

Toward an Anarcho-Empiricism: Integrating Precedent, Theory, and Impetus in the Anarchist Project

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The proposition of anarchy, from that minority which is most often its deliverer, still provokes in the majority a reduction from modern liberalism to classic Hobbesianism. Centuries of progress in the social dialectic and revelations in social biology are abandoned to that vicious notion of our innate competitiveness, self-interest, and power-lust, these constituting the “nature” of Hobbes’ proverbial man, which should more truthfully be called the *condition* of the state’s human, of capitalism’s human.¹ Hobbes’ characteristics do, of course, have a foothold in the reality of humanity, but Hobbes failed to see how his particular view was dependent upon his system of living. Taken as a theory of humanity’s conditioning rather than of humanity’s nature, Hobbes’ perspective becomes a support to the anarchist argument for the abolition of the state. This is only the case, however, if one qualifies the traditional anarchist view of human nature with an empirical view of reality. Specifically, if we consider an individual’s “nature” to be a result of their experience, then an individual with Hobbesian characteristics has such characteristics because she experiences competition, self-interest, and power-lust in her day to day life and in her larger society. Taking that empiricism and applying it to a revolutionary, anarchistic context, we can consider that a free and fulfilled individual must have some base experience of freedom and fulfillment from which her “nature” may grow.

Let me be a bit more enumerative with what might be called an anarcho-empiricist argument: 1) Human nature is an empirical process, that is, it is dependent upon observation and experience, and may better be called human conditioning; 2) those Hobbesian characteristics which seem to make anarchism unfeasible are thus conditioned into persons from their experience; 3) the feasibility of anarchism, then, depends upon both the deconditioning of individuals and societies from authoritarian, statist

¹ Marshall Sahlins. *The Western Illusion of Human Nature*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2008. 11.

experiences, and the conditioning of individuals and societies with libertarian, anarchistic experiences – though it could be argued that such experiences, being dictated internally *by* individuals, are not conditioning to the extent that experiences dictated externally *to* individuals are.

Judith Suissa, in *Anarchism and Education*, does not tailor her language so intentionally as to refer to human conditioning rather than human nature. She does, however, offer interpretations of human nature which distance the phrase from its connotations of inherency, considering it instead to be a question of “social and cultural context.”² To refer to something’s nature is to refer to something pre-determined within it – but our traits and tendencies are not pre-determined. They are the result of a dialectic between two principles: cooperation and competition. What initiates this dialectic is the necessity of living itself, and the struggle which is perhaps the only inherent thing in life. Suissa notes Kropotkin’s analysis of Darwinism as a base for anarchist theories of human nature:

Kropotkin does not deny the Darwinian idea of the principle of struggle as the main impetus for evolution. But he emphasized that there are two forms which this struggle can take: the struggle of organism against organism for limited resources . . . and the kind of struggle that Darwin referred to as metaphorical: the struggle of the organism for survival in an often hostile environment.³

It is this second kind of struggle which both Kropotkin and Darwin believed was best overcome by cooperation, or what Kropotkin famously called “mutual aid.”⁴ This does not mean that Kropotkin believed humans to be inherently cooperative. He believed that we have as much a propensity for cooperation as for competition – it is, though, the cooperative principle that, when fostered with “higher instruction and equality of conditions,” produces the freest and most fulfilled individuals and societies.⁵ Suissa supports Kropotkin’s perspective as legitimately anarchist with corroborating quotes

² Judith Suissa. *Anarchism and Education*. 2nd ed. Oakland: PM Press, 2010. 27.

³ Ibid. 28.

⁴ Ibid. 26. “Survival of the fittest,” that social Darwinist maxim, was not thought by Darwin himself to be principal among humans, as is commonly believed.

⁵ Ibid. 31.

from William Godwin and Mikhail Bakunin, so we can consider a classical anarchist conception of human conditioning to be based on cooperation as a propensity to be fostered in humans in *opposition* to their propensity for competition.⁶

Because this classical anarchist conception is based upon opposing propensities which are developed according to experience, it necessarily considers education to be a revolutionary impetus. Incidentally, the function of education in an anarchist society is not intrinsically different from the function of education in a capitalist state – both organizations use mass education to develop one human propensity over the other. The methods of conditioning used by anarchist societies are, of course, poles apart from those used by capitalist states, for the same distance is found between the propensities which they respectively develop.

