argentina, Shaffer on Cuba, Norma Valle Ferrer on Puerto Rico, Elizabeth Hutchison on Chile, and Sonia Hernández on the Mexican borderlands.[6] Studies of race and ethnicity unfortunately lag the study of gender but have still been addressed. In places like Brazil, Cuba and the Panama Canal Zone, anarchists tried to mobilize workers of African descent, while black anarchists became active in the movement.[7] In countries dominated by indigenous peoples, anarchists reoriented their messages to fit those specific ethnic realities. Steven Hirsch's work on Peruvian anarchists mobilizing in both Spanish and Quechua speak to attempts to use culture, language, and ethnicity to promote anarchism.[8] James Sandos illustrated how anarchists could also use ethnicity in "nationalistic" terms in violent conflicts along the US-Mexico border.[9] These are complimented by Ivanna Margarucci's recent studies on anarchism and indigenous populations in the Andes.[10]

Two edited volumes on Latin American anarchism have addressed cultural politics. The most explicit—Clara Lida and Pablo Yankelevich's *Cultura y política del anarquismo en España e Iberoamérica*—emerged from a Mexico City symposium in 2011 where authors explored anarchist cultural diversity, with five of the titles focusing on Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, and Peru. Authors note how anarchist newspapers were important disseminators of cultural ideas, serial-

ized novels, and poetry. The anarchist press also helped to create and disseminate anarchist rituals and symbols. Anarchists Cubanized and Peruvianized their cultural productions to reflect the diversity in these countries. Were they successful in fomenting a new vision among workers? Some authors believe so, but others like Sergio Grez Toso and Suriano suggest that other groups like Socialists and Catholics vied for worker attention, thus diluting the impact of anarchist culture or that most workers preferred other forms of commercial entertainment.[11] The second volume, edited by De Laforcade and Shaffer (*In Defiance of Boundaries: Anarchism in Latin American History—2015/2017*) included insights into anarchist cultural politics in Cuba (Shaffer), southern Brazil (Beatriz Loner), Costa Rica (David Díaz-Arias), and Chile (Raymond Craib).[12] As has become a common point, we see in these works how cultural efforts allowed anarchists to not only critique the broader culture but also to offer new ideas.

Anarchist theater and film could bring anarchism to life for audiences. Anarchist theater scholar Carlos Fos contrasts anarchist and commercial theater: "Bourgeois theater, determined by the economic structure, depended on consumption. Its objective was to fill the auditorium with spectators, even by appealing to crude works of entertainment. It was a commodity to sell, and its aesthetic structure was determined by demand. Libertarian theater…sought to emancipate theater from this perverse commercial logic to create cultural products determined by social and ideological content." In this type of theater, "anarchist discourse and scenic images, much more symbolic and allegorical than real" dominated productions that were themselves "returned to the hands of the people as a cultural and ideological weapon and a strong educational efficacy."[13] Fos explores the stage as a venue to advance anarchist ideas, serve as a cultural counterhegemonic force against capitalism, explore patriarchal abuses of women and issues of exile, and navigate the transnational influences on Argentine anarchist theater as well as Argentine anarchist theater's impact abroad.[14] As Alejandro Ortiz Bullé Goyri reminds us, anarchist theater in Latin America "gave voice to marginalized and oppressed populations" who also found in anarchist theater "a human interaction that gave a sense of social belonging" to these populations

and where they could see their lives and ideas expressed in cultural forms that they did not see in other cultural practices at large.[15] By the late 1800s, May Day had become a symbolic day for these marginalized populations to unite and demonstrate their potential collective power. Even after anarchism had declined in the hemisphere, anarchist theater groups still performed, and May 1st celebrations became days of recreation where workers performed plays, such as those commemorating the day performed by Amigos del Arte in Mar del Plata, Argentina as late as the early 1940s.[16]

Weekly meetings around the hemisphere often included the performance of plays—some written by anarchists, others not. Usually, anarchists and their families played the roles in these short, frequently moralistic, and two-dimensional works. Shaffer and Grez Toso have shown how one play— "Fin de fiesta" written by the Cuba-based Adrián del Valle—was performed in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Chile… and perhaps elsewhere, thus reflecting a transnational dimension to anarchist culture and the supposed universality of the anarchist message.[17] Gender, revolution, and love radiate through Puerto Rico-based anarchist Luisa Capetillo's "Influencias de las ideas modernas."[18] In both Del Valle's and Capetillo's plays, young women from the bourgeoise become anarchist heroines. Veracruz was the most important port in Mexico in the early 1900s, facilitating the arrival of radicals and radical ideas. According to Daniel Nahmad Molinari, workers in the city's Confederación General de Trabajadores (General Confederation of Workers—CGT) staged plays by the then-deceased anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón in the 1920s, reflecting a lingering anarchist sentiment in Mexico.[19] The conquest—if only temporary—of public spaces like parks and plazas to perform plays as well as to hold picnics became an important focus of anarchists (and other leftist groups) in places like Uruguay from 1920 to 1950, as Porrini demonstrates.[20] However, the rise of military dictatorships in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s forced leftwing performance culture underground—if anyone were brave enough to try to perform that is. In Uruguay, resistance theater did emerge in the 1980s during the transition from dictatorship to democracy. There, anarchist-leaning activists formed resistance theater groups in neighborhoods, "where the militant aspirations frustrated by the dictatorial order

were channeled from a more communal activity,"
according to Manuel Santos.[21]

While theater was a key cultural weapon of resistance and advocacy,
cinema could also be deployed for the anarchist cause. In the first
decades of the twentieth century, theater competed with commer-
cial cinema for the few pesos and centavos workers could afford. Of
course, anarchists—and others—might choose to visit both. But
what about an anarchist cinema? Juliano Gonçalves da Silva traces
the history of anarchist cinema to the present with emergence of the
Punk and Anarchist Film Festival of São Paulo, where films are cho-
sen based on their ideas and depiction of struggles, especially against
hierarchical exploitation and capitalism. The festival "aims for a
horizontal production with a narrative constructed by the anarchists/
punks themselves."[22] Anarchists had used cinema before. Barrancos
and Suriano note how leftists were late to the use of cinema in Argen-
tina, which did not appear in anarchist and socialist cultural events
until the 1920s.[23] One also can think of movies where anarchism
and anarchists in Latin America played central roles. Adriana Oger
and Daniel de Lucia argue that the first such film in Argentina was
Juan sin ropa about a violent labor uprising that appeared soon after
the Semana Trágica in 1919—a week-long anarchist and communist
uprising in Buenos Aires that was brutally crushed by police, result-
ing in massacres of activists.[24] One can also recount film versions
(in English and Spanish) of German anarchist and Mexico resident
B. Traven's novels (*Rebellion of the Hanged or Treasure of the Sierra
Madre*), or the 1974 Argentine movie *La Patagonia rebelde* based on
the book by anarchist author Osvaldo Bayer about a rural workers
strike and its violent repression in the early 1920s. Perhaps one of
the first movies ever produced from the writing of an anarchist came
from the play "Alma Guajira." Originally a national-award winning
play in Cuba written by the anarchist Marcelo Salinas, the produc-
tion's popularity led to a silent film version directed by Mario Orts
Ramos in April 1929, making *Alma Guajira* possibly the first movie
written by a Latin American anarchist. Theater and film united.[25]

While theater and film relied on powerful images and iconography,
newspapers, art, drawings, and photographs also became key tools

to promote positive visual images of anarchist social revolution and negative images of capitalists, politicians, and clerics. María Fernanda de la Rosa outlines what an "anarchist aesthetic" looked like when it came to creative endeavors whether film, theater, literature, or especially artwork, images, and photography. She argues that Latin American anarchist culture creators built off the works of Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, and ideas published in the Spanish newspaper *Acracia* in 1886. All reasoned that art needed to reflect life, especially the real conditions faced by the working class. Justice against oppression should be art's ultimate expression. However, artists were not to be bound by one single style because to be constrained would be to have one's freedom of expression controlled. Instead, "libertarian theory rejects all types of political, social, and economic determinisms….The creative impulse in multiple forms not only reflected diverse social forces but also made possible the aesthetic renewal of all of humanity."[26]

In societies with low literacy rates, fiction, poetry, and newspapers could be read aloud by, for instance, lectores in Caribbean cigar rolling factories. Speakers could relate ideas, histories, events, and more at public gatherings. The use of images served different purposes. For individuals who could not read, images could be their initiation into anarchism. Posters, murals, drawings, and photographs in newspapers—all could be used as anarchist weapons. For the literate, they became ways to reinforce texts and form an intratextual experience to promote the Ideal and critique or lampoon their opponents.

Brazilian scholar Caroline Poletto explores anarchist aesthetics and anticlericalism. In her PhD dissertation and subsequent writings, Poletto draws on the transnational nature of much anarchist imagery that traveled anarchist circuits and could be modified to fit new environments. These images were transmitted along transnational circuits, repeated and re-signified. She explores the complementarity of textual content (especially newspapers) and the visual content alongside those texts—each reinforcing and reaffirming each other— to create a "subversive imaginary" in anarchist cultural projects in Brazil, Argentina, and Spain between 1897 and 1936.[27] Image and text combined to create "easily identifiable stereotypes (debauched priest,

impure and sadistic nun, naïve faithful; the creation and dehuman-ization of the enemy (exaggerated and horrifying features); the use of the burlesque, the grotesque and satire, thus feeding the anticleri-cal imaginary."[28] Again, because illiteracy was high in many of the contexts in which these images transited to and within which they circulated, "the constant use of radical images is, in itself, a chosen strategy to attack the enemy, to constitute well-defined stereotypes and demoralize both the Catholic institution itself and its constituent members: priests and nuns."[29]

Rosalía Ramero leads renewed interest in revolutionary art in Mexico and on the US-Mexico border, art in the Partido Liberal Mexicano (Mexican Liberal Party—PLM) led by anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón, anarchist murals after the Mexican Revolution, and anarcha-feminism among the avant-garde in Brazil and Mexico. In one essay, Romero explores how the PLM deployed art from Barcelona-based anarchist graphic artist Fermín Sagristá. A Sagristá poster served as the centerfold for a special edition of the PLM newspaper *Regener-ación* in 1913, where three women on horseback lead humanity to-ward a new dawn and where the central image is surrounded by key anarchist thinkers— "a visual manifesto of the PLM's philosophy and ideals." A year later, Brazilian anarchists published a modified version of the poster in the Santos-based newspaper *A Revolta!* keeping the same general aesthetic but also illustrating the transnational dimen-sions and use of such images in "networks of exchange." Romero concludes that besides appreciating this Europe-Mexico-US-Brazil circuit we also should understand how Flores Magón was developing a theory of revolutionary art whereby "art must be legible to a wide audience and always in service of the proletarian cause….and whose affective power could speak to viewers on an emotional level, but also incite them to take direct action in the anarchist cause in Mexico."[30]

But can art act in other ways? Michele Martinenghi Sidronio de Freit-as explores the anarchist "Arte Social"—a movement launched first in France around the anarchist journal *L'Art Social*. She takes the stance that art and culture functioned as more than just "instrumentation as a means of propaganda and political agitation, but rather [we should see] its potential to create pedagogical spaces for the construction of

collective identities and class consciousness." Art, then, can be seen as "a means of mediating demands of a symbolic and cultural nature and of community ties on the part of different social subjects." In essence, Sidronio de Freitas asks how art and aesthetics can "build a class identity and consciousness"?[31]

Anarchists always emphasized the importance of reading, and historians have not missed this point. For instance, Inocencio Pellegrini Lombardozzi relates how anarchists in Chile put considerable weight on reading to end ignorance and learn the basics of anarchism. Reading was believed to be so powerful that it could create militants. Reading was also an individual pursuit so even the autodidact could become an anarchist without other propaganda or attendance at rationalist or evening workers schools. There also was a communitarian spirit to reading as people shared books and pamphlets with others. Additionally, anarchist groups frequently created libraries—often in union halls or in separate Centros de Estudios Sociales (Social Studies Centers). These libraries were "one of the fundamental pillars in the anarchist infrastructural apparatus" where one could read but also join in a common space.[32]

The visionary role of anarchist libraries is exemplified in Rafael Mondragón's study of the play *A contramano* (Against the Flow) by Argentine anarchist Rodolfo González Pacheco. The play portrayed reading and libraries as utopian pursuits and locations. Audiences not only saw the power of anarchist theater but were encouraged to reinforce the message from the stage with visits to anarchist reading rooms.[33] The notion of reading's power to create anarchist militants mainly came from anarchist intellectuals. Certainly, this was the case in Costa Rica, as José Julián Llaguno Thomas has outlined in his work on a group of intellectuals born in the late 1800s who became prominent anarchists from exposure to anarchism while abroad, from European immigrants, and by reading about anarchism. Llaguno Thomas is concerned with how these intellectuals interacted with the larger Costa Rican power structure and masses for after all there was no organized anarchist movement per se in the Central American country. Rather, through a few magazines and novels produced in the styles of Tolstoy and Zola, they sought to "translate conflict

from the pen to the street." Again, reading was key to create militants. The goal was to use reading to create a "libertarian imaginary" that would "configure an alternative political culture" to confront the reigning liberal order in the country.[34]

Studies of anarchist poetry and fiction have been slower to emerge than studies of other aspects of anarchist cultural politics. For instance, the otherwise notable edited volume *Cultura y política del anarquismo en España e Iberoamérica* mentioned earlier lacked any chapters on anarchist novels, plays, or short stories. Anarchist poetry was published in collections and newspapers across Latin America in the first half of the twentieth century. Anarchists' children often recited poetry at social gatherings. The anarchist activist who wrote poetry could be found everywhere, and their poetic output matched their importance in other realms of activism. For instance, Raymond Craib uses the life and death of the radical student and anarchist poet José Domingo Gómez Rojas to explore Chilean anarchists and their relations with student rebels. Craib shows how anarchists created urban "transnational communities" of anarchists born in Chile and abroad who then used their culture and multinational experiences to forge connections beyond Chile.[35] In Cuba, the telephone operator and poet F. Domínguez Pérez was a regular cultural fixture in Havana, publishing a poetry collection and poems in the anarchist press. And one cannot forget that Costa Rica's national anthem was written by the Costa Rican anarchist poet José María Zeledón Brenes, and the piano he composed it on sits in the National Museum of Costa Rica in San José.[36]

Global Spanish-language anarchist fiction surged with the publication of the La Novela Ideal and La Novela Libre series published in Spain in the 1920s and 1930s. The Cuban anarchist Adrián del Valle wrote the first novels of each series. Yet, before this, Latin American anarchists wrote a plethora of novels and short stories. Anarchist short stories and novels (both as stand-alone publications and serialized in newspapers) addressed every imaginable topic: strikes, militarism, nature, sex and sexuality, gender, class conflict, history, the present, the future, and on and on. Several studies note the transnational nature of anarchist novels. For instance, María Miguelánez

Martínez has presented work on anarchist book publishing in Latin America and the circulation of these works around the hemisphere and back and forth to Spain.[37] Lucas Domínguez Rubio outlines how anarchists established a "circuit of texts through which an unprecedented relationship" between printers, authors, publishers, and readers was forged and financed.[38] Alfredo Ramiro Bojórquez Cámara reflects on the Mexican newspaper *¡Luz!* which serialized anarchist fiction that almost universally portrayed the "vices of capitalist society" while educating readers on how to behave in creating a future society. The author explores the transnational dimensions of serialized novels, focusing on Alejandro Sux's *Bohemia revolucionaria*, published in *¡Luz!* as an example of an activist writer who traveled between Uruguay, Spain, France, and Mexico, "editing papers, forging literary networks," and publishing novels–efforts that showed how reading could generate anarchist consciousness and transnational sensibilities in readers who read about global characters and could compare their lives with those they read about.[39]

Other literature studies focus on women authors and women characters. For instance, María Hernández-Ojeda explores the 1912 novel *El Espíritu del río* by the Costa Rica-based anarchist Juana Fernández Ferraz. The main character proposes creating an anarcho-pacifist commune in the Brazilian jungle.[40] Valle Ferrer, Shaffer, Nancy Hewitt, and others have explored the fiction of another well-known woman anarchist, Luisa Capetillo from Puerto Rico who traveled and wrote in the US, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. They focus especially on Capetillo's anarcho-feminism and bourgeois women characters who are drawn to anarchism.[41] Shaffer has studied how anarchists in Cuba deployed women characters in a range of roles from prostitute heroines to bourgeois criminals, revolutionary mothers to noble partners struggling to keep alive the Ideal after their male partners are jailed, exiled, or killed, and Afro-Cuban or mixed-race women who teach white men about anarchism.[42]

Eliseo Lara Órdenes explores how anarchist authors in Chile and Argentina portrayed key characters specifically and the masses in general. Lara Órdenes looks at anarchist fiction as primarily "political literature" more than "class literature" in which the protagonist is

almost always of an "anti-systemic character" who comes from the lower classes. She also focuses on how anarchist literature portrays the masses—both as subjects but also as readers (or at least listeners to stories)—who are subjects playing significant roles in their own identity formation.[43] Finally, what happens when these revolutionary masses rise in violent armed revolt? Shaffer outlines how Caribbean anarchist authors incorporated revolutionary violence and propaganda by the deed into their fiction.[44]

While much of the historiography focuses on the first half of the twentieth century, I wish to conclude this review by noting an intriguing article about libertarian educational culture and space in southern Brazil that spans the decades to the present. Paulo Lisandro Amaral Marques and Marcela Paz Carrasco Rodríguez review how the Pelotas-based Grupo Iconoclastas utilized a variety of cultural forms (theater, meetings, centers, schools, music, and newspapers) to advance anarchism and "a new emancipatory culture" in the city in the first decades of the 1900s. One hundred years later, a new generation of anarchists built upon this cultural legacy at "Casa Okupa 171"—okupa (a squat) and okupado (occupied)—where anarchists took over an abandoned building in central Pelotas in 2014. "The space currently hosts a libertarian education study group, with a calendar of activities and a film-debate series related to issues of education and culture from an unpatriotic perspective" where anarchists were creating a "libertarian education for the twenty-first century, a counterpoint that seeks to overcome the old education system."[45] Again, space is key to so many of these studies where anarchists sought to carve out places (which in earlier decades had been sights of working-class power) to create living political alternatives.

The Essays Ahead

As a historian, I tend to view things chronologically. Thus, the essays here appear in chronological order, leading off with Geoffroy De Laforcade's anarchism in Argentina in the first half of the 1900s, followed by Kirwin Shaffer's look at Cuban anarchism at mid-century and into the first years of the Cuban Revolution, then Beatriz Scigliano Carneiro's discussion of anarchism and art in Brazil mostly in

the 1960s and 1970s, and concluding with Naomi Shields' analysis of participatory art and anarchism in Peru circa 2010. In the first two essays, we see the close relationship between cultural politics and working-class themes, issues, and spaces in Argentina and Cuba. In the two essays on Brazil and Peru, the working class is largely absent from anarchist cultural expressions, suggesting the relative decline in anarchism within organized labor and its resurrection outside of worker organizations as noted earlier in this essay.

What questions do these authors address? They ask what was the relationship between anarchist culture and labor in Argentina and Cuba? How did the Cold War impact anarchist cultural politics in Cuba and Brazil? What were the community dynamics surrounding cultural politics in all four countries? What was the relationship between anarchist culture and the wider political environments in which anarchists operated? How did anarchists use culture as a tool to work within hegemonic systems while opposing those systems? This last question is particularly interesting among the four essays. For instance, anarchists in Argentina used "nativist" cultural symbols like the gaucho for their own anarchist goals while Cuban anarchists worked with the Batista dictatorship while simultaneously opposing the dictatorship. In Brazil, the anarchistic projects of one artist found venues and expression (though not without problems) within the Brazilian dictatorship of the 1960s to 1970s and the larger Brazilian culture of Carnival. In Peru, anarchists worked with governmental entities while empowering a community abandoned by those same governmental entities. In all these essays—and something that stands out in much of the historiography—anarchists found ways within the hegemonic systems to carve out autonomous and pro-anarchy environments. The issue ends with a short reflection from Edson Passetti, coordinator of the Nu-Sol (Nucleus of Libertarian Sociability) program at at Pontifical Catholic University, San Paulo.

Notes

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[2] Juan Suriano, *Cultura y política libertaria en Buenos Aires, 1890-1910* (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos Argentinos Manantial, 2000).

[3] Barrancos, 1990; Kirwin Shaffer, "Freedom Teaching: Anarchism and Education in Early Republican Cuba, 1898-1930," *The Americas* vol. 60, no. 2 (2003): 151-183.

[4] Kirwin Shaffer, *Anarchist Cuba: Countercultural Politics in the Early Twentieth Century* (Oakland: PM Press, 2019); Pierre Quiroule, *La ciudad anarquista Americana* Reproduced in *Utopías libertarias latinoamericanas,* Vol. 1, *La ciudad anarquista Americana de Pierre Quiroule,* eds. Luis Gómez Tovar, Ramón Gutiérrez, and Silvia A. Vásquez (Madrid: Ediciones Tuero, 1991).

[5] Kirwin Shaffer, *Black Flag Boricua: Anarchism, Antiauthoritarianism, and the Left in Puerto Rico, 1897-1921* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013); Sergio Grez Toso, *Los anarquistas y el movimiento obrero* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2007).

[6] Maxine Molyneux, "No God, No Boss, No Husband: Anarchist Feminism in Nineteenth Century Argentina," *Latin American Perspectives* vol. 13, no. 1 (September-December 1986): 119-45; Laura Fernández Cordero, "The Anarchist Wager of Sexual Emancipation in Argentina, 1900-1930" in *In Defiance of Boundaries: Anarchism in Latin American History*, eds. Geoffroy de Laforcade and Kirwin Shaffer (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015/2017): 302-325; Laura Fernández Cordero, "Queremos emanciparos: anarquismo y mujer en Buenos Aires de fines del XIX," *Izquierdas* vol. 3, no. 6 (April 2010): 1-10; María Eugenia Bordagaray, "Apuntes sobre las relaciones entre anarquismo y feminismo en la Argentina," *Revista de Estudios Marítimos y Sociales* (2011): np; Nadia Ledesma, "Anarquismo(s) y feminismo(s). Reflexiones a partir de las intervenciones de las mujeres anarquistas, Buenos Aires (1896-1947), *Izquierdas* 34 (July 2017): 105-124; Kirwin Shaffer, "Prostitutes, Bad Seeds, and Revolutionay Mothers in Cuban Anarchism: Imagining Women in the Fiction of Adrián del Valle and Antonio Penichet, 1898-1930," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 18 (1999): 1-18 and "The Radical Muse: Women and Anarchism in Early-Twentieth-Century Cuba," *Cuban Studies* 34 (2003): 130-53; Norma Valle Ferrer, *Luisa Capetillo: Historia de una mujer proscrita* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Cultural, 1990); Elizabeth Quay Hutchison, "From 'la mujer esclava' to 'la mujer Limón': Anarchism and the Politics of Sexuality in Early Twentieth-Century Chile," *Hispanic American Historical Review* vol. 81, nos. 3-4 (2001): 519-53; Sonia Hernández, *For a Just and Better World: Engendering Anarchism in the Mexican Borderlands, 1900-1938* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2021).

[7] Kirwin Shaffer, *Anarchist Cuba* and *Anarchists of the Caribbean: Countercultural Politics and Transnational Networks in the Age of US Expansion* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2020/2022).

[8] Steven Hirsch, "Anarchists and the 'Indian Problem' in Peru, 1898-1927," *Anarchist Studies* vol. 28, no. 2 (2020): 54-75 and "Anarchism, the Subaltern, and Repertoires of Resistance in Northern Peru, 1898-1922" in *No Gods, No Masters, No Peripheries: Global Anarchism,* eds. Barry Maxwell and Raymond Craib (Oakland: PM Press, 2015): 215-32.

[9] James Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

[10] Ivanna Margarucci, "'Siempre con la mirada hacia el proletariado internacional': las agrupaciones de propaganda anarquista en La Paz, Bolivia, 1923-1926," *Páginas* yr. 15, no. 38 (May-August 2023): np and "Apuntes sobre una temprana experiencia de organización y lucha en el Perú. El anarquismo en el movimiento obrero y campesino-indígena, 1880-1930," *Ni Calco Ni Copia* vol.8 (2018): 97-120.

[11] Clara Lida and Pablo Yankelevich, *Cultura y política del anarquismo en España e Iberoamérica* (Mexico City: COLMEX, 2012).

[12] De Laforcade and Shaffer, *In Defiance of Boundaries*.

[13] Carlos Fos, *La dramaturgia urgente del teatro obrero anarquista clásico argentino y la conquista de América como temática problematizada* (http://conti.derhuman.jus.gov.ar/2012/10/6_seminario/mesa_02/fos_mesa_2.pdf, 2012)

[14] Carlos Fos, *Del teatro anarquista al teatro comunitario actual* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Artes Escénicas, 2010).

[15] Alejandro Ortiz Bullé Goyri, "El teatro de filiación anarquista en México e Hispanoamérica," *Revista* vol. 42 (2014): 103-18. Quotes from p.115.

[16] Milagros Dolahani, "El teatro en los festejos anarquistas del primero de mayo: entre la conmemoración y el ocio recreativo," *Izquierdas* vol. 36 (November 2017): 181-99.

[17] Grez Toso, *Los anarquistas;* Shaffer, *Black Flag Boricuas* and *Anarchist Cuba.*

[18] Shaffer, *Black Flag Boricuas.*

[19] Daniel Nahmad Molinari, *Teatro anarquista: La obra dramática de Ricardo Flores Magón y los sindicatos vercruzanos* (Oaxaca, Mexico: Parajes, 2009).

[20] Rudofo Porrini, "Izquierda uruguaya y culturas obreras. Propuestas al 'aire libre': pic-nics y paseos campestres en Montevideo, 1920-1950," *Mundos do Trabalho* vol. 3, no. 6 (July-December 2011): 105-29.

[21] Manuel Santos, "Teatro y resistencias: las botas, las razzias ¿y hoy? El teatro barrial y popular 1980-1990, sus enseñanzas y sus continuidades" https://www.academia.edu/42204814/ACTAS_II_Congreso_Internacional_Anarquismos_2019_1_?email_work_card=title (2019): 204-17. Quote from page 208.

[22] Juliano Gonçalves da Silva, "Idéias anarquistas na cabeça e uma câmera na mão" https://www.academia.edu/42204814/ACTAS_II_Congreso_Internacional_Anarquismos_2019_1_?email_work_card=title (2019): 191-203. Quote from p. 201.

[23] Barrancos, *Anarquismo*; Juan Suriano, *Cultura y política.*

[24] Adriana Oger and Daniel de Lucia, "¡Ni dios, ni amo, ni taquilla! El anarquismo en el cine argentino," *Pacarina del Sur* no. 49 (July-December 2022): np. Note, that at the time of this writing, one could find *Juan sin ropa* online for viewing. See for instance, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwHRlcLqxFU

[25] Alfonso J. García Osuna, *The Cuban Filmography: 1897 through 2001* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2003).

[26] María Fernánda de la Rosa, "La estética anarquista, 1900-1930" https://www.academia.edu/42204814/ACTAS_II_Congreso_Internacional_Anarquismos_2019_1_?email_work_card=title (2019): 175-90. Quote from page 179.

[27] Caroline Poletto, "Imaginacão subversiva ao redor do mundo: Imagens, poesías e contons de protest na imprensa anarquista e anticlerical (Espanha, Argentina e Brasil, 1897-1936)," PhD diss., (Universdade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, 2017).

[28] Caroline Poletto, "Prazeres e luxúrias no templo do sagrado: um estudo sobre a estética anticlerical anarquista" https://www.academia.edu/42204814/ACTAS_II_Congreso_Internacional_Anarquismos_2019_1_?

[29] Caroline Poletto, "Imagens anticlericais radicais: a formacão e a circulacão de um imaginário subversive na imprensa anticlerical argentina e brasileira no inicio do século xx," *Esboços* vol. 50, no. 29 (January-April 2022): 109-132. Quote from page 109.

[30] Rosalía Romero, "Fermín Sagristá, *Magonista* Art, and Revolutionary Anarchism in Mexico and Brazil," in *Regeneración: Three Generations of Revolutionary Ideology,* ed., Pilar Tompkins Rivas (Monterey Park, California: Vincent Price Art Museum, 2018): 26-33. Quotes from pages 26-31.

[31] Michele Martinenghi Sidronio de Freitas, "Arte social anarquista: una ferramenta de luta das classes subalternas" https://www.academia.edu/42204814/ACTAS_II_Congreso_Internacional_Anarquismos_2019_1_?email_work_card=title (2019): 218-27.

[32] Inocencio Pellegrini Lombardozzi, Lecturas subversivas: *Prácticas culturales desarrolladas en torno al mundo de la lectura entre los anarquistas de principios del siglo XX en Chile* (Chile: Centro de Estudios Sociales, January 2014). https://www.academia.edu/37886010/lect Quote from page 18.

[33] Rafael Mondragón, "La biblioteca, otro nombre de Utopía (A contramano del dramaturgo anarquista Rodolfo González Pacheco," *Pacarina del Sur* no. 48 (January-June 2021): np.

[34] José Julián Llaguno Thomas, *La semilla que germina: Anarquismo, cultura política y Nueva Intelectualidad en Costa Rica (1900-1914)* (San José, Costa Rica: Acracia Editores, 2012). Quotes from pages 55 and 157.

[35] Raymond Craib, *The Cry of the Renegade: Politics and Poetry in Interwar Chile* (London: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[36] David Díaz-Arias, "From Radicals to Heroes of the Republic: Anarchism and National Identity in Costa Rica, 1900-1977," in *In Defiance of Boundaries: Anarchism in Latin American History*, eds. Geoffroy de Laforcade and Kirwin Shaffer (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015/2017), 219-242.

[37] María Miguelánez Martínez, "Anarchist Publishing in the Americas. Strategies,

Rhythms of Production, and Cross-Border Circulation of Books and Knowledge in the Continental Libertarian Movement (1890-1910)," paper presented at the European Social Science History Conference, Gotenborg, Sweden, April 2023.

[38] Lucas Domínguez Rubio, "Un itinerario por los proyectos editoriales del anarquismo en Argentina: cambios, maniobras y permanencias," *Izquierdas* no. 33 (May 2017): 21-41.

[39] Alfredo Ramiro Bojórquez Cámara, "Cultura literaria en la segunda etapa de *¡Luz!* (1917-1918). Tesis de maestro (Ciudad Universitaria, Mexico, 2019). Quotes from pages 36-7, 84-5.

[40] María Hernández-Ojeda, "*El Espíritu del río* de Juana Fernández Ferraz: Novela transatlántica," *Anuario de Estudios Atlánticos* no. 58 (2012): 645-78.

[41] Norma Valle Ferrer, *Luisa Capetillo: Historia and Luisa Capetillo: Obra Completa: "Mi patria es la libertad,"* (Cayey, Puerto Rico: Departamento del Trabajo y Recursos Humanos, Universidad de Puerto Rico en Cayey, 2008); Shaffer, *Black Flag Boricuas*; Nancy Hewitt, "Luisa Capetillo: Feminist of the Working Class," in *Latina Legacies: Identity, Biography, and Community*, eds. Vicki L. Ruiz and Virginia Sánchez Korrol (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 120-34.

[42] Shaffer, "Prostitutes," "The Radical Muse," *Anarchist Cuba*, and *Anarchists of the Caribbean.*

[43] Eliseo Lara-Órdenes, "La liberatura anarquista del Cono Sur. La imagen del pueblo en los cuentos de la prensa obrera anarquista de Chile y Argentina (1897-1927)," *Revista Pacarina del Sur* no. 37 (October-December 2018): 238-93.

[44] Kirwin Shaffer, "By Dynamite, Sabotage, Revolution and the Pen: Violence in Caribbean Anarchist Fiction, 1890s-1920s," *New West Indian Guide* vol. 83, nos. 1-2 (2009): 3-35.

[45.] Paulo Lisandro Amaral Marques and Marcela Paz Carrasco Rodríguez, "Memoria de las prácticas de cultura-educación libertaria en la ciudad de Pelotas, Estado de Río Grande del Sur, Brazil," *La Brecha: Revista Anarquista de Historia y Ciencias Sociales* yr. II, no. 3 (2016): 40-47. Quotes from pages 45 and 46.

Framing Imaginaries of Anarchism in Argentina Across Space and Time

Geoffroy de Laforcade*

"A refusal is also a commitment to continually seek to create forms that to not exist."
- Marilia Loureiro[1]

Ivanna Margarucci, one of the best of a new generation of historians who have redefined the field, stipulates that the uncritical use of the notion of "import" when discussing anarchism in the "New World" results in silencing anarchist voices in their dialogue with one another in the Americas, while assuming that all were separated by national histories and bear a direct lineage with Europe. She explains that the "watertight compartments" generated by methodological nationalism frame histories of resistance as unidirectionally as modernity itself, with an assumed European origin, a westward expansion, an apogee, and finally a niche in a bygone past.[2] By habitually periodizing anarchism's "rise," its "heyday" and "decline," we miss its essential impulse as a culture of symbolic revolt prefiguring the dissolution of existing forms of domination, identification and allegiance, and directing the affect toward a culturally coded "dreamlike" future, expressed with urgency and imminence as an actionable alternative to the perceived misery of the present social condition. Everywhere the "Idea" traveled, it blended abstract, prescriptive narratives freely borrowed from a circulating material corpus of universal precepts with locally generated countercultural idioms of agency and opposi-

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tion.[3] This imaginary, like any revolutionary ideology, "fosters the creation of social relations that are radically external to customary relations; only through symbolic expression can the creation of voluntary groups grounded in the adherence to new principles be rendered possible."[4]

Consistent with the traditional assumption that anarchist labor activism disappeared or declined in relevance, some authors have suggested that cultural anarchism continued to infuse society well beyond the first decades of the century – which makes it possible to envision the experiments I just described as more impactful, over time, than the social environment that birthed them.[5] I coincide with Jacinto Cerdá, however, in believing that while the power of anarchists alone to shape the direction of organized labor diminished as industrial modernization reshaped the dynamics of working-class politics, the two – countercultural and labor-centered practices and discourses – were never dissociated enough to separate the analysis of culture from that of the workers for whom it crystallized their difference and dissent, and from whom many of its variants emerged.[6] Earlier authors such as Juan Suriano and Dora Barrancos pioneered, from the perspective of social history, the study of cultural practices in the everyday lives of working-class neighborhoods in an effort to escape the trappings of earlier chronologies that were overly focused on the strategies and tactics of organizations. Yet the spaces and locales where the events and discourses they chronicled converged closely with those where labor agitation and propaganda were staged.[7] As Adriana Petra writes, anarchists in the region

> displayed a strong sense of community that combined the economic struggle with a determined militancy of cultural integration that was an alternative to that of the state. An unequal integration, discontinuous, often ephemeral, contradictory in its appropriations, but cohesive in the face of the perception of domination.[8]

This work of carving its own space for an alternative culture, Petra continues, was only possible because strikes, mobilizations, and struggles grounded in the world of labor – plus the lived experience

of conflict and persecution – generated a broader context for it to crystallize into a well-defined projection of anarchist identity, even as the cultural industry and mechanisms of integration by the state conspired to marginalize and stigmatize it as "alien" to the social fabric of the nation.[9] Over time, this identity changed, but it remained grounded in the experience of labor conflict and its incidence on society. The cathartic experience of strikes – which impacted communities, generated solidarity, and drew clear boundaries between the cause and its enemies – brought with it a sense of euphoria and immediacy, power at its paroxysm, within which anarchist culture circulated. These dramatic interruptions in the routine of exploitation were, to paraphrase Michelle Perrot, an "antidote to isolation, to the deadly chill in which the division of labor confined workers."[10] The uncompromising formulations of anarchist discourse and the movement's self-perception as the very incarnation of the social revolution – as a vanguard perhaps, but more importantly as an ideal – was based on a claim of total alterity with respect to the existing order, a projection of the future as imminent and of direct action as decisive.[11] Thus anarchists in the Río de la Plata region were never really "dominant" but rather ubiquitous, discontinuous in their visibility as permanent organizations or institutions and often embedded in others, and present as a repertoire of dissent, an assemblage of countercultural signifiers, which offered alternative forms of cultural integration to that of the state.

The "oppressed" whose emancipation they championed were not defined as a classical proletariat; rather, they identified as belonging to the community of the "cursed," the "innumerable phalanx of the proscribed."[12] *El Perseguido* had set the tone as early as 1890: "We are the vagrants, the malefactors, the rabble, the scum of society, the sublimate corrosive of the present social order."[13] This anti-dogmatic stance of anarchists on the subject of revolution made it possible to envision unity beyond distinctions of nationality, gender, race, social status, and even religious belief. They extended the denunciation of oppression to all human relations and centered their transformational interventions on the experience of everyday life. They incorporated popular culture into their repertoire of signs when concrete struggles demanded that local communities be drawn into the emancipatory

endeavors for which they advocated. Anarchist rhetoric dramatized the showdown between two opposites – rulers and oppressed – and this melodramatic representation of reality found its expression in ongoing confrontations with capital.[14] Popular classes were portrayed as downtrodden and disinherited, as undesirable and excluded, and their enemies were designated as acting in concert to defend the privileges of the "decent" and "respectable" people who controlled the state.

John Zerzan reminds us that "capital has always reigned in fear of entropy and disorder. Resistance…is the real entropy, which time, history, and progress constantly seek to banish."[15] Living freely and anarchically is, as Petra relate, "to rebel against an order of meaning that is experienced as culturally normative and against the diversion operation by capitalism as of the meaning of life" through "nomadic, disarticulated, immediate, every day, ephemeral and minority" cultural resistance. This differs from anarchist conceptions expressed in working-class circles during the contested formation of the Argentine national state in the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries in that the latter anticipated capitalism's imminent collapse. It converges, however, with earlier anarchist culture as "a symptom of profound changes in social life" that reveals the ways in which "new subjects become social actors based on an alternative conception of the political based on desire, emotions, daily experience, relationships and local practices," reflecting or prefiguring "the perception of unprecedented dimensions of conflict, the formation of new subjects and new forms of resistance."[16]

When Agustín Nieto denounces the "autonomasia" – or naming of one entity to express a general idea – of conflating the Argentine Regional Anarchist Federation (FORA) with Argentine anarchism in general, he is suggesting that the temporality of anarchism, its narration in stages and assumption of evolutionary growth and decline, is an erroneous way to historicize the incidence of the movement as a parenthesis in the process of social integration, which erases not only diverse and divergent forms of anarchist action and organization, but also their cultural imprint and subversion of the temporality of the nation.[17] Limiting the experience of Argentine anarchism

to the capital city of Buenos Aires, framing its history as one of rise and decline or as one of institutions, and ignoring the transnational dimensions of its efforts at federalist coordination across borders has been shown by recent historiography, which transcends the normative assumptions of the social democratic tradition represented by Juan Suriano and his followers, to further distort its relevance to our broader understanding of the history of the region, and of *platense* anarchism itself.[18]

While Suriano and others have suggested that early anarchists expressed disdain for working-class and popular cultural forms such as carnival, *saynètes* and other forms of street theater and poetry, or with drinking and disorderly behavior, the reality is that artists from their ranks participated in them. It is important to remember that there were intellectuals and educators within the FORA, but also resistance societies and community sympathizers immersed in tumult and transgressions of work and everyday life, including forms of leisure, entertainment, and licentiousness, as well as the settling of scores, not formally sanctioned by the "Ideal." The aesthetic avant-gardism of modernist groups, such as the Ermete Zacconi Philodramatic Academy in Buenos Aires and the traveling *Caballeros del Ideal*, achieved popularity not just by spreading propaganda but by telling stories that reflected social realities with which the laboring poor could identify. Anarchist pamphlets, short stories, serial novels, and songs were anti-conformist and popular. All of this was part of a worldwide trend toward the democratization of reading and leisure. Anarchist, socialist, and syndicalist movements all participated in the promotion of cultural literacy among working women and men.[19] The creation of a working-class or popular culture and the translation and dissemination of classical works of literature and thought went hand in hand in the anarchist project, in the spirit of empowering the people with the tools to resist the education of church and state. In a heterogeneous society marked by the perpetual convergence of migrations from the hinterland to the city as well as from abroad, the exaltation of dissent and struggle often took the form of epic stories of labor insurgency and creative freedom at the margins. It was an apprenticeship of autonomy and a statement of artistic and social emancipation that may have been minoritarian but forged an influ-

ential counterculture, in part because it emerged against the backdrop of an era of almost incessant strikes and solidarity movements led by a powerful and far-reaching organized labor movement that structured communities and connected localities across regions and borders.

