



# An *Other* State of Mind is Possible: Anarchism and Psychology

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## Abstract

When order is presumed to rely upon centralised authority, anarchy is assumed to mean violent chaos. However, anarchists have long argued, and demonstrated, that other forms of order are both possible and beneficial: ecologically, socially and psychologically. While anarchism has been influential in the development of psychology and is currently being taken up in related disciplines, with the exception of Dennis Fox's body of work, anarchism has yet to be taken seriously in contemporary psychology. Drawing on anarchist, poststructuralist and feminist theory as well as personal experience, this paper offers an introduction to anarchism as not only a public social practice but also an inner state of mind. This is offered in contrast to the state of mind which underpins the state as institution. The statist state of mind is characterised by representation over and above direct experience, an attraction to domination and control, and a continual reliance on fear. An *other* state of mind, necessary for and produced by anarchist(ic) social relations, is characterised by vitality (freedom–equality), non-attachment to memory, and love. Such a state of mind, I argue, is cultivated through (spiritual) practice internally and through free, equal and loving relations with others. Such nano- and micro-level processes networked together potentially result in macro-level anarchist social relations more commonly associated with anarchist thought.

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## Introduction

Anarchism is perhaps the most challenging of political philosophies. Arguing that institutions such as the State, the Market and other forms of hierarchy and domination are not only harmful to human beings and the wider ecosystem but also unnecessary, anarchism is frequently villainised by those attached to those institutions or to a cynical view of human nature. When order is presumed to rely upon centralised authority, anarchy is assumed to mean violent chaos. However, anarchists have long argued, and demonstrated, that other forms of order are both possible and beneficial: ecologically, socially and psychologically. Indeed, germinal figures in the history of psychology have been greatly influenced by anarchism. One hundred years ago, anarchist Otto Gross wrote of “the inestimable future of psychoanalysis as the very soul of tomorrow's revolutionary movement” (cited in Heuer, 2004:160). More recent figures include co-founder of Gestalt Therapy Paul Goodman (1997), psycholinguist Noam Chomsky (2005), community psychologist Seymour Sarason (1982) and humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow (1971) who called for intellectuals to engage seriously with the anarchist tradition. This call has been taken up in recent years with the blossoming of scholarship work becoming known as Anarchist Studies. While growing strong in the related disciplines of politics and philosophy, geography and anthropology, anarchist theory and practice have yet to become visibly influential within the field(s) of psychology, with the notable exception of figures such as Dennis Fox (e.g., 2011a). Critical psychology draws inspiration from across disciplines perhaps working to heal the 19th century split of psychology from philosophy necessary for it to become a discipline of control (Fox, 2012). Anarchism, too, is known

for its disregard for borders. Fittingly then, this paper outlines a cross-disciplinary approach to developing anarchist psychology, even to the point of embracing apparent contradictions.

Is anarchism really realistic? While Lagalisse notes, “working to bring about postcapitalist social relations -- a possibility unproven – requires enormous faith” (2011:666), it is not a blind faith. Rather, it is faith based on observations – including those of Russian geographer and naturalist Pyotr Kropotkin made during his numerous studies of ecological and social systems. Against the dominant Hobbesian and social Darwinist thought of his time, Kropotkin argued that mutual aid, more than Spencer’s competitive “survival of the fittest”, was a key factor of evolution

inasmuch as it favors the development of such habits and characters as insure the maintenance and further development of the species, together with the greatest amount of welfare and enjoyment of life for the individual, with the least waste of energy (2009:33).

This view has since been affirmed by contemporary evolutionary research (Gould, 1997). And such observations continue. As David Graeber notes,

Anthropologists are after all the only group of scholars who know anything about actually-existing stateless societies; many have actually lived in corners of the world where states have ceased to function or at least temporarily pulled up stakes and left, and people are managing their own affairs autonomously; if nothing else, they are keenly aware that the most commonplace assumptions about what would happen in the absence of a state (“but people would just kill each other!”) are factually untrue (2004:95).