There is in this conception a great emphasis on human consciousness, that being the well which education would tap. Because of the degree to which humans are conditioned by their environments, the only way we can intentionally change ourselves is to become aware of ourselves – to acknowledge both what is essential in us and what is contextual in us, to be conscious. The classical anarchists did not believe that we would all suddenly undergo altruistic apotheosis upon the breaking down of our conditions and the accessing of our consciousnesses – even they considered competition to be a persistent opponent to human cooperation, an inherent threat due merely to its possibility, as inevitable as the choice between the right and left hands. Accordingly, education would not necessarily be an entirely autonomous process even after deconditioning under the supervision of the likes of Kropotkin, Godwin, and Bakunin – they believed that the individual must be readied for autonomy.

The writers of CrimethInc., an “ex-worker’s” collective of the modern anarchist movement, are evidently concerned with the deconditioning of individuals. While they believe that the individual must be freed *from* something in order to be free, they do not insist that the individual must be free *to do* something in particular. This is a step away from the social-focus of the classical thinkers, who would say that an individual must use his freedom to aid others in order to sustain collective freedom. The CrimethInc

⁶ Ibid. 29.

collective is not, however, so careless as to advocate pure individualism, and they even let slip an acknowledgement of our cooperative propensities:

Some misunderstand the claim that we should pursue our own desires to be mere hedonism. But it is not the fleeting, insubstantial desires of the typical libertine that we are speaking about here. It is the strongest, deepest, most lasting desires and inclinations of the individual: it is her most fundamental loves and hates that should shape her values. And the fact that there is no God to demand that we love one another or act virtuously does not mean that we should not do these things for our own sake, if we find them rewarding – which almost all of us do. But let us do what we do for our *own* sake, not out of obedience!⁷

It appears that the CrimethInc. writers are focused entirely on the access of consciousness, and are intentionally rejecting its direction from outside. This would seem to be a reaction to a conflict which occurs within anarchist circles between the two tenets of individualism and communalism. The classical anarchists emphasized the latter tenet, and it is often suggested that in attempting to sustain a communal ethic within their theories, they undermined that tenet of individual autonomy which makes anarchism so unique.⁸ If the classical anarchists supported an education system with the aim of conditioning individuals to a specific propensity, and if this aim is the same as that of a capitalist state's education system, then mustn't the classical anarchists aim to coerce the individual? In education, an individual reaches anarchism – in the pure, linguistic sense of being “without rule” – when she is released from that which ruled her, this being, to the anarchist perspective, authoritarian conditioning. Is an individual still without rule, though, when his education continues within certain confines, be they as wide as equality and justice? The CrimethInc. writers seem to have this question in mind, for, as stated, their writing is aimed at the deconditioning, but not at the direction, of the individual.

Prior to that passage in defense of individualism, CrimethInc., in *Days of War, Nights of Love*, dismantles the concept of universal morality. Their critique is basically one of empiricism versus rationalism, they being the empiricists:

⁷ CrimethInc. *Days of War, Nights of Love*. 2nd ed. Salem, Or.: CrimethInc. Workers' Collective, 2011. 27.

⁸ Judith Suissa. *Anarchism and Education*. 2nd ed. Oakland: PM Press, 2010. 50.

. . . we can investigate the freezing temperature of water: we can measure it and agree together that we have arrived at some kind of ‘objective’ truth, insofar as such a thing is possible. On the other hand, what do we observe if we want to investigate whether it is true that murder is evil? . . . As for the words of priests and moralists, if they can’t offer any hard evidence from this world, why should we believe their claims? And regarding our instincts – if we feel that something is right or wrong, that may make it right or wrong for us, but that’s not proof that it is *universally* good or evil.⁹

To CrimethInc., there is no instruction but one’s own, no pre-determined, moral basis from which to act. In bringing into question the immorality of murder, they reject even the basis of mutual aid from which the classical anarchists would act. To put a traditionally moralist perspective simply, to murder someone is to inhibit their freedom rather than to aid in it, and this is what might be thought of as “evil” about murder, which would make the contrasting “good” action to be aiding in someone’s freedom, that is, their ability to be materially and ideologically independent. CrimethInc. does away entirely with good and evil, though, declaring that “We need only feel in our hearts that it is right, that it is right for *us*, to have all the reason we need.”¹⁰ Such a declaration smacks of Murray Bookchin’s “post-scarcity anarchism,” wherein “Desire must become Need.”¹¹

Their perspective is useful in that it will not turn away those whose experiences have made them so vehemently opposed to the state that any amount of coercion is cause for their revolt; it is useful in that it will prevent those who have only a taste for the exoticism of freedom from returning to the banal security of their external authority. It is problematic, however, because it does not address the true complexity of conditioning and of human propensities. CrimethInc.’s suggestion that “We can act compassionately towards each other because we *want* to, not just because ‘morality dictates,’”¹² suggests that they recognize the human propensity for cooperation as a mean to overcome

⁹ CrimethInc. *Days of War, Nights of Love*. 2nd ed. Salem, Or.: CrimethInc. Workers’ Collective, 2011. 25.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 28-29.