Suriano's critique of the elitism of early anarchists in the first decade of the century, when their press often promoted hygienist and family-oriented leisure while cautioning against some expressions of popular festiveness and depoliticized behavior (excessive drinking, circus entertainment, folkloric storytelling, etc.) is framed as a balanced assessment: that for all of their plebian claims, they "borrowed" from bourgeois culture.[20] Entirely derived from one city, one decade and one type of source material, this judgement not only appears rather banal (liberalism, conservatism, all doctrines do this). It also ignores the fluidity of individual and group identities in any given space or context. Anticlericalism, for example, never stopped working-class anarchists I studied on the Buenos Aires riverfront over five decades from manifesting frequent, if ephemeral affinities, and even forging alliances, with social Catholics whom the enemy deployed to compete with and contain them, but who also shared kinship or ethnic ties, social solidarities, and periodic interests during labor conflicts with the leaders of anarchist resistance societies.[21] The conditions that made such instances possible were the same that allowed local activists to mobilize cross-class solidarity and mutual aid with shopkeepers, tavern owners, small entrepreneurs, foremen, and lawyers during general strikes or lockouts. They also fostered educational practices that garnered broad-based appeal while disseminating doctrine sharpening their critique of oppression, even in spaces where their numbers weren't strong and especially when seasonal laborers from the interior flocked to their shores during the high export season for casual work.[22]

The ongoing criminalization of anarchists was a constituent aspect of their identity as embodiments of total alterity. Labels of "dangerous" and "foreign" ascribed to anarchists were a pathological representation by Argentine elites of the poor as unassimilable. Police forces, prisons, and immigration authorities kept records by nationality

from 1882 onwards as a means of documenting the sources of social unrest, and in 1889 legislator Miguel Cané proposed a legal path to the deportation of foreigners to rid the social fabric of "'European vagabonds and delinquents'" targeting anarchists as "'sources of perversion'" representing a danger to the illiterate and impressionable masses. Conservative deputy Lucas Ayarragaray saw anarchists as degenerates and fanatics, and Argentine physicians associated them with mentally and biologically fragile crowds. Even socialists, who opposed deportations, vilified anarchists as anti-social, questioning their patriotism and even their masculinity. Legislative efforts to purge them used the language of contagion and vagrancy to criminalize and even medicalize their difference.[23] Both the 1902 Residency Law and the 1910 Social Defense Law articulated a fear of threats not only to the social order but to "*Argentinidad*" itself. The Residency Law was necessary, its promotor Ayarragaray said, because it "permits the exclusion of those foreigners who come to disturb the social order and ruin Argentine laws, with foreign elements that disintegrate our character and our history." He deployed concepts of nationalism and national identity to purge "poisonous" outsiders. The 1910 Social Defense Law was aimed at foreign but also native-born and naturalized anarchists, who were threatened with the loss of their political rights and Argentine citizenship.[24] Coming on the heels of the establishment of a "Special Section" of the police in 1901 and a "Social Order Division" in 1906, and in the context of close collaboration between police and diplomatic entities from other countries to track down activists wherever they found themselves, these measures criminalized all anarchist activity and forced many leaders of strikes and boycotts underground, while maintaining their legally clandestine places of operation, such as the headquarters of resistance societies, under constant surveillance. Systematic state repression of anarchists and of the organized labor activities they promoted was not merely a consequence, but rather a constituent dimension of the modernization of the Argentine state and both its liberal and conservative variants. Under the influence of their positivist Italian master Cesare Lombroso, who considered crime a biological pathology, Argentine criminologists

pointed to the correlation between immigration and

increasing criminality as proof of the connection between race and crime…. (T)hey saw criminal tendencies as inevitably transmitted by heredity, thereby creating a permanent danger to society. They expected this danger to be attenuated somewhat by the benign influence of "Saxon immigration," but mainly by a policy of immigration control…. The claims for immigration control went beyond the issue of crime, and the concept of "inferior races" was extended to non-Latin immigrants. Russian Jews, for instance, were considered a "physiologically degenerated race" and "a moral and economic danger," given their practice of usury. Many also attributed the wave of (anarchist) labor unrest during the "Tragic Week" of January 1919 to the influence of Russian-Jewish immigrants….[25]

In a country where on the eve of the First World War 49% of the people of the capital city and 43% of the entire nation were foreign-born – over half of them Italian – the latter were, for Cané, "more savage than the savages of the Pampas."[26] To which FORA activist Eduardo Gilimón responded: "Sure many anarchist agitators and strike leaders are foreigners. So is the working class, and so are the capitalists."[27] The setting of "Argentine anarchism" in its early phases was not only transnational on its own terms – a constellation of "federative futures" through an expansive region connected by networks of shipping, migration, community organizing, and the circulation of print culture – but also as the spreading of mainly Italian and Spanish immigration through port cities and towns of the South American Atlantic in which ethnic, linguistic and national forms of identification converged with local organizations, affinity groups and circulating texts.[28] This formed a regional space that in the case of Italians, John Galante has shown, became a reference ("Il Plata") often stronger than their place of origin.[29]

Beyond the littoral of the Atlantic Coast and the Paraná River, anarchism spread through provinces and remote areas of the Argentine "interior" – which, in terms of anarchist epistemology, is a dubious name implying the objectivity of a territorial and gravitational center,

thereby naturalizing the nation-state. In her extensive review of the historiography, Ivanna Margarucci shows that anarchists themselves from Eduardo Gilimón to Diego Abad de Santillán and generations of activist historians reproduced binary oppositions that merit revisiting in light of the actual spatial and temporal reach of anarchist practices and networks: center/periphery, city/country, immigrant/native, local/national, modern/traditional, anarchism/not anarchism – all which inhibit our understanding of the heterogenous counter-cultures and platforms that these traditions produced, as well as their incidence on the societies within which they worked.[30] In many ways, the bedrock of anti-statist, federalist, urban/rural, feminist, anti-fascist, internationalist, and anti-Eurocentric orientations formed by anarchist traditions project time, place, and identity in ways that invite us to rethink the "nation" in its temporally and territorially confined, teleological cultural representations and narratives of becoming.

Representations of the "*gaucho*" – historically a figure that blends cultures from Iberia, the Andes, Brazil, and Paraguay as an archetype of freedom and resistance, a precursor of working-class revolt – permeates anarchist writings in the early twentieth century. Elites regarded the *gaucho* as a barbarian to be civilized. Some anarchists concurred. For instance, alongside this current, there persisted a negative representation of rural folk and *gauchos* that was epitomized in the writing of Spanish anarchist Félix Basterra, a contributor to the first *Protesta*, who saw them as corrupt and prone to abuse, indeed the cause of ignorance and backwardness in the hinterland, and precursors of the urban figure of the "*compadrito*" – a dimwitted, duplicitous bandit and of course voter who originated in the Pampa, and who later morphed into the seductive dandy of tango fame.[31]

Other anarchists, though, exalted the *gaucho* figure as a kind of mythical ancestor, the embodiment of nature, ruse, courage, and recalcitrance to submission. Anarchist author Alberto Ghiraldo depicted the *gaucho* as the "Mephistopheles of the Pampa," an errant and persecuted figure without borders, the symbol of an oppressed people ensconced in a kind of primordial freedom that propagandists of the "Ideal" had a mission to sow throughout an incipient proletariat.[32] Laura Moreno-Sainz describes the anarchist projection of a

propagandist as the messenger of a long rebel tradition, an initiate into a universal community of the oppressed, a self-taught student of knowledge and science, and an orator gifted with the ability to educate.[33] She recounts the memories of Rodolfo González Pacheco, born in Tandil on the edges of modernity, who learned of the writings of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta, and Gori from passing guests on his parents' estate disguised as sailors and contrabandists, who left the literature behind in the peons' quarters where they slept.[34] The plays enacted and stories told by anarchists in fiestas, picnics, and working-class mobilizations, as well as the songs (*milongas, tangos, habaneras,* and improvised *payadas* – from the Spanish "*paguiar*" meaning wandering from village to village), transmitted this *gaucho* imaginary to workers from foreign lands, not as a borrowed "national" identity but rather as an insurgent expression of anarchist identity.

The so-called "*criollista*" tradition in popular literature permeated discourses of Argentine national identity. It offered symbols and archetypes with which plebeian sectors of society could identify and rooted stories of belonging in a world marked by cosmopolitanism and xenophobia. The telluric representations of rurality in Ghiraldo's work inflected intellectual discussions of the "oppressed" and the idioms of resistance that cultural practices conveyed.[35] The genre depicted the *gaucho* as a "noble spirit," "loyal to a firm code of values, valiant and selfless, incapable of betraying friendship or confidence" – all fundamental traits of anarchist self-representation.[36] Ghiraldo and the journal *Martín Fierro* acknowledged the appeal of *criollista* literature and mobilized its repertoires to reach an increasingly literate readership of foreign and native-born urban workers.

This story of how the myth of the figure of the *gaucho* came to epitomize anarchist readings of the Argentine past does not undermine our traditional understanding of Italian, Spanish, and other newcomers' importance in disseminating ideas and representations of the future inherited from a European anarchist tradition. As Michel Foucault argued, mechanisms of biopolitical securitization developed by modern states, marked by urban quarantining and strategies to isolate and confine the "abnormal" – the displaced, the destitute, the degenerate, the disorderly – resulted from the fear of contagion by

foreign elements. Ethnically, early anarchist activists reflected the composition of the urban working class, with Italians, Spaniards, and Eastern European Jews featuring prominently in their ranks, until the overrepresentation of immigrants declined after the First World War. Legislative efforts to purge them used the language of contagion and vagrancy to stigmatize, and even medicalize their difference. No longer viewed as "agents of civilization" who would erase the memory of the pre-Rosas era of plebian chaos and colonial backwardness, these immigrants were, at the turn of the twentieth century, racialized and stigmatized as dangerous in their own right, because of their participation in anarchist and socialist labor protest. Fears of invasion colored elite depictions of their large numbers and perceived deliquescent lifestyle, and these "*indeseables*" [undesirables] became the target of measures to protect the social order through expulsion and social control.[37] Whereas the political language and classical references of Argentine anarchism sometimes reproduced eugenicist and ethnocentric tropes, the European origins of early anarchist activists is too often read, as in the of-cited work of Juan Suriano, as signifying their removal from popular culture and diverse working-class expressions of identity.[38]

Italians, who were at the forefront of the early Argentine anarchist movement, remained prominent throughout the first half of the twentieth century, but it is a mistake to characterize them as European imports who were and remained culturally "foreign" to the working class in formation, as nationalist and even anarchist scholars sometimes do. Indeed, it is questionable to call them "Italians" at all since their presence in Argentina preceded the unification of Italy and national identity. Little prevented them from retaining their regional-based cultures and dialects within working-class communities.[39] Even before Buenos Aires was definitively declared the capital city of Argentina in 1880, "Italians" played central rather than peripheral roles at every step of the constitution of a new post-colonial nation. Indeed, they had settled the estuary of the Río de la Plata and traveled the Paraná River as master mariners, ship captains, and sailors since the early days of Spanish colonization. Their presence grew substantially from 1821 onward, when Ligurians and other northern Italians fleeing Sardinian domination added to an already flourishing

population of Genoese mariners and craftspeople. With the growth of coastwise shipping along the littoral in the 1830s, they dominated navigation, ship building and small commerce.[40] By 1850, many of them spoke in Genoese dialect, despite the presence of numerous Piedmontese, Lombard, Tuscan, and later Napolitan and Sicilian immigrants throughout the broader *porteña* city. The Riachuelo district of Buenos Aires was commonly referred to as "La Picola Italia."[41] During the second half of the nineteenth century, small entrepreneurs of French, British, German and Portuguese origin, Dalmation and Spanish immigrants, Afro-Argentine dockworkers, *criollo* laborers from Paraguay and the interior provinces, and transient sailors from around the world lived and toiled alongside these established Italian residents, whose domination of the cultural and commercial spheres in the community survived the growing cosmopolitanism of their surroundings.[42]

Necochea street in southern Buenos Aires, the bustling center of La Boca del Riachuelo popularly remembered as the "*calle del pecado*" (street of sin), was riddled with cafés and canteens associated in Argentina with the birth of the tango. It was a community of intense social and cultural interaction in which unskilled and uprooted workers crossed the paths with bohemian artists and intellectuals, promiscuous single men and women, middle-class married couples, rebellious anarchist activists, and "reputable" Italian immigrants who owned the boardinghouses, shops, restaurants, cafés, and dancehalls. Mariners spread news and stories of remote localities, and from La Boca transnational networks of anarchists and socialists connected communities as far south as Tierra del Fuego and as far north as the Andes. Anarchist resistance societies in La Boca organized cultural activities in the early years of the century. The most popular were Sunday picnics and open-air marketplace theatre presentations that contributed to their advocacy of rationalist education and other labor-initiated social campaigns while also serving as both platforms for ideological proselytizing and bridges between migrant laborers and the broader working-class community.[43]

In Buenos Aires, low-income families of precariously employed workers were housed in pluri-ethnic tenements known as *conventil-*

los, where seasonal migration swelled their numbers and slum conditions worsened by the year. It was a social landscape which colored anarchist depictions of an implacable ruling class conspiracy against hard-working common people.[44] Resistance societies affiliated with influential organized transportation workers and small artisanal and semi-artisanal professions where immigrants prevailed served as vehicles for an oppositional working-class culture of revolt and transgression of authority, channeled by their propagandists into a discourse of solidarity, direct action, and workplace insubordination. Insofar as this culture enabled unsettled workers to evade the stigmas of nationality and ethnicity within which existing institutions – governmental, religious, capitalist, or mutualist – framed their rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion, it legitimated the emancipatory representation of individual freedom and collective force offered by anarchists linked to the early FORA. "The foreigners," stated a *Federación obrera* local flyer in the early 1900s, "are those who preach hatred and practice exploitation, not the hard-working and brave men who come from distant lands to offer each other friendship and solidarity in the valiant endeavor of work."[45] In their efforts to hunt down anarchist agitators, local police investigators regularly patrolled the bars and canteens of the bustling streets of Necochea and Ayolas streets, the heart of anarchist organization, where "drifters and lazy men of all sorts take advantage of the drunken workers' ingenuity to spread their ideas about violence and strikes," and where "singers, strangers and pimps (*cafishios*) teach very young boys the immoral ways of their irresponsible elders."[46] As internal migration from the interior increased during the First World War and migration to and from Europe declined, the strong identification of anarchists with the local community of this part of Buenos Aies provided nationalist political interests with ammunition to discredit anarchists as aliens. Terms such as "*gringos*" (foreigners) and "*tanos*" (Italians) – as well as "*negros*" to designate non-white plebian migrants – were employed generically by nationalist groups to designate insurgent working-class communities as symbols of "otherness."[47] That markets and *conventillos* continued to reflect the cosmopolitanism and ethnic diversity of resident day workers, or that native and naturalized Argentines outnumbered European immigrants in the anarchist movement by the 1920s, did not deter locals and outsiders from evoking the "foreign"

essence of their neighborhoods, fueled by nationalist propaganda against the "European" ideologies they represented.

The legend of a mythic Genoese "Republic of La Boca" speaks to the strong identification of the neighborhood with its seafaring and shipbuilding heritage, but also to the stigma attached to it from the late-nineteenth century: a fiercely independent and lawless "mafia" or "black hand," recalcitrant to municipal government and perilous to visitors from the rest of the city. The first nominally independent Republic of La Boca fancied itself a replica of the Republic of San Marino, modeled on the Free Commune of Montmartre. Another strand of Italian thought that impacted La Boca was freemasonry, which formed a group of lodges called the "*Comitato Italiano*" in the 1870s and built a Logia Líberi Pensatori in 1875, incubator of radical labor traditions.[48] Many of the spaces in which anarchists converged for meetings, harangues, performances and strike committees, such as the *Sociedad José Verdi*, the *Unione Operai Italiani*, and the *Società Ligure*, were Italian mutual aid societies founded in the late-nineteenth century.[49] In 1901, the first meeting of the Argentine Workers' Federation (FOA), precursor of the FORA, was held in the *Sociedad Ligure* in La Boca. In 1906 Italian Masons founded a school, the *Unión Fraternal*, an important center of secular education and anticlerical activism that hosted anarchist and socialist activities during the period of trade union and resistance society formation that saw Buenos Aires play a leading role in the international labor and revolutionary movements of the first two decades of the twentieth century.

The slang spoken by workers in Buenos Aires, and reflected in their print media, was a mix of Italian dialects known as *cocoliche* that contributed to the emergence of Argentine *lunfardo*, which is a term that originated in the Lombardi dialect to identify criminals and delinquents, and mixed with Genoese, Tuscan, Galician, Portuguese, and even indigenous Guaraní and African Bantu – an original blend that remains a popular mode of communication in Argentina today.[50] Cultural and artistic life in the *barrios* where anarchism flourished was intense and diverse at the onset of the twentieth century. The *Negra Carolina* bar, a popular center of sociability frequented by anarchists in La Boca, was operated by a Black priestess born of

enslaved parents in Virginia who had befriended Josephine Baker in New Orleans, in an era when Galicians, Basques, Dalmatians, Lebanese, Brazilians, Chileans, British, Portuguese, Paraguayans, Swedes, Russians, and other immigrants flocked to the neighborhood.[51] The dialect of the older Ligurian community referred to as *xeneizes* (or *zeneizi*) was the *lingua franca* of everyday life.[52] Garibaldian and Mazzinian movements for the unity of Italy played important roles in the civic life of the *barrio*, as did Italian anarchist circles and resistance societies – the nucleus of the powerful FORA – and socialist clubs who elected Alfredo Palacios the first socialist deputy in Latin America in 1904.[53]

The FORA's anarchist organ *La Protesta* and the socialist newspaper *La Vanguardia* routinely published articles in Italian. Ettore Mattei, Cesare Batacchi, Fortunato Serantoni, Errrico Malatesta, Pietro Gori, as well as Severino Giovanni – the feared "expropriator" and sworn enemy of Mussolini – are some of the most prominent figures of Italian anarchism to have agitated in the streets of La Boca and elsewhere in Argentina. They were self-described cursed, banished, starved, and unkempt exiles identified by the Argentine state as dangerous interlopers who contributed to the working-class city's stigma of dangerousness and rebelliousness.

As Argentina had received an enormous number of immigrants by the eve of the First World War, its elites became obsessed with the "quality" of European arrivals. One cartoon from the early 1900s shows an Argentine official telling a matronly shopkeeper what he wants from her shop of European migrants: "I need immigrants, but from now on they must be sifted, because I don't want agitators, revolutionaries, strikers, communists, or socialists." The shopkeeper responds, "Enough, I know what you want: an immigration made up purely of bankers and archbishops."[54] The cartoonist was mocking a longstanding belief among Argentine elites that immigration policy would select the right kind of European, a notion that dated to Juan Alberdi's preference for northwestern Europeans.

Even as Argentina became white/European in its national discourse, Italians and other Mediterranean immigrants were stigmatized as

outcasts due to their proclivity for revolutionary agitation and undisciplined culture of poverty and licentiousness. In the 1920s, Italian anarchists through groups such as "*L´Avvenire*" and "*Renzo Novatore*" (in which Aldo Aguzzi and Severino Di Giovanni played prominent roles) and the *Unione Antifascista Italiana* (UAI) continued to articulate their activities with older sections of the FORA. From his exile in Uruguay, Italian anarchist Luigi Fabbri issued a supplement in *La Protesta* called "*Pagina in lingua italiana*" (published bi-monthly between 1929 and 1930). The anarcho-bolshevik Antorchistas also printed the Italian-language column "*L´Alba dei Liberi*" in the newspaper *Pampa Libre* based in General Pico.[55] María Migueláñez Martínez argues that the struggle against Italian fascism radicalized Italian political exiles, polarizing anarchist internal debates on the role of violence and drawing fierce retaliations from authorities, who saw the "expropriator" movement led by Severino Di Giovanni as epitomizing the dangerousness and lawlessness of anarchists in general.[56] For Davide Turcato, "the transnationalism and border crossing of Italian anarchism was vital to its struggle precisely because it contrasted with the territoriality and limited sovereignty of the Italian nation state. In other words, the mismatch in scope between people and state is problematic for long-distance nationalism, but it was advantageous for anarchism."[57]

Notwithstanding their unity of language with their host societies, Spanish immigrants were targeted as "foreigners" with the same virulence as Italians, and they were as fundamental to early anarchism in the Río de la Plata region.[58] Only Madrid and Barcelona had a more Spanish anarchists than Buenos Aires. Spanish exiles from the first Spanish republic flocked to the city in the late-nineteenth century, followed by a second generation in the first two decades of the 1900s. In the 1920s and 1930s, Spaniards flowed into Argentina, followed by refugees from the Second Republic who facilitated links between anarchists during the Spanish Civil War. The cultural influence of these émigrés extended to Spain itself, where Argentine publications, including anarchist ones, outnumbered those produced locally.[59] During the Civil War, hundreds of Argentine activists joined the CNT and FAI, among them Jacobo Mafud, Jacobo Prince, and José Grunfeld of the *Federación anarco-comunista Argentina* (FACA) and

FORA militant and publisher Diego Abad de Santillán, all prominent anti-fascists.[60.]

Cabinetmaker Gregorio Inglán Lafarga, writer José Prat, and Francisco Rós – the founder of the important dockworkers' resistance society in the early 1900s – were all prominent Catalán anarchists and key founders of the early anarchist movement in Argentina, along with Antonio Pellicer Paraire, who had been a founding member of the *Federación de trabajadores de la región española* (FTRE) in 1881. His articles in the Argentine anarchist newspaper *La Protesta Humana* in 1900 and 1901 theorized the organization of craft-based resistance societies and their coordination by local federations based on concerted direct action and solidarity pacts. Resistance societies, as defined by the first Argentine workers' congress of May 1901, were to be "working-class collectives organized for the economic struggle of the present" devoid of organic ties with either socialist or anarchist movements.[61] Pellicer Paraire saw them as models of organization, propaganda, communication, education, and economic direct action in the spirit of local autonomy and grass-roots empowerment. They were also the nuclei for diffusion of libertarian socialist ideals throughout the region, across national boundaries, and above institutional politics.[62] These resistance societies, quickly abandoned by socialist unions, became an anarchist movement under the umbrella of the FORA.

It is also necessary to consider, more broadly, people who were not immigrants and whom the movement touched, the cultural environment in which it moved (beyond well-known circles of Italians and Spaniards who dominated not just the working class but Argentine society in general), and the processes of racialization that underpinned their history as undesirables in the oligarchical republic. Argentines of African origin, for example, were present in the first three decades of the twentieth century, particularly in neighborhoods adjacent to the country's ports and especially in Buenos Aires. While new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe predominated at the time, Afro-Argentines, as they are referred to today, who a century earlier had been a majority on the riverfront, still constituted an everyday presence whose association with vagrancy, dissolute

lifestyles, and popular performances made them frequent victims of the same police persecution as labor and political activists. They were racialized by elites as remnants of the untamed *gaucho* era of pre-liberal national organization, the heritage of which anarchist authors sought to wrestle from the hands of nationalists, for whom "*negro*" and "*cabecita Negra*" were common derogatory designations. Such epithets were aimed not at the descendants of African slavery but the *mestizo* or culturally blended masses of seasonal migrants who flooded Buenos Aires every year during the high export season. Prior to 1910, before the cultural practices they championed diluted these prejudices, even foreign-born anarchists generically derided Afro-Argentines as politically and culturally unsophisticated.

However, in the 1910s, anarchist publications pushed back against Radical Civic Union and Socialist Party-supported criminology and atavistic nationalism by increasingly celebrating the plebian figures and cultures of the multi-ethnic communities in which they lived and worked. While loaded with racism when used in elite circles, the term "*negro*" in anarchist rhetoric was devoid of stigmatization or inferiorization, as well as common in *apodos* or nicknames of anarchist detainees defined as dangerous in police reports. Unlike some anarchist literature on the indigenous questions (noted below), no reflection on the colonial inheritance and the importance of ethnicity in describing specific social and labor conflicts occurred. Nor does one find explicit identifications of Black culture as dissolute or marginal, other than in early twentieth century denunciations of carnival in Buenos Aires, which was often conflated with drunkenness, sexualization, and depoliticized crowd behavior.[63]

Mixed-race and Afro-Argentine influence was felt in manifestations of popular culture that received growing attention in anarchist publications after the First World War. They dominated the *payador* singer genre and were frequent characters in *sainete* plays produced by Italian immigrants in La Boca del Riachuelo, where virtually all the actors of the revolutionary movements and their conservative nationalist nemeses that traversed the first half of the century were based.[64] Meanwhile, Cape Verdean mariners and shipyard workers who arrived in large numbers in the 1920s – and who unlike Black

Argentines were concentrated in a single working-class enclave in Dock Sud adjacent to La Boca and Avellaneda to the south of Buenos Aires – participated in anarchist activism. They did not put forward their African identity, as they were regarded by Argentine law as Portuguese and therefore "European" immigrants. In the 1940s and 1950s, many joined the FORA and other groups like the Maritime Workers' Federation (FOM) where anarchists were embedded and the *Federación Obrera en Construcciones Navales* (FOCN) to oppose nationalism and defend labor protests. They also led the resistance to Peronism and to the regime of General Pedro Aramburu after 1955.[66] All of this speaks to the absence of an inherent racial prejudice among anarchists. In all, there was little discussion in the anarchist media and literature of Afro-Argentine identity. Yet, this did not preclude Black figures from appearing in anarchist-inspired culture as workers and community members rather than as a distinct racial group. Black musicians, shoe-shiners, and women caretakers of children were commonplace in Italian descriptions of everyday life in Lezama Park at the entrance of La Boca near San Telmo, historically an Afro-Argentine neighborhood of Buenos Aires and the location of popular anarchist picnics for decades. Anarchists transmitted their revolutionary messages not just through newspapers, pamphlets, and books but also through music and dance. For instance, *habaneras, milongas*, and *tangos* originated in the Black culture of the Río de la Plata and became popular cultural forms in the early stages of radio broadcasts, recording, and film.[66]

Argentine anarchists also tackled the indigenous question. Organizations of various tendencies, including the FORA, denounced violent campaigns of so-called "pacification" in terms that behooved them to address indigenous peoples and their resistance. In an article published in 1911 in *Ideas y Figuras* edited by Alberto Ghiraldo, for example, Constancio Vigil wrote: "The White man is taking over everything, and granting the Indian the mercy of life compels him to behave like a domestic animal."[67] Ayelén Burgstaller has shown that this position, while consistent with the movement's opposition to the church, the state and the oligarchy, was generally articulated in paternalistic terms, promoting literacy and anarchist education as solutions to indigenous "docility." By the 1920s, however, activists of

the FORA and their "anarcho-bolshevik" rivals both promoted agrarian revolution in more systematic and inclusive terms, an outcome of their immersion in federalist networks of local committees throughout localities of Salta, Jujuy, Tucumán, and other regions of Argentina where the demands of real conflicts brought anarchists from Buenos Aires in contact with diverse outlooks on "the people." They proposed viewing indigenous peoples as subjects with their own agency, naming them revolutionaries, and ascribing to them struggles over land ownership as well as harsh working and living conditions. "Civilization" – a notion which anarchists had not historically contested – became synonymous with the oppression by the bourgeoisie, a mere pretext for achieving its conquering goals.[68]

By comparison, indigenous peoples were absent from mainstream and socialist depictions of Argentine identity.[69] Joaquín González, one the most influential voices in the early-twentieth century debate on the social question, believed that the country "had the enormous advantage of not having inferior ethnic elements in her population."[70] Similarly, Estanislao Zeballos, an influential politician and foreign affairs minister, remarked in 1906 that Argentina, among all the Spanish American nations, had been "the one to go forward the most rapidly and with the greatest uniformity," because the country had a homogeneous population "consisting of pure-blooded Europeans or *mestizos* produced by the crossing of more than three centuries."[71] For José Ingenieros, a socialist and one of the period's foremost advocates of racial interpretations of social phenomena, the "Argentine White race" was as an emergent substitution for "indigenous races."[72]

By the 1920s, anarchism in Argentina had diversified in its organizational expressions, its literature, and its regional contours. Historian Hélène Finet refers to the "anarchist heterodoxy" of the Argentine movement. It comprised the FORA and its deeply rooted traditions of local, transregional, and international federative networking among resistance societies and affinity groups. It contributed to forging a working-class counterculture of resistance to capitalism and the state. And it featured a diversity of expressions prior to 1905 and again in the wake the First World War, particularly the emergence of insurrectionist tendencies and anarcho-bolshevism in the 1920s.[73]

Leaders of the FORA throughout the 1920s defended a model of anarchist organization that – while it coexisted, interacted, and sometimes even blended with revolutionary syndicalist movements in action – always retained its autonomy and originality. Beyond the Río de la Plata region, anarcho-bolsheviks engaged with revolutionary movements throughout Latin America such as those of Augusto César Sandino in Nicaragua and Emiliano Zapata in Mexico. French-born anarchist Joaquín Falconett, a historic leader of *La Protesta*, corresponded with Mexican anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón and related news of the Mexican Revolution, as did Rodolfo González Pacheco and Teodoro Antillí. After Flores Magon's death in 1922, Mexican and the Argentine anarchists linked to the FORA coordinated actions as transnationalism gained momentum throughout the decade. Julio Díaz, then co-director of *La Protesta* with López Arango, participated in the organization of Central American anarchists in the mid-1920s in conjunction with the Mexican CGT. In 1929, these anarchists helped establish an ephemeral anarchist international, the *Asociación Continental Americana de los Trabajadores* (ACAT), affiliated with the International Workingmen's Association (IWA-AIT) and defined by Diego Abad de Santillán as a "regional and supra-national body defined by the federalism and autonomy of its component parts."[74] It pledged to overcome economic and geographic divisions, denounced imperialism, and called on an increased understanding among anarchists of different ideas, social realities, and traditions in the various regions of America.[75]

Formed in 1923, the *Alianza Libertaria Argentina* (ALA) federated a loose alliance of small craft societies, radical ethnic associations and political groups associated with anarcho-bolshevism, among them a group of dissident FORA activists led by González Pacheco. The group edited its own newspapers and worked within *La Protesta* until 1915 before launching *La Obra* (1915-1919), *El Libertario* (1920), and *La Antorcha* in 1921. The Italian "anarchist expropriator" Di Giovanni also published *Culmine* (1925-28) and *Anarchia* (1930), two of many short-lived newspapers that reflected an effervescence of dissensions within anarchism throughout the period, culminating in the creation of the *Comité Regional de Relaciones Anarquistas*

(CRRA) two years after the 1930 military coup and the establishment of the *Federación Anarco-Comunista* (FACA) in 1935. The FACA would become an ancestor of the contemporary *Federación Libertaria Argentina* (FLA), a pioneer of what would later become the doctrine of "*especifismo*" based on the "social insertion" of anarchist organizers in autonomous and social movements and unions.[76] This diversity within and among anarchist movements was a key factor in their growing immersion in struggles of the Argentine interior, including rural areas and indigenous communities.

There were revolts of seasonal workers in the Pampa of Buenos Aires province, rural uprisings in Santa Fé, Chaco, and in the southern province of Santa Cruz. All were actively supported by local workers' associations or *Uniones de Obreros Locales* (local anarchist steering committees) that coordinated with anarchists in the capital. Convergences and tensions between the rival anarcho-communist, anarcho-bolshevik, and "expropriator" tendencies played out in far-flung, remote localities where urban-based resistance societies fanned out as far south as Chubut and as far north as Salta.[77] From there, Argentine activists promoted solidarities throughout the Andean region. Antonio Fournakis, a Buenos Aires-based organizer of the *Unión Anarquista Balkánica Sud-Americana* which advocated abolishing national borders and federating anarchist groups across the continent, participated along with FORA activist Armando Triviño and printer Tomás Soria, an anarcho-bolshevik leader in Salta and Tucumán, in the organization of indigenous Bolivian anarchists in the 1920s. One of the leaders of the Oruro section of the Bolivian *Federación Obrera del Trabajo* (FOT) was Luis Gallardo of the Argentine FORA. Anarchist ideas circulated across the Andes to Peru, aided by the presence of activists from Argentina and Chile, many of whom passed through Salta on their way north. Pietro Gori addressed a fledgling early anarchist movement in Salta in 1901, prior to its consolidation within the *Federación Obrera de Salta* in 1904. As in northern Patagonia, local resistance societies and anarcho-bolsheviks expanded their influencce in the context of the Russian Revolution, the "Tragic Week" of 1919 in Buenos Aires, and the ensuing surge in labor organization nationwide. The *Agrupación Comunista Anarquista Despertar* was a local branch first of the *Unión Comunista Anarquista Argentina* and

then of the ALA, which waged a fierce battle for hegemony in the region with the FORA through the pages of the newspaper *El Coya*. Alberto Bianchi and Vicente Ferreito, correspondents of *La Protesta* and *La Antorcha* in Buenos Aires, organized conferences and cultural events in Salta, where the anarcho-feminist newspaper *La Tribuna,* edited by Juana Ruoco Buela, also circulated between 1922 and 1925, and where women organized in the seamstresses' *Sindicato de Obreras de la Aguja de Salta* led by Petrona Arias. The FORA organized urban and domestic workers, artisans, street vendors and other resistance societies into the *Federación Obrera Local Salteña* (FOLS).[78] Anarchist propagandists in the Argentine northwest often came from northeastern towns along the Paraná River linking Buenos Aires to Asunción del Paraguay. They traveled via the vast network of syndicalist branches of mariners' unions coordinated by the FOM, spreading news and returning to the capital with dispatches from far northern reaches of Salta and Jujuy.

Anarchists made inroads into the struggles of indigenous peoples from Chaco province to Patagonia. Emilio López Arango of the FORA advocated not only for inclusion of rural workers and peasants (representatives of the "genuine physiognomy of American peoples") but also the "elevation of the *gaucho* (*mestizo* transfrontiersman) and the Indian by anarchist movements." He decried nationalism as a product of "stupid pride," and described its advocates as "ashamed of their humble origins, of the Indian or African blood that runs through their veins; [they] even despise the native language, the habits and customs of the native-born, anything that might identify them with the terroir (*la terruña*, or the heartland)." [79] In the same vein, the ALA's Badaraco, founder of *La Antorcha* and the *Alianza Obrera Spartacus*, wrote in 1932 that Argentines were a "people nourished by many streams: Indians, Blacks, *gauchos* and immigrants endowed with knowledge in the noblest sense of the word, armed over the years with creativity from below, their own means of expression, democratic and combative memory…." Indigenous cultures, he continued, "remain alive in so many parts of our land, and are present in the struggles and the dreams that we share as libertarians…."[80]

Maia Ramnath has described anarchism as "a body of practices and

performative acts that seek collective liberation in its most meaningful sense, by maximizing the conditions for autonomy and egalitarian social relationships," constantly engaged with other components of society to achieve a "proper balance between a whole constellation of key pairs: freedom and equality, liberty and justice, the individual and the collective, the head and the heart, the verbal and the sensual, power relations and economic relations."[81] In any local or regional context, within or beyond the boundaries within which it explicitly took shape as an internationalist variant of socialism, anarchist practices were bound to steer a course to educate the "oppressed" through militant interventions in social and labor conflict, print, and performance. They drew from a corpus of literary and doctrinal writings by prominent authors in Europe, while their militant intellectual activists simultaneously reached into folk and popular repertoires to better blend with their environment and broaden their appeal.

Culture, as understood here, cannot be dissociated from representations of space and time implicit in the paradigms of federalism and social revolution that guided their expressions of identity and alterity. German anarchist Rudolf Rocker, who was widely read by anarchists in Argentina, defined federalism as "an organic collaboration of all social forces towards a common goal on the basis of covenants freely arrived at…. It is a unity of action, sprung from inner conviction, which finds expression in the vital solidarity of all…. Liberation of economics from capitalism! Liberation of society from the State!"[82]

The "social revolution" as a broad project of social transformation was conceived as an alternative to the "revolution" in tradition of late-eighteenth century France, which was based on the seizure of political power and establishment of a state. Power was conceived instead as countercultural, ubiquitous, achieved from below through association and solidarity of the oppressed, without hierarchies and in the spirit of local autonomy.[83] The temporality of anarchist representations of collective redemption blended immediacy with futurity. Their militancy of urgency and promise of autonomy led them to interact fluidly with broad sections of society, including ethnic and mutualistic societies, ideological competitors, unorganized workers, and the poor in general, less in a theorized fashion than through

direct action and the periodic fashioning of alliances in situations of conflict. Through the symbolic deployment of promethean imagery and the immanence of freedom, cultural practices and propaganda were geared toward a universal audience of the oppressed. For Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, their history "is first and foremost about people interpreting and giving meaning to vocabularies, concepts, and practices that had recently emerged on the local scene." It is not a matter, she continues, "of importing but of adapting, and adaptations cannot take place outside of the local framework…."[84] Beyond the hidebound nationalist framework of determining whether or not Argentine anarchists were guided by the "foreign" ideals ascribed to the ethnic origins of their initial proponents, or by an openness to "national identity" – a concept which they resisted in the name of the universality of their aspirations – their specificity should be understood as a reflection of the society in which they operated: diverse, changing, and inextricably bound with the emancipatory future to which they aspired.

Notes

[1] "Captura e fuga: notas para imaginar espaços-refúgio," *Leituras*, Sao Paulo: Pivô, 2022, https://www.pivo.org.br/blog/de-montanhas-submarinas-o-fogo-faz-ilhas/

[2] Ivanna Margarucci, "Repensando el anarquismo en América Latina. ¿Del nacionalismo metodológico a un giro transnacional incompleto?," *Prohistoria*, no. 34 (December 2020): 263.

[3] Laura Moreno-Sainz, "Anarchisme argentin (1890-1930): Contribution à une mythanalyse" (PhD diss., University of Grenoble 2, 2003): 275; Cf. *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Post-Colonial World, 1880-1940,* Steven Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt, eds. (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2011) and *The Cambridge History of Anarchism and Socialism* (2 vols.), Marcel van der Linden, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

[4] Pierre Ansart, *Les ideologies politiques* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), 99.

[5] Cf. for example Pablo Pérez, Juan Manuel Heredia and Hernán Villasemín, "El trabajo cultural del anarquismo. La Biblioteca Archivo de Estudios Libertarios de Buenos Aires (1995-2005) y el Instituto de Documentación Social CNT-FAI (1938)," *Germinal. Revista de estudios libertarios* no. 2 (2006); Luciana Anapios, "Prensa y estrategias editorials del movimiento anarquista en la Argentina de entreguerras," *Anuario del Intstituto de Historia Argentina* (FAHCE, Centro de Historia Argentina y Americana) vol. 16, no.2 (2016); Lucas Domínguez Rubio, "Un itinerario por los proyectos editorials del anarquismo en Argentina: cambios, maniobras

y permanencies, *Izquierdas* no.33 (2017).

[6] Jacinto Cerdá, *Negras tormentas. La FORA anarquista en Buenos Aires, 1930-1943* (Tesis de Maestría, Universidad de San Andrés, Argentina, 2021) : 21. Cerdá's thesis was recently published as *Negras tormentas. La FORA anarquista en la ciudad de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires : Grupo Editor Universitario, 2023).

[7] See Juan Suriano, *Anarquistas: Cultura y Política Libertaria en Buenos Aires, 1890-1910* (Buenos Aires: Manantial, 2001); translated by Chuck Morse as *Paradoxes of Utopia: Anarchist Culture and Politics in Buenos Aires, 1890-1910* (Chico, Calif: AK Press, 2019); Dora Barrancos, *Anarquismo, educación y costumbres en la Argentina de principios de siglo* (Buenos Aires: Contrapuntos, 1990).

[8] Adriana Petra, *Anarquistas: cultura y lucha política en la Buenos Aires finisecular. El anarquismo como estilo de vida.* Informe final del concurso "Culturas e identidades en América Latina y el Caribe" (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2001), 5.

[9] Ibid., 6.

[10] Michelle Perrot, *Les ouvriers en grève. France,* 1871-1890 Vol.2 (Paris: Mouton/ Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1974, 724.

[11] Adriana Petra, *op.cit.*; cf. Roberto Pittaluga, *Un imaginario utópico restaurador en el anarquismo de la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: El Cielo por Asalto, 2000).

[12] Hélène Finet, "Le débat 'Anarchie ou syndicalisme' à la lumière de la réalité argentine: la F.O.R.A face aux tentatives d'union syndicale du mouvement ouvrier (1901-1915)," in *Le Congrès anarchiste d'Amsterdam 1907-2007. Un siècle d'anarcho-syndicalisme,* ed. Hélène Finet (Orthez: Éditions du Temps Perdu, 2007), 19.

[13] *El Perseguido,* 05/18/1890, cited by José Moya, "The Positive Side of Stereotypes: Jewish Anarchists in Early Twentieth-Century Buenos Aires," *Jewish History* no.18 (2004): 22.