Similarly, anarchist sociologist Colin Ward (1998) argues that anarchism is a theory of organisation, offering numerous examples of everyday ways in which people work things out as equals; contemporary anarchist philosopher Todd May (2012) examines how everyday friendships demonstrate a fully functioning order which is *other* to capitalist economies; and anarchist essayist and storyteller Ursula Le Guin (2011) notes the quotidian modesty which disregards elite pretensions. Interdisciplinary anarchist Weaver comments, “I subscribe to the viewpoint that we are all anarchists most of the time. We live and delight in the muddling through of mutual aid” (2011:224). These everyday anarchies sometimes blossom into larger scale insurrections where people no longer obey the dominant order but instead create alternative orders based on cooperation and direct democracy (Fox, 2011b; Khatib et al, 2012; Maeckelbergh, 2009; Sitrin 2006, 2012). In contrast to cynical views of (human) nature, psychology might accept Sarason’s (1982) invitation to consider what he called the *central anarchist insight*: the institution of the centralised state and blind obedience to authority and procedure inhibits both individual autonomy and a psychological sense of community. Dennis Fox elaborates: “law’s short- and long-term gains simultaneously create a greater dependency on legal authorities, reducing the ability to work together to solve problems and resolve conflicts” (1999:23). Practically, an anarchist psychology might involve an examination of (and ongoing experimentation with) the practices, qualities of relationship and forms of social institutions which enable and nurture vitality (Jun 2010): the simultaneous freedom and equality, individuality and community, which anarchists advocate.

I draw upon Stanley’s (2012:631) statement about the political value of mindfulness by suggesting we also revise our basic understanding of anarchism as not only a public social practice but also an inner state of mind. This approach to anarchist psychology draws on 1) anarchist narratives of a political philosophy and praxis engaged in the project of realising post-state, post-capitalist social relations through a revolutionary process and 2) subjugated

anarchist(ic) knowledge which seeks to examine the ethical, emotional and spiritual nature of that process. The title is inspired by Sian Sullivan's (2005) engagement with the social forum, a counter-institution developed during the wave of anarchistic globalisation movements previous to this current moment of Arab Spring, Occupy and Idle No More. The World Social Forum, first held in Brazil in 2001, arose as a form of grassroots countersummit to the elite World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland. Sullivan questions the slogan "another world is possible", asking in what ways new subjectivities are produced in order that the so-called other can be embraced and structures of hierarchy and domination dissolved. This essay, in the spirit of her simultaneously psychological, spiritual, political and philosophical poststructuralist anarchy-feminist engagement, asks similar questions and offers notes for developing anarchist psychology. As both anarchism and psychology have many branches with no singular authoritative account, other anarchist psychologies are also possible.

### **Anarchist Ethics**

Anarchists aim to replace existing forms of hierarchy and domination, both institutionalised and interpersonal, with *other* forms of organisation (characterised by mutual aid, voluntary association, spontaneity and self-management) practiced in the here and now. By practising anarchist ideals in organising social spaces, autonomous, empowered, cooperative subjectivities (*other* states of mind) emerge (Acklesberg, 2005 [1991]; Clough, 2012; Franks, 2003; Gordon, 2008; Roseneil, 2000). As San Francisco-based organiser Rahula Janowski puts it

The world I want to live in is people collectively making decisions about the day-to-day operations of our lives; everybody is able to participate, and 'able' meaning both that they're allowed to and that they have the capacity – the skills, the time, the access. That's the world I want to live in, so the ways I want to struggle for that world is by trying, as much as possible, to do that now in the spaces where I can (Dixon 2012:44).

Examples of this practical anarchy abound. Rouhani describes the use of anarchist pedagogy which transformed students who

all reflect senses of confidence, dedication, creativity, and desire for collaborative social change that are at least in part linked to what and how they have learned. For me, our pedagogical experiments turned me into an anarchist, in ways that have greatly improved my abilities to teach, learn, live, and act in the world (2012:1738).

