

Merits of Anarchy in Contemporary Political Discourse

by Lenhardt Stevens

In light of the upcoming presidential election, the direction of the country's federal government is the concern of many Americans, as well as the front page of most news publications and the daily topic of conversation of news pundits. While the picture of the possibilities is represented to be a government distrusting right-wing candidate against a social welfare backing left-wing candidate, the fact of American politics is that progressive politicians are off the ticket, aside from infrequent and often times "unelectable" exceptions. Insofar as a citizen is interested in not living in a country whose laws and policies are against their judgments, where do anarchist notions hold value in today's discourses on a national level? To put it another way: how can one be an anti-state activist in a world overrun with private power? While nothing in the essay could hardly be understood as definitive, allow me to give an overview of what I claim the individual is meant to defend when political views are getting pushback from the immediate arguments of opposition to anarchist views.

Anarchism is a tradition with few examples from modern times. When Americans look back on the utopian movements described in Hawthorne's 1852 *Blithedale Romance* (which never uses the term *anarchy*) they see the movement towards a stateless human existence equated to a kind of non-Christian social reformation that is hopelessly lost in its ambitions for an agrarian cooperative with impractical consensus building. The narrator, mulling over his decision to move to the commune at Blithedale, muses, "...[w]as it better to hoe, to mow, to toil and moil amidst the accumulations of a barnyard; to be the chambermaid of two yoke of oxen and a dozen cows; to eat salt beef, and earn it with the sweat of my brow, and thereby take tough morsel out of some wretch's mouth, into whose vocation I had thrust myself? Above all, was it better to have a fever and die blaspheming, as I was like to do?" (Hawthorne 1852). The view that anarchists are backwards facing, technology condemning, and human nature shunning idealists has its place within representatives of the movement, but I aim in this essay to briefly allow the reader to understand that anarchism as a political commitment in actuality is a complex web of beliefs that is not meant to have any single leader or status of total achievement. Nevertheless, the attempts by anarchists to establish a society within their vision does have historical examples, and I will mention them as I expound on their themes.

If anarchism is to be understood as a set of ideals that affect a person's political commitments, then there must be some broadly locatable set of anarchistic ideological tendencies that pull a person one way or another as they justify the impact of their decisions made within the public sphere. Anarchism could hardly be understood to be some kind of withdrawn individualistic asceticism, or the rejection of society in the

name of better connecting to a lost man in nature (though these views are seldom excluded from conversations on anarchist principles); it is the radical agenda of rejecting coercive authoritative entities in favor of autonomous individual decision making, very much a social movement with social repercussions. The notion of an engaged and multifaceted state that is responsible for the day-to-day lives of the citizens under its rule is a rather modern invention of our species. While mass organization under kingdoms, empires, and other kinds of hierarchical communities has its origins in ancient practice, a state with the authority to prosecute even its leaders, who are not immune to the universal laws of the land, or the notion of a leaderless cooperative absent a state power structure are ideals that are still in their infancy. For this reason, it is not an idle practice to tease out the commitments of someone who is attached to a political concept like anarchism, especially regarding their motivations for an egalitarian social order. Anyone committed to socialism of a kind, or the attempt to minimize class-based relations within society, may find varying degrees of success with the two motivations of *equality under law* or *equality with political power* as applied to the country of their residence within recent history.

The point being is this: the state as an instrument for social good will only be as magnanimous as it attempts to be if it represents the interests of movements that are attempting to free its citizens of oppressive and exploitative state or private powers. When the state begins to represent its own interests and asserts itself against the wills of the people who it was designed to protect, its needs must wither like an ill-maintained structure in an inhospitable environment. We find ourselves in the balancing act of working with an organizing institution (such as state power) that is attempting to put limits on the power of massive institutions (such as multinational corporations). The anarchist in her struggle will need to define what struggles are the most immediate to her, and by what means will she attempt to address them. Moreover, individual means to address social change are limited when compared with the impact potential of mass public participation. Guerin is convinced that the anarchist's "...*permanent state of revolt* makes the anarchist sympathetic to nonconformists and outlaws, and leads him to embrace the cause of the convict and the outcast." (1970, p. 29) This is some fiery language, and while not untrue, it should be specified that the nature of those *sympathies* and *causes* will need teasing before they can become genuine commitments. Anarchism, rather than acting as a political, economic, or social program with set actions in order to achieve its end goals, is more a stance towards encroachments on an individual's personal liberties. An anarchist's solutions is up for the reader to determine from the theoretical commitments.

The principles of the freedom of the individual is unwavering, but what does that freedom amount to, and how should it be expressed in civil society? It could be said that most Americans do not believe in stepping on one another's pursuits, but oftentimes

this can take the form of tacitly accepting the exploitative practices of massive institutional power. The notion that this is a realizable virtue in most people, not to be actualizable merely by an elite class, is where anarchism begins to move leftward. It is the assertion that people, on the whole, can be cultivated with a desire to be compassionate, self-sufficient people, who do not need to be indoctrinated against their own judgments, and can make decisions about their own lives that do not require the intervention of an acting governmental body. The implicit understanding of human nature within the aims for anarchistic education are very much part of a deeper discussion of where our behaviors come from, how do we cultivate them, and which ones are worth cultivating.