¹¹ Murray Bookchin. *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*. Oakland: AK Press, 2004. 187.

¹² *Ibid.* 28.

struggle, but it suggests more strongly that they have not thought out, or at least not kept track of, their argument.

If CrimethInc. rejects universal morality because it is not empirically provable, then they should reject the individual morality which they describe as being felt in “our hearts.” What we feel in our hearts is still conditioned by what we feel around us, for the heart is not a mind apart from the brain’s – when we feel that something is right for ourselves we are deciding so based on some experiential facts which we may or may not recognize. An individual may feel that it is right for him to be greedy and competitive, but someone interacting with him would have the right to ask why he felt that it was right for him to do this – now, one can think of plenty of reasons to be greedy and competitive, I’m sure, but I’m also sure that it is easier to think of those reasons when there is historical and material evidence for their success. Argue with me if you will, but a person reading *Days of War, Nights of Love* in the present day will find far more historical and material evidence for the success of greed and competition in individual sustenance than of cooperation. In terms of the Darwinian struggle, who is more secure today? The oligarchs of the world, the heads of state, the lawyers and judges? Or is it the rebellious students, the poor, the Zapatistas and the Wobblies? The former amass power for themselves, and are thus able to direct it outward; the latter amass power for others, and thus can only hope that it might then be directed inward. Most of us in this world are subject to the outwardly directed power of the former, and thus we more frequently witness greed and competition securing access to resources than we do cooperation. Thus, the majority of our experience is related to or filtered by authority, coercion, greed and competition, and it is from these experiences that we would draw our individual morality, be it consciously or not.

This fact of the persistence of conditioning brings us back to the educational perspective of the classical anarchists, wherein an individual’s conditions are to be broken down, but then rebuilt in alternative forms. Competition is the paradigm from which individuals in the present must step into cooperation, and the classical anarchists believed that a step backward was as easy as a step forward. This dance between the propensities is due to the fact that transitioning from one to the other is not a question of progress, of moving forward or backward in human consciousness, as Bakunin believed,

but of dialectic, of moving sideways in human consciousness.¹³ Because of the ease of the step, the sustainment of an anarchist society requires that individuals have some basis to believe that it is better to step in one way – the cooperative – than in the other. Furthermore, the very initiation of the revolutionary consciousness requires that same basis, some empirical evidence of another way of being. The classical anarchists, in defending themselves through the internal conflicts of the nineteenth century’s infant radical organizations, were unwilling to recognize the true distance of their ideology from the mind of an individual conditioned by capitalism. The American Marxist Staughton Lynd, in conversation with the Balkan anarchist Andrej Grubacic, is succinct about the reality of that distance, though, and he expresses insight into the possibilities of closing that distance:

. . . I believe passionately that it is unfair and unrealistic to expect poor and oppressed people, or for that matter, anyone else, ardently to desire and sacrifice for something they have not experienced. We learn, as the poet John Keats once said, from what we experience ‘on our pulses.’ . . . Lately I have been wondering if this is why great leaps toward the new, post-capitalist world seem to spring from communities that are still in living contact with pre-capitalist folkways and institutions: in Chiapas, in Bolivia, in South Africa, to name a few.¹⁴

What Lynd means in reference to Chiapas, Bolivia, and South Africa is that people in these places have the empirical bases, the pre-existing conditions, if you will, for anarchism. Let me elaborate on his example of Chiapas, where he is referring to the Zapatistas and the importance of Mayan culture to their politics.

The Zapatistas are a group of people living in the jungles of Mexico’s most southern state, Chiapas, who became considered radicals once a statute in the Mexican constitution allowing communal land holdings was deleted to make the country fit for

¹³ Judith Suissa. *Anarchism and Education*. 2nd ed. Oakland: PM Press, 2010. 35. In reference to Bakunin: “. . . he remained a Hegelian idealist in the sense that his view of historical progress involved a notion of human consciousness progressing through successive stages, each resolving the tensions and contradictions of the previous stages.”