Kaltefleiter describes how the anarchy-feminist cultural practices of the Riot Grrrl movement allowed participants "to articulate feelings and experiences of life that had previously remained sealed within their minds" (2009:234). Anarchist ethics further influence numerous experiments and innovations in healthcare (Cleminson, 1995; Goodway, 2007; Smith, 2012), disaster relief (Crow, 2011; Lennard, 2012), education (DeLeon, 2012), research methods (Heckert, 2010a), economics (Shannon et al, 2012; White and Williams, 2012), art (Antliff, 2007), activism (Gordon, 2008), restorative justice (Amster 2003) and more – all areas of interest to psychologists. These examples of practical anarchy are also idealistic because each experiment is recognised both for its own immediate value and as part of a wider movement working to bring a tremendous global transformation of social, economic, political and ecological relationships. An ideal anarchist world might be characterised by a global tapestry of non-hierarchical cultures with neither states nor profits nor privilege based on race, class, gender, sexuality or other social markers. Instead, cultures find their own ways

of simultaneously practising freedom and equality, valuing both individuality and community. Few anarchists see this as a final, fixed state of affairs which occurs after “the revolution”, but rather a continuous process of nurturing anarchist subjectivities (for debate, see Davis, 2012).

Within individualistic, statist cultures, simultaneous freedom and equality is seen as idealistic in the pejorative sense: as impossible in real life because the two are imagined to be in inherent tension. And, indeed, an individualistic notion of freedom (i.e., privilege) is incompatible with equality. Judith Butler (in Heckert 2011:94) makes this distinction clear in a discussion of queer anarchism:

any minority has to make allies among those who are subject to arbitrary and devastating forms of state violence. It is in this way that I think queer anarchism is ‘smarter’ about state power, and legal violence in particular. Gay libertarianism imagines it is defending the rights of individuals, but fails to see that individualism is a social form which, under conditions of capitalism, depends upon both social inequality and the violent power of the state.

Anticipating Butler, Foucault and Sarason by some years, Goldman (1869–1940) likewise challenged the statist, capitalist definition of the individual, offering instead what might be seen as a more spiritual understanding of human individuality (Hebden, 2012).

Individuality is not the impersonal and mechanistic thing that the State treats as an ‘individual’. [. . .] The living [hu]man cannot be defined; [s]he is the fountain-head of all life and all values; [s]he is not a part of this or of that; [s]he is a whole, an individual whole, a growing, changing, yet always constant whole (Goldman 1996:111–112).

The sex-radical anarchism of Goldman’s period was radically influenced by the belief of Quakers, among others, in the divine spark in everyone (Passet, 2003), and Goldman herself was inspired by the anarchist mystic Gustav Landauer (Ferguson, 2011). Perhaps it was this wisdom, this vitality, this spark in each of us to which she referred as the fountain-head and which the state must necessarily deny. To claim the authority of knowledge/power over others, to speak on their behalf, depends on a denial of the wisdom of those individuals.

Goldman’s impressive body of theory, and much of anarchism’s more widely, is not only political and spiritual but it is also deeply psychological (Fox, 2011a; Honeywell, 2012). Anarchist transformation, Goldman notes, “can be brought about only through the consideration of every phase of life – individual, as well as the collective; the internal, as well as the external phases” (1996:64). Herbert Read also highlighted simultaneous development of individual freedom and “social consciousness” because “society can only function harmoniously if the individuals composing it are integrated persons, that is to say they are whole and healthy, and by that very reason competent to render mutual aid” (1943:18; see also Maslow, 1971). Thus, there is no necessary tension between individuality and community; rather, anarchism is a “fractal democracy” (Sullivan, 2005:380) where zooming into the nano- and micro-levels of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships or out to the macro-levels of organisations and polities we see self-similar patterns of anarchist ethics in practice.

## **A State of Mind**

In anarchist discourse, the state is largely defined as an external problem, an enemy to be defeated, an institution to be eradicated. However, as numerous critics both within movements and from the sidelines have noted, hierarchies also develop within anarchist

movements. Indeed, the very common anarchist discourse of social transformation as war and activism as a heroic endeavour of confrontation with police and other forces of authority rests on hierarchies of gender and ability, potentially reifying the very social patterns it purports to demolish. Domination occurs within activist spaces and intimate relationships, often mirroring societal hierarchies (Chen, Dulani & Piepza-Samarasinha, 2010; Gordon, 2008; Jappesen and Nazar, 2012; Coleman & Bassi, 2011; Sullivan, 2008).