[14] Eliseo Lara-Orde, "La literatura anarquista del Cono Sur. La imagen del pueblo en los cuentos de la prensa obrera anarquista de Chile y Argentina (1897-1927)," *Revista Pacarina del Sur* no.37 (October-December 2018): 17.

[15] John Zerzan, *Time and Time Again* (Olympia (WA), Detritus Books, 2018), 88.

[16] Petra, *op.cit.*, 20-21, 26.

[17] Agustín Nieto, "Notas críticas en torno al sentido común historiográfico sobre 'el anarquismo argentino'" *AContraCorriente* vol. 7, no.3 (Spring 2010): 235.

[18] Ibid.: 240-248.

[19] Cf. Mariana di Stefano, "Políticas de lectura y escritura en las escuelas del anarquismo en la Argentina a principios del siglo XX, *Cuad Sur* nos. 35-36; Martín Albornoz, *Cuando el anarquismo causaba sensación: La sociedad argentina, entre el miedo y la fascinación por los ideales libertarios* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2021).

[20] Juan Suriano, *Auge y caída del anarquismo* (Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual, 2014): 46-51, and *Anarquistas, op. cit.*, 145-178.

[21] Cf. Geoffroy de Laforcade, "Straddling the Nation and the Working World:

Anarchism and Syndicalism on the Docks and Rivers of Argentina, 1900-1930," in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Post-Colonial World, 1880-1940*, eds. Steven Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt (Leiden: Brill, 2011); "The Ghosts of Insurgencies Past: Waterfront Labor, Working-Class Memory, and the Contentious Emergence of the National-Popular State in Argentina" in *No Gods, No Masters, No Peripheries: Global Anarchisms*, Barry Maxwell and Raymond Craib, eds. (Oakland, CA: Institute for Comparative Modernities/PM Press 2015).

[22] Cf. Geoffroy de Laforcade, "A Laboratory of Argentine Labor Movements: Dockworkers, Mariners, and the Contours of Class Identity," (PhD diss., Yale University, 2001): chapters 2 & 3.

[23] Julia Rodríguez, *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 232.

[24] Ibid., 234-235; cf. Gabriela Constanzo, *Los indeseables. Las Leyes de Residencia y Defensa Social* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Madreselva, 2009).

[25] David Fitzgerald and David Cook-Martin, *Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 35.

[26] Cf. José Sáez Capel, "Los migrantes y la discriminación en Argentina," *Scripta Nova.Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales* vol.94, no.31 (2001); Fernado Devoto, "Los orígenes de unbarrio italiano en Buenos Aires a mediados del siglo XIX," *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana "Dr. E. Ravignani"* Third Series, no.1 (1989): 95.

[27] Eduardo Gilimón, *Un anarquista en Buenos Aires (1890-1910)* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1971), 41.

[28] Cf. Geoffroy de Laforcade, "Federative Futures: Waterways, Resistance Societies, and the Subversion of Nationalism in the Early 20th Century Anarchism of the Rio de la Plata Region," *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de America Latina y el Caribe* vol. 22, issue 2 (2011). José Arico defined anarchists as "mobile agitators: in *La hipótesis de justo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1998): 18. See also Martín Albornoz and Diego Antonio Galeano, "Los agitadores móviles: Trayectorias anarquistas y vigilancias portuarias en el Atlántico sudamericano," Dossié historia marítima y portuaria, *Atlántica* no.21 (January-April 2019).

[29] Cf. John Galante, *On the Other Shore: The Atlantic Worlds of Italians in South America during the Great War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022); Lila Caimari, "Rasgos de una vecindad informativa Buenos Aires-Montevideo a fines del siglo XIX," in *Política y cultura de masas en América Latina: espacios, escalas, temporalidades,* eds. Mercedes García Ferrari, Carolina González Velasco and Mariela Rubinzal (Los Polvorines: Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, 2023).

[30] Ivanna Margarucci, "El 'anarquismo argentino' en la historiografía anarquista. De la construcción de una noción centralista a la ampliación de la escala geográfica," *Historia Regional* (Sección Historia. Instituto Superior del Profesorado No 3, Villa Constitución) no. 48 (January-April 2023): 17.

[31] Ibid., 457; Félix Basterra, *El crepúsculo de los gauchos* (Buenos Aires: Buena Vista, 2005 (1st edition 1903), 65.

[32] Alberto Ghiraldo, "Mephispholes of the Pampa" in *Alma Gaucha. Drama en 3 actos y 8 cuadras* (Buenos Aires: Pascual Mediano Editor, 1909, first edition 1906): 11; Laura Moreno-Sainz, *op.cit.*, 83-98.

[33] Laura Moreno-Sainz, *op.cit.*, 101.

[34] Ibid., 101-103; Osvaldo Bayer, "El santo ácrata," Pagina/12 (April 9, 1994).

[35] Cf. Adolfo Prieto, *El discurso criollista en la formación de la Argentina moderna* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2006); Armando Minguzzi, "Estudio introductorio" in *Martín Fierro. Revista popular de crítica y arte* (Buenos Aires: Academia de Letras/ Cedinci, 2008).

[36] Carina Peraldi, "Imágenes en conflicto. Las representaciones del pasado rural como instrumento de pugna política al interior del movimiento anarquista argentino, 1900-1910," *A Contra Corriente* vol. 10, no. 1 (Fall 2012): 55.

[37] Cf. Gabriela Constanzo, *Los Indeseables. Las Leyes de residencia y Defensa Social* (Buenos Aires: Madreselva, 2008).

[38] Cf. Diego Armus, "Eugenics in Buenos Aires: Discourses, Practices, And Historiography," *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos* vol. 23 (2016).

[39] Fernado Devoto, "Los orígenes de unbarrio italiano en Buenos Aires a mediados del siglo XIX" *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana "Dr. E. Ravignani,"* Third Series no.1 (1989): 98.

[40] Juan Carlos Chiariamonte, *Mercaderes del litoral. Economía y sociedad en la provincia de Comentes, primera mitad del siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991), 93-94.

[41] Cf. "La Boca. El color de la ribera," *El Observador Porteño. Boletín Mensual del Observatorio del Patrimonio Histórico-Cultura* yr. 2, no. 8 (June 2018).

[42] Cf. Antonio Bucich, *Rasgos y perfiles de la historia boquense* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Ergan, 1962); *La Boca del Riachuelo en la historia* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Amigos de la Escuela-Museo de Bellas Artes de la Boca, 1971).

[43] Cf. Geoffroy de Laforcade, "Repertoires of Memory: The Foreigner and the Nation in La Boca del Riachuelo, Buenos Aires, mid-19th to mid-20th Century," *Latin American Essays, MACLAS* vol. XIX (2006).

[44] Guillermo Ariel Aramayo, "Mujeres migrantes, conventillos y conflicto social en la consolidación de un espacio de contrastes: Buenos Aires (1870-1915)," *Geograficando* vol. 17, no. 2 (2021).

[45] "¿Quiénes son los extranjeros?," loose flyer, undated; probably from the 1904-1905 period. Consulted courtesy of the late FORA activist Humberto Correale.

[46] Giuseppe Vespignani, *Per la salvessa delle famiglie* (Buenos Aires: Colegio Pio IX, December 1910), 3.

[47] Luis Romero & Luis Alberto Romero, eds., *Buenos Aires, historia de cuatro siglos*, Vol.2 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Abril, 1983), 181; José Barcia, "La amarga realidad de

los años 30," *Todo es Historia* no. 145 (June 1979): 7.

[48] Cf. Alejandro Martín Yaverovski, "Tres Repúblicas Barriales y sus Universidades. Las Universidades Populares en la ciudad de Buenos Aires en el período de entreguerras: un esquema preliminar," *Historia Caribe* vol. XVI, no. 38 (January-June 2021): 38-46.

[49] Roberto Payró, *Los Italianos en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de "La Nación", 1895).

[50] Cf. Neva Petralli, "Lenguas en contacto: el cocoliche rioplatense," *Lingüistas y lengua en Hispanoamérica en el siglo XIX* (Fall 2020); Oscar Conde, *El lunfardo en la literatura Argentina* (Buenos Aires: USAL/UCES/Academia Porteña del Lunfardo, 2009); Federica Goldoni, "Los italianos, el lunfardo y el tango," *The Coastal Review* vol. 9, no.1 (2017).

[51] Cf. Nélida R. Pareja, "La Boca. Lo que fue, será" in *La Boca : Identidad y pertenencia,* comp. Pablo J. Rey (Buenos Aires: Asociación Civil Rumbo Sur, 2014).

[52] Cf. Fiorenzo Toso, "Il Genovese in America meridionale," *Oltreoceano* No.1 (2007); Meo Zilio, *El elemento italiano en el habla de Buenos Aires y Montevideo* (Firenzre: Valmartina Editore, 1970).

[53] Cf. Fernando Devoto, *Historia de los italianos en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2008).

[54] David Scott FitzGerald, David Cook-Martín, *Culling the Masses the Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 299.

[55] Cf. Andreas Doeswijk, *Los anarco-bolcheviques rioplatenses, 1917-1930* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Documentación e Investigación para la Cultura de Izquierdas—CeDinCI), 2013).

[56] Cf. María Migueláñez Martínez, "Atlantic Circulation of Italian Anarchist Exiles: Militants and Propaganda between Europe and Río de la Plata (1922-1939)," *Zapruder World: An International Journal for the History of Social Conflict* no.1 (2014).

[57] Davide Turcato, "Italian Anarchism as a Transnational Movement, 1885–1915," *International Review of Social History* no. 52 (2007): 417.

[58] Cf. Moya, Jose C., *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).

[59] Cf. Víctor Manuel Lucea Ayala, "Anarquistas españoles en la Argentina. Experiencias de ida y vuelta (1890-1910)," *XII Jornadas Interescuelas/Departamentos de Historia* (San Carlos de Bariloche: Universidad Nacional del Comahue, 2009); El Hossayne Charef Lakrad, "La emigración anarquista como nexo de unión entre España y Argentina," *Trabajo de Fin de Grado* (Castellón de la Plana: Universitat Jaume, 2022).

[60] Cf. James A. Baer, *Anarchist Immigrants in Spain and Argentina* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

[61] *La Protesta Humana,* 11/17/1900-06/01/1901; Diego Abad de Santillan, La

F.O.R.A., *ideologia y trayectoria* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Proyección, 1971): 53; Rubén Eduardo Bittloch, *La theorie de la violence dans l'anarchisme argentin, 1890-1910* (Paris: Memoire de Diplôme de l'EHESS, 1982), 108-111.

[62] Antonio Pellicer Paraire, "Carta abierta a los obreros estibadores de la República," quoted by Gonzalo Zaragoza, *Anarquismo argentino* (1896-1902) (Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre, 1996), 298-299.

[63] Cf. Laura Caruso, "La fiesta y la comunidad: el carnaval en el barrio obrero del Puerto de Buenos Aires a comienzos del siglo XX," *Revista de Estudios Marítimos y Sociales* (June 24, 2020).

[64] Donald S. Castro, "'El sainete porteño' and Argentine Reality: The Tenant Strike of 1907," *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* vol.44, vos.1/2 (1990).

[65] Cf. Geoffroy de Laforcade, "Memories and Temporalities of Anarchist Resistance: Community Traditions, Labor Insurgencies and Argentine Shipyard Workers, Early 1900s to Late 1950s" in *In Defiance of Boundaries: Anarchism in Latin American History,* eds. Geoffroy de Laforcade and Kirwin Shaffer (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2015/2017).

[66] Cf. Robert Farris Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love* (New York: Knopf, 2019).

[67] *Ideas y figuras*, 07/25/1911.

[68] Ayelén Burgstaller, "El anarquismo y la cuestión indígena. De la represión del Centenario a Napalpí," *Archivos de historia del movimiento obrero y la izquierda yr. XI*, no. 21 (September 2022-February 2023): 125-129.

[69] Cf. Eduardo A. Zimmerman, "Racial Ideas and Social Reform: Argentina, 1890-1916," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* vol. 72, no. 1 (February 1992).

[70] Joaquin V. Gonzalez, "El juicio del siglo," *La Nación* (May 25, 1910).

[71] Estanislao Zeballos, *The Rise and Growth of the Argentine Constitution* (Buenos Aires: Albion Printing Press, 1906), 29.

[72] José Ingenieros, *La législation du travail dans la république argentine* (Paris: Cornely, 1906), 10.

[73] Hélène Finet, "Hétérodoxie anarchiste en Argentine: analyse d;une deviance contre-démocratique, *Nuevo Mundo, Mundos Nuevos* (2009).

[74] Diego Abad de Santillán, *La F.O.R.A.: Ideología y trayectoria* (Buenos Aires: Proyección, 1971—first edition 1931): 26-32; cf. Diego Téllez Anta, "Redes anarquistas de apoyo mutuo en Latinoamérica. Relaciones entre México y Argentina en la década de 1920," (Tesis de Licenciatura, Universidad Autónoma de México, México: Ciudad Universitaria, 2018); María Miguelañez Martínez, "El proyecto continental del anarquismo argentino: resultados y usos de una propaganda transfronteriza (1920-1930)," *La historia transnacional* no.94 (2014); María Migueláñez Martínez, "Más allá de las fronteras: El anarquismo Argentino en el período de entreguerras," (Tesis de Doctorado, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2018).

[75] *La Protesta*, 05/17/1929.

[76] Cf. Fernando López Trujillo, *Vidas en rojo y negro: una historia del anarquismo en la década infame* (Buenos Aires: Letra Libre, 2005); Javier Benyo, *La Alianza Obrera Spartacus: anarquismo, vanguardia obrera e institucionalización del movimiento sindical en la década de 1930* (Buenos Aires: Libros de Anarres, 2005); Nicolás Iñigo Carrera, *La Alianza Obrera Spartacus. Documentos y Comunicaciones* (Buenos Aires: PIMSA, 2000); Agustín Nieto and Oscar Videla, eds., *El anarquismo después del anarquismo: una historia spectral* (Mar del Plata: Gesmar, 2018); María Eugenia Bordagaray, "Controversias libertarias: La interplelación anarquista en tiempos del peronismo" (Tesis de Doctorado, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2014).

[77] Héctor Daniel Guzmán, Pablo Cosso and José Saravia, José, eds., *Anarquismo en el noroeste argentino. Los movimientos obreros en el siglo XX* (Santiago del Estero: Biblioteca Sarmiento, 2017); Cosso, "Entre la violencia y el racionalismo: Improntas y avatares del anarquismo salteño en torno a la década de 1920," *Historia para todos* (December 2021): 46-59; Cosso, "Apuntes sobre el anarquismo salteño entre principios de siglo y el Golpe de Estado del Gral. Uriburu (1901-1930). La fructífera, abigarrada y represiva década del '20," *XVIII Jornadas de Investigación y Docencia de la Escuela de Historia-VII/Jornadas de Intercambio y Cooperación entre Equipos de Investigación y Docencia del Instituto de Estudios e Investigación Histótica (I.E.I.His)* (November 28-30, 2018): 1-24; Hernán Scandizzo and Jorge Etchenique, "La represión política en Río Negro en las décadas de 1930 y 1940. El caso de los anarquistas," *Archivos de historia del movimiento obrero y la izquierda* yr. II, no.3 (September 2013-February 2014): 107-129; Hernán Scandizzo, "Neuquén, el límite de la organización anarquista en la Patagonia Norte (1918-1923)," *Revista de Historia* no.18 (November 2017): 32-55.

[78] Juan Posales, *Badaraco, el héroe prohibido: Anarquismo y lucha de clases en tiempos de infamia* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones La Rosa Blindada, 2001), 94, 221.

[79] Emilio López Arango, *Ideario* (Buenos Aires: Editiones de la A.C.A.T., 1942), 173-177.

[80] Juan Posales, *Badaraco, el héroe prohibido: Anarquismo y lucha de clases en tiempos de infamia* (Buenos Aires: La Rosa Blindada, 2001), 221, 286-290.

[81] Maia Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism. An Antiauthoritarian History of India's Liberation Struggle* (Chico, Calif.: AK Press/Institute of Anarchist Studies, 2011), 37-38.

[82] Rudolf Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture*, trans. Ray E. Chase (Los Angeles: Rocker Publications Committee, 1937), 535.

[83] Daniel Colson, *Pequeño léxico filosófico del anarquismo. De Proudhon a Deleuze*, trans. Heber Cardoso (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Visión, 2003), 230.

[84] Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 9.

The Cultural Politics of Sex, Race, Tourism, and Revolution in Cold War Cuban Anarchism, 1950-1961

Kirwin R. Shaffer*

Introduction

Anarchist cultural politics work as a two-way street. In one direction, culture shapes and reflects economic, political, and social lives. In the other direction, culture is an arena where political values and meanings are contested. We can thus explore what is cultural about politics and what is political about culture. This essay takes to heart Jesse Cohn's notions of "anarchist resistance culture" as the "ways in which anarchist politics have historically found aesthetic expression in the form of a 'culture of resistance.'" As Cohn notes, this culture of resistance targets "not only one particular oppressive regime" (in this case the Batista dictatorship and the immediate years surrounding it) but also "all forms of domination and hierarchy." Ultimately, anarchist culture had to be purposeful: "If anarchism is 'prefigurative politics,' striving to make the desired future visible in and through one's actions in the present," writes Cohn, "then anarchist resistance culture had to somehow prefigure a world of freedom and equality."[1]

Following its height in the first decades of the twentieth century, anarchism declined in importance in Cuba in the late 1920s and 1930s activists left the movement, fled into exile, or were killed by the government. However, immediately following WWII, anarchism rose again on the island. In 1950 alone, there were three anarchist publications, including one devoted strictly to the arts and culture. Another publication focused on the anarchist labor union of workers in hotels, restaurants, cafés, and cabarets, i.e., the heart of Cuban tourist culture. In the 1950s, the dictator Fulgencio Batista gained control over Cuba only to see a broad-based, multi-class revolutionary movement emerge in the countryside and the cities. It was during this time that

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a revitalized anarchist movement re-emerged. Anarchists returned to their historic use countercultural weapons to critique sexuality, racial politics, tourism, and other features of Cold War-era Cuba. Upon the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959, anarchists continued to use culture to celebrate the Revolution and promote their unique radical leftist agenda—an agenda that soon ran afoul of a growing Marxist, centralized state apparatus.

This study explores how anarchists in Cuba used their publications to challenge existing forms of repression in Cuban culture around sex, race and gender, and how they celebrated their roles in the public and private spheres during both the Batista dictatorship and the early years of the Cuban Revolution. The paper investigates the intratextual iconicity of photos and words in these newspapers and their messaging. As such, we can see how words and pictures in the same text convey and reinforce the same message, each as an icon of the other. This was an important development over anarchist newspapers in the early twentieth century as photographs were not included until the early 1920s. During that earlier era, line drawings and other graphics served this function but now the photographs gave a "realistic" reinforcement to the words, including photos of real-life anarchists working, agitating, and recreating.

Through articles on cultural practices both globally and in Cuba specifically, anarchists explored sexuality (especially childhood sexuality) that needed to be liberated from "backward" ideas and prohibitions. Through articles and photography, they explored nudity, but this could also lead to questionable uses of nude photography in their newspapers that had racial (racist?) overtones while at the same time using articles and photographs to highlight racism and anarchist efforts to attack racism globally and in Cuba. Their articles and photographs explored the dark side of tourism and prostitution under Batista. At the same time, these cultural sources celebrated the roles of anarchist-influenced labor unions in building Cuban tourism that provided jobs. They also promoted working-class tourism whereby workers could relax or travel abroad and forge internationalist alliances. Finally, their writings and photographs portrayed anarchist support for the revolutionary struggle, its militarist activism to

protect the revolution, and goals for rural reform that they modeled in part on praise for the Israeli kibbutz. Thus, anarchist resistance culture in Cold War Cuba reflected Cohn's points: attacking the numerous forms of domination and hierarchy while showcasing what a future Cuba could be like—egalitarian, free from exploitation, led by workers, rooted in nature, and privileging the local over the national/the decentralized over the centralized.

Anarchism and Cuban Culture

For decades, anarchists ascribed an important role to cultural politics. They viewed novels, plays, poetry, short stories, social gatherings, and excursions as both entertainment and educational tools. By the Cold War, Cuban anarchist literary greats like Antonio Penichet and Adrián del Valle had stopped publishing. Del Valle died in 1945, and Penichet began distancing himself from anarchism. However, Marcelo Salinas—active in anarchism since 1910—continued as an important anarchist cultural ambassador and served as the *Asociación Libertaria de Cuba's* (Libertarian Association of Cuba—ALC) Secretary of Culture.

In Havana during 1950, anarchists created the arts and culture magazine *Estudios: Mensuario de cultura* (edited initially by Salinas) to accompany the propaganda newspaper *El Libertario* and the union newspaper *Solidaridad Gastronómica*—nicknamed *Soli*.[2] *Estudios* was unique in Cuban anarchist publications—of which there were nearly forty since the 1880s. This culture magazine never officially proclaimed itself to be "anarchist," but anarchists controlled the board of directors and wrote most of the content. The format, discussion of the arts, publication of nudity and addressing issues of sexuality and sexual morality reflected topics published in an earlier journal—*Estudios. Revista Ecléctica* printed in Valencia, Spain from December 1928 to June 1937. For obvious reasons, the 1930s editions of the Spanish magazine focused heavily on politics, especially fascism. Earlier foci on the arts remained, but clearly took a back seat to discussions of fascism, capitalism, and especially sex. The Valencia journal was an anarchist and anarcho-naturist mass publication with 25,000 to 70,000 copies of each issue printed. The maga-

zine was widely disseminated in the Americas, including Cuba where at least one correspondent was based in the central Cuban region of Camagüey.[3] The journal ceased publication during the Spanish Civil War.

Following the civil war, Cuba- and Spain-born Republicans and anarchists who had fought in Spain migrated to Cuba. One of those Cuban anarchist war veterans was Abelardo Iglesias. Upon returning to Cuba following Franco's Fascist victory, Iglesias continued working for anarchist and anti-fascist causes.[4] In 1950, he was a founding member of Havana's *Estudios: Mensuario de cultura*.[5] Yet, there appears little overlap of people between the 1950 Havana and the 1930s Valencia publications. Granted, thirteen years had passed between the end of the first and the beginning of the second journal. No authors from the Spanish version appeared in the Cuban version except for a column published by Dr. Juan Lazarte in the second edition of the Havana journal. Lazarte was a frequent writer for the Valencia journal in the mid-1930s; however, the Cuban column ("La crisis final del Estado Moderno") appears to be a reprint and not something that Lazarte wrote for the Cuban journal explicitly—and probably not from a Cuban residence.[6]

The Cuban *Estudios* had a much higher orientation toward culture than its Spanish forebear, though like the Valencia journal, the Havana journal published extensively on sex and sexuality both from biological and artistic realms—as noted below. Editors filled Havana's *Estudios* (and the other newspapers) with book reviews, biographies of authors like George Orwell and Federico García Lorca, and art criticism. The Havana magazine focused heavily on Cuban culture and political culture, including columns on Cuban artist Wilfredo Lam, Cuban sculptor and artist Eugenio Rodríguez, the future of "serious music" in Cuba, and critiques of Cuban baseball that compared it to politics—highly popular, but through their supposed weight of importance and the noise they generated, they distracted from real problems.[7]

Meanwhile, Jorge Gallart (one of Salinas's noms de plume) attacked mainstream Cuban magazines for filling their pages with articles

about intellectuals like Cubans Raúl Roa or Jorge Mañach while ignoring anarchist intellectuals. "Never have we seen our intellectuals cited," wrote Gallart. If these magazines mentioned anarchists, they and their ideas were "disfigured." If an anarchist intellectual visited the island, no magazine mentioned it but fell all over themselves when some "Stalinist fellow-traveler arrives on our shores."[8] Anarchists set out to correct this with columns published by Cuban-based anarchists like Salinas, Abelardo Iglesias Saavedra, Roberto Bretau, Antonio Landrián, Casto Moscú, Rafael Serra, and others.

Anarchist cultural politics on the island addressed a plethora of issues via newspaper columns, art reviews, and photography. The triumph of the revolution in January 1959 temporarily allowed anarchists more press freedom to highlight anarchist ideas for creating a new revolutionary culture and society. However, by 1961, the increasingly centralized and Communist-influenced state apparatus of the new regime saw anarchists as counter-revolutionary, leading to the closure of the anarchist press and exile for many activists. The following sections explore how Cuban anarchists centrally located in Havana navigated the last decade of Republican-era Cuba by focusing on Cuban anarchist cultural politics about sex, race, tourism, and revolution as explored through the cultural lenses of text and photography in the anarchist press of the era.

Anarchist Cultural Explorations of Sexuality, Sex Education, and the Family

Anarchists believed families would play a key role in human emancipation. Earlier in the twentieth century, they used cultural productions like novellas, serialized novels in newspapers, plays, and weekly gatherings to reach union halls and households.[9] In 1950, Salinas reprinted Adrián del Valle's essay "La crisis de la familia" to contrast anarchist and bourgeois notions of family. Del Valle wrote that if a crisis affects marriage and leads to divorce that does not mean it affects the family because family was "biological" while marriage and divorce—following longtime free love notions—were artificial creations. So, when elites called for increased Church or state intervention to protect families by promoting marriage and attacking divorce,

they were only protecting these artificial constructs, not the natural family.[10] The anarchist focus on family as natural and biological illustrated what Penichet and Del Valle earlier had emphasized: families were natural seeds for mutual aid and decentralized organization of a future anarchist society free from unnatural state and religious constructs. Anarchists should focus on families—as much as workplaces—to help people live a prefigurative state of anarchism in the present and until the social revolution triumphed.[11]

Anarchists also rejected governmental and religious efforts to shape children. For instance, anarchists stressed the decentralized family's dominant role in childrearing, particularly guiding children's understanding of sexuality. Children should be taught openly and honestly about sexuality, especially their own. One should not want the government or the Catholic Church to be involved in this delicate matter. To this end, Dr. Santiago Velasco—the anarchist manager of *Estudios*—advised parents who might be ignorant of their children's sexual impulses. Reflecting common prejudices, Velasco warned that masturbation—"one of a child's first vices"—was not an illness but children should limit it. While girls and boys masturbated before and during puberty, parents needed to control this through a low salt diet, promote regular bowel movements, and encourage exercise so youth were less inclined to think about touching themselves. Velasco also urged parents to be upfront with children about menstruation, the normality of nocturnal emissions, and boys' erections. He additionally warned parents about "perverts" who sexually desired children. Parents had to educate themselves so they could teach their children what was natural, what was dangerous, and how to control usual childhood sexual curiosity. Finally, Velasco advised parents to treat and educate sons and daughters equally.[12]

For anarchists, sex was "natural" and should not be co-opted by authoritarian institutions that would impose artificial restrictions, prohibitions, and feelings of "sinful" behavior. The focus on "the natural" influenced other aspects of anarchism. For instance, anarchists in Spain and Cuba had a long historical involvement with *naturismo*, actively working with naturists in the 1910s and 1920s. In Spain, one found this link particularly strong in *Estudios* and in Cuba in the

journal *Pro-Vida*. *Naturismo* promoted living one's life in harmony with nature. Realizing the difficulty of this in urban environments, naturists advocated vegetarian diets, the recuperative powers of solar and steam baths, and even nudity.[13] In a magazine promoting health advice, culture and the arts, anarchists merged the three by regularly publishing nude photos in *Estudios*—a first in Cuban anarchist publishing history. Two-page spreads across the publication fold showcased primarily nude women models, but never revealing genitalia. These were rarely captioned, but instead they were for curious and appreciative eyes. A couple of things stand out. The photos celebrated physically healthy women. This continued a practice from earlier decades when anarchist newspapers often published drawings of vibrant, topless or nude women leading humanity to a new society away from debilitating societal structures that undermined humanity, as seen in the masthead from the anarchist newspaper *¡Tierra!* from 1903.[14] One can think of *Estudios'* nudes in the same way besides just being appreciated as works of art (Figure 1).

Figure 1

In their penultimate issue, *Estudios'* editors published a photo series of nude men and women from 1910 (again with covered genitalia) and offered their opinion on nudity (Figure 2). The editors suggested that "the problem of human nudity had been a controversial theme since the Middle Ages when society "began its prudishness" with men and women being covered from "the ankle to the nape." Anything exposed was horrible and led to crazy things like not bathing to avoid being seen in the nude. Today, though, "what is immoral is not in the nudity itself but in the viewer." By publishing nudes, they hoped "to popularize the nude" and strip away notions of perversion linked to nudity.[15] Historian Javier Navarro Navarro's conclusion about the Spain-based Estudios seems appropriate for the Cuban journal too: such "photos were no doubt a good allegory of the
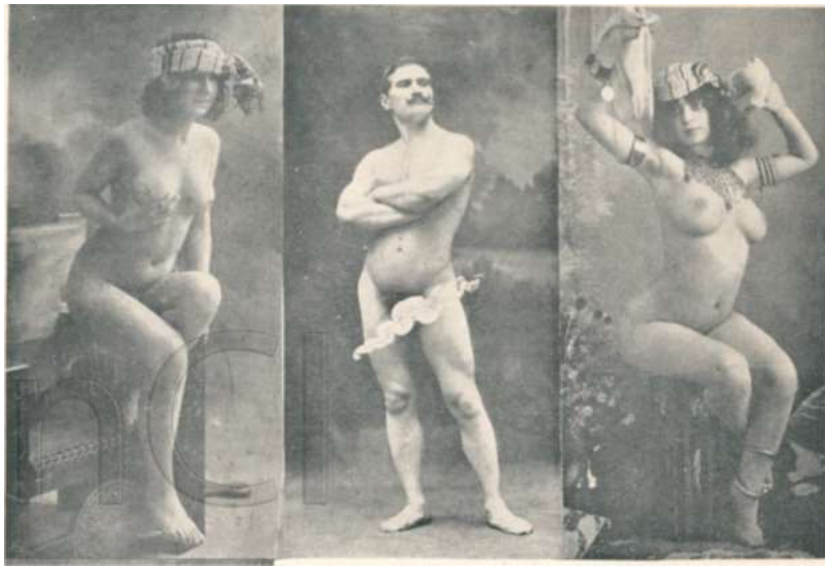
Figure 2

naturist and regenerationist ideas of the magazine that also helped, on the other hand, to attract readers and become close to the erotic and pornographic publications as in many books and leaflets of the that time."[16] Beyond this, though, one must consider the revolutionary dynamics of publishing and promoting nudity. Nudity among late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century free love advocates was always a revolutionary cultural act, whether one published it or lived in the nude alone or with others. This revolutionary act challenged religious and cultural puritanical notions. Nudity, like open discussions of sexuality, were open revolutionary challenges of love, eroticism, and natural/biological functions that cultural elites who created and enforced cultural norms saw as perverse.

Figure 3

Anarchist Cultural Explorations of Race and Racial Injustice in Cuba and Globally

Yet, something else about the nudes stands out: the models' races. The first issues showcased only white women, such as these from the first volume of *Estudios* in February 1950 (Figure 3). Where were Afro Cubans? Women of African descent appeared in later editions, but in different ways than white nudes. The first appearance shows an Afro Cuban woman in front of a painting of a baroque-era Spanish man on his horse looking shockingly with mouth agape at this real Afro Cuban (Figure 4). For the first time a caption appears. "Her beauty is bestial, in the noblest sense." Then the caption writer refer-

Figure 4

ences ethnologist Leo Frobenius's idea of African culture and "primitive peoples who settled with their cultural heritage" that influenced Europe. *Estudios'* editors concluded by reference to nude forms on their pages that "these lines have more than just the boldness of their nudity….They correspond exclusively to a people, to a history, to a part of the world."[17] While one might find an element of exoticism here—though the caption writer argued that "her exoticism is pure invention"—one could also see this as an attempt to portray women of all colors equally beautiful and worthy of celebration. This conclusion can be somewhat questioned though when one turns to the

magazine's final issue only to see the first full-frontal image of a nude (though with hands strategically covering her genitalia): the woman is Afro Cuban (Figure 5). Unlike the Spanish version of the journal where nudes were always of white women, the Havana journal reflected a greater racial diversity in its subject matter that clearly related to Cuban racial diversity. Yet, why was the only artistic nude fully facing the viewer an Afro-Cuban woman? Was there an element of the exotic and the erotic here that motivated the editors? Were editors internalizing long-standing tropes of sexualized Afro-Cuban women in Cuban culture? One cannot say definitively, but the questions linger.[18]

Figure 5

The nudes in *Estudios* raise the question of race and anarchism on the island. Did early exclusive focus on white women signal a subtle racism? Did the full-frontal Afro-Cuban woman reinforce a form of exoticism and eroticism? Anarchists rarely addressed racial issues early in the movement's history, but in the 1950s, they increasingly did.

Since the 1920s, Afro-Cuban Rafael Serra had agitated for anarchism. In a photograph of the ALC published in the magazine *Bohemia* in 1947, Serra is prominent among members.[19] While mainly a rank-and-file activist early on, by the 1950s Serra began publishing columns—many tackling racial issues. In one, he described an anarchist excursion to the port city of Mariel in April 1953. A store employee refused to wait on an Afro-Cuban member (most likely

Serra). Ironically, the store was located next to a bust of Afro-Cuban independence hero Antonio Maceo. In the 1950s, Afro Cubans still faced daily discrimination and being barred from stores, restaurants, hotels, and the like. In concluding the story, the author called for the "need to fight racial discrimination, now and as long as it exists."[20] In a 1957 column in the labor newspaper *Solidaridad Gastrónomica,* Serra suggested that while racial discrimination existed in Cuba, it was "not a profound part of our national coexistence." Yet, it still needed to be addressed. Serra stressed that one should think about discrimination, not in terms of racial injustice, but in terms of "social justice" and violations of "human rights." One should be wary of politicians offering simple anti-racism declarations and avoid "any antidiscrimination movement where political interests penetrate." True to his anarchist beliefs, he had no faith in solutions pursued by political parties or the government. Racism could only be overcome by "creating a collective conscience" where all believed in the sanctity of human rights.[21]

The Mariel incident also gave anarchists an opportunity to talk about race and teach a lesson about Maceo. Anarchists regularly reflected on the independence war era of the 1890s, whether praising Maceo's spirit of rebellion or approving of José Martí's call for an egalitarian republic. Anarchist Humberto Lezcano recalled the Afro-Cuban heroes of the war who endeavored to create Martí's republic "of all and for the good of all." He agreed with Serra that racism was just one of many problems in a larger quilt of social injustice. While racial discrimination persisted in Cuba, people of all races "are discriminated against, besieged by social inequality." He called for "a new integrationist movement" to fight for social justice for all.[22]

These critiques of racist practices as part of larger concerns related to social justice and human rights needs to be put in a larger global context. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations in December 1948. While such rights have often been characterized as tools used by the West to criticize governments in emerging and developing countries, the declaration itself was spurred on in the 1940s by lesser-developed countries and representatives of colonized nations who sought to create enforce-

able standards by which rich countries and colonial powers could be forced to respect poor and non-white people around the world.[23] It is useful to think of Lezcano and Serra's critiques of racism in Cuba in this light. Human rights reflected a larger framework of anarchist intersectionality that in this case emanated from Cuba—a developing, neocolonial country in the 1950s—that opposed discrimination and oppression of peoples based on class, race, and gender. These were fully "human rights" and thus they saw racism as an attack upon those rights.

Beyond the issue of human rights and racial discrimination in Cuba, anarchists also deployed their newspapers to address global racial concerns. For instance, in late 1952, Cuban anarchists praised Mau Mau guerrillas rebelling against British rule in Kenya. Despite British troop reinforcements, anarchists predicted the Mau Mau would fight until they had won "political and economic independence." At an ALC social gathering in Havana, Salinas spoke supportively of Jomo Kenyatta and the Mau Mau.[24] Anarchists also looked closer to home. In August 1955, white vigilantes lynched fourteen-year-old African American Emmett Till in the US state of Mississippi. Anarchists published a column on the lynching and subsequent acquittal of the murderers. The column highlighted the hypocrisy of US democracy and how the supposedly equitable US justice system showed its true colors on how justice is meted out in Mississippi if you lacked "white skin, blue eyes, and blond hair."[25]

Racial issues cut close to home for anarchists like Serra, but also for Salinas for whom anarchist discussions of family, childrearing, and race converged. Facing stark repression under the Machado dictatorship of the late 1920s, Salinas dropped out of active anarchist organizing, returning to his home in Santiago de las Vegas where he wrote plays and novels while working as a librarian. There, Salinas and his wife Luisa lived in a small house where they raised their adopted, Afro-Cuban daughter Picola. For someone like Salinas, race might not be a dominant topic and he—like other anarchists—might see racism more broadly as one of many kinds of human rights violations, but it was a significant enough issue to address in the ALC's *Diálogos libertarios de actualidad,* published toward the end of the Revolution's first

year in November 1959. In a fictional dialogue, Salinas argues that all peoples are essentially equal. Thousands of years of racial mixing meant that "today it is impossible to determine the precise type of this or that individual: one finds equal traits, equal cranium sizes in places as diverse as Denmark and Senegambia." If one could not find racial equality in the sciences and arts, "it is because you don't want to see it." Salinas' fictitious debater claims that by saying these things, anarchists just wanted to justify interracial relationships whereby "white women marry blacks, or Indians, or Chinese." Salinas denies any anarchist interracial marriage plan and argues that all people are free to be with whomever they wish. Look around, he concluded: white men liked women of African descent, so why shouldn't white women like Afro-Cuban men?[26] No radical plan; just free humans following their desires.

The Intratextual Aperture of Revolutionary Struggle: Land, Nature, and Tourism

By the 1950s, photographs had become important components of the anarchist press, serving multiple agendas. The previous discussion on race illustrates how photographs supplemented articles while offering visual commentary on those subjects. This continued and expanded as anarchists turned their attention to revolutionary topics in the 1950s. Group photos at anarchist meetings, talks held at the ALC *Estudios Sociales*, and meetings recognizing Spanish-exiles in Cuba acknowledged participants while also visually reflecting the large participation of men, women, and Cubans of all colors. Anarchists cut across all races and colors in Cuba. One sees this in photographs of multiple anarchist social gatherings published in newspapers where men and women of all ages and colors sit together drinking beer, picnicking, and listening to speakers, as seen in this August 1959 ALC social gathering photo from *El Libertario* (Figure 6).[27] Cuban anarchists were not race- or color-blind and were not all white. Group photos at anarchist cultural events let others know that anarchists came from across Cuban society. Beyond this, the plethora of group photos after January 1959 reveals that rank-and-file anarchists in the movement felt much freer to publicly identify themselves once Batista's dictatorial terror campaign ended.

In addition, the group photos reflect people who seemed to enjoy consuming large bottles of beer. In the early twentieth century,

Vista parcial de los asistentes al acto de confraternidad de ALC.

Figure 6

anarchists often campaigned for workers to avoid wasting their hard-earned low wages on alcohol. The money could be better spent to educate oneself, while the anarchist meeting hall or Sunday *velada* (social gathering) was deemed a more dignified way to pass time rather than in pool halls or bars. Yet, in the 1900s and 1910s, anarcho-syndicalist dependientes in the Cuban hotel and culinary industry played important roles in the anarchist movement. Their newspapers then, as in the 1950s, regularly ran advertising for alcoholic beverages. In fact, we can deduce that alcohol advertising helped to bankroll the anarcho-syndicalist press both circa 1910 and in the 1950s.[28]

Despite the alcohol promotions and socially recreational beer drinking, *dependientes* always had been proponents of healthier living. As noted earlier, they had supported the *naturismo* movement's calls for simple living in touch with nature to purify the individual, the family, and society. The *Pro-Vida* organization in the early 1910s published an anarchist-supported naturist newspaper with strong support from several leading anarchists of the time, including the most influential, Adrián del Valle. In the late 1920s during the first years of the Machado dictatorship, the paper continued publishing and worked with José María Blázquez de Pedro who was living in exile in Havana after being deported from Panama in 1925.

The group running the organization that published the newspaper remained active over the decades to the extent that in the first years of the revolution they had their own *Pro-Vida finca* (rural estate) outside Havana in Guanabacoa. Photos that accompanied columns about the *finca* illustrate how Cold War gastronomical anarchists continued the anarcho-naturist activism from decades earlier. In late 1960, almost two years after the Revolution's triumph, anarchists published a column titled "As the Human Being Moves Away from Nature, He Moves Away from Life." Accompanying photos portray a quaint rural environment where shirtless men enjoy a talk on vegetarianism and others a game of volleyball (Figures 7 and 8). For anarchists, the finca symbolized the importance of the countryside

Grupos de atentos naturistas escuchando al conferencistas y visitante señor Cheatham.