¹⁴ Staughton Lynd and Andrej Grubacic. *Wobblies & Zapatistas*. Oakland: PM Press, 2008. 50.

NAFTA. The famous face, or mask, rather, of the Zapatistas, Subcommandante Marcos, was a Marxist academic in Mexico City when the capitulation was made, and it inspired him and a group of his colleagues to hang up their tweed and don ski masks. As Lynd says, they “gave up their academic affiliations in Mexico City and moved to the Lacandón jungle in Chiapas. There they ‘accompanied’ indigenous Mayan communities for the next ten years, until, on January 1, 1994, all concerned were ready to make a public appearance.”¹⁵ Lynd goes on to say that although Zapatismo, as the Zapatista ideology is called, is a fusion of Marxism, indigenous ideas, and liberation theology, the influence of Mayan culture seemed to be the base of its radical praxis.¹⁶ Evidently, these were not the Mayans of the old city-states, for they “had been living a decentralized, communal, essentially anarchist way of life for hundreds if not thousands of years.”¹⁷ Zapatismo builds itself upon and critically employs the culture of those Mayan peoples, basing social organization on those “essentially anarchist” traditions, and basing political power on the Mayan concept of “leading by obeying,” or making it possible for individuals to meet communal needs by ensuring that their individual needs are met.¹⁸

David Graeber, in *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, makes it clear that despite the influence of Mayan traditions within Zapatismo, it is not an “indigenous movement”. Indigenous voices take part in the revolutionary dialectic of the Zapatistas, and may even dominate, but the sense of a dialectic is never lost to the movement itself:

The Zapatistas were overwhelmingly drawn from Tzeltal, Tzotzil, and Tojolobal Maya-speaking communities. . . . There was, apparently, some difference of opinion within the Zapatista movement itself over the forms of democratic practice they wished to promulgate. The Maya-speaking base pushed strongly for a form of consensus process adopted from their own communal traditions, but reformulated to be more radically egalitarian; some of the Spanish-speaking military leadership of the rebellion were highly skeptical of whether this could

¹⁵ Ibid. 64.

¹⁶ Ibid. 64. Lynd: “As Teresa Ortiz put it to my wife and myself . . . the Marxists from Mexico City learned more from the Mayans than the Mayans learned from the Marxists.”

¹⁷ Ibid. 13.

¹⁸ Ibid. 5.

really be applied on the national level. Ultimately, though, they had to defer to the vision of those they ‘led by obeying,’ as the Zapatista saying went.¹⁹

Zapatismo is a synthesis of revolutionary ideologies aimed at the reorganization of society, as the desire for the Mayan contingent to radicalize their traditional processes shows. The mainstream media, however, often misrepresents its holistic intentions because of its proximity to indigenism, depicting the Zapatista aim as multiculturalism rather than revolution, indigenous rights rather than human rights. That misrepresentation is merely an unwillingness to recognize radicalism as experimentation, though. The Zapatistas are experimenting with ways of being, not simply defending the way in which they have been. They see the necessity of an empirical base from which to act, and they see the necessity of dialectic in synthesizing practice with theory, or rather, empirical evidence with rational hypotheses.

Lynd’s proposition regarding places like Chiapas speaks directly to this anarcho-empiricist argument. However, because the “pre-capitalist folkways and institutions” of Zapatismo remain in dialectic with other ways of and thinking and doing, we cannot think of such customs themselves as revolutionary. In truth, it seems that no single ideology with the potential for establishing counterpowers, as Graeber calls revolutionary institutions, can itself sustain revolution. The Zapatistas have sustained themselves through a dialectic between precedent, as in the Mayan influence; theory, as in Marxism; and impetus, as in liberation theology, wherein the three respond to and elaborate upon each other. Any one of them could be the basis for alternative living, but it is only through their mutual aid and negotiation that they can unify movements, cross contexts, and begin to shift paradigms. An empirical basis for freedom and equality is merely the experience of the two – it is not itself the recognition of that particular experience’s limits, nor is it the recognition of ways to expand freedom and equality. Nevertheless, Lynd’s point that “it is unfair and unrealistic to expect poor and oppressed people . . . ardently to desire and sacrifice for something they have not experienced,” does not present all its complications in regions where people have an empirical experience of

¹⁹ David Graeber. *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004. 103-104.

freedom and equality, of anarchism, in the form of pre-capitalist cultures or proximity to such cultures.