However, anarchists also offer a more nuanced understanding of the state as “a social relationship; a certain way of people relating to one another. It can be destroyed by creating new social relationships; i.e., by people relating to one another differently” (Landauer, 2010:214). What are the roots of this relationship of the state? I offer for consideration the proposal that the state is always *also* a state of mind. Murray Bookchin (2003:94–95) argues

the State is not merely a constellation of bureaucratic and coercive institutions. It is also a state of mind, an instilled mentality for ordering reality. Accordingly, the State has a long history – not only institutionally but also psychologically. [. . .] Awe and apathy in the face of State power are products of social conditioning that renders this very power possible.

Similarly, Colin Ward (1998:72) contrasts “the state of mind that is induced by free and independent action, and that which is induced by dependence and inertia”. Between these two, we might see the state of mind that characterises the state as an attraction to domination, to control, to self-centredness whether in the role of hero, villain, victim or lethargic witness. (Here I refer to real life domination rather than the play domination of BDSM (Call, 2011)). Bookchin, Ward and other anarchists identify feedback loops whereby the state (and other forms of hierarchy) as macro-institutions promote hierarchical relations between individuals and thus a particular state of mind which accepts hierarchy, whether as necessary and good or as an object of resentment which must be wearily endured (Newman 2004:124).

We might also turn to Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of overcoding, that operation “that constitutes the essence of the State” (1977:199), which involves lumping life’s infinite diversity into categories and then judging in terms of those categories, thus reinforcing the appearance of authority inherent in the categories themselves. In querying the benefits of legal procedures for social justice, Dennis Fox makes a similar critique, arguing that “imposing group-level categories and abstract principles regardless of individual circumstances inevitably causes unjust hardship” (1999:21). Fox, Deleuze and Guattari echo Landauer’s notion of the Bund:

It is a form of bondage or containment within boundaries, a conceptual policing-up of what is in itself irregular, untidy, resistant to categorization. ‘All history, all comprehension is a simplification, a condensation’, Landauer warns us; in truth, there are no ‘fixed and distinct things’ such as our comprehension and our historical will-to-know demand from and project onto reality (Cohn, 2010: 425).

For these scholars, the practice of domination necessarily involves a mental projection onto reality which is assumed to be true. This projection (not the psychoanalytic form) is characterised by a belief in the separation of “fixed and distinct things”, a hierarchy among them and the claim of authority to make both separations and judgments. Here, the attraction lies not necessarily to domination *per se* but to the authority of being *right*, in both the intellectual and moral senses.

That the state is both a pattern of relations and a state of mind fits with what Todd May has argued is the principal mode of political domination: representation. “Practices of telling people who they are and what they want erect a barrier between them and who (or what) they

can create themselves to be” (May, 1994:131). While Foucault was credited with teaching us “the indignity of speaking for others” by Deleuze (1977:209), Nathun Jun argues that “the anarchists were the first to acknowledge that representation is not a purely macropolitical phenomenon” (2010:57). This continues down to the individual level. The mind is a phenomenal tool for representation; categories and judgements can be profoundly useful in day-to-day living. However, when a person is attached to their representations (e.g., thought projections onto reality), they no longer relate directly to life. They relate instead to the authority of their thoughts (Taylor, 2012). The survival of the State as institution both encourages and depends upon micro-level acts of rigid categorisation and judgement. Such rigidity obscures details from vision, whether this is the local detailed knowledge missed by big picture statecraft (Scott, 1998) or compassion for oneself and other living beings missed through a focus on instrumental self-importance (Edwards, 1998). One exemplar of state-thought in action is the character Sheldon Cooper in the popular American television programme *The Big Bang Theory*. The tragicomic nature of his character is based on the absurdity of his attachment to his own self-centred authority. Another example: border control depends upon the belief in the legitimacy of categories of citizenship, nation states and immigration officials over the experience of and compassion for those labelled illegal (Hayter, 2004). Such belief may be strategically mobilised through the deployment of discourse, including threats of violence, designed to stimulate fear and weaken social bonds (Clough, 2012). This may draw upon images of the other, including the danger of becoming the other through loss of status of oneself, and to simultaneously encourage reliance upon state(-like) protection (Brown, 1995). Ultimately, the threat may be to the very status of being alive.