Figure 7

and the equally important decentralized management of the land beyond the growing tentacles of a rapidly centralizing Communist-controlled state apparatus where people could live and recreate in the rejuvenating spirit of the land. In fact, Casto Moscú, who wrote the column, ended with an appeal to the new revolutionary government, which claimed to seek a healthier population: we want to call "on the revolution's organisms [that] express their concern for the welfare and health of our people so that they will look a little more closely at our food and living systems. It would be good if they would visit our *finca*."[29]

But the *Pro-Vida* rural estate had larger historical and political asso-ciations. The photos and column emerged just as anarchists joined in

Uno de los espaciosos campos de deportes de la finca Naturita.

Figure 8

nationwide debates surrounding land reform. Cold War-era anar-chists had promoted agrarian reform before the revolution. In two editions of *Estudios* in April and May 1950, they looked to the Jewish kibbutz system in pre-Israel Palestine as a guiding model inspired by libertarian principles whereby cooperatives were constructed "with-out a state, without violence, and without supreme authority." There, one found absolute freedom, sexual equality, everyone working the land together, and a democratic general assembly deciding issues (Figures 9 and 10).

... Las comunidades libres están basadas en la libertad real...

Figure 9

Following the advent of the Israeli state in 1948, anarchists urged those people living and working in the kibbutz needed to preserve the communes' decentralized character, resist state interference, and avoid becoming a state tool. As one anarchist concluded, "without the Kibbutz and without the spirit of free association, Israel would not exist. Israel would continue to be a desert."

...la labor realizada en los últimos setenta y dos años de construcción comunalista en Palestina fué llevada a cabo sin la intervención de ningún Estado...

Figure 10

The above images are from April 1950, with the captions, "The free communities are based on real freedom" and "the work realized over the past 72 years of communalist construction in Palestine was achieved without any State intervention." [30] Anarchists saw the kibbutz as decentralized, autonomous forms of community organizing where people worked in harmony on the land to grow their own bounty. Columns and photos illustrated harmonious living and cooperative labor in a decentered socialist environment.

But the Guanabacoa *finca* had another purpose. The *finca* exemplified a way for working people to enjoy a form of short-term tourism. In rural Cuba, the working class could escape for a brief respite from urban, capitalist chaos and pollution. Issues surrounding rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation could influence anarchist discussions of tourism more broadly. Bars, restaurants, hotels, and cafés were central to the thriving tourist economy. Cuba's anarchists benefited from tourism as much of their support came from workers in that industry. At the same time, *Solidaridad Gastronómica* advocated for what one author called "social tourism." In a 1953 column, José Mar-

cos Mandado argued that in the modern industrial world "turismo social" was "a necessary imperative of current life" for the working masses. Industrialism created an unhealthy environment with bad air, little sunlight, and alienation. The waterfalls at Hanabanilla, Cuba—the highest on the island—could bring beauty to a visitor as well as love…if one believed a local legend (Figure 11).
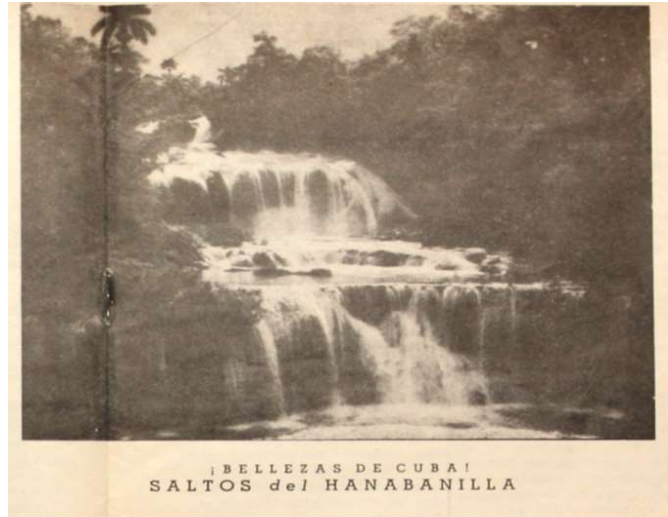
Figure 11

The author argued that travel and vacations were almost "an obligatory social service." But working-class tourism could do more than regenerate workers' bodies and health. Travel around the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea was increasingly affordable, offering Cubans of even modest means the chance to explore the region and fuel the "currents of American solidarity." Such tourism would avoid "the negative aspects of tourism, the deformation of national customs" and would instead "be an inter-American instrument that promotes social and political development in the peoples of America" so that such transcontinental progress would "make in the New World a new world based on social justice."[31]

However, tourism—especially as it impacted *gastronómicos* in Cuba—had mixed effects. Some photos published in the Cold War anarchist press illustrated a seemingly contradictory anarchist critique of the Batista era and the role of the tourism and culinary industries. Though the anarchist press never directly attacked Batista during his reign, it did publish columns and photos that clearly condemned the increasing violence under the regime. For instance,

in 1957, *Soli* denounced the conditions in which many poor, working-class women found themselves. While culinary workers labored across the hospitality industry, young waitresses in bars were employed outside of the culinary union's orbit and suffered in ways that unionized culinary workers did not.

In the late 1950s, anarchists turned their attention to the plight of these *meseras*. Anarchists claimed bar owners exploited young waitresses through low pay, ten-to-twelve-hour shifts, and with no labor protections afforded unionized culinary workers like disability pay, maternity leave, pensions, or vacation pay. "They are true slaves," declared one anarchist. Anarchists further claimed owners forced young meseras to augment low pay with prostitution since bar owners were linked to the "white slave trade." "Each bar is a brothel and each woman working there is a victim of prostitution." These were women beyond the estimated 12,000 in Havana's nearly 300 brothels by 1958. These young women frequently ended up with violent customers. Too often they were killed, as anarchist wrote in their newspaper coverage and analysis (Figure 12).

Figure 12

The photos accompanying such analyses do not shy away from revealing the full-facial identity of the women who fell to this bar-related violence. While one can fault the possible anarchist exploitation of these images, they illustrated two things: the brutality of Batista's corrupt Havana and the need for the union to reach out to

these women. While it is impossible to know if any or all these young women were in fact sex workers, anarchists thought so and used this possibility to again attack Cuban capitalists. Believing neither the government nor owners were interested in eliminating this mistreatment, *Solidaridad Gastronómica* urged young women to avoid work in bars. Anarchists were mildly pleased that the island's main labor organization—the *Confederación de Trabajadores Cubanos* (Confederation of Cuban Workers—CTC)—responded to their observations and formed a commission to investigate. However, anarchists declared the problem ultimately had to be addressed at the root: capitalist exploitation. Would a commission really do much good? They never found out. The commission was formed in November 1958. In two months, the Revolution came to power. In 1961, the government banned pimping and used the *Federación de Mujeres Cubanas* to reform prostitutes.[32]

While anarchists portrayed the seamy underside of Batista-era tourism, they also celebrated their roles in what was one of Batista's crowning construction projects: the building of the Hotel Habana Hilton. Hotel construction began in 1955 under Batista's initiative. Yet a major financial investment came from the Culinary Workers Retirement and Social Assistance Fund. While anarchist culinary workers might have disliked the relationship between the fund and Batista, they nevertheless hoped the investment would generate new jobs in construction and the food service industry manning the completed hotel—employment sectors with a strong anarchist presence (Figure 13). *Solidaridad Gastronómica* reported on the project, including interviews with anarchist construction workers and across-the-fold spreads of photographs showing construction progress until it opened in March 1958 as the tallest and largest hotel in Latin America.[33] Upon opening, anarchists congratulated themselves with a bold banner headline in red ink in *Solidaridad Gastronómica* reading "SE INAUGURA EL HOTEL HABANA-HILTON POR ESFUERZO DE LOS GASTRONOMICOS" [The Havana Hilton Hotel Opens Thanks to the Efforts of the Gastronomy Workers]. The newspaper asserted that "the culinary class of workers had a very high concept of what tourism represents for our country" and were pleased to contribute to a project that served and "represented the economy of

Figure 13

our nation." They did not dwell on the fact that Batista oversaw the project or that a hotel with 630 guestrooms could flood the city with tourists seeking fulfillment of prurient interests. Rather, they praised the hotel as "one of the greatest works realized by workers" and a testament to "Cuban *gastronómicos*."[34]

The Intratextual Aperture of Revolutionary Struggle: Anti-Batista, Anti-Communism

Despite this strategic association with Batista, the anarchist press celebrated the fall of Batista and the dawning of a new revolutionary era in January 1959. The ALC began re-publishing *El Libertario* (which they had printed until Batista closed it in 1952). Now two anarchist monthly newspapers joined their voices, hoping to shape the revolution along anarchist principles. In these newspapers in the early years of the new revolutionary society, anarchists revealed their secret support for the armed struggle in the 1950s, celebrated the rebel army and militias, noted their early approval of Fidel Castro, and lamented the late-1959 death of revolutionary leader Camilo Cienfuegos.

During the Batista dictatorship, prominent anarchists did not shy away from saying or showing who they were, including this two-page spread of anarchists in Cuba in December 1955 (Figure 14).[35]

Figure 14

However, during Batista's reign, anarchists never mentioned their roles in both the urban and rural armed struggles against Batista. With a feeling of greater press freedom in early 1959, anarchists now openly discussed their roles in the armed revolt and anarchist victims of the dictatorship. Rafael Serra—mentioned earlier and one of the longest-active anarchists on the island since the 1920s—became a fixture in the press during this transitory time. Multiple portraits of Serra accompanied a multi-page story on him in December 1958— just days before Batista fled from power. With the new press freedom in January 1959, the ALC's *El Libertario* published another photo essay on Serra, who Batista's regime brutally tortured (Figure 15).[36]

These columns and photos revealed publicly what had long happened underground during the revolutionary struggle: anarchists might have funded Batista's Habana Hilton, but now the public saw the faces of anarchists who had worked underground to topple the dictator.

Figure 15

During the euphoria that accompanied the first year of revolution, the anarchist press published photos to accompany columns celebrating the militaristic aspects of the revolution and especially the men and women *milicianos* who fought for and now defended the revolution. This began with the first issue of the revised *El Libertario* just a week after the revolution came to power. The new editors published on page 1, just below the banner the following photograph (Figure 16):[37]

Figure 16

Traditional anarchist anti-militarism had been suppressed and the militarist dimensions of the armed revolutionary struggle were now celebrated. This anarchist (or at least revolutionary) militarism continued throughout 1959. In May 1959 as revolutionaries celebrated the first revolutionary-era May Day, both *Soli* and *El Libertario* praised the armed militias protecting the revolution from imperial assault. Such praise was accompanied by photos of uniformed, armed men and women celebrating the revolutionary struggle and the need for continued armed militancy to defend the revolution (Figures 17 and 18).[38]

Figure 17

By publishing the photographs, anarchists related their support for leftist armed militancy and portrayed themselves as solid revolutionaries every bit as committed to radical structural change as the better-known revolutionary leadership of Fidel, Che, Raul, and Camilo. Though we don't know for sure, it is possible and maybe even likely that these photos included men and women anarchists within the armed militias.

Figure 18

Anarchists also believed that the militias could be used internationally. With the fall of authoritarian presidents Perón in Argentina, Somoza in Nicaragua, Pérez Jiménez in Venezuela, and now Batista in just a little over three years, anarchists believed the end was near for the rest of Latin America's dictators. Riding a wave of myopia in the first months of the Cuban Revolution, anarchists called for turning up the heat on all remaining dictators. Omar Diéguez García suggested if the Cuban Rebel Army were to storm the Dominican Republic, the dictator Rafael Trujillo "would not last fifteen days."[39]

Throughout 1959, anarchists illustrated their links to the new revolutionary leadership. That summer, just six months after the fall of Batista's dictatorship, the Havana anarchist Eliseo "El Campesino" Morejón sat in the kitchen of the Havana Libre (formerly Havana Hilton) Hotel with Fidel Castro. Castro had made the hotel the revolutionary headquarters, but the hotel also was a center of anarchist labor organizing and had been since the beginning of construction in 1955 to its opening in 1958. In 1959, the hotel symbolized the broad spectrum of Cuba's revolutionary left literally and figuratively from top to bottom: the *fidelistas* on the twenty-fourth floor of the twenty-five-floor hotel; the anarchist culinary workers in the lower bars, restaurants, and kitchens.

El compañero Morejón, autor del presente escrito, en amena charla con el doctor Fidel Castro. Rodeado de compañeros de trabajo en la cocina del Hotel Hilton.
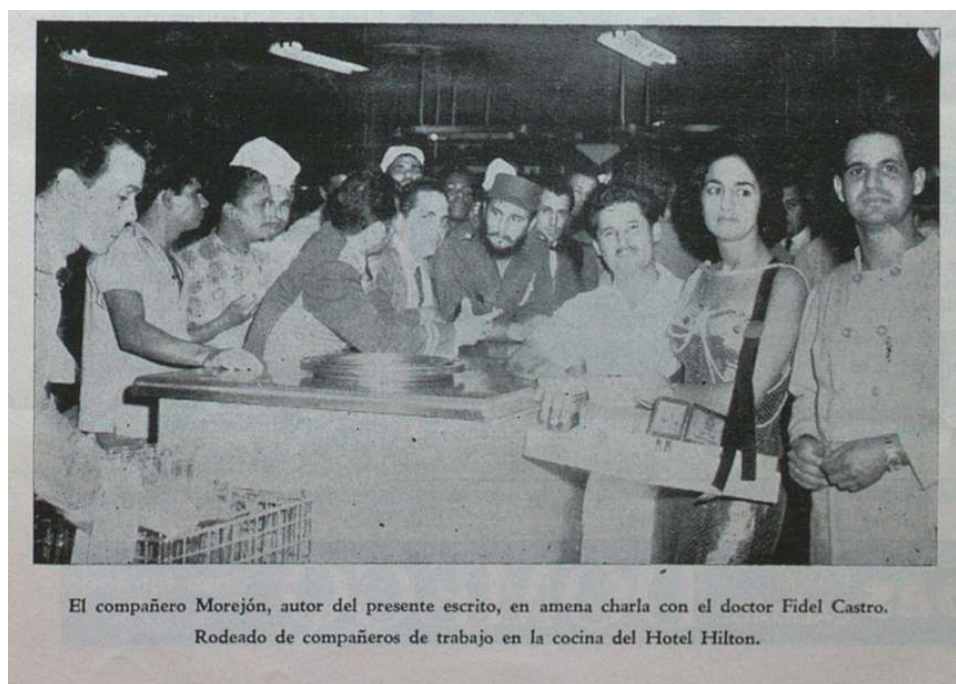
Figure 19

Early in the revolution, many anarchists seemed to like Fidel. Morejón and Fidel sat together for photos, and in a column published in *Solidaridad Gastronómica, Morejón* "concluded that Fidel is gifted with the virtues that make men great" (Figure 19).[40] He found Fidel open to new ideas like decentralized agrarian cooperatives. He liked how Fidel walked around without bodyguards and talked with the hotel's culinary workers. "I see in Dr. Fidel Castro the revolutionary who wants to make a socially transformative revolution in our country."[41]

By late 1959, though, anarchist euphoria increasingly turned to anarchist disillusionment. On October 28, 1959, a plane carrying one of the Revolution's heroes—Camilo Cienfuegos—disappeared from radar over the Florida Straits. Authorities searched for wreckage but called off the search in mid-November. The disappearance struck a chord with anarchists. Rumors circulated around Cuba that Cienfuegos had grown disheartened with the state-centered, top-down control of the Revolution. Anarchists considered him one of their own (Figure 20). Though Cienfuegos was not known to have worked in anarchist organizations nor to speak publicly about anarchism, that did not matter to Cuba's anarchists. His growing disillusionment

Figure 20

matched theirs. Plus, his father was an anarchist tailor who had immigrated to Cuba from Spain. While holding out hope for his recov-

ery, the editors of *Solidaridad Gastronómica* praised him as "C. Cienfuegos: El valiente guerrillero de la libertad" (Camilo Cienfuegos: The Valient Guerrilla Warrior for Freedom) and published the above photograph of Camilo with anarchist hotel workers. After the search ended without finding Camilo's body, *El Libertario* offered sympathy to his anarchist father Ramón.[42] A year later, with government persecution of anarchists increasing, one of the ALC's last public acts was to hold a memorial service for Cienfuegos. Anarchists walked to Havana's Malecon sea wall. Antonio Landrián praised Cienfuegos as a revolutionary brother. Then, attendees dropped a wreath over the wall and into the sea. It was a fitting symbolic end to Cuban anarchism too.[43]

Anarchists despised the mounting Communist takeover of the revolution and the government's growing centralization of labor, education, and agrarian reform. In July 1960, the government closed *El Libertario*—*Solidaridad Gastronómica* would only last until 1961. In *El Libertario's* last edition, editors published photos and graphics of revolutionary Spain and historical Cuban anarchists. The photos seem to ask readers to remember the long anarchist struggle for decentralized control, individual freedom, and social equality. The current Communist-linked leadership was leading the revolution on a path that would undermine those goals just as the Franco fascist dictatorship had done in Spain after 1939. The revolution in Cuba—like in Spain—was following to totalitarianism.

Conclusion

This essay has explored anarchist cultural politics from 1950 to 1961—a time when Cuba transitioned from a republican democracy to an authoritarian dictatorship, which was then toppled by armed revolution—only to then be dominated by a Communist authoritarian government. Though anarchism declined in importance in the cultural, labor, and political struggles in Cuba after the 1920s, anarchists remained a critical voice on the Cuban Left. They had supported the Spanish Revolution in the late 1930s. Then after World War II, anarchists re-emerged to challenge the state—whether democratic or authoritarian.

Anarchists focused their cultural politics on an array of issues. Sexuality, race, harmonious living with nature, tourism, and revolutionary activism were key themes explored via articles and editorials published in anarchist newspapers from 1950 to 1961. Photographs reinforced articles, analyses, and editorials. Anarchists used this intratextual iconicity in their publications to promote an anarchist understanding and interpretation of Cuban culture during the pre-revolutionary days of the Cold War. While anarchists printed a journal devoted explicitly to culture (*Estudios* in 1950), their other newspapers replicated the roles of resistance culture that anarchist newspapers played in the heyday of Cuban anarchism in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Through this resistance culture, anarchists challenged various forms of oppression that average Cubans encountered in the first decade and a half of the Cold War. These challenges and criticisms manifested at the same time ideas, ideals, and notions to what a future free Cuba could aspire. Sexuality could be taught shamelessly. Racism could be relegated to the dust heap of history with the triumph of social justice. Tourism could be a force for recreation not just for the elite but also for workers, who if they labored in the tourism and food service industries would simultaneously benefit economically. Rural life, especially cooperatively run farms and decentralized communities, could sow the seeds of human regeneration and free communities with no need for state interference or oversight. Revolution was the cause of the day, and when Batista was overthrown, anarchists celebrated the dawning of a new libertarian day. But growing Communist control and state centralization of revolutionary forces in the early 1960s disillusioned anarchists, who soon found their newspapers closed, themselves portrayed by the government as counterrevolutionaries, and most forced to stop agitating or go into exile.

Notes

[1] Jesse Cohn, *Underground Passages: Anarchist Resistance Culture, 1848-2011* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2014), quotes from 4, 14, and 16-17.

[2] For reference to the nickname, see the last page of *Solidaridad Gastronómica*, July 15, 1955.

[3] Javier Navarro Navarro, "Transnational Anarchist Culture in the Interwar Period:

The Magazine Estudios (1928-1937)" in *Writing Revolution: Hispanic Anarchism in the United States*, eds. Christopher J. Castañeda and Montse Feu (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019): 209-212. See also Navarro Navarro's "Reforma sexual, control de natalidad, naturismo y pacifismo. La cultura libertaria trasatlántica en las décadas de 1920 y 1930: Estudios. Revista Ecléctica (1928-1937) y su proyección y redes en América," *Historia y política* no. 42 (2019), 145-174.

[4] Frank Fernández, *Cuban Anarchism* (Tucson, Arizona: Sharp Press, 2001), 62.

[5] *Estudios*, February 1950. Front matter.

[6] See *Estudios: Revista Ecléctica,* December 1928 to June 1937. Lazarte's column in the Cuban magazine is from vol. 2, April 1950, 16-19, 46.

[7] For Orwell, see *Estudios,* April 1950, pgs. 33-34. For García Lorca, see *Estudios*, July 1950, 22-24. For Lam, see *Estudios*, February 1950, 19-20 and an interview with Lam in *Estudios*, July 1950, 34-35. For Picasso, see *Estudios*, April 1950, 7-9. For Rodríguez, see *Estudios*, April 1950, 35. For music, see *Estudios*, February 1950, vol. 1. For baseball, see *Solidaridad Gastronómica*, September 15, 1953, 2.

[8] *Estudios*, February 1950, 42-43.

[9] See Kirwin Shaffer, *Anarchist Cuba: Countercultural Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2019).

[10] *Estudios*, April 1950, 10-12, 46.

[11] Shaffer, *Anarchist Cuba,* 215-220.

[12] *Estudios*, February 1950, 32-34; June 1950, 38-39.

[13] Shaffer, *Anarchist Cuba,* 107-161.

[14] *¡Tierra!,* December 25, 1913, 1

[15] *Estudios,* August 1950, 7.

[16] Javier Navarro Navarro, "Transnational Anarchist Culture in the Interwar Period: The Magazine Estudios (1928-1937) in *Writing Revolution: Hispanic Anarchism in the United States,* Christopher J. Castañeda and Montse Feu, eds. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019): 213.

[17] *Estudios,* July 1950, 26-7.

[18] Ibid., September 1950, 26.

[19] *Bohemia,* September 14, 1947, 20-22, 77-78.

[20] Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution* (New York: Oxford, 1995), 307; *Solidaridad Gastronómica*, April 15, 1957, 6.

[21] *Solidaridad Gastronómica,* May 15, 1957, 1-2.

[22] Ibid., June 15, 1957, 11.

[23] A fine discussion of the developing-country driven aspects of the declaration can be found in Rebecca Barlow's *Women's Human Rights and the Muslim Question: Iran's One Million Signatures Campaign* (Melbourne University Publishing, 2012).

[24] *Solidaridad Gastronómica*, November 15, 1952, 3; June 15, 1953, 1.

[25] Ibid., January 15, 1956, 1 and 3.

[26] Marcelo Salinas, *Diálogos libertarios de actualidad* (La Habana: ALC Editorial, November 1959): 29-33; Justo Muriel, "'Este hombre generoso que no sabía odiar,'" *Marcelo Salinas: Un ideal sublime y elevado…* (Miami: Ediciones del Movimiento Libertario Cubano en el Exilio, 1977): 23.

[27] *El Libertario,* August 31, 1959, 3.

[28] For the earlier era, see any edition of Havana's *La Voz del Dependiente* (1907-1911) or *El Dependiente* (1911-1917).

[29] *Solidaridad Gastronómica,* November 15, 1960, 4-5.

[30] *Estudios*, April 1950, 4-6; June 1950, 5-7. The paper did not mention displaced Arabs.

[31] *Solidaridad Gastronómica,* December 15, 1953, 6-7.

[32] Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution,* 305; *Solidaridad Gastronómica,* October 15, 1957, 1-2; October 15, 1958, 12; November 15, 1958, 2, 6-7. Photo from *Solidaridad Gastrónomica,* October 1957, 1.

[33] *Solidaridad Gastronómica,* September 15, 1955, 4-5.

[34] Ibid., March 15, 1958, 2.

[35] Ibid., December 15, 1955, 6-7.

[36] *El Libertario*, January 10, 1959, 3.

[37] Ibid., January 10, 1959, 1.

[38] Ibid., May 10, 1959, 4; Solidaridad Gastronómica, May 15, 1959, 12.

[39] *Solidaridad Gastronómica*, June 15, 1959, 1 and 11; August 15, 1959, 1-2.

[40] Ibid., July 15, 1959, 7

[41] Ibid., July 15, 1959, 1 and 7.

[42] Ibid., November 15, 1959, 1 and 12; *El Libertario,* November 25, 1959, 1. Photo from *Solidaridad Gastronómica,* November 15, 1959, 12.

[43] *Solidaridad Gastronómica,* November 15, 1960, 1.

Inventions of Acratic Lives:
José Oiticica, José Oiticica Filho (JOF), and Hélio Oiticica's "Antiart"

Beatriz Scigliano Carneiro*

"Are you an anarchist?," asked a journalist from a popular entertainment magazine in 1966. *"Body and soul,"* replied the Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica.[1]

The above statement stands out for those familiar with Hélio Oiticica's (1937-1980) remarkable career because he rarely declared himself an anarchist. Hélio was never a "political personality" in the Brazilian anarchist movement, and, in fact, the movement was much reduced during Brazil's twenty-one-year military dictatorship (1964-85), when anarchists were persecuted by the state, attacked by hostile conservatives, and depreciated by leftist groups. Living under these circumstances, Oiticica manifested his anarchism through ethical stances infusing aesthetic experiments. This article traces the interweaving strands that led him to adopt this strategy and the ways in which his artwork intersects with the viewpoints and artistic activism of his father and grandfather.

Chromatic: from *Neoconcreto* to *Bólide*

Hélio Oiticica was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1937. His father was José de Oiticica Filho (1906-1964), an engineer, entomologist and photographer, and his mother was Angela Oiticica (1906-1974). He was grandson of the poet, philologist, and teacher José Oiticica (1882-1957), an active anarchist and editor of the acratic publication *Ação Direta* (*Direct Action*) from 1946 to his death. In 1954, encouraged by his father, Hélio started his artistic training with the artist Ivan Serpa, who taught a "free painting" course at the Museum of Modern Art in

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Rio de Janeiro. Hélio's artistic initiation took as its starting point early twentieth century "constructivist" avant-garde traditions, which enjoyed great resonance in Brazil's art circles during the 1950s and 1960s. His first works, executed with rigor and accuracy, echo the paintings of artists such as Kazimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian. In 1955 and 1956, he participated in exhibitions held by the *Grupo Frente*, a collective of artists brought together by Serpa. The exhibitions attracted the attention of Brazil's most important art critics: Mario Pedrosa and the poet Ferreira Gullar. The latter regarded *Grupo Frente's* formation as the most important contemporary event in Brazilian art.

However, the group dissolved, and some members, including Hélio, joined the Concrete Art movement, which had emerged in the city of São Paulo.[2] At that time, Brazilian concrete artists were holding exhibitions in Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, and São Paulo. In 1959, a new *Neoconcreto* group was formed by Hélio Oiticica, Ligia Pape, Franz Weissmann, Lygia Clark, former members of *Grupo Frente*, and additional artists (notably, the poet Ferreira Gullar). They met frequently to discuss their work and related procedures and experiences. The *Neoconcreto* group distinguished itself from the Concrete Art movement by placing greater emphasis on the question of art as a vehicle for social transformation through organic and sensorial experiments.

The involvement in these movements gave Hélio, in his own words, "pictorial thought without content."[3] His work was informed by the absence of representation, as he incorporated mathematical knowledge, a structure, logical sequences between the elements distributed in the plan, and studies of insights developed by Gestalt theory. In the era of the *Frente* group, his works consisted of studies concerning the possibilities of plane and color that were elaborated utilizing gouache on paper or cardboard or the medium of oil painting on wood. Plates of color saturated rectangles. While working with the Concrete Art movement, Hélio started the *Metaesquemas* series, in which he researched the rhythm of shapes in the traditional plane of painting: his subject was the rectangle without the rigidity of adjacent color plates that had featured in his previous works. Here shapes gained movement and lightness. He then carried out monochromatic

experiments, starting with "white on white" – a reference to Malevich's *White on White* (1918-19) paintings, and went on to research the transition from canvas to space through the expansion of color beyond the picture plane.

In 1959, Hélio started the *Invenção* series: these were monochrome works in square plates hovering slightly out from a wall, in which colors (yellow, red, orange, white) were applied in superimposed layers. This marks Hélio's first experience with departing from the two-dimensional plane in painting. Hélio commented at the time: "Here I think I discovered, for me, the technique that becomes expression, the integration of the two, which will be important in the future."[4] From this he reiterated the following principle: "all true art does not separate technique from expression; the technique corresponds to what the art expresses, and therefore it is not something artificial that is learned and adapted to an expression; it is indissolubly linked to it."[5] In *Invenções*, a painting's "support" was absorbed, or dissolved, into expression, and this opened the way for subsequent works.

While part of the *Neoconcreto* group, Hélio embarked on systematic research concerning form, materials, and the expansion of color-light, pursuing "painting after painting." He created *Bilaterals* and *Spatial Reliefs* (1959), three-dimensional works composed of painted wooden surfaces hanging from the ceiling, whose suspension allowed the viewer to optically apprehend the monochromatic surface from different angles, imbuing temporality with the experience of color. In 1960, he executed works that intensified the active participation of the spectator. The *Nucleus* was composed of monochromatic plates hanging in a labyrinthine arrangement. He also created the first of his *Penetrable* series. PN1 had movable wooden plates that could be manipulated by people, allowing entry to a monochromatic cabin. With *Penetrável*, Hélio believed he had integrated spectators into the color-structure by placing them in the center of it, thus advancing the transition from painting to space and bringing time's passage, duration, into play as a component of the work. "In the penetrable, definitely, the relationship between the spectator and the color-structure takes place in complete integration, since he is virtually placed at the center of it."[6]

Hélio's search for "the painting after the painting," subsuming body and structure within color, led, in 1963, to a new art form, the *bólide* ("fireball" in Portuguese), composed in two main series: *Glass Bólides* and *Box Bólides*. Both artworks were to be manipulated by people, thus revealing shapes and color pigments that saturated one's hands, along with poems, images, and smells. What mattered here was the sensory stimulus provided by each *bolide*: the experience was no longer merely of color expanding in space. It integrated gestures to realize the shape of the *bolide*, and for complete enjoyment of the work. Experiences with these and other objects led to the formulation of the *supra-sensorial*. This mode of art goes beyond optical perception; it expands sensitivity and reaches other senses – touch, smell, and kinesthesia (proprioception). More and more people were involved in the realization of artworks envisaged by Hélio.

Carnival: the margin is inside the river

The politics of *bolide* are complex. At the end of 1963, Hélio had been invited by the sculptors Amílcar de Castro and Fernando Jackson Ribeiro to collaborate making carnival floats for the "*Vê se me entende*" ("Watch if you understand me") component of the *Estação Primeira da Mangueira* samba school parade scheduled for the 1964 Rio de Janeiro Carnival. Unexpected experiences and productive encounters resulting from this engagement had an important impact on his life and art. Carnival in Brazil, especially in Rio de Janeiro, features championship competitions between samba schools that parade along a central avenue in the city center for several nights. The parades must develop a plot using costumes, floats, and a samba specially composed for the occasion. Each samba is performed, sung, and danced by residents of a given school's neighborhood. Many neighborhoods in the suburban areas and favelas (slums which are built on hills throughout the city) are inhabited by very poor populations — these include people descended from former slaves manumitted during the era of slavery or freed after slavery's abolition in 1888.[7] Samba associations that perform in the streets on carnival days could involve participants from these districts. In the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth-centuries, samba dancers descending from the impoverished "hills" (favelas) into

wealthier "asphalt" districts were not well regarded by the population of the "asphalt." They were even prohibited by the authorities because the samba art form and Afro-Brazilian dances were associated with "backwardness" and "poverty." At the time, the Brazilian establishment aspired to show the world a "civilized and progressive" face.[8]

However, the spread of radio and the phonographic industries in Brazil popularized, commercialized, and legitimized the samba. Two famous musical movies publicized samba songs and carnival "marchinhas" which were well-known thanks to the radio: *Alô Alô Brasil* (1935) and *Alô Alô Carnaval* (1936).[9] Neither movie included Afro-Brazilian characters or musicians, though the government of the time, the Getúlio Vargas Dictatorship (1930-1945), mobilized this popular musical genre as a component of its nationalist project to nurture a genuinely "Brazilian" official culture. Subsequently, Afro-Brazilian samba clubs officially organized themselves, and competed on the "asphalt" for the title of Carnival Champion. Over the years, carnival parades attracted a multitude of tourists, including foreigners, who were seduced by Rio de Janeiro's many festivals, which included elegant balls for the elite along with street block parties and samba school parades outdoors in the avenues. Brazilian governments supported these celebrations and publicized them outside Brazil. Furthermore, beginning in the 1950s, Rio de Janeiro youths from the "Southern Zone" (the wealthiest area of the city) began attending rehearsals of samba schools as well as the carnival parades, sometimes disrupting the cadence of dancers and musicians.

As part of this official support, Carnival attracted the attention of visual artists, who, working with set and costume designers, were invited to collaboratively choreograph the visuality of the parades and even joined the jury awarding the carnival's champions. For example, the samba school *Salgueiro* won the title in the 1960 championship because it had a team of professionals trained at the *Escola de Belas Artes* to elaborate "modern and tasteful" costumes and allegories. The Estação Primeira da Mangueira, in turn, came to represent "old-fashioned" traditions in the parades. Sergio Cabral asserts that a "Professor at the Escola de Belas Artes, a member of the jury for the 1962 parade, confessed that he had given the school a bad grade because

he considered the combination of green and pink (the mandatory colors of Mangueira's identity) very ugly. And he wasn't alone. Many people had the same opinion."[10]

However, carnival was criticized by a significant portion of Rio de Janeiro's middle class, accusing "the favelados" of furthering "the enormous financial frivolity that the Carnival represents – expenses with the parade itself, the expensive costumes, and time wasted in endless preparations and rehearsals."[11] Some intellectuals, predominantly affiliated with left-wing parties, considered devotion to samba and related celebrations as forms of alienation, and attributed any joy to the ingenuity of sectors of the people who were alienated from a true revolutionary consciousness. Others, while upholding the alienation thesis, considered traditional samba associations such as Mangueira to be authentic manifestations of the people's creativity.

For his part, Hélio was not interested in making the schools look more suitable for tourists or the middle class, nor did he want to be mistaken for a youth of the "asphalt" who partied in the hills. He invited Miro, a famous dancer, to give him samba lessons and only when he considered himself ready to dance – capable of performing the most difficult steps – did he make his debut at the Carnival of the Fourth Centenary in 1965. Subsequently, he joined the school and paradied for some years. In the milieu of Morro da Mangueira, he was not recognized as an artist, he was only "*Hélio de tal* [Hélio so and so]."[12]

Oiticica's dexterity in socializing with people in Morro da Mangueira and Rio de Janeiro's *malandragem* territory was reinforced by his friendship with Rose de Souza Mattos—girlfriend of Mangueira's president at the time.[13] She was from a traditional Afro-Brazilian family in the Estácio neighborhood, a central region of the city and the birthplace of samba. Her father was a samba player and dancer. Oiticica often stayed at Rose's mansion near the Mangue area – a famous region of brothels. There he forged relations with people from that "other side" of Rio's social life: samba dancers, criminals, drug dealers, and workers. Many of them became close friends or partners. Incognito, he used to visit some when they were imprisoned. In these

circles he learned to dance, found partners for casual sex (Hélio was homosexual) and experienced an everyday way of being far removed from his usual life. "I felt old when I was a teenager. So, the street was a way for me to stop being old, and also a sexual initiation, of course."[14] Hélio mixed with them in soul and in body—bodies in motion, bodies that dance and love each other.

These encounters marked the end of what Hélio called "bourgeois conditioning," a reference to the class-inflected "intellectual paraphernalia of Ipanema" (a wealthy neighborhood in the south of Rio) and an ideas-driven lifestyle (granted, his anarchist family had served to some degree as a protective oasis from such influences).[15] Amongst the slums and poor neighborhoods, Hélio found a world in which carelessness implied detention and death, and survival depended on paying attention to the minimal possibilities of life. In these factors of living, he discovered intense vitality and strength.

"The bourgeois conditioning to which I was subjected since I was born fell apart as if by magic – I must say, by the way, that the process had already been taking shape before, without my knowing it."[16] By breaking from this social strata, Hélio found himself positionless within the caste stratifications of Brazilian society: he perceived "his individual place as a total man in the world, as a social being in its total sense and not included in a particular stratum or elite. Not even the marginal artistic elite.…What interests me is the total act of being that I experience here in me – not partial acts, but a total act of life, irreversible, the imbalance for the balance of being." This restlessness, "this process that had already been taking shape before," emerged from his artistic practice expanding colors into space, with the integrating spectators. It had manifested in his artworks and carried resonances derived from his anarchist teachings.[17] Reflecting on an exhibition of Hélio's work in 1966, Pedrosa summarized: "Beauty, sin, revolt, love give this young man's art a new accent in Brazilian art. No use in moral admonitions. If you want background, maybe this is one: Hélio is the grandson of an anarchist."[18]

Total revolt: a family of anarchists

Hélio's anarchist grandfather, José Oiticica, was the son of a senator in the newly proclaimed Brazilian Republic of 1889. He came from a family of sugarcane farmers in the state of Alagoas, whose members had held positions in medicine, law, the arts, and institutional politics since imperial times. In 1913, Oiticica, who held a Bachelor of Law degree, broke through the imaginary walls demarcating Brazil's segregated social strata when he climbed the stairs to the headquarters of Rio de Janeiro's *Federação Operária* [Workers' Federation] and joined the anarchist organization. This decision arose from his reflections and experience as an educator. Independently, Oiticica had conceived of a new theory concerning the state and society, which he shared with one of his cousins. The cousin replied: "But this already exists. It's pure anarchism!" He was dumbfounded and hesitated, because for him anarchism was a "kind of sect whose supporters intend to straighten the world by destroying it with the bomb."[19] Consulting various anarchist publications, including *Les Temps Nouveaux* and *Revista Blanca,* familiarized him with the ideas of martyred anarchist educator Francisco Ferrer y Guardia: he realized that his "discovery" had been put into practice for some time, not only in matters related to the education of children and young people, but as a way of life that could realize humanity's freedom.[20] Thus, he decided to build his life in accordance with acratic ideals, and immediately sought contact with the Federação Operária and other Rio de Janeiro-based anarchist groups. In short order, his new found militancy led to participation in the second Brazilian Workers Congress, which took place in September 1913.

Throughout his life, he helped families of activists, aided escapees from the law, and hid people persecuted by police in his house. He also took part in demonstrations and was very active promoting anarchism. His militancy aimed, above all, to inform, instruct and mobilize individuals: avoiding elevating himself into a position of authority, he sought to educate people and strengthen their capacities for autonomy and freedom. In 1918, he was accused by undercover informers of being the leader of an anarchist conspiracy to dynamite Brazil's Government Palace during a great working-class insurrection

that had shocked the city of Rio de Janeiro. After his arrest he was sent to Alagoas and confined for a few months on the Oiticica's family plantation. Returning to Rio de Janeiro in 1919, he founded the anarchist newspaper *Spartacus* and continued his militancy, an obstinance that earned him stretches of confinement in various prisons.

His enemies were not only governmental authorities. In 1928, he was shot at during a conference of the Graphics Union, and only escaped death because the assassin missed his target. The would-be killer had acted at the behest of the newly founded Brazilian Communist Party, which, obedient to Moscow, was seeking to force workers' organizations into its orbit. Such sectarian violence led Oiticica to regard Communists as little better than the social oppressors anarchists were trying to free workers from:

> Freeing the men from the boss is a lot, but it's not all. It is necessary to remove them from the tutelage of political and religious leaders; and from the tyranny of "morals," creation of oppressors to fanaticize slaves. Thus, we do not understand a revolutionary whose action stems from servitude. How to institute a free regime if we do not get rid of the traditional handcuffs? How to propose a free life if we live by imposing rules and listening to orders? How can we desire a "man for himself," if we are habituating ourselves and others to vexatious disciplines, obsolete censures and degrading punishments?[21]

From 1916, Oiticica had taught Portuguese in a traditional public school, the *Colégio Pedro II*, where his knowledge so impressed the examiners that they hired him even though he was a well-known anarchist and anticlerical militant. Neither periods in prison, nor accusations that he was an incendiary prevented him from continuing to teach at that school until he retired in 1951. He was also a professor of prosody at the Municipality of Rio Janeiro's School of Theater, and taught Greek at the University of the Federal District. Oiticica was a poet and dramaturgist as well. He took musical composition classes with the Afro-Brazilian musician, teacher, and erudite com-

poser Paulo Silva (1892-1967), a specialist in counterpoint and Bach. He even composed songs, although they remain unpublished. Moreover, in addition to being a militant anarchist, there was an esoteric side. Oiticica belonged to the Rosicrucian Order, which propagated "Natural Laws" as the path to social harmony.

In 1929, he founded the anarchist newspaper *Ação Direta*, but its publication was interrupted months later. He renewed the newspaper following the end of the Vargas dictatorship in 1946, and it continued to be published until 1958, a year after Oiticica's death. Its foundational principle: "Only direct-action shakes thrones, threatens crowns, convolves worlds. Alone, it mainly educates and strengthens the dispossessed people, in their millenary struggle."[22] In explaining direct action — the "core" of anarchism's realization in life and politics — Oiticica ascribed this ethos to the attitudes of the first Brazilian abolitionists who, by hiding and defending slaves fleeing captivity, defied the law and police of their time.[23] Direct action promoted individual and collective initiative by dispensing with mediation and representatives in favour of full responsibility for the consequences of one's actions.