Revolutionary anarchistic experiments have not been isolated to such populations, however. I am not, and I do not think that Lynd is, suggesting that poor and oppressed people in places where pre-capitalist cultures are either without visibility or not present do not at all recognize that they are poor and oppressed. Rather, they have no evidence of an alternative, no pre-existing condition or precedent for one. Theory and impetus, then, must work that much more to elaborate upon what precedents of freedom and equality might be recognized in a purely capitalist society, as they have in the Netherlands.

The anarchist movements in the Netherlands, from their beginnings in the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, were driven by a combination of Marxist analysis, anarcho-syndicalism, and Christianity. Two ex-pastors, Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis and Bart de Ligt, published numerous works which articulated a Dutch voice in the revolutionary conversation of the late nineteenth century. They referenced not medieval free cities or pastoralist folk tales for threads of European freedom to weave, but applied Marxist theories of class analysis to Dutch working conditions, and critiqued state violence from the perspective of Christian pacifism.²⁰ The early Dutch impetus to revolution – largely from the libertarian streams of Christianity – and their theory for revolution’s spread – Marxist critique, as is so often case, but with an anarchistic approach to labor organization – were directed toward the Dutch experience of capitalism, toward industrial life in a country whose history is solidly, violently statist.

Unsurprisingly, the Dutch anarchist movement, having lost its proximity to its own pre-capitalist culture, evolved to sustain itself on that empirical basis of freedom which is common to all humans: imagination, the banner of which was taken up by the Provo and Kabouter movements in the mid to late twentieth century.²¹ To draw imagination from the folds of its conditions, however, the Provos and Kabouters had to rely upon and contribute to the ongoing dialogue between theoreticians such as

²⁰ Peter Marshall. *Demanding the Impossible*. 4th ed. Oakland: PM Press, 2010. 484-485.

²¹ Ibid. 486. “They stood in the constructive anarchist tradition which stemmed from Proudhon and Landauer, not the apocalyptic one associated with Bakunin. . . . Their legacy of play, spontaneity, fun and idealism has not been lost.”

Nieuwenhuis and de Ligt – their theories elaborated the precedent of imagination to make its faint flickers amidst capitalist conditions into bright beacons, at once internalizing the impetus to action. Imagination being creativity, it seems a likely dialectical growth from earlier Dutch anarchists' Christian pacifism, a secularization and, as said, internalization of the earlier impetus. We see in the Dutch example, then, theory taking the reins of a scant precedent and a waning impetus in order to sustain the revolutionary dialectic.

Because Marxist analysis seems to be the most frequently applied revolutionary ideology on the left, I feel it is necessary to elaborate on its potential to cross contexts, to draw theory from diverse practices. The great importance of Marxism is in its critique of capitalism. It takes the hegemonic bull by the horns and examines the conditions which it places upon individuals and societies. From the evidence within the system itself, Marxism draws a conclusion that counters the dominant paradigm and yet does not invalidate it. Specifically, it declares that capitalism precludes itself, and that revolution toward an egalitarian model is thus inevitable. As Robert Heilbroner writes in a summary of Marx's ideas,

. . . capitalism must unknowingly breed its own successor. Within its great factories it would not only create the technical base for socialism – rationally planned production – but it would create as well a trained and disciplined *class* which would be the agent of socialism – the embittered proletariat. By its own inner dynamic, capitalism would produce its own downfall, and in the process, nourish its own enemy.²²

The current paradigm is capitalism, and an ideology which wishes to change the current paradigm must understand its effects upon the populace and its effects upon itself. Marxism is the ideology which delivered the first influential critique of capitalism, and as capitalism has evolved through the centuries, so has Marxism evolved to critique it.

It is important not to think of Marxism as a revolutionary movement in and of itself. Such a misconception inspires those simple critiques that point out the failings of communist experiments as examples of the inadequacy of Marx and Engels' ideas. Early

²² Robert L. Heilbroner. *The Worldly Philosophers*. 7th edition. New York: Touchstone, 1999. 147.

experiments of the kind, such as Leninism, skirted true revolution by failing to break out of a statist, market context. Lynd describes a conflict between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg on the subject of colonized nations that exemplifies what I call “unintegrated” Marxism’s tendency to rely on state power to initiate and sustain its theories:

Lenin said that socialists should support the ‘self-determination’ of colonized nations, and worry about socialism later on. Luxemburg said that once you started down the road of parochial nationalism there was no way to find your way back to international solidarity.²³

Lenin’s support for oppressed nations at the beginning of the twentieth century was an example of that reliance because, if I recall the later events of the Cold War correctly, “supporting” the “self-determination” of another nation often means accumulating more state power to one’s cause. Luxemburg, in true anarchist manner, recognized that nations and states can themselves threaten solidarity.