### **An Other State of Mind**

Anarchist psychology can function not only to recognise the forms of political representation that occur at the macro-, micro- and nano-levels (fractals of domination) but also, and perhaps more importantly, to nourish freedom–equality at all levels (fractals of democracy). Jun refers to this conjoined anarchist ethic as *vitality*.

In both its potential to change and its actual transformations, in both its singularity and universality, human life is a reflection of the ‘unity in multiplicity’ which Proudhon ascribes to the universe as a whole. Individual and social, social and ecological, ecological and global, global and cosmic – these are just so many levels of analysis which, if they can be said to differ at all, only differ in terms of scope. For the anarchists, ‘*Il ya seulement la vie, et la vie suffit*’ (‘there is only life and it is enough’) (2010:56).

Ivan Illich, inspired by the anarchist psychologist Paul Goodman, similarly and clearly argued for a very different quality of life than that characterised by competition, profit and control:

I choose the term conviviality to designate the contrary of institutionalized productivity. I want it to mean autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and intercourse of persons with their environment, and this is *in contrast with the conditioned response of persons* to the demands made upon them by others or their milieu. I consider conviviality individual freedom realized in mutual personal interdependence and, as such, an intrinsic ethical value. I believe that without conviviality life becomes meaningless and persons wither (in Graham, 2009:442, my emphasis).

And I see a third source of a vital, anarchist psychology in radical ecopsychology which in turn has roots in libertarian Marxism (Fisher, 2002) and the anarchism of Goodman, Bookchin and others (Heckert, 2010b; Rhodes, 2008). Andy Fisher writes

The broad political task is therefore to decolonize or revitalize the lifeworld. Because the system is parasitic on the lifeworld, there comes a time when the degradation of the latter reaches such an extreme that the forces of life started to fight back. [...] In this light, ecopsychology may itself be seen as part of a larger political project for decolonizing the lifeworld and redirecting the system (2012:104–105).

In sharp contrast to the state of mind both underpinning and supported by hierarchical systems, these three thinkers (among others) advocate another state of mind, one which perceives and cherishes the beauty and unity of life for its own sake rather than for instrumental purposes of control. This, I argue, lies at the heart of anarchism. Of course, anarchists can suffer from that malaise predicted by Illich which comes from individualistic and radically unequal ways of living, and so their writing can become cynical, tired and resentful. As Nietzsche noted many years ago, anarchists are prone to the latter. Like Newman, who engages with this criticism, my interest is in “an anarchism without *ressentiment*” (2004:124).

### **Nurturing Vital Anarchist Subjectivities**

The insightful Emma Goldman suggested that “freedom, expansion, opportunity, and, above all, peace and repose, alone can teach us the real dominant factors of human nature and all its wonderful possibilities” (1996:73). Similarly, Carole Pateman points out, “participation develops and fosters the very qualities necessary for it; the more individuals participate the better able they become to do so” (1970: 42–43). Anarchist psychology might look like a circular argument where 1) human capacity for participatory freedom is asserted and 2) the condition required for that freedom is freedom itself. Instead, we could say it is a prefigurative spiral whereby practicing freedom, we do not come around to the same place we started but instead explore subtly different terrain. Like Foucault (1988), anarchist psychology might emphasise “practices of freedom”.

The problem is not of trying to dissolve [relations of power] in the utopia of a perfectly transparent communication, but to give one’s self the rules of law, the techniques of management, and also the ethics, ethos, the practice of self, which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination (Foucault 1988:18).

In an anarchic essay on spiritual activism and the recognition of the beauty and unity of life, Gloria Anzaldúa (2002) argues this practice involves a combination of inner work and public acts. Where most anarchist writing focuses on public acts, which are fundamental to anarchist psychology as described above, I focus here on inner work due to limitations of space and to bring nuance to questions of the public.