Libertarian action also required a libertarian personal posture. Oiticica was guided by his faith in people's capacity for autonomy and self-government. In this spirit, he emphasized individual choices and the courage to try out one's own path, which he argued is necessary for the practice of freedom. But this individualism does not prescind attention to others. Writing on the principles and purposes of anarchism, he built from these premises: "1 - Men associate to ensure their existence and reproduction, obtain maximum happiness, improve the species, physically, morally, and mentally. 2 - The maximum happiness of one depends on the maximum happiness of all."[24] The latter echoes Bakunin's notion that liberty for all, far from being a limit on the individual, as liberal individualists claim, constitutes liberation's confirmation and infinite expansion. Anarchism was the only societal practice capable of realizing truly collective freedom and happiness. "Only the individual has the right to direct his reasoning, regulate his language, confront his style, moderate his judgment, guide his action…. [Anarchism] repels the prison regime of capital-

ism, condemns the factories of doctors, priests, soldiers, men cast in a single mold, mannequins cut in a single model, scarecrows whose filling is the same dry straw."[25]

Amongst Oiticica's artistic activities, playwriting was the most significant avenue for disseminating ideas. This art rendered social theory more impactful and sensuous, not only through the spoken word, but thanks to its capacity to make direct contact with an audience. Plays were part and parcel of initiatives dedicated to informing and instructing workers. In the case of anarchist theater, performances often occurred in the humble rooms of a union organization or similar venue. Routinely staged by amateurs, those with some theatrical training would help interpret the characters and provide technical support, such as costumes, scenery, lighting, and stage organization. The play on stage was contiguous with the audience. In fact, performances were often but one part of an ensemble of events that included lectures and even dances. Between 1919 and 1923, Oiticica wrote plays propagating anarchist ideas and practices: *Azalan; Who saves them; It's not a crime!; Rolling Stone;* and in 1936, *Pirlimpimpim's Powders.* The plots are infused with discursive passages addressing anticlericalism and free love as well as criticisms of bourgeois mentality, property, and the exploitation of workers. Activists staged these works several times in worker halls and union centers in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Rolling Stone and Who saves them were even integrated into the repertoire of a professional theater company.

Oiticica also theorized how other art forms could foment revolutionary consciousness. Regarding poetry, he staunchly rejected modernism and free verse, and defended the classical metric in poetic construction. His own poems followed the rigor of the nineteenth-century French Parnassians (a poetic movement whose ranks included Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine). For him, form and structure were integral to an artwork:

> To write badly is to think badly. If nothing else, it is
> thought that is devious, lame, ill-taken, unreliable as
> a work of art. Thinking must be, above all, aesthetic
> creation. Thought without beauty is not thought; it is

at best a bit of truth spoken by a sage; it is only a possibility, a dough for a fiat, a stone for a cameo. Hence, the Idea is worth as much as the phrase. A thought embedded in a truncated or harsh sentence suffers; keen ears hear its cry. On the contrary, a fragile thought, embedded in a clear phrase, sings, and prays. Great thoughts, embedded in lapidary periods, are living beings, have blood and lymph, breathe, speak, move, and commove…. This is the reason for the perpetuity of classical art. Moderns or modernizers wrongly rebel against rigor, the "tyranny" of classicism…. Correctness of contours and firmness of design are less prime qualities; [what] they [classical artists] want [are] the vague, the indefinite, the imprecise, the disconnected.[26]

Bringing together form and idea seamlessly, the artwork comes alive. The poems of Oiticica and the poets he admired followed the rules of a strict classical metric. However, unlike his Parnassian counterparts, Oiticica did not support so-called "art for art's sake." For him, formal rigor was in the service of the idea, and the content of the artwork, social transformation. In this reading, anarchism put into practice requires formal structuring and self-constituting order, otherwise it will be an undeveloped amorphous possibility, merely a "rough stone." Would the constructive rigor of an anarchic practice infused with freedom as envisaged by Oiticica be the "antecedent" that shaped Hélio's art that critic Pedrosa suggested in his review of 1966 (see endnote 18)? Commenting on the exhibition of the artist's maquette project *Cães de Caça* (*Hunting Dogs*) at Rio de Janeiro's Museum of Modern Art four years earlier in 1961, he had also called attention to this relationship, announcing: "Hélio Oiticica, an austere young artist, as befits the grandson of an illustrious anarchist, brings to our museum the latest ideas."[27]

Hélio's brother, the architect Cesar Oiticica, who, like Hélio, studied with artist Ivan Serpa, confirms Pedrosa's intuitions. He has summarized: "The entire formation of the Oiticica family, at least since our anarchist grandfather, has as its goal to think and act according

to our own ideas, based on our own experiences, without accepting dogmas or authoritarianism. Education was not an exercise in schooling, but in formation based above all on example. A poem by José Oiticica could be said to model the extended family's approach. "Become an example, the example is what builds."[28]

The eldest son of José Oiticica and Francisca Bulhões was Jose Oiticica Filho (JOF), father of Hélio, who made his living as a mechanical and electronic engineer. He had never attended high school because his father feared his children being subjected to standardized curricula, civic dates, and state indoctrination. Instead, JOF and his seven sisters studied at home and took qualifying exams to enter higher educational institutions. JOF, in turn, adopted the same educational program for his children. The initial education of Hélio, César, and their younger brother, Claudio, was carried out at home by their parents. In Hélio's words, "my father was against all kinds of teaching… [he] allowed me a type of excessive non-conditioning to certain types of adjusted behavior…with time I came to love the maladjustment as if it was something precious and rare: [within] my power to experience."[29]

In addition to being an autodidact zoologist publishing studies on insects (including hitherto unknown ones), JOF taught mathematics in higher educational institutions from 1928 to 1962. To enhance his scientific investigations, he perfected microphotography techniques and invented a device to better capture infinitesimal details. At the same time, he became interested in the aesthetic aspects of photography. This led him to join São Paulo's "Photo Club Bandeirante" (founded 1941; "Bandeirante" refers to a spirit of adventure and experimentation—but bandeirantes historically were real people who charged into the forests to enslave indigenous peoples). He would go on to participate in numerous photography exhibitions, both national and international, and receive several awards. In 1948, the Guggenheim Foundation awarded him a two-year fellowship to pursue entomological studies at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. While in residence he regularly visited museums and art galleries, especially Washington's National Gallery of Art. Upon returning to Brazil, he branched into non-figurative photography, a move which

brought considerable acclaim. In practice his turn to non-figurative photography drew him into the realm of painting and sculpture: masterly studies in contrasts between black and white were in tune with its aesthetics. Framing and compositional deliberations involved harmonizing measurements and mathematical calculations.[30] In this regard, JOC's decision to enroll his children, Hélio and César, in a painting course taught by Ivan Serpa was not fortuitous. Serpa was an exponent of geometric constructive trends in Rio de Janeiro and JOF was interested in São Paulo's concrete and neo-concrete movements, which had begun to inform his artistic activity.

JOF tried techniques such as "solarization," in which the laboratory light is turned on while developing the negative. JOF related: "The role of the camera is much less important than what comes after. If the photographer takes the plate, develops, and then orders a copy, he hands over to the copier the most important phase of the photographic creation work. How much can you do when copying one. It's at this time when the grays, the lights, and the cut are graduated that photography is, in fact, born."[31]

He was progressively turning to technical means for unexpected, thought-provoking results. A negative could be "worked" to release new aspects and forms in countless combinations. For example, it could be copied to a transparent material and thus become a "transparent positive" that serves as a negative for opaque paper copies. In a series called *Derivações* [*Derivations*], these negatives and positives have some reference to external objects. In the series *Recriações* [*Recriations*], some negatives incorporated brush strokes, collages, or adhesive tape, and were often copied directly onto photographic paper, which could later be worked on in positive and negative interactions. The negatives integrated paint, collage, and, occasionally, objects and glass plates. At the opening of a solo exhibition of photographs in 1954, Oiticica Filho stated: "I am the most dissatisfied with the work I've done.... I'm always dissatisfied, knowing I am a prisoner of a camera that is stubbornly copying instead of creating. I know what is entailed in being a prisoner of a medium of expression as limited in its possibilities as a sheet of chlorobromide paper is. Hence, my struggle; trying to master the medium through technique to print

something aesthetic on a rectangle of paper, keeping it as much as possible in sync with my inner self."[32]

Around 1957, while Hélio and César were exhibiting with *Grupo Frente*, JOF began painting. In the beginning his artworks were an accessory activity as his photograms and manipulated negatives remained central; but then came his *Geometric Paintings* and, from there, the construction of wooden reliefs. According to Hélio, his father had reached a stage "where color and visual space became problems for aesthetic study. The plastic problem that involves them (the wooden reliefs) is still very current (color-light, object-frame, unlimited space) and they are, without a doubt, unique works."[33] Underlining the anarchist implications, JOF reflected: "The man who creates and therefore thinks, is essentially himself, an individual in and of himself, who marches proudly in search of the goal to reach…. The creative impulse does not admit a master, it cannot be a slave, it is, on the contrary, a relentless destroyer of idols, it is a one hundred percent iconoclast."[34]

Rupturing the fabric: "from adversity, we live"[35]

. . . and my olive grove green country
grew dark
the green became violent....
the violence...................................turned black
and the blue of the sky no longer lit up the day
APRIL
Roberta Camila Salgado[36]

The year 1964 was one of ruptures for Hélio. He had plunged into the transformative culture of Carnival, but also experienced personal loss as authoritarianism spread throughout Brazilian society. On April 1, 1964, almost two months after the luminous parade of Rio de Janeiro's Carnival, tanks occupied the country's main roads and cities. Student and union organizations were attacked, and their offices set on fire. It was the onset of Brazil's military coup and the inauguration of a two-decade dictatorship.[37] With the support of the United States, the military and reactionary civic forces backed by most of the Na-

tional Congress overthrew the government of President João Goulart, which was planning important social measures, including agrarian reform. Military personnel were placed in key government posts and in April, Institutional Act No. 1 was enacted. This suspended the political rights of anyone opposed to the regime or deemed to endanger it. Dissident politicians were intimated by threats of impeachment, imprisonment, and expulsion from the country as persecutions, dismissals, and arrests swept across Brazil. These developments undermined JOF's health: he died of a stroke on July 26, 1964.

A few months later, on October 3, 1964, after a spectacular manhunt that lasted five weeks, a young man nicknamed "Cara de Cavalo" (Horseface) was shot 120 times by police officers, thereby "avenging" the death of detective Milton LeCoq. The detective's death had occurred weeks earlier during a shoot-out involving the police and Cara de Cavalo, who had been threatened by a gang of crooks to whom LeCoq offered illegal protection. The fatal shot was from a policeman's gun, but this only stirred the vengeful rage of authorities.[38] Over the next few weeks, the hunt for the "slayer" made headlines in popular newspapers. In a statement by one of LeCocq's partners about the manhunt, he said "We made a great chaos in the State of Rio. We killed the criminals who resisted and arrested those who hid Cara de Cavalo....We were not thinking straight, our only concern was to catch the thug."[39]

Hélio's first solo exhibition at Galeria G4, Rio de Janeiro, in 1966 included *Bólide 33 Bólide Caixa 18 Homage to Cara de Cavalo Poema-Caixa 2* (1965-66). The *Bólide* structures consisted of handmade boxes containing materials of different textures and shapes which spectators were to interact with and manipulate. *Bólide 33* was received by critics as a "pop-art novelty" which "would put an end to the rationalist coldness of concretism." The allusion to pop-art was due to the inclusion of a newspaper photograph of Cara de Cavalo with one of the boxes—an unprecedented move in the artist's creative trajectory (until then he had never incorporated figurative imagery). However, apart from the pop art reference, no critic or journalist drew attention to the controversial photo, despite the well-publicized events surrounding the young man's death. Cara de Cavalo (Manuel

Moreira) was a close friend of Hélio. We have no record of Oiticica's conduct during events leading up to his friend's killing, but the following year, when he paid tribute to his friend, he revealed his intention with *Bólide 33* was to contrast the degenerate status that the "oppressive dirt – police, press, politicians" had bequeathed to Cara de Cavalo with an artistic tribute to his friend of "great sensitivity."[40] Hélio relates: "This work represented for me an ethical moment that was powerfully reflected in everything I did afterward: it revealed to me more of an ethical problem than anything related to aesthetics."[41] The artwork was a "symbol of social oppression on the marginal. He (Cara de Cavalo) was the scapegoat, public enemy No. 1 . . . all possibility of his survival was castrated" as he was transformed into a "leprosy" to be extirpated.[42]

Hélio also made a *bólide* featuring a photograph of a second deceased youth (*B 44 Caixa Bólide 21-poem box 3*), Alcir Figueira. The death photo had been reproduced in newspapers, but Hélio didn't know the Figueira personally. What impressed him was the youth's story: pursued by the police, Figueira chose to commit suicide at the edge of a stream, where his body was found and photographed. In 1968 Hélio would emblazon the photo on a bright red banner with the slogan "be a marginal, be a hero," – to this day, this is one of Oiticica's most famous, defiant artworks.

Both his friend and this youth, according to Hélio, embodied a "visceral, self-destructive revolt" against Brazilian society. Both had also been moved by the "search for happiness, security, affection . . . filling a void." Oiticica made it clear their actions and eventual fates signaled "there was "something rotten in society," that they were not the problem. In his words, it was "society, with its prejudices, outdated legislation, which creates its anti-heroes, the 'animals' to be sacrificed."[43] Hélio conceived of his homages as a means of objectifying their plights, autonomous from State power. His art had nothing to do with romantic idealization, nor was he "deploring a crime." "I don't want to make any accusations here," he stated, "nor exercise 'justice,' since reactions to crime or against [restive] developments tend to be increasingly violent: the oppressors are strong and deadly."[44] He underlined violence on the part of the oppressed was an inescapable

facet of revolt. Hélio's anarchism came to the fore when he stated, "I'm not for peace, I find it useless and cold; how can there be peace or how can one wish for it while there are still master and slave?!"[45]

The experimental exercise of freedom[46]

On August 12, 1965, in the gardens of the Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, during the opening of the group exhibition *Feira Opinião 65* [*Opinion Fair 65*], which Hélio participated in (involving twenty-nine artists, thirteen from Europe and sixteen from Brazil), museum administrators prevented Mangueira samba dancers from performing. The dancers were to wear and parade Hélio's Carnival-inspired *Parangolés* (brightly coloured capes that could double as banners) in procession through the museum, however the group was deemed too noisy and their dress inappropriate. Hélio had not counted on the institution's managers being frightened by an "invasion" of irreverent, perhaps dangerous, *favelados* celebrating Carnival. Hélio protested: "Is that right? Black people can't go into the MAM [Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro], that's racism!"[47] The dance Hélio learned and performed in carnival parades reverberated in his new *Parangolés* series. He recalled, "[Dance, samba] is, for me, an experience of greatest vitality, essential mainly as a demolition of prejudices, stereotyping, etc.…There was a convergence of this experience with the form that my art took in *Parangolé* and everything that is related to it…. Not only that, but it was the outset of a definitive social experience, and I don't even know which direction it will take."[48] Additionally, "*Parangolé* reveals…its fundamental character of 'environmental structure,' having a main core: the 'participant-artwork,' which is divided into 'participant' when he is watching, and 'artwork' when he is being watched in this environmental space time. These participant-artwork nuclei, immersed in a specific site (in an exhibition, for example), create an 'environmental system.'"[49] Art expands in space with the active presence of the so-called spectator, who now becomes a participant, or better yet, a co-creator, as the work only fully exists thanks to the actions of other people within the totality. The result, in context, could be considered an anti-art, in as much as it broke with the then conventions of contemporary visual art that centered on an artwork's autonomy and aesthetic values.

In fact, a *Parangolé* was an "anti-artwork" par excellence. Rebelling against modernism's succession of aesthetically-loaded "isms," there were no pretensions of inaugurating a "new aesthetic" embodying a generalizing "moral" divorced from the creative agency of the subject: "*Parangolé* does not intend to establish a new moral or something similar, but to overthrow all morals, as they tend to a stagnant conformism, to stereotype opinions and create non-creative concepts."[50]

Developments in Oiticica's oeuvre found echoes in the artwork of other artists who were also grappling with public involvement as a factor in artistic activity. This led him to speak of a *Nova Objetividade* ["New Objectivity"] movement that distinguished Brazilian art from international currents such as Pop-Art, Op-Art, New Realism, Primary Structures, or Hard Edge painting. *Nova Objetividade* was conceived as a convergence of multiple tendencies up to that point. Amongst its main features, the following stand out: spectator participation; a position on social, political, and ethical issues; and collectivity which expands public participation within complex artistic environments – samba schools and popular street parties being exemplary.[51] In April 1967, he staged a major exhibition of *Nova Objetividade* artwork at the Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro. Hélio created an "environment" which he called *Tropicália*. This consisted of an ensemble of *Penetráveis* ["*Penetrables*"] – "human-scale structures composed of tents and banners made of different fabrics [*Parangolé*] and painted wooden panels or other materials, which can be penetrated, crossed and manipulated by living bodies, in an informal and spontaneous way"[52] – distributed among tropical plants. In addition, poetry by Roberta Camila Salgado printed on fragments of construction material, politically charged figural drawings on newspaper created by Antonio Manuel, and other artworks permeated the installation. The exhibition's audience proved heterogeneous. "People from the artistic class and I-don't-know-what were a little wary," the artist recalled. "But for people who came from the streets it was the biggest thing. The people from Mangueira were delirious. 'Look here! *Parangolé*!' And they wrapped the cloth around their heads."[53]

At that time, Hélio formulated the notion of the "supra-sensorial," in which environments would be "directed at the senses . . . led the

individual to a 'super-sensation,' to the dilation of their usual sensory capacities, to the discovery of their creative center, their dormant expressive spontaneity." Instigated by art, the individual could be freed from social-political conditioning and "imposed truths" outside their lived experience.[54]

Tropicália evolved into a term loosely associated with Brazil's youth-hippie artistic subculture, involving popular music, contemporary fashion, new theater, and experimental cinema. However, this diluted the radicalizing intent of the exhibition. As Hélio related, *Tropicália* was not supposed to be a new 'artistic movement,' but the denial of such concepts as art-isms – it is important to have an activity that is not limited to art."[55] The years 1967 and 1968 were rocked by massive anti-dictatorship protests and acts of resistance across the entire spectrum of society, including the arts. In August 1968, Hélio and other artists involved with *Nova Objetividade* contributed to the unrest with an event entitled *Apocalipopótese*, which was staged in a public park. Interactive artworks included "Lygia Pape's *Ovos* (*Eggs*), cloth boxes from which an enclosed person breaks forth; Antonio Manuel's *Urnas quentes*, wooden boxes that participants broke open to reveal slogans like "Down with the Dictatorship" and "Power to the People;" and poet Torquato Neto and critic Frederico Morais donning Oiticica's *Parangolé* capes."[56]

On December 13, 1968, the military dictatorship promulgated Institutional Act No. 5, which gave it extensive powers, including the right to shut down the powerless Legislative Congress. Arrests and disappearances intensified as the military dictatorship's bloodiest phase began. This involved kidnapping, torture, and the assassination of political opponents or those suspected of protesting; extrajudicial death squads that terrorized the impoverished population; the intensification of censorship of the arts and the press; and a final dismantling of any popular organizations still resisting military rule.

Not long after the proclamation of Institutional Act No. 5, Hélio Oiticica left Brazil for England with most of his artworks. There, in 1969, he held his first major exhibition outside Brazil at the Whitechapel Gallery in London. Several environments were set up, including

Tropicália and a set of Penetraveis entitled Eden.[57] The experience propelled his trajectory beyond creating immersive participatory environments. He imagined the possibility of generating new life through artworks which he called *Nests*. These would generate new experiences in which each individual constituted a "mother cell." Hélio coined the term *Crelazer* to encapsulate the concept of being in the world without occupying a specific space and time, living pleasure without a-priori thoughts, and fostering an environment in which leisure, as opposed to work, was the portal for creating value: "*Crelazer* promises to build a world where I, you, us, each one is the mother cell."[58]

In July 1969, along with fellow Brazilian artist Lygia Clark, Hélio participated in the *First International Symposium on Tactile Sculpture* at California State College, Long Beach, organized by Professor August Copolla.[59] He gave a talk on *Crelazer* and *Nests* and discussed the nuances of his conception with students, suggesting "it is useless to have 'participation' or 'propositions' if they are not guided by a complete change in the object relation; the same with what might be called 'sensory participation.'"[60]

In 1970, despite knowing "if I don't stay quiet, they will arrest me," Hélio returned to Brazil.[61] He was eager to build communities modelled on those he had encountered in England, notably North London's "Exploding Galaxy" collective of artists, dancers, musicians, and poets (1967-8). A related inspiration was the convergence space of the *Barracão* — the site where the samba school parade was rehearsed, and participants assembled before leaving for the main parade. In a letter to Lygia Clark, Hélio reflected on his expansive conception of art merging with life, "if a practice is not repeated or grouped, communication becomes limited. That's why I must definitely create my community in Rio, I'm not interested in anything anymore, and then, all communicative experiences will be able to enter into a context; I will not compromise; clothes, daily life etc., everything becomes a revealing experience for me."[62] In Brazil, the dictatorship's regime of intolerance enforced by censorship, imprisonment, and torture was at its peak. Under these circumstances, Hélio's home in Rio de Janeiro was filled with friends and friends of

acquaintances who found it to be something of a refuge. "In 1970, on one of my trips to Brazil, I almost went crazy," Hélio recalled. "My return was a real horror. There were too many people around me, and I was doing things here and there in a huge dispersion."[63] In September 1970, police raided and searched his home after an imprisoned friend falsely accused Hélio of filming "terrorist" actions.[64] The dreamed-of creative community was impossible to realize under a military dictatorship.

At this juncture he applied for and was granted a two-year Guggenheim scholarship. He moved to New York, where he lived from late 1970 until 1978. Prior to the move, on July 1970, his work was featured in an exhibition, *Information*, curated by Director John Hightower at the Museum of Modern Art. Vito Acconci, who also participated, describes Hélio's work:

> In the middle of the museum there was a space for people! No one had thought about a space for people in terms of art. There were places in the middle of this public space that could be these private spaces. It was possible to have space for one or two people. He [Hélio Oiticica] was making small compartments – 'nests' where people could remain...he had an interesting notion of public space. It was composed of private spaces. His work was about the conjunction of privacies. You could have your privacy and have a person at your side. You may have social contact.[65]

***Nests* in New York**

While living in New York he dubbed his various residences "Babylon" or "Abrigo do Norte" ("North Shelter"): these *Nests* (*Babylonests*) were where he created art installations and drew people into his projects. In his opinion, Rio de Janeiro had become stifling and lacked avenues for new experiments.[66] In New York he could escape the expectations people had of him, and thus be freer to elaborate his conceptions. Upon arrival, Hélio created sketches and maquettes for a set of six large labyrinthine "*penetrables*," the subterranean *TROP-*

ICÁLIA PROJECTS, which were to be enacted in Central Park.[67] Over the next seven years many such projects were envisaged as sketches on paper or in the form of maquettes, films, or serial photographs. Proposals and critical statements were also produced. Hélio, however, shunned a career in the New York art scene. He sustained his output by drug dealing, cocaine being his drug of choice, which he became addicted to.[68] Occasional works by Hélio were exhibited during these years: for example, in 1972 the "*penetrable*" Filtro was part a collective exhibition, *EX-Position*, organized by Brazilian artist Carlos Vergara at the Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro.

In addition to producing films, posters, photos, maquettes, essays on his art, and propositional statements, Hélio embarked on creative writing, which he gathered in a collection called *Conglomerate: Newyorkaises.* This included personal reflections, poetry, comments on readings, notes on everyday experiences, letters sent to friends, excerpts from other authors, and notes on propositions.[69] These activities reflect creative possibilities first explored during his youth, when, in 1953, he and his brother Cesar, with the help of his mother Ângela Oiticica and aunts (Sonia Oiticica, actress; Vanda Oiticica, actress and opera singer, and Vera Oiticica Pimentel, classical dancer) performed plays in an improvised theater near where they lived.[70] Something else reemerged from his adolescence:

> My grandfather had a dream: to transform dwelling in a "house" . . . [a] THEATER OF MUSICAL PERFOR-MANCE: it doesn't matter: many people have already lived DREAM LIFE-THEATER that would actually be like HOME-THEATER to communicate stage-audience-performance in everyday life: so distant and so close to what I want: SHELTER/BARRACÃO/EN-VIRONMENTALMANIFESTATIONS/BABYLON-ESTS – but wouldn't a SHELTER-PERFORMANCE approximate closely my grandfather's old dream? And yet be so far from it!? [71]

José Oiticica had imagined a "Life-Theater" that would dissolve the separation between actors and audience, and he politicized this

endeavour as an anarchist mode of community building. In like fashion, his grandson sought to expand his own community-building strategies. At this juncture the term "invention" enters his artistic practice. Hélio argued "creating" was determined by impulses he dubbed "natural," not to be confused with purposive experimentation with a preset goal.[72] An "invention" gave rise to a series of new inter-relating positionings based on experiences and the expansive consequences of their effects. In this sense, the initiatory invention remains "alive" and "vibrant": one invention generates another invention, and so on. More than that, Hélio suggested that inventions could be "braided;" loose "strands" could come together in a large "fabric" involving numerous people (inventors). According to Hélio, "The state of invention is profoundly lonely, but it is profoundly collective."[73] In this regard, Hélio's best known work was conceived in partnership with filmmaker Neville de Almeida. "It was the realization," Hélio recalled, "that changed my life and behavior and led to a multiplicity of proposals with radical and ever greater consequences."[74] During 1973-74, the collaborators create a series of nine "supra–sensorial" environments, entitled *Bloco-Experienciâs in COSMOCOCA – programa in progress* (*Block-Experiments in COSMOCOCA – program in progress*), which they numbered CC1 to CC9.

The *Cosmococas* were plans for complex installations ("blocks") that incorporated concurrent slide projections, soundtracks, mattresses, balloons and other various materials, as well as sets of instructions for participants to create future public and private performances. Throughout the series the projected slides feature album covers, newspaper clippings and photographs of celebrities including Yoko Ono, John Cage, Marilyn Monroe, Luis Buñuel, and Jimi Hendrix among others. Images of the pop culture icons are stratified under white pigment drawings the artists made using cocaine as a raw material, illustrating the concept of constructing sensory experiences as well as the possibility of changing one's perception of time.[75]

The *Cosmococa* program incorporated cocaine as artistic material to "play with what you can't play with," i.e., morals and guilt, with no prescriptive agenda. Hélio reasoned, "Madness! How can anyone know what poison each person needs?: all this is just another exten-

sion of Judeo-Christian hang-ups: no one is trying to save themselves!: on the contrary: as [anarchist theatrician Antonin] ARTAUD says: – LET THE LOST GET LOST!"[76] Each "block" of sensory experimentation was envisaged as a collective game, an insufflation to escape one's habits, to become open to the unexpected. They would unleash "inventing: a process in progress that is not limited to the construction of the WORK, but which launches us into worlds that are simultaneous."[77]

By the end of 1970s, repression in Brazil was easing as political exiles were allowed to return and opponents of the regime began to be released from prison. Hélio left New York for Brazil in 1978, having withdrawn from cocaine addiction and the drug dealing that sustained his lifestyle after the Guggenheim fellowship ended. In Brazil he picked up where he had left off, participating in various collective endeavours, including films, and realizing a few *Penetráveis* installations (PN 24 Rijanvieira at the Café des Arts, Rio de Janeiro and Nas Quebradas in São Paulo) before his untimely death on March 22, 1980.[78]

"Heir without inheritance"

"I am the heir without inheritance: so, I am always at the beginning."[79] Heir to an anarchist lineage, heir to the constructivist trend in twentieth-century art, heir to an impressive intellectual legacy, heir without the burden of inheritance, free to be within the threshold of invention, without knowing in advance where the next project will end up. "I don't know what I do, because each thing I do, sets me up for what I'm doing; if projects are being done, that is, invented, inaugurated, they are inaugurating a situation, a new reality, each and every time."[80] Hélio was not a militant, though militancy was his namesake. One of the first anarchist centers in Rio de Janeiro to be shut down after the Brazilian dictatorship unleashed the full force of repression in 1969 was the José Oiticica Social Studies Center (founded in 1958; raided and closed in October 1969). However, Hélio never attended events there.[81] His anarchism was embedded in his approach to life, and life's relationship to art. Crossovers between life, art, and anarchism reside in each anarchist's attitude, an attitude of

shared collectivity and anti-authoritarian resistance. This leads to the intensification of anarchist practices in everyday life wherein ethical modes of being disrupt manifestations of hierarchy and authority in a bid to eradicate them. The key fulcrum of resistance to repressive power, according to Michel Foucault, is a truthful relationship with oneself, an ethics and aesthetics of existence.[82] "Couldn't everyone's life become a work of art?" Foucault once asked.[83] Considering art-making as a "technique" of self-realization, he also pondered "why should a painter work, if he is not transformed by his own painting?"[84] Hélio sought to go beyond the transformation of the self. His propositions aimed at a collective transformation enacted by freely interconnecting individuals. He engaged in reaching out and incorporating others, dissolving barriers of perception that confine us, and dishabituating lived experience from routines and fixed ideas. From the *Parangolé* forward he made it clear that his "environmental" program "never betrays those who practice it: it simply gives each one his own cargo, his individual responsibility; it is beyond good and evil [i.e., externalized moralities], etc."[85]

During the 1970s Hélio argued conventional art had devolved into "a category of a structure in decay."[86] He had in mind not only visual art – painting, sculpture, photography – but also artwork incorporating the "spectator's participation and the introduction of sensory elements." This "had been important for the introduction of a new form of behavior (more aimed at daily life)" but it too was being recuperated as an experiential "object" for consumption, as opposed to a portal for self-transformation.[87] When sensory and participatory-based projects become art objects, the distancing between spectator and artwork returns and interrupts the flow of self-initiated invention. A year before his death, he declared: "Normal people become visual artists. I do not…. I declanche [trigger, set off] …. I didn't become a visual artist…. I became a declancher [sparker] of states of invention!"[88] Inventing a proposal and trying it out was the only way to evaluate its effectiveness as a conduit for free agency: it was not possible to predict in theory what would happen, it was necessary to take risks for the experience of this agency to be realized. During these endeavours, Hélio transformed the category "art" — painting, sculpture, performance and so on— by taking it to its limit and beyond

into anti-art through the dissolution of the compartmentalization of the work-author-spectator relationship. Hélio explains:

> *Anti-art,* recently taken to dramatic forms, to the edge of experience, now demands a definitive radicalization….I call it, in my experimental efforts, a crebehavior, it is not simply "creative behavior," although it can be, but something much more amplified; it is not an object-creation through behavior, nor the transformation of living acts into creative ones, which would be a simplistic notion: in such a case conditions would only become distant Utopias, but if, from inside conditioned behavior, the elements start to grow as necessities, like germs which burst from the center of the conflicts themselves, and inform behavior in a new open way, completely attuned with individual lived acts: process which conducts and informs to the very center of behavior conflict itself and opens into surprising transformations — not to be content with the effort to "attain a model" of life, but to live in a continuous consciousness of such conflicts, which could be the only way for such a transformation process to take place.[89]

Hélio envisaged artworks as experimental vectors fostering freer behaviors and ideas, opening us up to the transformation of values and attitudes and to the flourishing of collective diversification based on individual responses to the process at hand. Discussing anarchism's relation to his transformative conception of anti-art, he declared: "First of all, I must immediately clarify that such an [ethical] position can only be a totally anarchic position, such is the degree of freedom implied in it. Everything oppressive, socially and individually, is in opposition to it—all fixed and decaying forms of government, or existing social structures, come into conflict here." The individual's most passionate "intuitions and yearnings" were anti-art's foundational touchstone.[90]

Heir without inheritance, what legacy did he leave? After all, he's

been gone for over forty years, but despite this, his propositions have not been exhausted: many remain to be pursued. Some unrealized projects have been revisited in exhibitions and lectures, but without the living presence of their author, his legacy, arguably, is in danger of being "pacified" in museums. With Hélio's *The Invention of Color: Magic Square #3* installed on the grounds of the Banco do Brasil Cultural Center in Brazila and his *Cosmococa* environments being recreated for various exhibitions (uncomprehending visitors taking "selfies"), researcher Paula Braga asks: "How can we resume the explosion of life force germinations in contemporary art?... Have we lost the possibility of exploding the germs of desire for a total relationship with the world?"[91] Beyond the posthumous urge to recognize the worldwide importance of his art, there is the drive to recover Hélio's virulence in art and life. What arsenal did Hélio Oiticica leave for twenty-first century anarchism and our struggles?

Notes

[1] Hélio Oiticica. "Interview with Marisa Alvarez de Lima. *A Cigarra magazine*, 20 de julho de 1966," in *Hélio Oiticica*, eds. Cesar Oiticica Filho et al. (Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azougue, 2009),.41.

[2] According to the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg coined the term in 1930, arguing lines, colours, and planes were the most "concrete" or "real" features of an artwork. Thus "concrete art" restricts itself to these elements. Concrete art was introduced to Brazil by Swiss artist Max Bill at the São Paulo Biennale in 1952. His ideas attracted many young artists, poets, musicians, to "concrete art" practices. See Museum of Modern Art, "Art Terms": https://www.moma.org/collection/terms/concrete-art

[3] Hélio Oiticica. "Meta esquemas 57/58," *Hélio Oiticica. Catálogo* (Paris: Editions de Jeu du Paume, 1992), 27.

[4] Hélio Oiticica, "A transição da cor," *Aspiro ao Grande Labirinto* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986), 50.

[5] Ibid., 51.

[6] Ibid., 52-53.

[7] Brazil was the last country in the Western hemisphere to abolish slavery in 1888.

[8] The expressions "hill" and "asphalt" mark a cleavage between the poor and the rich in the city of Rio de Janeiro. The *hill* refers to slum districts built on the city's hills. The *asphalt* references well-planned urban neighborhoods with good housing and services inhabited by the wealthier strata.

[9] Musicals from the Cinedia cinematographic studio, founded in 1930.

[10] Sergio Cabral, *Mangueira: nação verde e rosa* (São Paulo: Prêmio Editorial, 1998), 92-95.

[11] Janice Perlman, *O mito da marginalidade* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1977), 290.

[12] Hélio Oiticica, Interview with O Pasquim, 6 de agosto de 1970, in *Hélio Oiticica*, eds. Cesar Oiticica Filho et al. (Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azougue, 2009), 71.

[13] The term *Malandragem* implies a zone for casual sex.

[14] Hélio Oiticica, "Um Mito Vadio," Interview with Jary Cardoso, Folha de São Paulo, 5 de novembro de 1978 in *Hélio Oiticica*, eds. Cesar Oiticica Filho et al. (Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azougue, 2009), 241.

[15] Hélio Oiticica, "Mangueira e Londres na rota," Interview with Norma Pereira Rego, Última Hora, 31 de janeiro de 1970, in *Hélio Oiticica*, eds. Cesar Oiticica Filho et al. (Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azougue, 2009), 99.

[16] Hélio Oiticica, *Aspiro ao Grande Labirinto* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986), 73.

[17] Ibid., 74.

[18] Mario Pedrosa, "Arte Ambiental, Arte pós-Moderna: Hélio Oiticica," *Dos Murais de Portinari aos Espaços de Brasília* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1981), 209.

[19] Roberto das Neves, "Prefácio," in *Ação Direta*, ed. José Oiticica (Rio De Janeiro: Germinal, 1970), 25.

[20] Ibid., 25.

[21] José Oiticica, "Contra o sectarismo," in Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 107.

[23] Ibid., 107.

[24] José Oiticica, "Princípios e fins do anarquismo," in Ibid., 247.

[25] José Oiticica, "Contra o sectarismo" in Ibid., 96.

[26] José Oiticica, "Culto à forma," *Correio da Manhã*, Rio de Janeiro, 3 de dezembro de 1921: 2.

[27] Mario Pedrosa, "Os projetos de Hélio Oiticica," *Acadêmicos e Modernos:Textos III* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1998), 341.

[28] César Oiticica, Testimony, 18 July 2008.

[29] Hélio Oiticica, Manuscrito de 1973.

[30] In 1954, during his first solo exhibition in São Paulo at Foto Cine Clube Bandeirantes, he presented the lecture "Harmonic analysis of a rectangle."

[31] José Oiticica Filho, "Discurso na Inauguração da Exposição no Foto-cine Clube Bandeirantes." *Foto-cine Boletim* ano VII, no. 88 (abril 1954): 14.

[32] Ibid.: 14

[33] Hélio Oiticica, "Ciência das Imagens: José Oiticica Filho." *Paparazzi: arte fotográfica* ano III, no. 18 (agosto-setembro 1998): 15.

[34] José Oiticica Filho, "Discurso na Inauguração da Exposição no Foto-cine Clube

Bandeirantes," 15.

[35] Note written in P16 Parangolé Capa 12.

[36] Roberta Camila Salgado, *Verdes Correntes\ Tropicália* (Rio de Janeiro: Azougue, 2015), 19 (in English).

[37] Pietro Ferrua, "O golpe militar de 1964," *verve* (28 november 2015): 142-152. Italian anarchist Ferrua was living in Brazil at the time of the coup and participated in the Brazilian section of the *Center des Recherches sur l'Anarchisme* – CIRA.

[38] In 1965, these policemen set up the Scuderie LeCoq, a death squad complete with logo and anthem, to continue the killing of "bandits" previously undertaken by officer LeCoq. It was only disbanded in 2005.

[39] Testimony of José Guilherme Ferreira, "Sivuca," in *Barra Pesada*, ed. O. RIBEIRO (São Paulo: Círculo do Livro, 1985), 215.

[40] Hélio Oiticica, "Heróis e Anti-Heróis de Oiticica," *Diario de Notícias,* RJ, 10 April 1968. http://www.culturaebarbarie.org/sopro/arquivo/heroioiticica.html

[41] Hélio Oiticica, "Letter to Guy Brett." 2 April 1968. *Hélio Oiticica. Catálogo* (Paris: Editions Jeu du Paume, 1992): 135.

[42] Hélio Oiticica, "Testimony," *Diário de Notícias,* RJ, 10 April 1968.

43 Ibid.

44 Hélio Oiticica, "Posição ética (1966)," *Aspiro ao Grande Labirinto* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986, 82.

[45] Hélio Oiticica, "Testimony," *Diário de Notícias*, RJ, 10 April 1968.

[46] An expression of the art critic Mario Pedrosa referencing the activities of artists during the 1960s-1970s, which was frequently cited by Hélio and his companions. Mario Pedrosa, "Por dentro e por fora das Bienais," *Mundo, homem, arte em crise*. 2 ed. (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1986), 308.

[47] Gerschman, in *Opinião 65 ontem e hoje,* Ciclo de Exposições sobre Arte no Rio de Janeiro: no. 5, ed. F. Morais, (Banerj, 1985).

[48] Hélio Oiticica, "A dança (november1965)," *Aspiro ao Grande Labirinto* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986), 73.

[49] Hélio Oiticica, "Notas sobre o parangolé," *Aspiro ao Grande Labirinto* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986), 72.

[50] Ibid., 81.

[51] Hélio Oiticica, "New Objectivity. (1967)" https://monoskop.org/images/5/57/Oiticica_Helio_1967_1999_General_Scheme_of_the_New_Objectivity.pdf

[52] Hélio Oiticica, "Penetrables, 1961-1980" (Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro) https://mam.rio/obras-de-arte/penetraveis-1961-1980/

[53] Hélio Oiticica, "Interview with Aracy Amaral (October 1977)," in *Hélio Oiticica*, eds. Cesar Oiticica Filho et al. (Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azougue, 2009), 153-154.

[54] Hélio Oiticica, "Aparecimento do supra sensorial na arte brasileira," *Aspiro ao*

Grande Labirinto (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986), 104.

55 Hélio Oiticica, "Information (1970)," in *Helio Oiticica: A Pintura depois do Quadro* (Rio de Janeiro: Silvia Roesler Edições de Arte, 2008), 212.

56 "Apocalipopótese and after" (Museum of Modern Art: Rio de Janeiro) https://www.moma.org/calendar/events/107

57 Guy Brett, Luciano Figueiredo, *Oiticica in London* (London: Tate Publishing, 2007).

58 Hélio Oiticica, "Possibilidades do Crelazer," *Aspiro ao Grande Labirinto* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986,: 116.

59 First International Tactile Sculpture Symposium, July 1969: http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,901133,00.html

60 Hélio Oiticica, "The sense pointing towards a new transformation" (English), *ARTMargins* (2018): https://direct.mit.edu/artm/article-abstract/7/2/129/18069/The-Senses-Pointing-Toward-a-New-Transformation1?redirectedFrom=PDF

61 Hélio Oiticica, "Carta de Hélio Oiticica de 23/12/1969," in *Cartas*, eds. L. Clark and H. Oiticica (Rio de Janeiro: Editora UFRJ), 128.