It is because of Lenin and Luxembourg’s conflict, and because of the holistic Zapatista example, that I call Leninist-type manifestations of Marxism “unintegrated.” I may have misspoken earlier, in saying that Marxism takes the bull – capitalism – by the horns. Certainly it takes something of the bull, but it cannot take the horns, because it originates within the beast’s belly. It must be wrenched out into the open by an integrative effort, a synthesis of revolutionary ideologies. Such could have been the result of the Internationals of the nineteenth century, but there the opportunity to integrate the various developing revolutionary theories into an effective praxis was lost to squabble. In truth, Marxism, its socialist and communist offshoots, and anarchism, are not separate methods of taking on the proverbial beast, but rather the scattered pieces of a tool – the dissembled pieces of a rifle to some, the dissembled elements of a lantern to others. Lynd, as usual, puts it well, though is a bit benign:

²³ Staughton Lynd and Andrej Grubacic. *Wobblies & Zapatistas*. Oakland: PM Press, 2008. 161.

I am a person who believes that Marxism and anarchism each has indispensable strengths and dramatic weaknesses. I think the future of the left literally depends on synthesizing these two traditions. I do not believe one should be privileged over the other. Nor do I consider it helpful to contrive terms such as ‘Anarcho-Marxist.’ It is much simpler than that. A century and half ago, for reasons that have more to do with personalities than anything else, these two viewpoints were made to seem mutually exclusive alternatives. They are not. They are Hegelian moments that need to be synthesized.²⁴

I agree that terms such as “Anarcho-Marxist” are unhelpful, but only because Marxist analysis must be inherent within anarchism for it to ever hope of breaking out of the beast, let alone killing it. In relation to anarcho-empiricism, Marxism is important because it critiques capitalism within its own context, this context being the empirical experience of most of the world. Too often, anarchism, in its utopianism, seeks out the empirical basis for the world that should be, while forgetting to seek out the empirical basis for the world that is, and in turn finds itself unable to get from here to there. Anarchism seems to know what there looks like; Marxism seems to know what here looks like; both arrive at their conclusions empirically, through the observation of experience. To me, though, anarcho must remain a prefix, for it is always necessary to keep the end in mind as one gathers one’s means – and anarchism is certainly the end.

In light of the previously discussed view of human conditioning which sees it as a dialectic between propensities, anarchism must be the end of revolutionary praxis. To develop the cooperative propensity to its fullest, the competitive must be suppressed, and to fully suppress the competitive propensity, experiences of authority and coercion must be eliminated or restrained in every possible moment. Marxism, then, must go beyond socialism, beyond the state and the market and into anarchy to keep the threat of capitalism at bay. Likewise, anarchism must reconcile itself with the empirical bases of “here” before the empirical bases of “there” can enter into the consciousness of an individual who does not know that there is a “there.”

This necessity of synthesis returns to the question of how to decondition and recondition a human. If human conditioning is a dialectic, then so must be the human life

²⁴ Ibid. 99.

– it requires an exchange between precedent, theory, and impetus at all times, making the sustenance of free societies a constant process. I do not expect anarchism to kill the Hobbesian monster – rather, I expect that anarchism will quell its destructive power. In anarchism, when we become the monster – it being only a simple sidestep – we do so in the context of individuals rising out of and initiating their own open dialectics.

Therefore, our destructive, monstrous dialectic will either run its own, isolated course to extinguishment and others will freely avoid it or freely seek aid when affected by it, or it will open itself to the scrutiny of other dialectics and be doused by precedent, theory, and impetus. I expect this to be the case only if anarchism is able to become a strong empirical basis to its dialectic, if it is able to be so integrated as to present its liberating and equalizing ends as the initiator of an understanding of precedent, a growth of theory, and a reception of impetus. To use the phrase “anarcho-empiricism,” then, is to remind wanton, ideal, utopian anarchists that although anarchism is the specifically desired end of their revolutionary praxis, it exists within the aged and varied context of empirical, evidential inquiry and synthesis.

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