I should note that many anarchists would balk at the parallels I am drawing between anarchism and spirituality (Lagalis, 2011). What is referred to as spirituality in some cases may reinforce the very individualism which anarchism intends to dissolve (Carrett and King, 2005). However, just as spirituality can attract those who are looking for new ways to focus on themselves, many people are drawn to anarchism based on an individualistic sense of freedom. In both cases, that individualism may either fall away or be reinforced depending on the circumstances. Surprising alliances may evolve. Eckhart Tolle, for example, is a best-selling author saying something similar to what I am saying. Surely, the critic might say, this is spiritual capitalism. Like Foucault, however, he sees a clear link between individualism, state and capitalism. He writes

the ego is destined to dissolve, and all its ossified structures, whether they be religious or other institutions, corporations, or governments, will disintegrate from within, no matter how deeply entrenched they appear to be (Tolle 2006:19).

This from the book entitled *A New Earth*, echoing Deleuze and Guattari's (1994:99) call for philosophy to be "utopian" "so as to summon forth a new earth, a new people". No singular philosophy will accomplish this. Different concepts, different practices suit different people in different contexts. Philosophies may even be logically inconsistent with each other (e.g., the atman or true self of Hinduism versus the no-self of Buddhism; monotheism versus polytheism versus atheism) and yet still achieve the same results: wise and compassionate people who give selflessly to others. Like the anarchic Zapatistas of Chiapas who state "The world we want is one where many worlds fit" (Womack, ed. 1999:303), anarchist psychology might be open to a diversity of approaches to relating as free equals.

In dominant Western psychological frames, inner work could be read as the examination of memory through a therapeutic process. My own approach to anarchist psychology has been radically influenced by another kind of inner work. In my training as a yoga teacher, I have witnessed the liberating effects of physical practice, mental focus and yoga ethics in action (Satchidananda, 1978; for other anarchic connections between embodied movement and social movement, see Goia, 2008; the nanopolitics group, 2012). In an interview entitled the "yoga of anarchy", psychotherapist, yoga teacher and activist Michael Stone notes (McCann, 2007, np) that

it is not enough just to re-cognize the pattern [of our thoughts]. We have to see through the process of cognition so that we can see how whatever we are noticing is impermanent and without an inherent eternal substantiality in time and space. . . . And when we let go of all this contextualizing and storytelling, the feeling that is left is intimacy with all things.

Here, we see clearly the release of individualism called for by Goldman, in Stanley's (2012) relational mindfulness and in Foucault's recognition of anti-psychiatric, feminist and other

anarchistic struggles . . . [that] attack everything which separates the individual, breaks [their] links with others, splits up community life, forces the individual back on [themselves], and ties [them] to [their] own identity in a constraining way (1982:780–781).

While a yogic or meditative approach might involve more of the release than an attack, the principle remains that self-centred subjectivity hurts both community life and the individual mind. "Identity becomes a cage you reinforce and double-lock yourself into" (Anzaldua, 2002:558). Foucault calls for liberation "both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state" (1988:785). In order to do this, Landauer suggests we go deep into ourselves, deeper than memory which "is limited to the few and superficial experiences of our individual lives. . . . the true individuality that we find in the deepest depths of ourselves *is* community, humanity, divinity" (2010:105). To reach these depths, Anzaldua calls for the path of *conocimiento*,

a form of spiritual inquiry, [which] is reached via creative acts – writing, art-making, dancing, healing, teaching, meditation, and spiritual activism. [. . .] Through creative engagements, you embed your experiences in a larger frame of reference, connecting your personal struggles with those of other beings on the planet, with the struggles of the Earth itself (2002:542).

These practices of inner work serve to bring a certain “wakefulness of heart” (Rhys-Davids 1890, cited in Stanley 2012:635) which is hampered by the self-centred state of mind linked to capitalism, the state and other relations of domination. They also enable a form of action which creates something *other*, so that good revolutionary intentions do not inadvertently pave a path to hellish authority. As Stone puts it,

You have to recognize that because of the momentum of memory you have a moral obligation to practise so that you don’t put the negative effects of those memories into the culture through your actions. Yoga is action, but you can only take action based on non-attachment, otherwise it’s reactivity (2007, np).

If we react to our projection onto reality, based on memory rather than what is present, we are likely to reproduce the patterns of relation we hope to release. If we can see the world with insight, with fresh eyes, with a wakeful heart, then public acts have different effects. Changing perception changes action.