62 Hélio Oiticica, "Carta de Hélio Oiticica de 24/06/1969," Ibid., 124.

63 Hélio Oiticica, "Interview with Cleusa Maria. Jornal do Brasil, 8 de março de 1978," in *Hélio Oiticica,* eds. Cesar Oiticica Filho et al. (Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azougue, 2009), 71.

64 "Hélio Oiticica: artista de amanhã," *O Globo* (RJ), 17 de setembro de 1970.

65 Vito Acconci, "Testimony for the film Heliophonia of Marcos Benisson, 2002," in *Experiments in exile*, ed. Laura Harris. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), 98.

66 Hélio Oiticica, "Manuscritos," *Caderno* (1973).

67 Hélio Oiticica, "subterranean TROPICALIA PROJECTS," in *Hélio Oiticica. Catálogo* (Paris: Editions de Jeu du Paume, 1992), 143-157.

68 Ben Davis, "Hélio Oiticica's Journey From Art Visionary to Coke Dealer and Back Again," *Art News* (July 14, 2017): https://momus.ca/helio-oiticicas-journey-art-visionary-coke-dealer-back/

69 Hélio Oiticica, "Uma parte de seus escritos foram publicados em fac-símiles dos manuscritos e datilografias," in *Hélio OITICICA. Conglomerado: newyorkaises.* Frederico Coelho e César Oiticica Filho, eds. (Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azougue, 2013).

70 "O clube da rua tem seu teatro em uma garagem," *Correio da Manhã* (RJ), 13 de março de 1953.

71 Hélio Oiticica, "Mundo abrigo, 22 jul. 73," in *Conglomerado: newyorkaises*, eds. Frederico Coelho & C. Oiticica Filho (Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azougue, 2013), 40.

72 Transcribed excerpt from an intervention during Lygia Clark's testimony, re-

corded on September 14, 1979 by the Museum of Image and Sound MIS (RJ).

[73] Ibid.

[74] Hélio Oiticica, "Block-Experiences in COSMOCOCA- program in progress," in *Hélio Oiticica. Catálogo* (Paris: Editions de Jeu du Paume, 1992), 180-181.

[75] "Hélio Oiticica & Neville D'Almeida: Cosmococas" (Lisson Gallery) https://www.lissongallery.com/exhibitions/helio-oiticica-neville-d-almeida-cosmococas-programa-in-progress-1973

[76] Ibid., 181.

[77] Ibid., 180.

[78] Hélio participated in documentaries about himself by the filmmaker Ivan Cardoso. See HO e Heliorama, available in https://youtu.be/yGYHJaGXHOU https://youtu.be/0-e611g3K5s

[79] Hélio Oiticica, "Manuscript, 22 de abril de 1978." Document 0094,77, p. 4, in *Catálogo Raisonné*, *Projeto Helio Oiticica.*

[80] Hélio Oiticica, "Testimony" from the film HO e Heliorama (January 1979) in *Hélio Oiticica*, eds. Cesar Oiticica Filho et al. (Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azougue, 2009), 240.

[81] Pietro Ferrua, "O Fechamento do Centro de Estudos Sociais prof. José Oiticica," *Verve* no..23 (maio de 2013): 65-79.

[82] Michel Foucault, *Hermenêutica do Sujeito*. (São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2011), 225.

[83] Michel Foucault, "À propos de la généalogie de l'éthique: um aperçu du travail em cours," in *Dits et Ecrits* IV (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 392.

[84] Michel Foucault, "Une Interview de Michel Foucault par Stephen Riggins," in *Op.cit.*, 536.

[85] Michel Foucault, "Une Interview de Michel Foucault par Stephen Riggins," in *Op.cit.*, 536.

[86] Helio Oiticica, "Uma arte sem medo. Entrevista a Gilse Campos," *Jornal do Brasil,* 29 de janeiro de 1970, 90.

[87] Ibid., 90.

[88] Helio Oiticica, "Testimony from the film HO e Heliorama," 234.

[89] Helio Oiticica, The sense pointing towards a new transformation (English) http://legacy.icnetworks.org/extranet/enciclopedia//ho/index.cfm?fuseaction=documentos&cd_verbete=4523&cod=625&tipo=2

[90] Helio Oiticica, "Programa ambiental. Posição ética," *Aspiro ao grande labirinto*, 78-79.

[91] Paula Braga, "Os sentidos e a urgência de transformação," *Poiésis* vol.. 20, no. 34 (julho - dezembro 2019): 40.

Playing with Garbage in Lima, Peru:
Social Transformation through Participatory Public Art

Naomi Shields*

Laughing, squeals of excitement, the buzzing whirr of people: the vibrant scene of a once-neglected urban corridor springing to life at a community-built amusement park. According to many scholars, artistic experiences in public spaces invigorate communities, promote democratic discourse, and encourage collective reimagining.[1] This article explores the socially transformative potential of participatory public art, with a specific focus on the capacity of playful interaction to promote themes of freedom and autonomy within the context of a twenty-first century neoliberal society. To pursue this inquiry, I draw on the work of British social critic and author Colin Ward (1924-2010), whose valued and robust contribution to the contemporary anarchist canon explores the vital importance of freedom and autonomy in modern life. According to Ward, well-intended people need to exercise their freedom consciously and actively against systems of dominance in order to manifest a freer society. He maintained that effective resistance to systems of dominance could be executed through simple, everyday activities, and he considered playing in public spaces to be an example of this subtle protest strategy.[2] I situate these themes in part within the field of relational art, a contemporary art genre that necessitates viewer participation and emphasizes social interaction, through a case study of a temporary public playground installation in Peru, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público/ Self-made Public Amusement Park* (2010). This participatory art installation was a collaborative project between the Spanish artist collective Basurama [Trash] and local community members of the Surquillo neighbourhood in Lima, Peru. The play space, consisting of various climbing apparatuses made of recycled automobile tires erected on a controversial, partially constructed and abandoned elevated train line, invited community members of all ages to engage

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in unregulated playful activity.[3]

Although much research demonstrates that participatory public art improves social conditions and the physical health of participants, I am not appraising the utility of participatory art in this regard.[4] Instead, I am discussing the symbolic value of participatory playful art as a prefiguration to a more democratic society. In *Anarchism and Art: Democracy in the Cracks and on the Margins* (2016), Mark Mattern, Professor of Political Science at Baldwin Wallace University, analyzes the prefigurative politics and transformative potential of popular art forms such as DIY punk music, poetry slams, graffiti, street art, and flash mobs.[5] Citing nineteenth-century anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's *Du principe de l'art et de sa destination social* (1865), Mattern champions the prefigurative potential of art: that is, the ability of art to highlight themes that already exist in society while also prescribing a vision of the future.[6]

Analyzing *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* considering anarchist critical theory rather than quantitative social science is influenced by Claire Bishop, a contemporary theorist and critic of participatory art. In *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (2012) Bishop notes that disciplines in social science are often employed to analyze participatory art due to the genre's emphasis on sociological themes, but that this can repress the symbolic meaning of a work: "since participatory art is not only a social activity but also a symbolic one, both embedded in the world and at one removed from it, the positive social sciences are ultimately less useful … than the abstract reflections of political philosophy."[7] With this in mind, I am not focusing on the quantifiable impact of *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* on individual participants or the specific community in Lima. The work was dismantled over ten years ago and I am not asserting irrefutable evidence of a lasting cause-and-effect relationship between the work and the community. Instead, I embrace what Bishop calls the "constitutively undefinitive reflections on quality that characterise the humanities," and present a theoretical discussion of the potential of participatory public art to evoke change by presenting immediate alternative social realities.[8]

Employing the work of Colin Ward and other scholars, this chapter investigates how *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* relates to strategies of prefigurative activism through non-hierarchical social organization, the assertion of autonomy, and the expression of freedom. I provide a short summary of the theoretical discourse on participatory public art and the social qualities of the genre, then introduce Colin Ward and the themes in his writing that are most relevant to *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público*. By applying Ward's theories to the categories of social organization, freedom and autonomy, I illustrate how *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* confronted the social, economic, and political domination of the capitalist, neoliberal State. I proceed with the same analytical framework to discuss the significance of playful participation specifically. By employing Ward's advocation for unrestricted play in public spaces and engaging with contemporary play theorists, I explore how playing presents novel possibilities for social reorganization, resisting authority, and promoting freedom and self-governance.

Theorizing Art and Social Engagement

I'll begin by clarifying the terms collaborative art, participatory art, relational art, and dialogical art. Collaborative art refers to work produced by more than one individual artist. This practice has increasingly gained popularity over the last three decades. Swedish curator and educator Maria Lind posits that the "post-Fordist" work-place culture of interdisciplinary alliances and open source technologies promotes collaborative methodologies by rewarding innovation, creativity, and flexibility.[9] Lind references art critic and historian Christian Kravagna's four modes of collaborative art: working with others (artists that work with the public on collaborative projects); interactive activities ("push-button art" that permits involvement, but which does not alter the fundamental structure of the work); collective action (a group of people propelled by a shared goal); and participatory practices (art which transfers the final development of the work to the audience).[10]

Participatory art, therefore, refers to work that requires an interactive audience to produce a final outcome, or, in Bishop's formation,

art in which people constitute the medium of the work.[11] *Relational Aesthetics* (1998), by French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud, first defined relational art as a genre and presents an additional framework for the analysis of participatory art practices that emphasize the social experience of the viewer.[12] Performative art scholar Shannon Jackson describes relational art as "inter-relational, embodied, and durational,"[13] and art historian Tim Stott explains it as "a shift in understanding the work of art from a discrete and autonomous object to an integrated and dynamic complex of elements acting in relation to one another and in relation to an environment."[14] Like Lind, Bishop locates sociopolitical transformations within the last century that compelled artists to continually rethink "art's relationship to the social and of its political potential."[15] In her essay "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics" (2010), she defines the "core political significance of relational aesthetics" as the search for "provisional solutions in the here and now."[16] *Appearing Rooms* (2004), by Danish artist Jeppe Hein, is an example of relational art: the outdoor interactive water installation consists of a network of waterspouts arranged across a concrete space that responds to human participation.[17] Line Marie Bruun Jespersen, a Danish scholar in Communication Psychology and Design at Aalborg University, analyzes the relational aesthetics of *Appearing Rooms* by describing it as "a 'situation' where the viewers become part of the work and where the social situation is the most important aspect of the work – the pavilion as an object is secondary."[18] Similarly, the climbing apparatuses of *RUS Lima Autoparque de Diversiones Público* foreground participatory interaction. Although the use of car tires as construction material addressed the critical issues of transportation and waste management in Lima, they remained secondary to the primary objective of inciting playful activity in public space. Basurama quotes Nicolas Bourriaud in their publication *RUS Libro del Proyecto 'Residuos Urbanos Sólidos'; Basura y Espacio Público en Latinoamérica* (2011), asserting that the emphasis of the playground installation was to create an "environment that could produce 'modes of heterogenous sociability'" ("espacios de intercambio social donde se producen 'modos de sociabilidad heterogéneos'").[19]

During the mid-1990s, art critic Grant Kester developed the genre of dialogical art: a relational art promoting multi-disciplinary work

that, existing outside of art galleries and museums, can reach broader audiences and address diverse social concerns. Kester asserts that the inclusive characteristics of dialogical art allow for "overlaps between art practice and activism, environmental science, participatory urban planning, social work, ethnology, and so on."[20] Pascal Gielen, Professor of Sociology of Art and Politics at the Antwerp Research Institute for the Arts, expresses a similar value judgment in his assertion that artists effectively engage with contemporary society when they strive to be "artistic and ecological and economic and political and social."[21] In summary, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* can be defined as collaborative, participatory, and relational; it was created by a non-hierarchical artist-collective in collaboration with local artists and community members and submersed participants into a socially-complex and relational play space. It is also an example of dialogical art in its emphasis on multi-disciplinary collaboration and communication, and its promotion of immediate action in the name of social, economic, and political agency.

Rus Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público in Context

Basurama was founded in 2001 by a group of students at the Madrid School of Architecture (ETSAM).[22] The artist-collective uses garbage as the primary medium of their work, which often centres on themes of community engagement within the contested use of public space. In the past two decades, the group has collaborated with over one hundred communities on four continents to creatively repurpose garbage in projects ranging from fashion shows to neighbourhood parties.[23] As their name and choice of medium suggest, their work also draws attention to the environmental degradation and human suffering that result from excessive consumerism and poor waste management worldwide. Their mandate: "Our aim is to study those phenomena inherent in the massive production of real and virtual trash in the consumer society, providing different points of view on the subject that might generate new thoughts and attitudes. We find gaps in these processes of production and consumption that not only raise questions about the way we manage our resources but also about the way we think, we work, we perceive reality."[24]

RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público was part of a larger transnational project that was spearheaded by Basurama called *Residuos Urbanos Sólidos* (Solid Urban Waste—RUS). The RUS projects, funded by the Spanish International Development Agency (AECID), involved local community members throughout multiple cities in Latin America between 2008-2010 and adhered to the necessity of low-cost construction.[25] The "on-site, ad-hoc" projects varied, depending on what each community wished to create, but maintained a similar basic structure whereby Basurama connected with local organizations, community groups, shop owners, and governments to address specific concerns via interventions, campaigns, and public art exhibitions.[26] RUS projects are listed as follows: Miami, United States (*Miami Trash Machine*, a mobile music cart made of garbage that initiated spontaneous musical parties in parking lots and gas stations); Mexico City, Mexico (*Haga Su Propio Carrito*, a community project that encouraged trash collectors, pepenadores, to construct their carts in creative ways out of the garbage they collect); Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (*Tsunami de Basura*, a decorative curtain of empty plastic containers was hung on the city's waterfront to invigorate the deserted space and invite community use); Buenos Aires, Argentina (*Todos Somos Cartoneros*, a project that initiated playful public activities using cardboard to narrow the social divide between people who discard cardboard and those who collect it for recycling fees, the *cartoneros*); Montevideo, Uruguay (*Colabore Con Su Clasificador Local*, an installation exhibiting photographs of garbage from houses to landfills that highlights the hidden beauty, rather than unsightly decay, of the urban garbage experience); Córdoba, Argentina (*Tejedoras Urbanas*, a community project displaying creative repurposing of garbage by local artisans); Asunción, Paraguay (*Con las Cosas Serias No se Juega*, an installation of benches and swings, constructed out of wood pallets and plastic, that reinvigorated a degraded public park in a central area of the city); and San Juan, Puerto Rico (*Esperando a la Guagua*, a project that adorned bus stops in the city with books, playful objects and apparatuses constructed out of garbage to increase community interactions).[27]

Their playground installation in Peru, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was open from January 30 to February 28, 2010 and

an exhibition was held at the Spanish Cultural Centre in Lima during the month of February to showcase the project. With funding from the AECID, Basurama produced a catalogue for the exhibition, *RUS LIMA; Residuos Urbanos Sólidos, Import/Export toda clase de basura*, which elaborates on their work in Lima as well as the other RUS Projects.[28] The installation enlivened neglected urban space with activity while casting a critical light on Lima's ever-expanding and over-polluting automobile culture and the government's unfulfilled promise of adequate public transportation for the millions of residents within the sprawling metropolis.[29] The participatory art installation, constructed largely of discarded and donated automobile tires, consisted of swings, various climbing apparatuses and a zip line.[30] It spanned the length of fourteen cement pylons that were in a perpetual state of suspended construction; some pylons reinforced a cement platform intended for the trainline while others supported nothing but thin air (Fig. 1). An online photo gallery of the installation on the Basruama

Figure 1: *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público*
Self-made Public Amusement Park (2010)

website provides a collaged panoramic image that captures the entire installation and includes the names of the various play apparatuses.[31] The Basurama members involved in *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* were Yago Bouzada Biurrun, Benjamín Castro Terán, Alberto Nanclares da Veiga, Juan López-Aranguren Blázquez, Rubén Lorenzo Montero, Manuel Polanco Pérez-Llantada, Pablo Rey Mazón and Miguel Rodríguez Cruz.[32] They collaborated with the following local artists and artist-collectives: Camila Bustamante (graphic artist), Christians Luna (performance artist), Sandra Nakamura (visual artist), C.H.O.L.O. (local social artists), El Cartón (an architecture students collective), Playstationvagon (graffiti collective), El Codo (graffiti collective), Motivando Corazones (artist collective) and Recurseo (group of designers that produce "objects with purpose" (objetos con objeto).[33] Basurama also engaged with the greater community of Surquillo from their temporary home base in Lima at the Casa de la Juventud (Youth Centre), where they experimented with various designs for the play structures before installing them on the nearby train line.[34] As well as contributing to the design stages, a group of young environmental activists, Fuerza Juvenil (Youth Force), provided vital manpower for the installation's ten-day construction.[35] Although Basurama initiated the project and sourced external funding of 1,500 Euros, the Peruvian collaborators had more than a "supporting role" in the design and construction of the project.[36] They were fully engaged with its creation, in accord with the participatory ideal.[37]

RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público was highly visible, located in a grassy corridor between busy streets near a large intersection and a cancer hospital. Although the patients' families and visitors were known to congregate here, before *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* the space was not celebrated as a public space of leisure: it was essentially neglected and forgotten.[38] Allison Young, Professor of Contemporary Art History at Louisiana State University, calls small pockets of urban spaces overlooked by regulating forces "parafunctional" sites: urban spaces that are "unused, unwanted sites of disrepair and decline."[39] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* invited the community of Surquillo, and visitors to the area, to re-territorialize and breathe life into the space.

Publicly shared space (the "commons") can be a place of collective reimagining and many scholars agree that artistic experience in the urban commons invigorates communities and promotes democratic discourse.[40] As culture and sustainability scholar Nancy Duxbury asserts, public art is "an essential element of social cohesion in society" that can stimulate "chance meetings" while creating "new necessary relationships."[41] This is certainly evident in the case of *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público*. Basurama noted that during the design and construction process the project became a whirlwind of debates, workshops, presentations, visitors, collaborators and creators they could not have anticipated ["se ha convertido en un torbellino en el que caben debates, talleres, presentaciones, visitas, acompañamientos, creadores que aún no conocíamos"].[42] Diagrams produced from the design process can be found on the Basurama website, and visually articulate the priorities and necessities of the project. One diagram exhibits the expressed interests of the community: "eating with friends," "playing with grandchildren," and "an amusement park!" Above the image, which consists of a diverse group of silhouetted community members contributing to the same "thought bubble," the central intention is made clear: "A project for and with the people" (Fig. 2). Although *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was
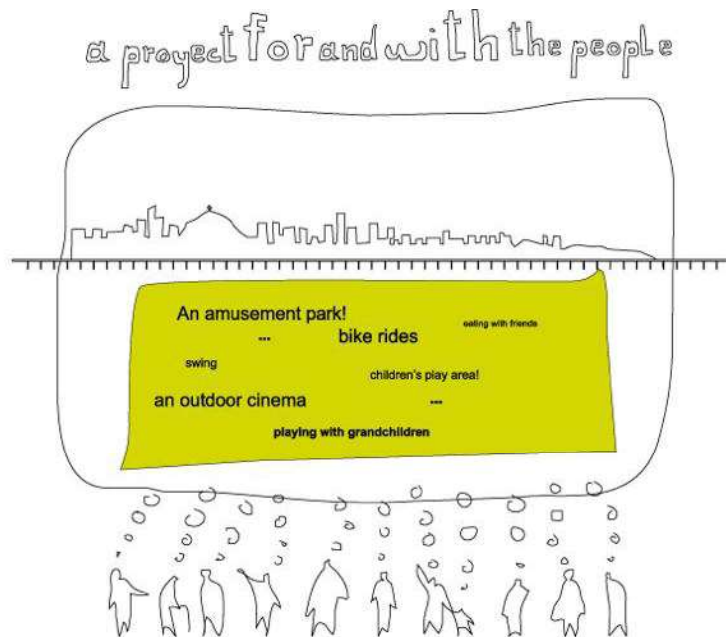

Figure 2: *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* - design illustration: "a project for and with the people"

short-lived, Basurama's methodology of horizontal management and cooperative alliances produced a practical and flexible framework, "an action tool" (una herramienta de actuación) that could be used by others in other contexts.[43] This became a reality when similar projects were established soon after in and around the city; the social artist-collective C.H.O.L.O. and visual artist Christians Luna, both of whom had participated in *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público*, created two additional playgrounds from recycled material in the outlying neighbourhoods of Pachacutec-Ventanilla and Cantagallo-Rimac.[44]

In addition to the various interactive apparatuses, Basurama's installation was adorned in the colours of the "Chicha graphic art" aesthetic. Chicha graphic art is a product of the rich cultural history of Lima. In the 1960s and 70s, an influx of rural Peruvians migrated to the city. As a result of this increasingly diverse urban population, a new musical genre evolved mixing Colombian Cumbia (rock music) and traditional Andes Huayno folkloric music. Peruvian Cumbia, renamed Chicha in 1965 after the pop hit "La Chichera" by Aurora Andina, has grown exponentially more popular over the years.[45] Musical groups have to compete for audiences and vigorously advertise their shows through eye-catching posters and flyers, maintaining a demand for local graphic artists and print shops.[46] Some of these Chicha graphic artists and print makers, such as Elliot Tupac, Samuel Gutiérrez and Moises Sants, are now internationally recognized.[47]

The visual iconography of Chicha graphic art is distinct: florescent hues of pink, orange, green, blue, and yellow with bold signature lettering in high contrast black and white. Some contend that these colours hail from the colourful pallet of the Indigenous textiles of the Huancayo region; others have noted that neon ink was widely available and affordable in the early 1980s (the time of the Chicha "boom"), and that budget constraints may have determined the Chicha colours.[48] Hailing from the lower economic demographic of rural workers migrating into urban centres, the Chicha moniker originally referred to "lower class" citizens. Now a mainstream style, the mix of modern pop and rural Indigenous cultures reflects the collective history of urban Peruvians and has become a celebration of their rich

cultural heritage.[49] The use of the Chicha colour palette in *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was a decision made by local community members in the design process, and the vibrant neon colours adorning the cement pylons clearly evoked a local, homegrown fiesta (Fig. 3).[50]

Figure 3: *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* - Chicha coloured pylons

There were a variety of other visual components in the installation: a mock map of the proposed train line by graphic artist Camila Bustamante; a pink neon sign that read "*Deseo*" (Desire/Wish) by local visual artist Sandra Nakamura; a Chicha-coloured tent constructed in the shape of a train engine perched on the platform that had never held a real train; a poster that portrayed amusement park tickets for access to the pretend train line; and a spray-painted pillar depicting a ticket booth (Fig. 4).

The environmentalist spirit of *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* and its criticism of the train line's incompletion reveal its political undertones. Massive cement pylons reaching nine metres into the air with nothing atop and deserted land beneath had speckled the urban landscape of the Peruvian capital for decades. President Alan García first announced the proposal for the train line in 1986, yet only managed to complete ten kilometres before leaving office in

Figure 4: Spray-painted pylon,
"*Subo al tren fantasma* (Board the Ghost Train); *Boleteria* (Ticket Booth)"

1990.[51] The public transportation initiative was never completely abandoned by subsequent administrations but had still not materialized by the time President García returned to office in 2006. Upon his return to power, which lasted until 2011, García aimed to improve the poor reputation he garnered during his first presidency, which was wrought with human rights violations, political corruption, and near national bankruptcy.[52] The train line was not exempt from scandal either: García was accused of making a dubious construction deal related to the project with the corrupt Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi during his first term.[53] In 2010, despite obtaining tacit permission for its continued existence from the municipality, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was not officially supported and was destined to be dissembled with the explanation that construction on the train line was going to commence shortly thereafter.[54] In fact, due partly to the publicity of the installation and partly to the imminent retirement of García, who wanted to complete the train initiative before the end of his political career, the original infrastructure was completely demolished and a new train line, Lima Metro, was constructed and opened in July, 2011.[55]

Anarchy, Colin Ward, and *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público*

As their mandate reveals, Basurama contests systems of socio-political authority in order to generate "new thoughts and attitudes… about the way we think, we work, we perceive reality."[56] The artist-collective lends itself well to an anarchist critical analysis as anarchism is a political philosophy that rejects social and political frameworks based on domination and submission to authority in favour of alternative models to human organization based on social freedom and agency. In considering the anarchistic qualities of *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* I draw on the ideas of British social critic Colin Ward, who championed social networks founded on mutual aid and modes of behaviour that could defy and challenge oppressive power structures. Ward was particularly interested in the inherently anarchist tendencies of children at play, alternative and progressive educational pedagogies, housing policies that respond to occupants, worker's control, and the positive impact of non-hierarchical social organization founded on freedom and autonomy.[57] Well-known for his contributions to urban planning through his role as Education Officer for the Town and Country Planning Association and his position as Centennial Professor of Housing and Social Policy at the London School of Economics, Ward was also a contributor to and editor of the anarchist journals *Freedom* and *Anarchy* for over two decades (1947-1970).[58] Fusing individual freedom with social cohesion, Ward asserted that diverse systems of social organization enhance freedom and autonomy, rather than impede it, and dedicated his life to sharing practical solutions that would empower people to manifest a freer society through immediate actions based on cooperative social interactions.[59] In the essay "Making Anarchy Respectable: The Social Philosophy of Colin Ward" (2007), Stuart White categorizes Ward as a *normative anarchist* for judging a society's merits according to how little or how much it allows for freedom and autonomy. White identifies two defining features of Ward's anarchism: a strong emphasis on relationships of cooperation and mutual aid, and the right of individuals to "take charge of their environment and lives."[60]

RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público fosters an anarchist environment in accord with Ward's belief that "anarchy is a matter of creating anarchistic spaces, albeit provisional, within existing society and enjoying them while they last."[61] Known for his pragmatism, Ward postulated that a wholly anarchist society may never be achievable, but that a more anarchistic society certainly was, since it is latent in many everyday social interactions: "[F]ar from being a speculative vision of a future society, [anarchism] is a description of a mode of human organisation, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant authoritarian trends of our society."[62] Applying anarchist theories to contemporary issues, Ward argued that, "instead of being a romantic historical by-way," anarchism is "an attitude to human organisation which is more relevant today than it ever seemed in the past."[63] He observed that evidence of the "enduring resilience" of anarchism throughout the centuries has been overshadowed by "the cartoonist's stereotype of the anarchist as the cloaked and bearded carrier of a spherical bomb with a smoking fuse."[64] His approach resembles the pacifist methods of German anarchist Gustave Landauer (1870-1919). Landauer contended that, more than an institution, the State is a mode of behaviour, a social relationship based on dominance and submission created and perpetuated by individuals' actions: people must act differently in order to dismantle it.[65] Landauer's influence is evident in Ward's advocacy of prefigurative activism: individuals combining "immediate aims with ultimate ends."[66] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* manifested many of the anarchist principles Ward championed by bypassing the status quo in a bid to assert non-hierarchical social organization, self-governance and the right to occupy public space.

Claire Bishop questions the presumption inherent in many relational art practices that "democratic community" equates to "harmony."[67] She argues that democracy exists within a perpetual state of conflict, and the absence of conflict does not depict a utopic society but instead one that represses dissident voices.[68] With this rationale, she criticizes relational artists who focus on producing social harmony in their work, and instead encourages artists to draw attention to the oppressive forces that create a false sense of harmony.[69]

Ward would surely agree with Bishop that a homogenous system of uncontested beliefs is not indicative of a true democracy: however, Bishop's distrust of social harmony overlooks the anarchist conviction that a social order can foster harmonious anarchic relationships coexistent with and as a counter to the oppressive forces of authority. Peter Kropotkin's entry on "Anarchism" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1905) posits harmony in an anarchist society is "obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements… for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilised being."[70] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* strives for both "democratic community" and "harmony": the installation directly engaged with the local community, criticizing urban land use and the absence of public transportation while simultaneously inciting the joyous manifestation of community amusement in an unregulated public space.

Social Organization, Freedom, and Autonomy

Ward considered anarchy to be a principle of social organization, one aimed toward living as freely as possible within imposed top-down constraints.[71] Based on Peter Kropotkin's central argument in *Mutual Aid* (1902), that social cohesion is fundamental to our basic survival and thus a naturally occurring tendency in human organization. Ward asserted that voluntary cooperation is "just as strong a tendency in human life as aggression and the urge to dominate."[72] The idea that cooperation is an intrinsic human behaviour is accepted by many scholars. American economists Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis assert that cooperative behaviour has significantly influenced human evolution to this day due to its "prosocial" attributes: it enhances communities by positively reinforcing social behaviours that benefit both the individual and the group.[73] Tom. R. Tyler, Professor of Psychology and Law at Yale Law School, applies a group engagement model to organizations to investigate why people "willingly cooperate," and finds that groups become naturally cohesive when members are afforded "discretionary authority to do what is appropriate or reasonable."[74] These scholars support Ward's assertion that individual freedom is integral to social cohesion due to the fundamental human tendency toward mutually beneficial behaviours.

Cooperative behaviour has also been found to increase organizational stability. American psychologists Brandon A. Sullivan, Mark Snyder and John L. Sullivan find that "(g)roups built upon a foundation of cooperation are uniquely capable of solving difficult social, political, and economic problems, generating creative, high-quality outcomes, and prove viable and robust in the face of setback and over time."[75] Ward asserted that social order occurs naturally without external control based on voluntary mutual aid. He called this the theory of spontaneous order: "given a common need, a collection of people will, by trial and error, by improvisation and experiment, evolve order out of the situation."[76] He cited examples of complex organizing systems found in natural and social science to critique the concept of a centralized and homogenous conception of government. Contending that human organization is best achieved through a multifarious web of non-linear interactions that are in constant flux -- "harmony results not from unity but from complexity" -- Ward argued that the more flexible a social framework is to variables, the more "durable" it is compared to "any kind of externally imposed order."[77] This aligns with the work of American biologist Edward Owen Wilson and Canadian anthropologist Wade Davis, who both elucidate that diversity correlates directly with resiliency: from animal and plant kingdoms to human systems, the more variants within the structures the more likely they are to adapt and survive.[78] In the place of a centralized administration, Ward championed voluntary alliances between small co-operative bodies to address manners of "production, distribution, and exchange, without dependence on the state."[79] In *Anarchy in Action* (1973) he declared, "it is not anarchy but government which is a crude simplification of social organization:"[80]

> How crude the governmental model seems by comparison, whether in social administration, industry, education or economic planning. No wonder it is so unresponsive to actual needs. No wonder, as it attempts to solve its problems by fusion, amalgamation, rationalisation and co-ordination, they only become worse because of the clogging of the lines of communication. The anarchist alternative is that of fragmentation, fission rather than fusion, diversity rather than

unity, a mass of societies rather than a mass society.[81]

Ward observed that unregulated public spaces are conducive to social reorganization because they foster unencumbered social interactions.[82] Political Scientist Carissa Honeywell observes that Ward's anarchism adheres to "a particular political philosophy of immediacy, or directness, in temporal and spatial terms," and she links DIY ("do it yourself") methods to the anarchist appeal for decentralization and direct participation in the political, social, and economic spheres.[83] Insisting that the city is "the common property of its inhabitants" and "self-evidently belongs" to the people, Ward declared that "the likeliest lever for change in the organised system will come, not from criticism or examples from outside, but from pressure from below."[84] Interestingly, a 2013-14 research project that investigated the back alleys of Vancouver, Canada found that, once occupied by people, neglected urban sites became "spaces of creative engagement."[85] According to the Canadian researchers and anthropologists Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier and Nick Wees, because these sites are less regulated and controlled by "centralized urban interests" they "allow inhabitants to conceptualize and use them in their own terms to a greater extent," thereby presenting "differing possible interpretations and potentials for social interaction."[86] Their research reinforces Ward's advocacy of the freedom to create new modes of social organization on the part of the people themselves. In 1973, Ward co-authored *Streetwork, The Exploding School* with Deputy Education Officer to the Town and Country Planning Association, Anthony Fyson. The work is a summary of pedagogical insights based on research conducted by the association between 1971 and 1973. They discuss the challenges and strengths of progressive educational programs, wherein lessons were taught in public community spaces rather than classrooms.[87] Reflecting on the programs, Ward emphasized that direct participation is paramount for social transformation: "There is no substitute for experiencing an environment at first hand."[88]

Ward argued increased regulation of urban spaces was diminishing the capacity of these spaces to serve the needs of the public in all of its complexity and variety, and contended that, "in a society where urban land and its development are in the hands of speculative entre-

preneurs and where the powers of urban initiative are in the hands of local and national government," it becomes inevitable that decisions are made "by bureaucracies and speculators or by an alliance between the two."[89] According to Mark Mattern, the economic power allotted to multi-national conglomerates and property owners by liberal democratic governments produce and reinforce economic inequality that "quickly translates into dependence and subjection."[90] State rules and regulations subjugate citizens to commercial interests and economic, political, and social domination.

Despite the always-present possibility of manipulation and exploitation by the State, Ward believed that people should manifest the future they envision through direct actions. He championed "temporary autonomous zones," which he describes as "fleeting pockets of anarchy that occur in daily life."[91] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* is one such zone: it was a temporary lived experience, a deregulated environment founded on the free association and collective agency of the people involved.

The Spanish artist-collective and their co-collaborators in Peru drew attention to Lima's prolific car culture, exacerbated by a lack of adequate public transportation, and the spread of giant consumerist shopping malls, which contributed to urban sprawl and the homogenization of urban culture through the eradication of smaller pockets of social and economic activity.[92] They observed that the urban spaces where people once congregated have been abandoned due to the car culture and shopping malls.[93] Ward would agree, proclaiming in 1989 that the "motor vehicle" is "tearing out the heart of our cities and towns."[94] Basurama noted that although public space serves a unique function in the social and political life of urban dwellers, the city street unfortunately no longer functions as a hub of community interaction.[95] They attribute the increasingly homogeneous urban environment to the growing government regulatory and corporate-driven appeal for safe and unsullied public spaces, "clean," but actually, sterile.[96] According to Basurama, the emptying of public space due to stricter regulations converts urban space into a mere residue of community life: "Un gran residuo. *Un Residuo Urbano Sólido* (RUS)."[97] To counter corporate and state control over the public sphere and

attendant neoliberal capitalist values, the installation encouraged community members of Surquillo to disregard the consumerist ethos of the shopping mall and congregate and fraternize in a public space over which they took ownership.

In contrast to Claire Bishop's promotion of social criticism over social harmony in relational art, performative art scholar Shannon Jackson asserts that "when a political art discourse too often celebrates social disruption at the expense of social coordination, we lose a more complex sense of how art practices contribute to inter-dependent social imagining."[98] According to Basurama, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was intended to realize the struggle for autonomous self-development and the fulfilment of the public's desires. They hoped it would fuel the imaginative potential of alternative uses for this abandoned urban space beyond their temporary art installation, such as creating a permanent playground or a raised sidewalk or an urban green space.[99] The pink neon sign by local visual artist Sandra Nakamura that read "*Deseo*" (Desire/Wish) was meant to encourage participants to consider alternative possibilities for this reclaimed public space (Fig. 5). Visitors to the installation are documented inquiring: "Who is paying for this?" "Why are these rides free?' "How can this be happening?" "Why can't we have playgrounds as special as this everywhere?"[100] Rather than offering didactic answers, *RUS*

Figure 5: *Deseo* (2010) - Sandra Nakamura

Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público presented more questions and encouraged participants to question the self-imposed constraints they perpetuated through presumptions that discouraged alternative possibilities. This reflection illustrates Landauer and Ward's conviction that subjugation to authority is founded on tacit, sometimes unwitting, agreements made between citizen and State.[101]

RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público also encouraged participants to reflect on the relationship between public infrastructures and access to use. Despite having occupied this public space for three decades, the train line in Surquillo had no access points and had never been a viable option for public transportation.[102] In order to stimulate critical reflection on this state-imposed dysfunctionality, copies of *Lima 2427*, by graphic artist Camila Bustamante, were distributed to visitors on the opening day of the installation.[103] *Lima 2427* is a mock pamphlet that resembles an official municipal map of the projected-but-never-completed train line (Fig. 6). Basing her time-line calculations on the degree to which the project had yet to materialize, Bustamante concluded the train line would finally be finished in the year 2427.[104] The pamphlet was part of a larger artistic

Figure 6: Agency of Unrealized Projects.com/Participants reading *Lima 2427*

campaign Bustamante started in September 2009 involving the distribution of stickers and posters that read: "2427: Better late than never, the train is coming!"[105] The campaign was meant to generate community awareness of the government's lack of accountability in providing public transportation. Bustamante notes, "Transportation

is a very good layer to view how a country deals with democracy, human rights, and the equality of people."[106] Directly critiquing the train line's non-production was a bold move, especially with President García back in power. In her 2011 interview with British curator and writer Rory Hyde, Bustamante acknowledges that her *Lima 2427* project was, "quite provocative and critical of the government and the corruption surrounding the contracts for the metro. I remember when I was sticking a poster up somewhere, one guy said, 'Watch out what you are doing.'"[107]

Ward describes how freedom is repressed not only by overt rules and laws, but also by the unequal distribution of political and economic power: "ours is a society in which, in every field, one group of people makes decisions, exercises control, limits choices, while the great majority have to accept these decisions, submit to this control and act within the limits of these externally imposed choices."[108] A proponent of the right to self-governance, he argued that social order developed not from forced submission to authorities and the delineated parameters of bureaucratic red tape, but through "an extended network of individuals and groups, making their own decisions, controlling their own destiny."[109] In Ward's contribution to the May 1957 issue of the anarchist journal *Freedom*, he argues that the acceptance of government control by the masses has to do with a disenfranchised perspective: "the most obvious and near-at-hand explanation is the hypnotic effect of authority in modern society, which has destroyed our faith in our power as individuals: we don't believe in our power, and we have in consequence become powerless."[110] As a response, Ward asserted that people should "create their own solutions," and experience "that sense of liberation that comes from taking your own decisions and assuming your own responsibilities."[111] He urged his readers to resist oppressive systems in order to actively improve their own lives and communities: he promoted architecture constructed by the people themselves (among other measures) as an attainable means to do so.[112]

John C. Turner, a well-known advocate of the urban squatting movement, contends that DIY house construction promotes "self-discovery and growth."[113] Ward similarly argues self-building "gen-

erates immense pride and self-confidence among people who have housed themselves that way."[114] In *Anarchy in Action* (1973), Ward cites Turner and William P. Mangin to argue against the conception promoted by government officials and international agencies that self-made settlements lead to crime and violence.[115] Writing in 1969, Turner and Mangin found that in Peruvian barriadas: "Employment rates, wages, literacy, and educational levels are all higher … than the national average. Crime, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, and gambling are rare, except for petty thievery, incidence of which is seemingly smaller than in other parts of the city."[116] Such well-being is also discussed in *Vandalism* (1973, ed. Ward.), where a study of playgrounds in the UK found that vandalism decreased significantly in playgrounds that were built by the community compared to those built by the government.[117]

The concept of self-building directly relates to the English translation of *Autoparque* (Self-Made Park), which is a reference to *autoconstrucción*: self-building. Anthropologist Alberto Corsín Jimeñez defines *autoconstrucción* as "a source of vitality and improvisation; of skill, craft, and tacit knowledge; of political acuity and community values; of autonomy and resistance; of resilience and resourcefulness; of perseverance, defiance, and irreducibility."[118] Similarly, British artist and curator Benjamin Parry, who discusses the art of Abraham Cruzvillegas in his essay "Beyond aesthetics: Poetics of Autoconstrucción in Mexico City," notes that *autoconstrucción* embodies "adaptability, dialogue, collaboration, recycling and experimentation."[119] Cruzvillegas grew up on the outskirts of Mexico City on the "squatted lands" of Ajusco, where self-organized communities in the 1960s and 1970s established necessary services and infrastructures such as housing, electricity, and plumbing.[120] Cruzvillegas focuses on the process of creative experimentation with one's immediate environment through adaptation and modification.[121] His ongoing installation series *Autoconstruccción* consists of sculptural objects that are constructed entirely out of objects that he finds in and around his studio and reflects on the creative flexibility of working with found materials and the process of perpetual experimentation.[122] Basurama has similarly organized many "self-made" ever renewable projects, from Brazil to Mozambique, in the form of *autoparques* and *autobarrios* (self-made

neighbourhoods).[123] The DIY process endorsed by Basurama and their co-collaborators also extends beyond this or that individual project; for example, after *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was dissembled by the state authorities, two playgrounds constructed in Lima by local artist-collectives were named *Parques Autoarmables* (Self-Assembled Parks).[124]

Ward criticized the State for using community-based projects to obscure state-sanctioned policies that perpetuate poverty and the disenfranchisement of poor communities.[125] While he was a strong proponent of self-help and mutual aid, he criticized neoliberal governments for placing the onus of responsibility on the individual, rather than the State, to rectify systemic inequality and oppression. This ideology inhibits genuine self-help through mutual aid among communities and increases the public's "reliance on the bureaucratic organization."[126] With this in mind, some might question the anarchist qualities of an art project that was funded by a government institution, the Spanish International Development Agency (AECID).[127] On the other hand, I argue that Basurama carved out an anarchistic social project with the means they had. In *Anarchism and Art: Democracy in the Cracks and on the Margins* (2016) Mattern distinguishes between anarchists that endorse the destruction of the State and anarchists who see the possibility of establishing anarchist ways of being alongside the State. He defines the latter as adopting an interstitial strategy: the tactic of identifying "existing cracks and fissures" in the state apparatus and working within those cracks to expand them until they "threaten major institutions of domination."[128] Here he is indebted to Ward, who wrote in *Anarchy in Action* (1973) that "anarchist alternatives are already there, in the interstices of the dominant power structure. If you want to build a free society, the parts are all at hand."[129] I propose that Basurama located just such a 'crack' in the dominant institution of Spain's AECID, an organization informed by theories of neoliberalism that works with government and non-governmental agencies in developing nations to help them advance economically within the global capitalist system.[130] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* took AECID funding, but rejected the tenets of capitalism and neo-liberal governance by criticizing the lack of adequate public transportation options for marginalized communities, the

degradation of a common public space at the hands of civic authorities, and the capitalist status-quo's ideology of progress, consumerism, and urban development in Lima.[131] Using a Spanish government agency to financially support their project was an interstitial strategy for change. In his 1966 essay "Anarchism as a Theory of Organization," Ward wrote, "I think we have discovered what these new forms of organization should be. We have now to make the opportunities for putting them into practice."[132] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* is an example of the sort of practice Ward speaks of. Basurama and the local collaborators in Lima located interstices in the political discourse on environmental protection, urban land use and unequal access to public transportation, and carved out a physical demonstration of freedom and autonomy in public space.