With awe and wonder you look around, recognizing the preciousness of the earth, the sanctity of every human being on the planet, the ultimate unity and interdependence of all beings *somos todos un paiz*. Love swells in your chest and shoots out of your heart chakra, linking you to everyone/everything. [...] This *conocimiento* motivates you to work actively to see that no harm comes to people, animals, ocean to take up spiritual activism and the work of healing (Anzaldúa 2002:558).

This talk of wakeful hearts and love may surprise many readers, including those familiar with anarchism. A commitment to freedom through loving ourselves and others runs like an undercurrent through the anarchist tradition, particularly in the voices of anarchist women from Emma Goldman (Bertalan, 2011; McBride, 2011) to Ursula Le Guin (Davis, 2011) and/or those with a spiritual approach to politics (Barnhill 2011; Marshall, 2009; Rowbotham, 2008; Tift and Sullivan, 1980). For others, it is perhaps more comfortable, less vulnerable, to speak simply of mutual aid. Whereas mutual aid might be interpreted either through a cool, instrumental lens to include mutual backscratching of elites or the lens of war where mutuality is dependent upon a common enemy, love necessitates a softening of borders.

Love, here, is not limited to romance. The wakeful heart requires neither object nor condition. Bell Hooks states that where there is fear, there is no room for love (2000) and romance is all too often filled with fear (Barker, 2012). If the state is always a state of fear, at once defensive in relation to other (non-)states and internally aggressive towards elements deemed to be dissident, dangerous, different (Dean and Massumi, 1992; Tift and Sullivan, 1980) in order to justify its role as protector (Brown, 1995), then to learn to see the world through the eyes of love is to cultivate an *other* state of mind. “Love sets the world alight and sends sparks through our being. It is the deepest and most powerful way to understand the most precious that we have” (Landauer, 2010:106–107). With love, the so-called hard questions of our times about redistribution of wealth, practices of direct democracy and undermining fears of racialised, sexualised and gendered and otherwise othered “others”, become much easier. Commenting on the spiritual anarchism of yoga guru Sri Aurobindo, Chakraborty suggests that “Distribution is first and foremost a state of consciousness, which is nourished by the learned joy of sharing and giving” (1997:2). If there is no fear of scarcity, no fear of loss of “control”, no fear of “others”, but a recognition of our beautiful interdependence, there is no question. Of course we help each other.

## (In)Conclusion/Invitation

Drawing on anarchist, poststructuralist and women of colour feminist anti-authoritarian theory as well as direct experience, I have suggested that the state is always also a state of mind characterised by fear, self-centredness and attachment to categorisation and judgement. In contrast, I have offered fragments of an anarchist psychology which advocates individual and collective practices which enable a release of this individualism in exchange for connection with others and with one's own intuition. Anarchism has always been a practical tradition, exploring and testing ideas which may assist in the practice of freedom as equals. The concepts in this paper are offered in that spirit, that they might be tested in relation to the authority of your own experience.

## Short Biography

Jamie Heckert writes at the intersections of psychology, sociology, law and political theory exploring the subjects of anarchism, gender and sexuality. His papers have appeared in *Sexualities*, *The European Journal of Ecopsychology* and *Educational Studies*; his essays can be found in *Anarchism: A Documentary History Of Libertarian Ideas*, *Queering Anarchism: Addressing and Undressing Power and Desire*, *Postanarchism: A Reader*, *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, *Queering Methods and Methodologies: Queer Theory and Social Science Research*, *Understanding Non-Monogamies* and *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist theory and practice in a global age*. He is co-editor (with Richard Celminson) of *Anarchism & Sexuality: Ethics, Relationships and Power* (Routledge, 2011) and has held positions at the University of Edinburgh, Napier University and the University of Kent. He currently lives in Poole, England, where he teaches yoga and engages in other scholarly work. He received his BA in Psychology and Gender & Women's Studies from Grinnell College and his PhD in Sociology from the University of Edinburgh.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> For a more engaged account of connections between anarchism and vitalism, see Barker, Heckert & Wilkinson (2013).

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