The Anarchist Playground: An Exercise in Prefiguration

I now shift focus from the design and construction of *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* to the prefigurative potential of the relational, playful environment it created. Ward's position on the democratic function of public space, the natural tendency of voluntary cooperation, and the importance of self-realization are all tangibly manifested through the playground. An advocate of the "adventure playground"—play spaces with as little structural interventions from authority figures as possible—Ward recognized the anarchist characteristics inherent in spontaneous, ungoverned play. The unregulated play space was an example of "living anarchy: a space that is valuable both in itself and as an experimental verification in microcosm of anarchism's whole social approach."[133] The socially cohesive environment of an unregulated play space prefigured qualities of an anarchist society: "The adventure playground is a kind of parable of anarchy, a free society in miniature, with the same tensions and ever-changing harmonies, the same diversity and spontaneity, and the same unforced growth of cooperation and release of individual qualities and communal sense, which lie dormant in a society whose dominant values are competition and acquisitiveness."[134] Combining Ward's conception of play with contemporary play theorists, I discuss how unregulated play in public space creates possibilities for social reimagining that prefigure alternatives in real time. Linking the

anarchist qualities of unregulated play with the social dimensions of relational art, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* created an anarchist space that fostered voluntary cooperation, freedom, and autonomy.

Although the definition of play can be ambiguous, varying from traditional folk festivities to highly organized sports, the type of play that a public playground evokes is fundamentally spontaneous, voluntary, and ungoverned.[135] Many theorists and educators evaluate play according to the function it performs in socially and physically conditioning a child for adult life. German sociologist and historian Henning Eichberg observes that this framework may help justify the right to play and access to recreational activities, but also asserts the symbolic value of play expounded by "classic" theorists Karl Groos, Roger Caillois, Johan Huizinga, and Brian Sutton-Smith has value.[136] In *Questioning Play: What Play Can Tell Us About Social Life* (2016), Eichberg notes that the "narrow… industrial functionalist mythology" of play perpetuates the "industrial capitalist culture and its patterns of growth, productivity, development of achievement, and forward mobility."[137]

This issue is discussed by Chris Wilbert and Damian F. White in their "Introduction" to *Autonomy, Solidarity, Possibility: The Colin Ward Reader* (2011) where they draw attention to Ward's interest in the "morality and politics" of play.[138] Using the example of the "recreation movements" of nineteenth-century England, Ward revealed how play and leisure programs have been used in the past to reinforce the apparatus of the State: totted for improving the strength and health of the poor, the recreation programs were actually implemented to produce robust factory workers and soldiers out of the working class.[139] Functionalist approaches to play are clearly not a useful framework for exploring the prefigurative potential of play to contest authority and subvert social norms. On the other hand, referencing Sutton-Smith's categories of the rhetoric of play in *Ambiguity of Play* (1997), Eichberg asserts that freedom-engendering play contests the "rhetoric of progress," and "questions all, especially the well-established order of normality."[140] Becky Beal, Professor of Kinesiology at California State University, throws further light on this issue in "Symbolic Inver-

sion in the Subculture of Skateboarding" (1998), where she lists the vital ingredients of unfettered play as: a lack of rules and authority figures; the freedom to start and stop at any point; intrinsic motivation; and a lack of competition.[141] In her study of forty-one skateboarders over a two year period, she observed that unorganized play disrupts mainstream social operations and that the general disdain of skateboarders is specifically linked to their rejection of "dominant norms associated with mainstream sport and corporate bureaucratic relations."[142] Thus, the *kind* of play is significant; spontaneous ungoverned play rejects established social normalities and cultivates individual agency and co-operative social experimentation.

Although the anarchistic tendencies of children have been discussed at length by philosophers, educators and social scientists alike, Ward stands out for the depth in which he explored this topic. He was a firm believer that the behaviour of children could be instrumental in understanding broader social possibilities, and his works *Streetwork: The Exploding School*, ed. (1973), *Vandalism,* ed. (1973), *The Child in the City* (1978), and *The Child in the Country* (1988) defend the rights of young people and their use of public space while criticizing the diminishing opportunities for children to explore and play without direct adult supervision.[143] In "Playful Voices in Participatory Design," Rosie Parnell and Maria Patsarika, scholars of children's spaces and design, note that "Ward's depiction of children's everyday lives is a radical manifesto that focuses on the need to pay more attention to the hidden messages that children's playful voices communicate."[144] Like Eichberg, Ward contested the over-simplified conception of play as a developmental aspect of child-rearing and believed adults equally benefit from the social experimentation that play spaces afford, asking: "Isn't there a place for the adventure playground or its equivalent in the adult world?"[145] Photos taken of participants engaging with *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* reveal that people of all ages interacted with and congregated around the installation: this was an interactive play experience for people of all ages (Fig. 7).

Tim Stott, Lecturer in Art History and Theory at Dublin Institute of Technology, analyzes playful and participatory art in *Play and Participation in Contemporary Arts Practices* (2015).[146] Applying cybernetic

Figure 7: *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* - Play for all ages

theory to relational art installations that encourage playful behaviour, Stott concludes that play "functions as a means of social organisation," and that "novel or unprecedented organisation … develops from local, nonlinear interactions within the system."[147] The relational characteristics of play spaces are also discussed by play theorist Stuart Lester in his contribution to *Education, Childhood and Anarchism: Talking Colin Ward* (2014) entitled "Play as protest: Clandestine moments of disturbance and hope." Lester elucidates that "such spaces are not simply neutral physical containers for activity but rather are relational achievements brought about by immediate encounters and movements between bodies, materials, symbols and so on, each with their own trajectory and force to affect and be affected."[148] The extensive extra-personal and interpersonal exchanges within play spaces produce social alliances that remain in a perpetual state of flux. Indeed, they depend on flexibility and adaptability. This is the social dynamism that Ward refers to when he asserts that play spaces inherently demand creative solutions on the part of participants and thus allow for novel social experimentation.[149] Stott articulates the paradoxical dynamic of the playground environment, describing it as "a space both of constraint and possibility."[150] For Ward, unregulated playgrounds are examples of anarchist social organization because they reveal this symbiotic relationship between the seemingly contradictory qualities of unbridled freedom and social cohesion.[151] Art in-

stallations that create play spaces, therefore, produce complex social situations wherein participants freely deconstruct, experiment with, and recreate their identities in relation to a specific spatial and temporal environment. Their ability to simultaneously produce friction and cohesion demonstrates the capacity of playful participatory art to combine social discord and harmony: the antithesis of Claire Bishop's "false utopia" paradigm.[152]

One of the play apparatuses at *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* stands out for prompting this dynamic, socially interactive experience of playing in public spaces. *¡Rambo!* was a climbing web constructed out of car tires bolted together and strung from the edge of the cement train line platform. Because of its large size and the countless ways in which someone could interact with it, the climbing web invited multiple players to simultaneously participate and voluntarily cooperate for the mutual benefit of the play experience. A photo of children playing on *¡Rambo!* depicts three children interacting with the apparatus in different ways: one child hangs from his hands, looking down at the ground below; another casually dangles his legs and rests his upper body in a comfortable position of leisure; and a younger child clambers up the rubber apparatus with obvious determination and little interest in the older two (Fig. 8). The appar-

Figure 8: *¡Rambo!* - voluntary cooperation for mutual benefit

ent social cohesion in the photo was not created through instruction and enforcement of play behaviour, but through, in Ward's words, "the natural and spontaneous tendency of humans to associate together for their mutual benefit."[153]

Basurama has constructed many self-built play spaces (autoparques) since 2010. The artist-collective worked with four communities in Africa between 2011 and 2016: *Autoparque Niamey: Hagámoslo Juntos!* (2011) in Niger; *Autoparque en Addis Abeba. La Casa de los Niños Perdidos* (2012) in Ethiopia; *Autoparque en Maputo* (2013) in Mozambique; and *Autoparque en Ben Guerir* (2016) in Morocco. In Equatorial Guinea they created *Autoparque en Malabo* (2014), which involved the construction of a float for a November 15th Eco Carnival. In Brazil, Basurama collaborated in the construction of two public play spaces, one in Rio de Janeiro, *Playground Gatos en Rio de Janeiro* (2015) and the other in São Paulo, *City for Children Under 99 Years Old* (2016), which Basruama describes as "a playground designed for unlimited ways of using."[154] They also work locally and build playgrounds in Spain such as *Autocole Ideo/#imagineyard #buildyard* (2015) and *Autocole Ideo 2 #imaginarhuerto #construirpatio* (2016), two pedagogical projects at the private school Escuela Ideo in Madrid where students participated in the design and construction of a play space with recycled material.[155] Another Spanish playground project, *Parque Cecilia* (2017), was part of a larger project called *Neumáticos que dejan huella* (Tires that leave a mark) created with an organization that works with vulnerable children and youth on creative projects, Creática ONG.[156] The installation was constructed out of recycled material at the Colegio Maestro Rodrigo in Madrid, and the play objects were successfully designed to generate electricity.

British historian David Crouch notes in "Lived Spaces and Planning Anarchy: Theory and Practice of Colin Ward" (2017) that Ward's focus on an individual's ability to directly influence their environment demonstrates his enthusiasm for freedom over resistance.[157] Ward considered unconstrained playing to be an exercise in countering repressive social forces: "That there should be anything novel in simply providing facilities for the spontaneous, unorganized activities of childhood is an indication of how deeply rooted in our social behav-

iour is the urge to control, direct and limit the flow of life."[158] Mattern discusses the complexities of the notion of freedom and elucidates that having the freedom to do what you want does not directly equate to being free of external control or coercion: "simply being left alone, however, may not guarantee that individuals are able to do what they want."[159] According to Mattern, anarchist concepts of freedom and autonomy require the ability to exercise total control over one's life and the opportunity to develop the means to do so.[160] Play theorist Thomas S. Hendricks, who investigates the most intrinsic influences of play on the human experience in *Play and the Human Condition* (2015), describes how play affords individual agency. Through "planning, coordinating, executing, and revising of action strategies," play cultivates "self-realization, meaning-making and cultural reproduction," and presents participants opportunities to "learn who they are, how they are situated, and what they can do."[161] In this context, unregulated play not only endorses free choice but also facilitates autonomy through a process of self-realization and echoes the philosophy of *autoconstrucción*.

Unregulated play is an example of prefigurative activism because it offers tangible alternatives for social organization through lived experience and reflects current societal norms while manifesting hypothetical future realities in the present moment. Many play theorists agree that play can dismantle cultural hegemonies and subvert political authorities.[162] The prefigurative quality of play is described by Tim Stott as the "practical apprenticeship for the real political and social freedom to come," and by Henning Eichberg as having "revolutionary implications" due to a shift from a "one-sided focus on formal organization, rules, and decisions to bodily democracy."[163] Although not typically an overt form of activism, unregulated play in public spaces is what Ward refers to as a quiet revolution: a subtle act of everyday resistance.[164] In his chapter "Play as Protest and Exploration" in *The Child in the City* (1977), Ward references the folklorists and child theorists Iona and Peter Opie and the sociologist and oral historian Paul Thompson to argue that, due to the dominant position adults assume over children in society, children at play can be a "territorial conflict or resistance," and even an "outright war with adults."[165] The games of children intentionally disrupt the adult world, and the direct and im-

mediate agency of unregulated play empowers individuals to subvert relationships based on dominance and submission.

RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público evoked a "quiet revolution": not only did it contest the restricted use of urban public space and address the issues of trash accumulation and inadequate public transportation in Lima through the use of discarded car tires and the skeletal remains of the neglected trainline, it also presented the lived experience of freedom and autonomy that occurs through unencumbered play. The playground was designed as an imaginary train station that simultaneously confronted the government's empty promise of public transit. It was a playful tactic, emphasizing the joyous community activity first and foremost, but undoubtedly casting a critical light on the abandoned infrastructure and the unused space. For example, the Chicha-coloured tent constructed in the shape of a train engine faced the abyss where the cement platform gave way to deserted land below and toward the zip-line apparatus called *El Tren Volador* (The Flying Train). Furthermore, as a part of their campaign, and as a contribution to the exhibition at the Spanish Cultural Centre in Lima, a graphic design of two amusement park tickets, one blue and one yellow, poked fun at the train line that was never built. As Basurama states: "La invitación era clara: ¡Súbete al tren fantasma!" ("The invitation was clear: All aboard the ghost train!") (Fig. 6).[166]

Conclusion

Connecting the social dimensions of relational art with the transformative characteristics of unregulated play, this chapter explores the capacity of participatory playful art to challenge established norms and present novel social experiences. By locating intersections in the progressive political attitudes of Colin Ward and the artist collective Basurama, I explore how the installation prefigured a society that exhibits the anarchist principles of voluntary social cooperation, freedom, and autonomy. Colin Ward was critical of the excess political power of the capitalist neoliberal State and its negation of non-hierarchical alliances founded on the principles of freedom and autonomy. Basurama is also critical of the capitalist system, apparent in the connection they draw between consumerism, garbage pro-

duction, and the degradation of community space. Ward opposed authority and social relationships based on control and submission; similarly, Basurama rejects the primacy of the individual artist and instead embraces collaborative, non-hierarchical alliances within and outside of the collective. Both Ward and Basurama advocate for social transformation through participatory grassroots projects that promote freedom and autonomy and contest increasing regulations of urban public spaces: Ward, through his advocation for the right to occupy urban spaces for educational and recreational activities and the DIY self-building movement; Basurama through their collaborative art projects that invite communities to reclaim and repurpose their public spaces for community use, i.e., *autoconstrucción.* Lastly, and significantly, both Ward and Basurama emphasize the value of play spaces for their capacity to cultivate novel opportunities for social reorganization through spontaneous non-hierarchical social interactions founded on voluntary association and cooperative behaviour. Ward encouraged people of all ages to occupy public spaces and engage in spontaneous playful activity while Basurama's many playground installations endorse freedom-engendering play in unregulated public space.

From its design, construction and use, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was fundamentally inclusive, challenged the "order of normality," and contributed to self-realization and autonomy. Using car tires to create play objects that hung from the neglected infrastructure of a promised but never-materialized public train line, the project cast a critical light on the abandoned infrastructure and presented an alternative use for the space. The project confronted social, economic, and political domination of a capitalist neoliberal State. *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* exemplifies the socially transformative potential of participatory public art to prefigure anarchic social possibilities in real time. The installation invited viewers to participate in an ordinary situation of life, one they had likely experienced before, here illuminated as an excellent example of "anarchy in action": free play.

Appendix 1

Details of the constructed apparatuses. This list is copied directly from Basurama, "Lima and the Ever-Postponed Electric Train," in *How to Grow a Playspace: Development and Design*, eds. Katherine Masiulanis and Elizabeth Cummins (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 269.

The Flying Chairs –20.6-metre-high swings, made with reused tyres and ropes, hanging from the slab, including swings for couples, lower and highe1r seats, etc.

The Ghost Train – an installation of a "favela style" train.

The Lookout – a scaffolding structure that provided a way for neighbours to visit the elevated promenade.

Rambo! – an installation using the rings of reused tyres that connected the ground with the platform slab, as kids love to explore and climb. It was built with the idea of "conquering" the slab, that far-from-us structure.

The Flying Train – a zip line to complete the trip of the train with your own body, jumping from the slab and landing some 60 metres away. There was also a smaller version for little kids.

The Crazy Bull – a manual version of the mechanical bull that had to be pulled by someone for the fun of the three people riding on top of it.

The Pirate Boat and The Viking Boat – two swinging sculptures made of tyres that allowed groups to ride together.

Notes

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5 Mark Mattern, *Anarchism and Art; Democracy in the Cracks and on the Margins* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2016), 18.

6 Mattern, 11.

7 Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 7, 2020, accessed July 16, 2020, https://hdl-handle-net.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/2027/heb.32115.

8 Bishop, Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship, 7.

9 Maria Lind, "The Collaborative Turn," in *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*, eds. Johanna Billing, Maria Lind and Lars Nilsson (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007), 20 & 29.

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11 Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship,* 2.

12 Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon, Les Presses du réel, 2002), 14 & 112.

[13] Shannon Jackson, *Social Works; Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 12.

[14] Tim Stott, *Play and Participation in Contemporary Arts Practices* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 7.

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[16] Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and relational aesthetics," in The 'do-it-yourself' artwork; *Participation from Fluxus to new media*, ed. Anna Dezeuze (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), 258.

[17] Line Marie Bruun Jespersen, "Collective Reception of Art in Public," in *Animation of Public Space through the Arts; Toward More Sustainable Communities*, ed. Nancy Duxbury (Coimbra, Portugal: Almedina, 2013), 264.

[18] Bruun Jespersen, 264.

[19] Terán et al., 171, quoted from Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (1998).

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[22] Basurama, https://basurama.org/en/about

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

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Libertarian Culture, The Invention of Existences

Edson Passetti*

The composer asks: "Existing, what is the purpose?" . . . and concludes: "Only life's material was that delicate." The song is called *Cajuína*[1] and it permeates the gatherings, celebrations, and parties of Nu-Sol (Nucleus of Libertarian Sociability)[2], where we routinely pair it with a second 'folk' tune, *Cuitelinho*.[3] These songs make us strong: they stir a lively sense of anarchy inscribed in poetry, music, dance, meals, aphorisms, and disagreements. Then there are the words of Chilian novelist Roberto Bolaño: "In a thousand years nothing will be left of all that's been written this century. They'll read loose sentences, traces of lost women, fragments of motionless children" (Bolaño, 2021, p. 32-33). Or the Polish writer Olga Tokarczuk: "To me, of course, the river paid no attention, caring only for itself, those changing, roving waters into which – as I later learned – you can never step twice. (...) Standing there on the embankment, staring into the current, I realized that, in spite of all the risks involved, a thing in motion will always be better than a thing at rest; that change will always be a nobler thing than permanence; that that which is static will degenerate and decay, turn to ash." (Tokarczuk, 2021, p. 13) Neither composers nor writers identify explicitly as anarchists, but they are among those exceptional artists who break with traditional canons in a bid to energize life as such. In this way art affirms life by upending "anarchy's" equation with chaos, violence, and misrule or with a dogmatic commitment to past formulations.

Anti-politics

Anarchy/anarchism (s) is an anti-politics, whether framed as classi-

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cal, historical, or post-anarchist. In a nutshell, anarchists live and coexist. They attract and push away. They avoid absolute truths but, being human, can slip into idealizations, embrace dreams of harmony, or succumb to consoling utopias. Most fundamentally, as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (2011), underlines, anarchists provoke permanent war against centralizing authorities.

Anarchists do not seek to govern anyone, nor to impose a singular 'truth' based on a theory or supposed consensus encompassing a totality or fictive unanimity. It was anarchists, after all, who, in the course of the nineteenth century, called into question the idea of a sovereign, Godly or otherwise, imbued with a benevolent societal mission. An internalized will toward self-subjection requires a sovereign who exercises punishments and rewards; whose imperatives become commands; who demands obedience; who perpetuates relationships of submission. The government of subjects by subjects in State-based systems is accomplished through the perpetuation of hierarchy founded on a centralized authority that embodies sovereignty.

Anarchists fight against the centralizing tendencies of hierarchy as such, whereas heterodox Marxists claiming to be libertarians persist with a style of politics that nourishes it. Anarchists know that power is not limited to the legitimacy of authority. To speak of legitimacy is to aspire toward consensus concerning the governance of some over others. Legitimacy can be mixed, but it will never be provisional; it is deployed to sustain relationships based on centralizing hierarchies. The great anarchist challenge is to escape from the networks and flows of power that premise continuity on the centrality of hierarchy disguised as such or combined with horizontal relations. For these and other reasons, anarchists are advised to avoid establishing close relationships with any left-wing political tendencies. The 'left' is a political designation dating to the era of the first French Republic (1792-1804): the term is anchored in representational structures of governance in which one party or tendency asserts sovereignty over other competing parties or tendencies. If there is a so-called 'dialectical spiral' figuring in leftist politics, it is the constant reformulation of this style of governance in Marxist regimes, where factions jostle for

domination within a hegemonic state-party structure.

Proudhon, in his debate with Karl Marx, made it clear that the 'Hegelian synthesis' foundational to "historical materialism" – thesis, antithesis, synthesis -- was nothing more than an abstract configuration presupposing sovereignty over others as a constantly replicating process. It has always been clear to some anarchists that Mikhail Bakunin's (2003) adherence to Marx's theory of historical progression through dialectically driven social change opened the door to negotiations with Marxists who call themselves libertarians: this has led to bland impasses experienced to this day. Has any Marxist come forward to engage in a respectful way with anarchist critiques of Marx's conception of historical materialism? Reflect on how consistently Marxists of all persuasions have attacked the anarchist heterotopia of abolishing property and the State. Who is interested in maintaining this one-way relationship, apart from a scattering of academics in the United States and Europe? We can create anarchist heterotopias (Passetti, 2002) in the here-and-now: we can transform customs, dissolve hierarchies, and develop the dynamic *problematizations* (Passetti, 2016) that generate a libertarian culture (Passetti and Augusto, 2008). In the process, we can nurture anarchist associations of free unique friendships permeating the workplace. Anarchists are anti-political. They constitute a vital force that refuses monocultures of unification, a force that strengthens societal diversity. Anarchism rejects the universalizing leftist ideal of social transformation through State-based "revolutions" and the ideology of "democracy" which the United States projects as the universal form of governance in our era of ecopolitics (Passetti et. al., 2019).

against the sovereign

Examining the societal relations of government-generating "subjects" -- that is, ascending and descending power relations, including how subjects govern themselves – a timely opportunity arises to consider the persistence, reform, or abolition of sovereign power. Liberals and the legal-political philosophers are aware of how sovereign power generates and benefits property regimes (private, mixed, and state-based) and their continuity. Contemporary structures of sover-

eign power can be traced in Europe back to the peace of Westphalia (1648) and John Locke's *The Second Treatise on Civil Government* (1690). The art of governing, the modern way of leadership from above, of sovereignty, is theoretically based on reason decoupled from religious imperatives (which is not to say such governance is free from religion). Sovereignty over others is circular: it turns in on itself, and there is no way to destroy sovereignty through the exercise of such sovereignty. We have, according to Foucault (Foucault, 1979), the governmentalization of the State in a drive to master power and control over captive subjects designated as "citizens" (this involves ever intensifying knowledge about the population derived from political economy, statistics, political science, and security monitoring, with specific apparatuses of governance armed with access to peculiar knowledge banks). Those concerned with the legalities of "human rights" are marooned in this system of subservience to sovereign power. Proudhon summarized government as a relationship in which a sovereign entity exercises instruments of control from birth to death by inscribing its values on us in a bid to internalize them:

> To be governed is to be watched, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right nor the wisdom nor the virtue to do so. To be governed is to be at every operation, at every transaction noted, registered, counted, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, prevented, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be place[d] under contribution, drilled, fleeced, exploited, monopolized, extorted from, squeezed, hoaxed, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, vilified, harassed, hunted down, abused, clubbed, disarmed, bound, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and to crown all, mocked, ridiculed,

derided, outraged, dishonored. That is government;
that is its justice; that is its morality. (Proudhon, 2003,
p. 8)

Demolishing the overpowering sovereign, the calcifying societal practices of centralizing authorities, depends on the invention of new customs, of a libertarian culture. Ruptures and transformations in everyday life are what matter. It is necessary, before anything else, to destroy 'the sovereign in oneself' -- the idea of the sovereign, the desire for a sovereign.

Libertarian culture is not founded on identities, nor is it made and reproduced as a closed entity, autonomous from the society it seeks to transform. It gains larger and more intense dimensions according to the events which it inevitably engages with. Libertarian culture is no safe haven, much less a contemporary version of the Epicurean 'garden of delights'. Its most immediate struggle involves creating new ways of being, new social spaces of freedom, and their temporary consolidation as a disruptive force. Thus, it values educational processes for children and young people that are free from fear; free from the use of force to impose order; free from antagonistic competition; free from the imposition of societal views that stifle self-directed learning. It affirms libertarian relations by subjecting 'rational certainties' to free intuition. Nurturing a 'warrior attitude' in education, it anarchizes anarchism, as envisaged by Max Stirner in *The Ego and Its Own*. Anarchism promotes parrhesia as a path of learning (Foucault, 2011). A practitioner of parrhesia never restricts themselves to one source of knowledge because their challenging spirit of inquiry grinds against hierarchies of authority. Anarchism exercises problematizations; it cultivates the intransigence of radicalism through which practices of freedom can spread and affirm themselves. In short, libertarian culture is not a goal for the future, but an urgency in the present. Nothing is more indispensable than affirming practices of freedom that dissolve authorities *into nothing.*

Notes

1 *Cajuína* by Caetano Veloso. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-nIMtLql7Y

2 https://www.nu-sol.org

3 *Cuitelinho*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sANzim7D_oI

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Book Review

Kathy Ferguson, *Letterpress Revolution: The Politics of Anarchist Print Culture*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2023

Every political movement engages with communications and print media in distinctive ways. But for anarchists, whose prefigurative ethics insist on the unity of means and ends in pursuit of revolutionary social change, these engagements take on a unique significance. The means through which anarchists have corresponded with each other and circulated ideas over the past two centuries both articulate and materially embody their political visions.

While I wouldn't have put it in those words, I intuitively knew this as I entered into anarchist communities at the height of the global justice movement. The scissors and gluesticks used to collage together the layout of DIY zines; the long hours bent over the photocopier at the corporate office store, printing and stapling and folding and looking over one's shoulder to make sure employees weren't getting suspicious; trips to the post office box and prisoner letter-writing nights at the local infoshop—these were as instrumental to the experience of being an anarchist of that generation as militant protests or Food Not Bombs meals. DIY aesthetics, scamming corporations, and volunteer-run spaces for sharing print materials produced by horizontal collectives were not only practical adaptations for a chronically under-resourced movement to be able to keep its ideas in circulation, but concrete expressions of anti-capitalist and non-hierarchical values. Within the hothouse of punk and anarchist countercultures, our relentless focus on the politics of everyday life could verge on moralism at the expense of strategy, as critics then and since have observed. But we understood that an intimate linkage existed between the ideals to which we were devoting our lives and methods through which we promoted them, both the material objects we produced and the relationships that went into them.

But the punk anarchists of the global justice era were by no means the first anti-authoritarian generation to take these questions of medium and message seriously. In her lovingly crafted study, *Letterpress Revo-*

lution: The Politics of Anarchist Print Culture (Duke University Press, 2023), political theorist Kathy Ferguson documents and analyzes how an earlier era of anarchist printers, writers, and readers collaborated to materialize their political visions in word and in deed. The book argues that Anglophone classical anarchist print culture "thrived through a dynamic combination of media technology, epistolary relations, and radical scholarship" that directly embodied the movement's ideals (3). Ferguson eloquently summarizes the prefigurative nature of anarchist print culture as "creating the society for which they longed through the process of calling for it" (10), and argues that today's radical movements can learn lessons from "earlier anarchist successes in combining material, semiotic, and social relations to build alternative forms of public life" (4).

While all political movements, radical and otherwise, have their organs of communication and debate, Ferguson insists that something distinguishes how anarchists have historically used them: "Journals did not just report the anarchist movement; they were, in large part, the anarchist movement"(x). Rather than simply consuming aligned ideas via subscription to national publications—more common among socialists, she observes—anarchist print culture adopted a political ethos centered on decentralization and active participation. She notes how British Marxist historian E.P. Thompson, "exasperated" by what he described as a "rash of anarchism" on the British left, grumpily cataloged the bewildering range of their periodicals "published on blue paper, red paper, and toilet paper" (3). Indeed, in the words of a Spanish anarchist truism quoted in the preface: "If you find two anarchists you'll also find three newspapers" (x). (I'm sure I'm not the only reader to have chuckled in rueful recognition at this observation.) This penchant for proliferating periodicals has meant that historians of anarchism have relied heavily on them as sources. But while many studies explore the content of these publications in relation to the movements that spawned them, Ferguson contends that "little attention has been paid to their form" (25). Thus *Letterpress Revolution* integrates a careful study of the material dimensions of print culture—the machinery, the ink smears on fingertips, the visceral weight of a new book or periodical in one's hand—with sophisticated reflections on the networks of relations engendered within

these objects and close readings of their textual practices.

The book's introduction parses three distinct senses of "letters"—as graphic symbols representing a sound in speech, as units of written communication exchanged across distances, and as a mode of learning—which correspond to the book's three major body chapters. To explore the printed letter that comprises text, the first chapter explores anarchist presses that produced books, pamphlets, and periodicals for the movement. The second chapter, "Epistolarity," assesses the anarchist culture of letter-writing through a close reading of the exchanges between several mid-century correspondents. The third chapter analyzes the culture of anarchist letters that emerged within several prominent classical era English-language periodicals, dissecting the anatomy of print genres and themes to draw conclusions about the movement's political praxis. The final chapter briefly considers the implications of the analysis for anarchist theory today, while a series of appendices document anarchist compositors, pressmen, and bookbinders, biographically describe several of the book's main characters, and list the contemporary printers interviewed for the study.

Ferguson draws on sophisticated intellectual tools to scaffold the book's arguments, including Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's notion of assemblages and its elaboration by Manuel DeLanda and other theorists, the political thought of Jacques Ranciere, as well as work in Black studies, literary criticism, media analysis, and affect theory. For readers already interested in anarchist history, aspects of Ferguson's approach may come across as unnecessarily scaffolded with extensive theorization. At some points, these interventions seem merely to restate straightforward conclusions with excessive citations, perhaps helpful in translating or legitimizing anarchist ideas to non-anarchist academic audiences but limited in how they advance our understanding of anarchist print culture. However, at their most elegant, Ferguson's interventions skillfully deploy interdisciplinary theories to illuminate sophisticated insights immanent within the anarchist tradition. For instance, she picks up on the archivist Bertha Johnson's passing use of the term filament to describe her connections with other anarchist correspondents, weaving it together with

assemblage theory to establish a leitmotif recurring throughout the text to poetically evoke the linkages connecting radicals in rhizomatic networks across time and space.

Letterpress Revolution's first chapter turns our attention to the material dimensions of anarchist print culture in two registers. First, it documents the presses that produced anarchist materials and the people who operated them. Focusing particularly on Romanian-American anarchist printer Joseph Ishill, but surveying a wide range of workers who participated in different aspects of print work, Ferguson attends to gendered patterns, mobility, union membership, state and vigilante repression, and the place of printers within anarchist networks. Second, the chapter delves into the physical process of printing itself, from the machines used to the sensory dimensions of the labor experience, and evaluates the aesthetics of different printings in terms of the material techniques needed to enact them as well as anarchist conceptions of the significance of beauty within visions of revolutionary transformation. The analysis rests not only on archival findings but also Ferguson's interviews with contemporary radical printers who use analog print technologies that date back to the period of classical anarchism, enabling her to describe in fine-grained detail the tactile experience of setting type and operating the machines. Far more than the caricature of the disheveled bomb-thrower, she convincingly argues, the figure of the printer wielding the composing stick best embodies the classical anarchist movement—and deepening our knowledge of the practice of printing can meaningfully enhances our understanding of the movement.

In focusing on printers themselves and not merely the writers whose words they printed, the book decenters more widely known anarchist historical figures who occupied the public's (and later the historian's) eye with their speeches and writings, in favor of little-known rank-and-file participants in the movement. This approach continues into the second chapter, which focuses on the significance of writing letters within anarchist communication networks. Anarchists, Ferguson maintains, seem to have a penchant for epistolarity—apparently Emma Goldman is estimated to have written some *two hundred thousand* letters over the course of her life—and revisiting

their correspondence helps to trace the filaments linking everyday participants in the movement and the ideals to which they devoted their quiet lives. The chapter offers close readings of the letters exchanged between writer and activist Rudolf Rocker and printer Ishill, Labadie Collection curator Agnes Inglis, and sisters Bertha Johnson and Pearl Johnson Tucker. While none of these figures except Rocker would likely be known to any but the most avid anarchist historians, all served as nodes within transnational networks of activists and conduits of ideas, debates, conflicts, and passions that animated early and mid-twentieth century anarchism. Ferguson offers insights into the gendered dynamics of archiving, communication, and care work as feminized forms of labor, illuminating the persistence of patriarchal norms even within radical movements. Amid theoretical reflections on the complex temporalities and interactive subjectivities embodied within letters, this chapter offers some of the most moving and human moments within the book, as the dreams, frustrations, vulnerabilities, and determination of the correspondents shine through excerpts from their letters. Ferguson focuses attention not only on the objects she encounters in the archives but on her own evolving reading practices and the archival research experience itself. In a particularly poignant moment, she describes how the shock of encountering Rocker's obituary without warning, after so many long hours spent immersed in his letters left her weeping: "I thought we had more time" (120). A section titled "Reimagining Bertha and Agnes" undertakes what some scholars have called a critical fabulation, narrating a speculative alternate history in which the two elderly women consummate their long correspondence as domestic partners, freely mingling Ferguson's own desire and fantasy with the details of the women's lives. Concluding with Inglis's poetic manifesto in praise of anarchist historical research, the chapter reads as a love letter in its own right to the people, the politics, and the process of archival excavation as it intersections with the utopian imagination.

Archival research marks one mode of what Ferguson, engaging with Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's theory of the undercommons, terms *radical study*. This paradigm animates the third chapter, which turns to the textual practices through which anarchists communicated and embodied their ideals within print culture. Focusing on

three prominent anarchist periodicals launched in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, *Free Society, Mother Earth,* and *Freedom*, Ferguson produces a detailed formal analysis of these journals' textual practices, including taxonomies of their main thematic elements and arguments and their means of engaging readers as participants. Detailed discussions of two distinctive types of articles, the "social sketch" and the "think piece," enable consideration of the gendered dynamics of genre and the relationship between form and content within anarchist writing. These journals, the chapter concludes, modeled a mode of radical study that epitomized the alignment of means and ends, inviting readers "both to think about anarchism and to think the world anarchistically" (184).

Historically oriented readers may puzzle over the book's irregular periodization. The opening chapter focuses primarily on mid-twentieth century printers, but draws on Ferguson's interviews with contemporary anarchists who have sustained the use of analog print technologies. The correspondences read closely in the second chapter primarily date from the 1940s-1950s, while the periodicals that form the basis of the third chapter are primarily from the 1890s-1910s—except for the UK's *Freedom*, which was published for over a century—and the final chapter examines three contemporary movements. While this temporal flux offers the advantage of a broad view of the anarchist tradition that enables resonances across generations to emerge, its collapsing of quite distinct periods in radical history may dilute the specificity of its conclusions.

This becomes especially clear in the final chapter, "Intersectionality and Thing Power," which differs notably from the three preceding it that comprise the bulk of the book: much shorter, more prescriptive in its analysis, turning away from print media, and focusing on recent movements. Ferguson opens by turning the common perception that anarchism is admirable in theory but unworkable in practice on its head, asserting by contrast that anarchist practices have proliferated widely with great success—whether under the sign of "anarchism" or not—but that this rich tradition of anti-authoritarian activity remains undertheorized. She identifies two key pathways for enriching anarchist theory: using theories and histories from Black studies to

deepen intersectional analyses of power, and engaging new materialist frameworks to illuminate the liveliness of matter, or following political theorist Jane Bennett, "thing power" (189). Unfortunately, despite its valuable goal of contributing to the development of new anarchist theory, this chapter is also the book's least convincing.

First, Ferguson attempts to diagnose the inadequacies of anarchism's historical engagement with questions of race generally and Black struggles specifically. She proposes four explanatory factors: the appropriation of the language of slavery as a metaphor for all exploitation, extracted from the specificity of Black experiences; lack of attention to the history of slavery and anti-Black racism; a focus on writing to the exclusion of other modes of oppositional political expression, and an overly rigid rejection of reformist politics. How to understand the historical failures of US anarchist movements to meaningfully engage race and Black struggles—particularly in contrast to contemporaneous communist movements, which did, from the 1920s forward—is a crucial question with urgent political implications for our intersectional radical movements today. However, most of these factors require explaining themselves rather than serving as explanations, and are hampered by a lack of temporal specificity.

For example, one factor that might more convincingly account for limited anarchist engagement with Black struggles during this era in the US is geography. As Ferguson notes in the preceding chapter, while anarchists adopted an internationalist lens to report on struggles around the world, their periodicals often centered local struggles to engage readers in their region. During the period in which the publications on which she based her analysis of US classical anarchism were active (1897-1918), the first wave of the Great Migration of African Americans was only just beginning, and 90% of the nation's Black population lived in the South—the only region of the country with virtually no active anarchist presence. Viewed through this lens, Ferguson's critique echoes biographer Jacqueline Jones's critique of renowned Chicago anarchist Lucy Parsons for not orienting her politics around Black identity—despite the fact that during the 1880s, Black Chicagoans made up around 0.01% of the city's popula-

tion. While Jones is less and Ferguson more sympathetic to anarchist politics, both project contemporary demographic realities and ethical-political prescriptions onto historical anarchist movements, with limited analytical value.

A more pertinent question may be why from the 1920s onwards, when demographic shifts and increased political mobilization meant that Black communities and movements were far more legible to non-Black anarchists than previously, anarchist movements did not correspondingly shift into more extensive engagement. While periodicals based in Great Migration cities such as New York's *Vanguard* in the 1930s did publish occasional analyses of resistance to anti-Black racism by Black anarchists, these efforts paled in comparison to the Communist Party's extensive mobilizations to organize Black workers, protest anti-Black violence, support Black legal defense in cases such as the Scottsboro Boys, and more. This robust engagement from authoritarian communists did not stem from a more expansive notion of what constituted politically valid resistance—in the twilight of the classical era, anarchists certainly held less rigidly workerist conceptions of political engagement than much of the left—which raises questions about whether this criteria offers much insight to the problem.

Considering a longer historical arc casts further doubt on Ferguson's contention that anarchists' rigidity around rejecting reformism led them to overlook the significance of Black struggles. As historian Andrew Cornell has documented, anarchists played significant roles in Black civil rights organizing from the 1940s onwards, contributing direct action strategies and covering campaigns for racial justice extensively in their periodicals. Understanding the reasons for the historical underdevelopment of anarchist engagement with Black struggle and theorization of race will demand a more carefully historically calibrated set of explanations—though Ferguson has done anarchist history and thought an important service simply by posing the question and providing initial hypotheses for debate.

The fourth chapter concludes with brief analyses of three quite different movements with anarchist-aligned politics—Food Not Bombs,

Protect Maunakea 'Ohana, and the feminist bookstore movement—through the proposed intersectional and "thing power" lenses. The movements are interesting, but the analyses cursory relative to the richness of the earlier chapters. It is unclear, for example, what conceptualizing Food Not Bombs as "actualized by the actancy of food" (202) does to enrich our understanding of its politics. The concluding section seems to merge the self-evident observation that radical movements always involve sensory engagement with material things with an assumption that effective radical theorizing requires developing a specialized vocabulary to describe how these things can both affect and be affected: "Attending patiently to multidirectional relations among loosely bounded actants can be a way to nurture liveliness in both our theories and our things" (214). It seems more plausible that indigenous theories that broaden notions of kinship and relationality beyond the human, intersecting with anarchist engagements with radical ecology and animal liberation—none of which appear in this volume—could enrich political theories bound by liberal, settler, and anthropocentric conceptions of subjectivity. But, having logged many hours stirring pots at Food Not Bombs and staffing the counter at radical bookstores, I remain uncertain how the new materialist approaches to "thing power" described here can enhance my analysis of these political practices. Perhaps Ferguson will develop these concepts further in future work; until then, I am content to bracket the final chapter as an underdeveloped coda to an otherwise powerful and persuasive analysis of anarchist print culture.

Letterpress Revolution, like the innumerable print artifacts it analyzes, is a labor of love. The book opens in its preface with Ferguson's recollection of taking part in the production of an obscure anarchist periodical by a tiny collective in upstate New York in the 1970s. This personal connection, locating her long-forgotten youthful efforts within a long and powerful radical genealogy, animates the care with which she documents and theorizes the anarchist print cultures described in these pages. Its prefigurative political vision is clear and trenchant; indeed, one of the book's many striking gifts is its remarkably lucid and concise exposition of the core ideas of anarchism on its second page. While the overgrowth of theory and citation might stand some judicious pruning to allow the archival material enough

room to blossom, the book's understory teems with a rich ecosystem of ideas and stories painstakingly cultivated through patient research. For academic readers familiar with interdisciplinary theories of narrative, media, assemblage, and undercommons, it offers a window into the enduring value of a century and a half of anarchist theories and practices as manifested through print culture. For readers looking to anarchist history for inspiration, it offers a nostalgic and impassioned defense of how a movement of "bookish poor people" (132) used letters, in the word's triplicate sense, to wage their quixotic global struggle against capitalism and the state—and how their successes and failures might inform our own efforts to "think the world into being" anew (184).

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Book Review

David Graeber and David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity,* London: Allen Lane, 2021

Since its release, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* (2021) by the late David Graeber and David Wengrow has been heralded as an 'instant classic' in both laudatory and more reticent reviews.[1] The book's central assertion takes aim at the theory that humanity lived in small, egalitarian hunter-gatherer bands prior to 12,000 BP (Before Present i.e., 1950-01-01) and only developed stratified hierarchies following the advent of agriculture. The authors claim this is a myth, and a dull one at that. Graeber has long held that a pre-agricultural period of egalitarian "primitive communism" is a fairy tale: thus, humanity establishing a similarly non-hierarchical utopia at some future point is equally fatuous.[2] Building on this premise, they contend that before and after agriculture, humanity generated vibrantly dynamic social formations that shifted periodically between egalitarian and authoritarian modes before becoming 'stuck' in the rut of dominating hierarchical structures due to the loss of three fundamental freedoms (see below).

My analysis begins with an overview of responses to *The Dawn of Everything* that have circulated in public media and academic journals. As we shall see, *The Dawn of Everything* has received wide-ranging praise for confronting antiquated concepts of social evolutionism, for popularizing archeology amongst the public, and for expanding our political horizons. At the same time, reviewers have raised concerns about the book's theses and the authors' use of sources. Specialists have pointed to gaps in the treatment of primary material as well as Graeber and Wengrow's selective engagement with the relevant scholarship. There are also serious questions concerning various case studies and the underlying logic and methodologies being deployed (or calculatedly ignored) in the course of argumentation.

Then there is Graeber and Wengrow's rejection of received definitions of societal equality and egalitarianism. Having questioned the usefulness of these foundational conceptions for our understanding

of a free society,[3] they offer a new model based on three "substantive" freedoms: to disobey; to leave; and to transform societal relationships. I will be teasing out the problematic aspects of these "freedoms," which are multiple and cumulative.

Finally, I am engaging with *The Dawn of Everything's* generalized understanding of medieval and early modern European thought. Graeber and Wengrow assert a 'maximalist' argument that notions of social equality were incommensurable with European societies and must, therefore, have been imported, and a concomitant 'minimalist' argument that Europeans never broached the origins of social inequality as an issue before exposure to non-European ideas. While the authors recognize a strain of "folk egalitarianism" informing period festivals, popular uprisings, and peasant communes, they are adamant that the theorizing and historicizing of "equality" could not have been developed in Europe without non-European input.

They rest their case on an essay competition held by the Academy of Dijon, France in 1754 addressing the origin of inequality. This is the event that famously prompted Jean-Jacques Rousseau (c. 1712–1778) to write the *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men* (1755), in which he speculated that humanity had lived in a natural state of equality before private property was institutionalized. Graeber and Wengrow attribute the competition's topic—"what is the origin of inequality among men and is it justified by natural law?"—to Indigenous critiques of European society then circulating in the form of published dialogues between European colonizers and charismatic Indigenous chiefs. In particular, they single out commentaries recorded by Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan (1666–c. 1716), in his two-volume memoir, *New Voyages to North America* (1703), which focuses on extended encounters with Algonquian peoples, whose territories fell within the Canada colony of "New France" (Quebec and northern Ontario). As we shall see, contra Graeber and Wengrow, there is plenty of evidence that Europeans were deeply engaged with issues of equality and inequality well before Indigenous perspectives from North America came into play.

Critical Responses

The Dawn of Everything has received much praise for how it reorients public conversations about global history, introducing popular readership to a wide array of societies, cultures, and histories. Crawford Kilian, writing for the leftist online publication *The Tyee*, captures the spirit of excitement that ensues, as he marvels at details such as how the builders of Stonehenge rejected agriculture in favour of gathering hazelnuts or evidence of equitable housing in Teotihuacán.[4] There is certainly value in broadening awareness, and I have recommended *The Dawn of Everything* to friends and family on these grounds. Graeber and Wengrow are imparting a spark of wonder concerning the diversity of human societies, and reviewers rightly call attention to this feature as well as the book's sheer breadth and scope.[5]

The authors effectively challenge conventional notions of linear progress and social evolutionism, particularly those proffered by popular authors of 'Big History' such as Yuval Noah Harari, Jared Diamond, Steven Pinker, and Francis Fukuyama. There is a need to debunk the popularized narrative that global humanity has evolved in stages from "primitive" egalitarian foragers to complex "civilized" agrarian states, and that sovereign-centric or state-centric societies are more 'advanced' than non-state and less-stratified societies. However, several reviews have argued Graeber and Wengrow's attempt to forge their own thesis to counter these grand metanarratives falls short,[6] and some anthropologists have gone so far as to question whether *The Dawn of Everything* has anything important to say about human origins at all.[7] Cautionary reviews note this 'new history of everything' has been said to misrepresent evidence and the scholarly studies it references.[8] As one critic puts it, a blizzard of examples delivered at a quick pace while shirking sustained engagement with the state of the literature leaves much to be desired.[9] Most glaringly, for authors identified with anarchism, *The Dawn of Everything* fails to consider counterparts who have pondered the very issues they raise, such as Murray Bookchin in *Ecology of Freedom* (1982), Pyotr Kropotkin in *Mutual Aid* (1902), or Elié Reclus in *Les Primitifs* (1885). Additionally, Fredrick Engels' *On the Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) and Karl Marx's unpublished *Ethnological Notebooks*

are never addressed.[10] Even more troublingly, Graeber and Wengrow neglect much contemporary Indigenous-authored scholarship.[11]

A few examples will illustrate how rapid-fire delivery brings reprehensible features into sharp relief. Take the evolving role of women: this is a recurring topic in *The Dawn of Everything*, but the authors never broach the construction of gender, how gendered relations develop, nor how gender intersects with inequality.[12] Similarly, political scientist Ian Morris observes that *The Dawn of Everything's* assertion that contemporary evolutionary accounts of humanity's progress fail to address fluid movements toward or away from agriculture is unconvincing.[13] Historian Walter Scheidel likewise disputes Graeber and Wengrow's "black-and-white reasoning" when they posit evolutionary approaches cannot account for seasonal variability or gradual processes of transition between foraging and farming.[14] Renowned anthropologist Chris Knight attributes such faulty reasoning to the authors' conflation of modern evolutionary theory with historical models of social Darwinism ('survival of the fittest'): bluntly, they lack "any real understanding of human evolution."[15] Curiously, *The Dawn of Everything* omits any discussion of humanity's development prior to 30,000 years ago, a glaring lacuna, given current research.[16] In this regard, *The Dawn of Everything's* deployment of antiquated typologies related to Indigenous peoples of the coastal Pacific Northwest and California also reflects a lack of scholarly rigor.[17]

Emily Kern expresses a sentiment I often had with *The Dawn of Everything*: "As a reader, I found myself wanting Graeber and Wengrow to name some names, to tell us exactly who came up with these tidbits of civilizational thinking and evolutionary theory that have so permeated contemporary thought and brought us so many restrictive conclusions."[18] The authors present their insights as novel and at odds with the academic consensus,[19] but do so without much dialogue with the research they contest. Additionally, selective presentation of evidence runs rife in *The Dawn of Everything*.[20] As Brian Fagan and Nadia Durrani observe, "Such revisionism is all very well, but the evidence is often thin—and to dismiss rival, often long proposed theories without serious discussion, as the authors regularly do, is questionable."[21] Anticipating such objections, Graeber and Wengrow

argue the comprehensiveness of their study necessarily limits their ability to fully contextualize *The Dawn of Everything*, stating that had they explored the state of the literature on this or that issue, it "would have left the reader with a sense that the authors are engaged in a constant battle with demons who were in fact two inches tall."[22] Their characterization of problematizing viewpoints speaks for itself.

The Dawn of Everything's account of early state formation is not dissimilar from existing scholarship,[23] however the choice to delineate the features of pre-modern states in accordance with the conception of the state as a 'sovereign' entity by virtue of its monopoly of violence within a territory is at odds with the norm, since scholars routinely date the advent of this conception to the European Treaty of Westphalia (1648).[24] Such slippages carry over to the central question of the book: when did we become 'stuck' in hierarchical societal structures?[25]

As we have seen, *The Dawn of Everything* rejects the so-called agricultural trap, wherein once humanity innovated the practice of agriculture, this created the conditions for emergent social hierarchies, state-formation, and ever-increasing violence, but there is plenty of evidence that agriculture did play a pivotal role. Developmental trajectories merging agriculture, domestication, social stratification, urbanization, and state formation may have been gradual, but, as Scheidel puts it, "even a trap that was slow in closing was, in the end, a trap."[26] Graeber and Wengrow do concede that farming lead to "ever larger and more settled populations, ever more powerful forces of production, ever larger material surpluses, and people spending ever more of their time under someone else's command," and yet they assert these casual connections have "very little explanatory power."[27] This prompts the question: does their model of "three freedoms" provide a convincing explanation regarding the societal conditions that might enable humanity to be relatively free from oppression, or to gage when we are being dominated?

"Three Freedoms"

Early in *The Dawn of Everything*, Graeber and Wengrow discard the

analytical usefulness of "equality" or "inequality" because they cannot decide on a means to judge inegalitarian disparities within a given society or attribute equality with a qualitative sameness.[28] According to them, any metric one applies to determine the extent of equality within a society is useless because cultures have different notions of what is to be shared amongst its members.[29] The authors are not concerned with wealth inequality or social stratification, flippantly remarking that if a society achieves equality 'on earth,' then dominance hierarchies and private property are derived from 'the divine.'[30] Since they are opposed to comparatively measuring degrees of equality or inequality as a factor when discussing societal freedom, unlike so many of their contemporaries,[31] the onus is on them is to proffer some alternative measurement to judge free societies. Enter the freedom to move, to disobey, and to reorganize social relationships.[32] These are the three key "substantive freedoms" that unlock liberation: they are "substantive" because they can be realized, and have been in the past.[33]

Let us consider the freedom to "move away and relocate" or "to abandon one's community, knowing one will be welcomed in faraway lands."[34] Are such maneuvers always exercises in freedom? Graeber and Wengrow discuss incidents in ancient Egypt, Mesoamerica, and Mesopotamia when cities were abandoned by the populace to escape or undermine overlords.[35] Here moving was not an exercise in substantive freedom in the celebratory *Dawn of Everything* sense: it was a drastic reaction to coercion that destroyed existing social arrangements. Where the substantive freedom to move elsewhere and be welcomed does apply is when egalitarian hunter-gatherers relocate to a different group that they shared relationships with to diffuse tension,[36] or when movement is facilitated by extended networks represented by different clan, phratry (a descent or kinship-based group) or moiety (a descent group that coexists with one other descent group).[37] Amongst the Algonquian and Iroquoian peoples of the North American Great Lakes region, for example, clans played a fundamental role in governance[38] that was place-based and tied to seasonal migrations within a territory.[39] According to Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) historian Deborah Doxtator, prior to disruption due to colonization, matrilineal Haudenosaunee clans enacted patterns of

movement within shared territories in which the number of village occupants would shift throughout the year as activities required.[40] The Algonquian Anishinaabek people, on the other hand, had patrilineal clans that converged or scattered seasonally within their territories: people concentrated together in the spring and autumn, and dispersed in the winter following their established foodways.[41] Heidi Bohaker has characterized clan identity as a kind of 'traveler's aid society': one bore the emblems of a clan to indicate who was a relative during migrations.[42] Marriage was especially important for building relationships between clans, both for purposes of reciprocal hospitality and for gathering allies for raids and warfare. Bands and clans had distinct resource and hunting grounds: sharing access to territories within a nation was negotiated through clan relationships, while inter-national or confederacy-based agreements involved treaties, with associated law and protocols.[43] Graeber and Wengrow rightly point to the clan systems of the Great Lakes region as a case study in the "substantive freedom" to move. That said, their discussion is woefully outdated, because they draw almost exclusively on a speculative history presented in Elizabeth Tooker's "Clans and Moieties in North America" (1971), a study that is long since surpassed, as sources I cite indicate.[44]

The authors expound on the freedom to move elsewhere referencing recourse to "uninhabited" regions, as in the case of the Osage people,[45] who migrated from the Middle Ohio River valley to the Great Plains over the course of the eighteenth century. Indigenous sovereignty and territoriality in their original homeland centered on dense clusters of agricultural towns along rivers that were surrounded by an inner ring of designated hunting grounds. Beyond this zone was an outer-ring of claimed hunting grounds which overlapped with those of other nations, forming shared buffer zones.[46] Seasonal dispersals for hunting and the migration of villages within a nation's territory rendered geographic boundaries more fluid, but they were still enforced,[47] and emptying space of inhabitants to expand claimed hunting grounds was a common outcome of Indigenous warfare.[48] Osage historian Louis F. Burns relates that when his people began migrating to the Great Plains, they were compelled by continuous warfare with Iroquoian peoples, and that constitutional reforms among the Osage

(which Graeber and Wengrow cite)[49] included innovations in military organization so smaller groups of warriors could be organized into war parties to quickly respond to threats, without large preliminary ceremonies.[50] We should note expansion west on the part of the Osage also came at the expense of the Caddoan people, who were in turn driven south of the Red River.[51] In short, the Osage may have chosen territorial migration over submission to a rival nation, but this hardly qualifies as an exercise in "substantive freedom" for the Osage (or for that matter, the Caddoans), as the authors suggest.

The second freedom is the freedom to "disobey authorities without consequences"; "disobey orders"; or "ignore or disobey commands issued by others."[52] Here, Graeber and Wengrow conflate disagreement, the limits of sovereignty, and distance from power with the "substantive freedom" to disobey a command. For example, the authors argue that among the Shilluk people, whose Kingdom was in Southern Sudan, subjects ignored the sovereignty of the *reth* (monarch) when they were not in the capital. Similarly, the North American Natchez Nation of the lower Mississippi region ignored their "Great Sun" (supreme chief) when out of his presence.[53] However neither of these instances constitute a substantive freedom to disobey on the part of the people themselves, as they reference an obligation to obey the sovereign, rather than a social arrangement wherein a subject might disregard a direct order when in the monarch or supreme chief's presence.

As Graeber and Wengrow note, the *reth's* authority was circumscribed: "there was also nothing remotely resembling an administrative apparatus to translate his sovereign power," no taxation system to "enforce royal orders," or any mechanism for reporting if the *reth's* order had been "obeyed."[54] Rather than reflecting a substantive capacity to disobey, the relationship between the *reth* and his subjects simply demonstrates an absence of coercive capacity. Similarly, the Natchez Nation was made up of semi-autonomous village districts, and the further these villages were from the Grand Village and the "Great Sun," the more diminished the supreme chief's power over the populace became, because these villages had their own "Sun" chiefs and War chiefs whom the villagers "feared and obeyed".[55] When the

194

"Great Sun" issued orders, the "Suns" in outlying villages often flaunted them, and the Natchez people were far more under their sway than that of the central authority.[56] The "Great Sun" is better understood as 'first amongst political equals' within a loose confederation of independent "Suns" that formed a landscape of shifting alliances and factions, all of which were competing for predominance. The sovereignty of the "Great Sun" was not limited by "freedom to disobey" being exercised by commoners: competing authority exerted by other "Suns" is what kept the "Great Sun" in check.

Indeed, their understanding of the concept of "command" when considering acts of disobedience is also contestable. The authors link the "power to command" to sovereignty and have a broad conception of what it means to "command," referring to pervasive imperative verb forms in language as evidence that even egalitarian hunter-gatherers like the Tanzanian Hadza tribe give commands and orders.[57] Critiquing this conflation of the imperative form with sovereignty, Knight deftly observes that Hadza children and women make demands of adults and men with imperatives as a form of counter-dominance, an observation which throws the linguistic foundations of Graeber and Wenglow's thesis into disarray.[58] A second example is Graeber and Wengrow's discussion of the North American Wendat Nation, whose traditional territories encompassed the Saint Lawrence River valley and estuary in the Great Lakes region. The Wendat practiced consensus governance amongst their clans.[59] One always had the option to exit from a relationship, and families that disagreed with a clan command or experienced inter-relational strife could move away to establish their own village or join another village within the larger nation.[60]

The Dawn of Everything couches this freedom as an act of disobedience in defiance of commands, but this lacks nuance. According to Canadian scholar and Wendat speaker John Steckley, the closest equivalent expression in the Wendat language to "command" is to "request, ask." To "obey" is a conditional – one is "being with someone's word" (the condition of being in agreement) with another person.[61] In sum, the Wendat peoples' societal capacity to refuse requests or demands is better understood as a freedom to *disagree* (with the

possibility to exit a relationship), rather than *disobey*.

The third substantive freedom, the freedom to reorganize social relationships, permeates *The Dawn of Everything's* story about our collective evolution toward the present reign of hierarchical domination. However, the prescriptive power of this "third freedom" is undermined by its slippery amorphism. The authors interchangeably reference freedom to "create new and different forms of social reality"; "shift back and forth between social structures, depending on the time of year"; "rearrange social ties"; "reorganize social relations"; "shift and renegotiate social relations"; "create or transform social relationships"; "build new social worlds"; "imagine and enact other forms of social existence"; and "shape entirely new social realities, or shift back and forth between different ones."[62]

Profiling examples, they discuss various Indigenous peoples engaging in societal governance 'switchback' exercises through the year.[63] The Cheyenne people of the Great Plains in North America, who congregated in the summer and autumn to hunt bison, are said to be a case in point. Every summer, we are told, the Cheyenne appointed a police force to order their affairs which disbanded at the end of the hunting season, when they again split into smaller bands and went their separate ways.[64] The authors would have it that the Cheyenne dramatically switched arrangements back and forth seasonally,[65] when, as we shall see, there was an underlying continuity informing their governance structures.

The Cheyenne Nation had forty-four chiefs (Véhoo'o), in their traditional governance system.[66] These chiefs periodically congregated the entire nation from late spring to late autumn in large camps to perform ceremonies and hold political meetings.[67] Aggregations of bison amassing smaller sex-segregated herds into seasonal breeding herds[68] created the preconditions for congregating.[69] "Warrior Societies" (Nótåxeo'o), were appointed to facilitate ceremonies and great hunts for a set period and rotated policing power between them.[70] When the bison migrated, the large camps dispersed. Within each band, Véhoo'o continued to act as peacemakers while Nótåxeo'o members ensured the decisions of the band's Véhoo'o were followed.

In addition, throughout the year the Nótâxeoʾo shared responsibility for four sacred tasks: facilitating travel; protecting the village; organizing hunts; and policing ceremonies.[71] In this manner Nótâxeoʾo and Véhooʾo shared and exchanged power, an arrangement which Cheyenne scholar Leo K. Killsback describes as "a delicate balance between two highly organized institutions, its foundations built on the Cheyenne principle of brotherhood. […] The temporary shifts in governance of original Cheyenne national government, in which warrior societies would take charge, are part of the system."[72] Graeber and Wengrow belittle the intentionality and complexity of traditional Cheyenne governance, which they describe as a "play chiefs" and "play police" arrangement.[73] Furthermore, Cheyenne society did not oscillate between two discrete governance structures, as *Dawn of Everything* claims: this structure was contiguous all year.

Evoking Marcel Mauss (1872–1950) and Henri Beuchat's (1878–1914) long outdated "Essay on the seasonal variations of Eskimo societies" (1904–5), the authors also assert that the Arctic Inuit peoples shifted their mode of governance seasonally, thus exercising the "third freedom." In the summers, when small, closed member bands fished or hunted caribou, patriarchal authority was exercised. In winter months, the Inuit gathered in meeting houses and this mode of authority dissolved, and with it, hierarchy, property and sexual propriety.[74] However, subsequent research has upended the thesis of Mauss and Beuchat.[75] In fact, the societal organization of Inuit groups has substantive regional differences.[76] For example, in the case of the Copper Inuit, who lived in the north western Kitikmeot region of the Arctic, "egalitarianism and individual autonomy" prevailed, whereas in the eastern Arctic, "deference to leaders" was the norm, "a deference that, although voluntary, was equated with loyalty and was an ever-present feature of social life."[77] Again, the authors' switchback paradigm proves false.

We can take this further. Mutual aid, which Graeber and Wengrow refer to synonymously with communism,[78] was actually practiced year round by the Inuit, who developed institutions of reciprocity and generosity to redistribute food in times of scarcity enacted through the practice of *Qaujimajatuqangit* (Inuit Ecological Knowledge).[79]

Voluntary gift-giving and communal eating in the autumn and meat-sharing during the winter maintained relationships in the absence of strong family ties in Inuit society.[80] During times of scarcity in the summer,[81] well-off Inuit would help nearby camps in need by sending them food or allowing access to meat caches.[82] Food sharing was seen as an obligation and *turlulaujaq*—calling everyone in the camp to eat—was customary when returning with food.[83] Institutions for sharing food changed in accord with cycles of seasonal subsistence. The Inuit practiced what I regard as a "substantive" freedom, the freedom not to go hungry, and this was thanks to mutual aid, rather than seasonal-driven shifts between authoritarianism and communism, as *The Dawn of Everything* posits.

Reappraising Europe

I noted at the beginning of this review that *The Dawn of Everything* frames Europe as the globe's regressive epicentre, burdened by a culture which could not conceive of social equality before this value was introduced to the social discourse from North American Indigenous cultures.[84] As previously mentioned, the key event was an essay competition in 1774 challenging participants to debate the origin of social inequality and if it is justified. Graeber and Wengrow attribute the debate's origins to emerging knowledge of Indigenous perspectives conveyed to Europe via the Baron de Lahontan's *New Voyages to America* and to a lesser extent *The Jesuit Relations*.[85] In response, reviewers have questioned the credulity of their claim that *New Voyages* in particular is primarily responsible for discourses on the origins of inequality in Europe.[86] Philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, for example, argues the writings of medieval Pope Gregory I (c. 540–604) and Renaissance humanist Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), in addition to social movements such as the sixteenth century "School of Salamanca" and reformation-era Anabaptists, provide ample evidence that Europeans grappled with social inequality long before the eighteenth century.[87] In response, Wengrow contests that these figures and movements were concerned with inequality's origins, and qualifies *The Dawn of Everything's* thesis: "The question we ask is more specific: How did a consensus form among European intellectuals that human beings—innocent of civilization—lived in 'societies of

equals,' such that it made sense to inquire as to 'the origins of inequality'?"[88]

Responding to Wengrow, there is plenty of documentation that medieval Europeans developed political narratives concerning originating "societies of equals," with explanatory accounts of how equitable sociality was undermined. For example, during the 1381 Peasant Revolt in England, the priest-rebel John Ball (c. 1338–1381) delivered a sermon, paraphrased by the chronicler Thomas Walingham (died, c. 1422), in which he condemned the feudal system of serfdom, arguing "that from the beginning all men were created equal by nature, and that servitude had been introduced by the unjust and evil oppression of men, against the will of God, who if it had pleased Him to create serfs, surely in the beginning of the world would have appointed who should be a serf and who a lord."[89] The provocations of Ball were a shock to those in power, and he was executed when the rebellion was crushed.

Inequality's origins also fired up the parliamentary "Leveller" faction during the First and Second English Civil Wars (1642–1648) which culminated with the execution of King Charles I (1600–1649) and the establishment of the English Commonwealth, with power invested in the parliament. Early Leveller leaders such as parliamentarian John Lilburne (c. 1614–1657) and pamphleteer Richard Overton (1640–1664) both emphasized original states of equality and the absence of domination. In *The Free-mans Freedom Vindicated* (1646), Lilburne asserted all men and women were "by nature all equal and alike in power, dignity, authority, and majesty, none of them having (by nature) any authority dominion or magisterial power, one over or above another."[90] Similarly, Overton's *An Arrow Against All Tyrants and Tyranny* (1646) attributed natural freedom to the entirety of humanity: "For by natural birth, all men are equally and alike borne to like propriety, liberty and freedom, and as we are delivered of God by the hand of nature into this world, every one equally and alike to enjoy his Birthright and privilege; even all whereof God by nature hath made him free."[91] The Levellers forcefully insisted that the natural equality of humanity, granted by God, should be the basis of governance. The right to rule was to be contingent on the consent

of the governed, rather than imposed through domination. Leveller's knew who equality's enemies were. The equitable nature of humanity was a God-given foundation of society that could only be renewed by dismantling aristocratic tyranny and its governing institutions.

The even more radical "True Levellers", also known as the "Diggers," circulated broadsides such as *A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England* (1649) that mobilized a state of natural equality to attack the institution of property: "We say, while we are made to hinder no man of his Privileges given him in his Creation, equal to one as to another; what Law then can you make, to take hold upon us, but Laws of Oppression and Tyranny, that shall enslave or spill the blood of the innocent?"[92] Speaking to England's ruling aristocrats, the Diggers opposed inherited structures of domination that enclosed common land and likened the violence of the nobility when seizing the commons and declaring it their property to the Biblical 'first murder' of Abel by his brother, Cain. Like Ball, the Diggers argued political and economic hierarchies imposed by force were the progenitors of inequality.

In sum, a century before Rousseau began writing his *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men* and over fifty years before Lahontan published his memoirs – key events in *The Dawn of Everything's* 'origin story' concerning Europeans considering equality—we have full scale egality-driven social upheavals erupting in England: so much for Graeber and Wengrow's passing reference to "folk egalitarianism" by way of dismissing the existence of such currents.[93]

Well before *New Voyages to North America* was circulating, continental European intellectuals were also considering societal equality, the origins of inequality, and if inequality is justified. Prior to his death French judge Étienne de La Boétie (c. 1530–1563) wrote *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude* (1574) wherein he argues that freedom and equality are humanity's natural states.[94] La Boétie identified the tyranny of conquest and political deception as originating causes of inequality.[95] Tyranny, he wrote, is maintained thanks to hierarchies of property secured by elites, and it is perpetuated by those who "accept servility to acquire wealth."[96] How humanity lost any desire to reinsti-

tute our natural state of equality and freedom through social reordering, was a pressing issue for La Boétie.[97] In other words, he conceived of natural freedom and its corollary, equality, as an historical condition that might be realized, pointing, in particular, to the founding and evolution of the city state of Venice.

Venice amalgamated from a collection of hamlets founded by waves of migrants escaping to the mudflats of the Venetian lagoon during the fifth century, as Rome's empire fell into terminal decline. Early Venetians governed themselves through open-air people's assemblies (a style of governance not uncommon in medieval Europe),[98] called *arengo*.[99] Periodically, the *arengo* elected a leader, or *doge*, for life: each year two "tribunes" were also elected and empowered to prevent any abuses of power on the part of the *doge*.[100] When *doges* attempted to consolidate political power to themselves through dynasty building or coups, they were quickly replaced.[101] Power grabbing was a dangerous venture: during the first century of Venetian self-rule, all but one doge was assassinated, blinded, or exiled. The early Venetian Republic enforced radical democracy punctuated by violent catharsis, and it makes for a telling contrast with *The Dawn of Everything's* conjecture that the sole manifestations of populist 'turn over' in medieval Europe were the crowning and dethroning of 'Carnival Kings' during folk festivals.

Democratic Venice flourished for some time, but reforms gradually restricted enfranchisement to a growing aristocracy and circumscribed the powers of the *arengo* until this institution was abolished in 1421.[102] By the sixteenth century, when La Boétie was writing, Venice's ruling elite held deliberative councils and debates behind closed doors presided over by the "Great Doge," with fait accompli decisions proclaimed to the general public.[103] Lamenting the decline of equitable democracy in his *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*, La Boétie imagined a meeting between Venice's freedom-loving founders and their sixteenth century counterparts, wondering how both could have originated from the same place.[104]

Given centralizing power and inequality in cities is discussed extensively in *The Dawn of Everything*, the case of Venice is clearly

important. Graeber and Wengrow cite the Spanish sixteenth century conquistador, Hernán Cortés (c. 1485–1547), leader of the expedition that caused the fall of the Aztec Empire, who compares the Indigenous City State of Tlaxcala (which allied with Cortés) to Italian Republics such as Genoa, Pisa, and Venice, in that the Tlaxcala people had "no supreme overlord."[105] Cortés himself described the Tlaxcalan political system as a Venetian-style oligarchy: "There are many lords all living in this city, and the people who are tillers of the soil are their vassals, though each one has his lands to himself, some more than others. In undertaking wars, they all gather together, and thus assembled they decide and plan them."[106] Tlaxcala's aristocracy formed a council of 50 to 100 nobles and four principal leaders deliberated over the decision-making.[107] Graeber and Wengrow equate this with a "popular urban council,"[108] suggesting debate and speeches are indicators of direct democracy, when this is far from the case.[109] In any event, they never discuss the radically democratic features of Venice's initial republic, or its degeneration to the point where Cortés would draw comparisons between Venice's oligarchy and that of Tlaxcala.

Disingenuous engagement with European egalitarianism is on full display in the authors' discussion of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who is type-cast as a young French courtier who never encountered equitable values being enacted in society, and lived off the patronage of aristocrats.[110] In fact, as historian David A. Bell points out, the author of *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men* (1755) was a middle-aged philosopher born in Geneva, who lived for years in poverty as a domestic servant.[111] His father was a poor watchmaker who nonetheless had citizenship in the General Council of the Republic of Geneva and could thus vote.[112] However by 1712, when Rousseau was born, a patrician-dominated Small Council and larger Council of Two Hundred had supplanted the General Council in importance and sought to monopolize power. During his youth, the "Anonymous Letters" (1718) agitated for Genevans to reclaim their status as a republic of "free people," whose liberty was a natural right, from the Small Council.[113] Stratification of citizenship was excluding many Genevans from political participation,[114] which caused factions seeking to expand enfranchisement in the name of equality to periodically protest, riot, strike, and even take up arms against the city's

oligarchy.[115]

Rousseau, future theorist of equality, was caught up in these politics, and his circle of friends in Paris included a number of Genevan agitators and democracy-oriented politicians, such the exiled radical Toussaint-Pierre Lenieps (c. 1697–1774).[116] Historian Helena Rosenblatt has researched how the example of Geneva figures in the development of Rousseau's theory of human nature.[117] Referencing the city of his birth, Rousseau argued "man was by nature good," and that "economic development and commerce corrupted him."[118] In his words:

> [Genevan] municipal administration was as democratic as possible. The people acknowledge neither classes nor privileges nor any inequality amongst its members; it acted either by itself in general council, or by its procurators called Syndics whom it elected annually, and who accounted to it for their administration; no intermediary order interposed itself between them and it, and that is the true characteristic of Democracy.[119]

Thus, when Graeber and Wengrow attribute the inspiration for Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin and Basis to Inequality Among Men* (1755) to Indigenous critiques recorded in *New Voyages to North America*, they betray a bias that permeates their entire tome.

Conclusion

There is much to be admired in *The Dawn of Everything's* integration of global perspectives and hitherto marginalized histories in a bid to expand the boundaries of our political imagination. Given our present predicament, it is unsurprising that so many readers have found value in this timely response to pressing questions. That being said, Graeber and Wengrow never specify what went so terribly wrong with the three freedoms: and, when we subject their book to critical examination, it seems their own sweeping metanarrative on the origins of inequality (and avenues for freedom) is just one more example

of 'Big History' mythmaking.

A final observation: while much has been made of this book's anarchist politics,[120] one could question what type of anarchism they promote. Taking stock of human history, Graeber and Wengrow conclude that societal forces of hierarchy and equality have been oscillating in perpetuity, and that the problematic issue for us is hierarchy's development into a hegemonic force.[121] Dislodging us from this hegemony, Graeber and Wengrow would have us empowered by the "three freedoms" to return to an endlessly recurring cycle of constructing and then dismantling hierarchical inequalities.[122] In the end, anarchic "freedom" is always destined to falter.[123]

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Notes

[1] Ian Morris, "Against Method," *American Journal of Archeology* 126, no. 3 (2022): EO65; Giulio Ongaro, "David Graeber Knew Ordinary People Could Remake the World," *Jacobin*, November 22, 2021, https://jacobin.com/2021/10/david-graeber-the-dawn-of-everything-human-history-anthropology.

[2] Chris Knight, "Did Communism Make Us Human? On the anthropology of David Graeber." *The Brooklyn Rail*, June 2021, https://brooklynrail.org/2021/06/field-notes/Did-communism-make-us-human.

[3] David Graeber and David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*, (Toronto: Signal, 2021), 6–8, 73–75; Lauren Harding, "The Dawn of Everything," *Human Ecology* 50 (2022): 393.

[4] Crawford Kilian, "The Hopeful Message of '*The Dawn of Everything*," *The Tyee*, November 11, 2021, https://thetyee.ca/Culture/2021/11/12/Hopeful-Message-Dawn-Everything/.

[5] See, for example, Jared Spears, "A Bigger Picture Gives Our Ancestors Their Full Humanity," *Yes Magazine,* November 15, 2021, https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/a-new-social-justice/2021/11/15/book-human-history-ancestors; and Brian Fagan and Nadia Durrani, "The Dawn of Everything: A new history?" *Reviews in Anthropology* 50, no. 3–4 (2021): 81.

[6] Daniel Immerwahr, "Beyond the State," *The Nation*, September 20, 2021, https://www.thenation.com/article/society/graeber-wengrow-dawn-of-everything/; Chris Knight, "Wrong About (Almost) Everything," *focaal blog*, December 22, 2021, https://www.focaalblog.com/2021/12/22/chris-knight-wrong-about-almost-everything/; Polly Wiessner, "Hunter-gatherers: Perspective from the starting point," *Cliodynamics*, SI: Leading Scholars of the Past Comment on the Dawn of Every-

thing, (2022): 1.

[7] Camilla Power, "Gender egalitarianism made us human: A response to David Graeber & David Wengrow's 'How to change the course of human history,'" libcom, September 5, 2018, https://libcom.org/article/gender-egalitarianism-made-us-human-response-david-graeber-david-wengrows-how-change-course.

[8] See John Zerzan, "*The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* by David Graeber and David Wengrow (review)," *World Literature Today* 96, no. 1 (2022): 73; Charles Edwards, "Upending Civilization: A review essay on *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* by David Graeber and David Wengrow," *Skeptic Magazine* 27, no. 1 (2022): 74.

[9] Harding, "*The Dawn of Everything*," 394.

[10] Misha Falk, "Looking to the Past to Imagine the Future: A Review of Graeber and Wengrow's *The Dawn of Everything,*" *Upping the Anti,* March 3, 2022, https://uppingtheanti.org/blog/entry/looking-to-the-past-to-imagine-the-future-a-review-of-graeber-and-wengrows-the-dawn-of-everything.

[11] Ben Fitzhugh, "Comment," *American Anthropologist* 120, no. 2 (2018): 253; Harding, "*The Dawn of Everything,*" 394; Rachael Kiddy, "Review," *Antiquity* 96 no. 386 (2022): 501.

[12] Nancy Lindisfarne and Jonathan Neal, "All Things Being Equal," *The Ecologist*, December 17, 2021, https://theecologist.org/2021/dec/17/all-things-being-equal.

[13] Morris, "Against Method," 68–9.

[14] Walter Scheidel, "Resetting History's Dial? A critique of David Graeber and David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*," *Cliodynamics*, SI: Leading Scholars of the Past Comment on the Dawn of Everything, (2022): 3–4.

[15] Knight, "Wrong About (Almost) Everything."

[16] Jane Bassett, "Not the dawn of everything," *International Socialism,* no. 178 (2023), http://isj.org.uk/not-dawn-of-everything/; Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything,* 17, 81; Power, "Gender egalitarianism made us human."

[17] Colin Grier, "Comment," *American Anthropologist* 120, no. 2 (2018): 254.

[18] Emily Kern, "The Radical Promise of Human History," *Boston Review,* November 3, 2021, https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/the-radical-promise-of-human-history/.

[19] Scheidel, "Resetting History's Dial?," 1–17.

[20] Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Digging to Utopia," *The New York Review,* December 16, 2021, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2021/12/16/david-graeber-digging-for-utopia/; Arjun Appurdai, "The dawn of everything?" *Anthropology Today* 38, no. 1 (2022): 1–2; Zerzan "(Review)," 73.

[21] Fagan and Durrani, "The Dawn of Everything?," 94.

[22] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything,* 514–5.

[23] Scheidel, "Resetting History's Dial?," 15–16.

[24] Scheidel, "Resetting History's Dial?," 11.

[25] Bassett, "Not the dawn of everything?"; Scheidel, "Resetting History's Dial?," 2.

[26] Scheidel, "Resetting History's Dial?," 6.

[27] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 127, 133.

[28] Wiessner, "Hunter-gatherers," 3; Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 126.

[29] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 73–4.

[30] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 158–163; 552, note 50.

[31] Kent Flannery and Joyce Marcus, *The Creation of Inequality: How Our Prehistoric Ancestors Set the Stage for Monarchy, Slavery, and Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); Walter Scheidel, *The Great Leveller* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); Ian Morris, *Forages, Farmers, and Fossil Fuels: How Human Values Evolve*, Stephen Macedo, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2015); Michael Smith and Timothy A. Kohler, eds., *Ten Thousand Years of Inequality: The Archaeology of Wealth Differences* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2018); David Stasavage, *The Decline and Rise of Democracy: A Global History from Antiquity to Today* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

[32] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 133, 262, 426, 482, 503; there are other definitions of these freedoms which will be explored.

[33] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 130–1.

[34] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 132.

[35] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 379–80.

[36] Wiessner, "Hunter-gatherers," 2.

[37] Phratries comprise groups of related clans and occur in sets of three or more; moieties may, but need not, comprise groups of clans but always occur in pairs.

[38] John L. Steckley, *The Eighteenth Century Wyandot: A Clan-Based Study* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2014), 28–50.

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[47] Jeffers Lennox, *Homelands and Empires: Indigenous Space, Imperial Fictions, and Competition for Territory in Northeastern North America, 1690–1763* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 10, 17.

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[49] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 500.

[50] Louis F. Burns, *A History of the Osage People* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 15.

[51] Burns, *A History of the Osage People,* 28.

[52] Graeber and Wengrow,*The Dawn of Everything,* 133, 362, 503.

[53] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 392–8.

[54] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 368.

[55] Karl G. Lorenz, "A Re-examination of Natchez Sociopolitical Complexity: A View from the Grand Village and Beyond," *Southeastern Archeology* 16, no. 2 (1997): 98, 100; George Edward Milne, *Natchez Country: Indians, Colonists, and the Landscape of Louisiana* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), 34.

[56] Milne, *Natchez Country*, 36, 70; Graeber, "Notes on the Politics of Divine Kingship," 393.

[57] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 547–8, note 15; Graeber has also raised this idea of imperatives before in David Graeber, "Notes on the politics of divine kingship," *On Kings*, David Graeber and Michael Sahlins, eds. (Chicago: Hau Books, 2018), 456–7.

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[61] Steckley, *The Eighteenth Century Wyandot*, 54.

[62] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 132–3, 362, 398, 426, 469, 482, 502, 503, 525.

[63] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 131

[64] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 108–10.

[65] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 110.

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[71] Killsback, *A Sacred People*, 204.

[72] Killsback, *A Sacred People*, 205.

[73] Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 131, 503.

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