While the shades may vary, past movements such as free love, and anti-war movements across America, and, in more contemporary moments, the deregulation of the internet are all motivated by an impulse to keep institutional regulative violence, oppression in thought and in act, away from the people. By now, it should be clear that anarchism is a radical agenda. It takes the *status quo* as insufficient for the realization of the better aspects of our potential. On multiple levels, a revolution, or opposing order to the current arrangement, is necessary. But “[b]y revolution we do not have to mean pitchforks and bloodshed. A revolution can also take place *on a cultural level*, and if ever there were any prospect of that, it would be in the proletarian revolution, since *we are the last to take up violent means*, the last to wish a brutal, violent revolution on ourselves. But such matters do not depend on us, they *depend on our opponents*.” (Luxembourg [my emphasis] 1971) While Luxembourg did not identify as an anarchist, let us take from her words what we can in regards to what sorts of avenues the anarchist may express her ideals of non-violent collaboration with individuals. A powerful venue for an anarchist voice is within the spheres of artistic expression or intellectual debate. Acknowledging the potential for “revolution[ary]” thinking, prior to and, perhaps, separable from revolutionary establishment of new organizations, will create the difference between a political actor who is willing to confront their ideas in public and one who is not interested in how others may receive their actions, a kind of extremism in its lack of consideration for the parties who do not agree with an anarchist conception of society.

The non-violent principle is the foundation upon which the anarchist develops the rest of his beliefs. How should this non-violence be adopted? Is it an absolute position that begins to resemble pacifism, or does it have numerous exceptions, in the case of self-defense or preemptive strikes? If non-violence is a principle for the anarchist to adopt seriously, it will be critical to discern its usages historically, where it has succeeded, and where it has failed. No doubt, despite the protests of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the military operation continued for years afterwards without a clear direction for how the public should address the government imperative to “stay the

course” in the region. Without the mass consensus of American people, the anarchist is forced to ask herself what alternative strategies were there in order to prevent the state-sanctioned destruction of an entire region. I leave it to the reader to decide where their moral position them in the struggle against state violence, and ask them to consider the prospect of a peaceful future by peaceful means.

By seeking out political allegiances with other like-minded individuals, an anarchist can develop causes with legitimate capacities for change, the betterment of immediate circumstances for people facing oppression. The relationship of anarchism to socialism and communism is a fascinating one, and will not be explored nearly with the depth the topic deserves here, but I should like to sketch a few of my own feelings about these two alternative allegiances. The difference between the anarchist and the communist, as a matter of fact, may be very little for practical purposes. Both are in tune with the wish to be rid of government power, and both *should* strive to eliminate that power with the intervention of a properly functioning pre-existing state authority. It would seem the only thing that inhibits the anarchist and the communist from working together would be a disagreement on the means to accomplish their common goal, a shame considering, from my view, they should be alignment. After all, even the most radical communist knows that to abolish government power prematurely before the proper social relations are in place would spell disaster for the filling of the power vacuum remaining in its place. Thereto, there are questions over anarchist practices and which ones the anarchist should adopt in order to address the agents, institutions, or organizations that advocate for relations within a hierarchically ordered society, i.e. capitalistic, patriarchal, etc.

In 2014, a very clear instance occurred in Portland where anarchists descended into the very practices they are meant to be chiding. I do not think it is relevant here to discuss whether or not I think that Kristian Williams points about sexual assault have merit, what is more at stake is whether or not discourses are allowed to take place where people are free to express their views without fear of intimidation or bullying. In their attempt to advocate for sexual assault survivors, a group attending the conference began chanting at Williams, disallowing him from commenting on their protest in an open manner. There are two things I find discouraging about protests of this manner: 1) Williams was ready to engage with these people in a calm and thoughtful manner, but the emotions of the protests were so high that the conference on police violence had to be cut short as a result. If the talk's theme was “Why Patriarchy is Necessary” and the speaker was willing to discuss their views in respectful manner, I still do not feel that silencing that speaker's voice through incessant chants would be an effective means of opposing their views. Eliminating the possibility for dialogue should be condemned from every angle. 2) There was a display of the wider anarchistic anxiety over the relationship between an anarchist and law-enforcement. Both Williams and his

opposition were saddened by the arrival of the authorities, with Williams being chastised when alerted that they were on their way. Indeed, law enforcement is a typical example of how state power abuses its relationship with citizens. Our relationship with law enforcement must be more complex than us versus them if they are made up of individuals who are attempting to do the right thing. I will leave it there. A response from the conference organizers contains the following suggestion:

“To forge relationships based on solidarity, mutual aid and support that can carry us through as we struggle against the state, patriarchy, capitalism and all forms of oppression requires a level of willingness to treat each other with respect and care — even when we disagree. We also believe that *our communities and movements are strongest when we can disagree without branding each other as enemies.*”

(Crow, Esquivel, Williams 2014 [my emphasis])

What’s more, the issue over what anarchists should be is continually a live one. To be absolutist regarding what you believe anarchy is would be a contradiction in terms. No one is leading the struggle for anarchistic causes; they are an ever-evolving group of political agents. In-fighting within radical organizations is common, but has mostly a counterproductive effect. In the case of the above example, no one would doubt that Williams self-identifies as someone who advocates for a non-patriarchal society, but his adversaries were suggesting hypocrisy in his words allowed them to silence him altogether. The anarchist owes it to himself to attempt to hear the voices he may disagree with, not for the sake of becoming persuaded by them, but for the virtue of creating a space where an exchange of ideas can take place. It is hopeless to believe we can agree on every point of contact regarding our political ideals; what matters is where our connections are fundamental, and how to take collective action when we recognize them.

Given that there is no political party for an anarchist to join, it is up to her to make sense of how to best engaged with the institutions she may come into contact with. Complete withdrawal from civil society is an option, although a commitment to this lifestyle may result in a shirking of responsibilities another anarchist may argue are more pressing than a too idealistic an attachment to the disengagement with state or private institutions. There is no book on anarchism, although we may try to find our favorite historical anarchist from which we can develop our political theory. In point of fact, anarchists will need to defend the term from any manner of charges as they adopt the label for themselves, or shun it for disinterest in being called violent and disinterested in democracy.

We should not at all be committed to any doctrine outside of the liberty of the individual in order for someone to be considered an anarchist. The safety of the public is not a concern limited to those who believe a state is the most comprehensive means to guarantee the fair distribution of rights and the minimization of coercive or violent practices. The anarchist, as a social activist, is skeptical of solutions found within state

organizing, because the implementation of policy is dependent on the consistency of the state's representatives in power, whose interests can interfere with the enactment of the spirit of our most well-intentioned interpretation of the law.

The anarchist does not seek to interfere in the practices of the household on the individual, so long as the consent¹ of each member is communicated between participants. Arrangements such as marriages that do not observe traditional Judeo-Christian values concern the anarchist only insofar as they are alternative ways of exploring the concept of love outside of a rigidly codified set of social norms. Research on the exploration of how anarchist values relate to romantic codes of conducts are numerous, and worth exploring outside of the bounds of this essay.

Religious affiliation is irrelevant insofar as the what the anarchist is bringing to a pluralistic worldview. Where it becomes relevant, however, is in confronting the evangelizing principle, a term originating from (but that I am applying to religions beyond) Christian doctrine, whereby I am not asked as an individual to consider my private conscience as a source for the commitment to the religious practice. Anarchist is not concerned in life beyond this world. It allows religions to satisfy those human concerns, but cannot abide by religions legitimizing suffering here on earth.

“Here, then, lies the cause of the irreligion of the modern class-conscious socialist proletariat. *It is not the product of any intentional anti-religious propaganda.* Nor is it the demand of any program. It comes rather gradually as a consequence of the deeper social insight, which the working people acquire by instruction on the field of political economy. The proletarian is not divorced from his faith by any materialist doctrines, but by teaching which enables him to see clearly and rationally through the conditions of society, and to *the extent that he grasps the fact that social forces are natural effects of known causes, the old faith in miracles dies out in him.*”

(Untermann 1907 [my emphasis])

In turn, the religious minded individual, although not to be shunned from the primary struggles of the anarchist, will be inconvenienced by the individualism embodied in libertarian values if they have proselytizing ambitions. The anarchist does not seek to make others anarchist, despite the goal of convincing others to support causes within labor, social, and political movements. A muslim anarchist may believe that Islam, being the true religion, leads one to believe in radical rejection of the state's existence, but some tension may arise as they cast others using language like “evil” and “enemy” to describe people outside of the faith. An anarchist has to determine for themselves what moral universe they occupy, but I doubt the possibility of religious ethics of acting as a useful framework for anarchists to employ.

¹ This rather clunky term deserves a close and technical definition that I am incapable of supplying here. For instance, a slave *consenting* to be subservient to their master may appear to have

The anarchist believes that there is a *good* in society worth fighting for, but the nature of this good is not a clear-cut issue. The moral foundations of anarchy are within concepts like equality, fairness, and justice, and although I have alluded to their realization in this essay, the *foundations*, as it were, for these notions, with a God or without, is for another day and another conversation.

If the state and private institutions are to be treated with distrust, then the anarchist is still seeking some kind of authority to oversee social processes. How should we engage effectively with large institutional entities to curb their abuses if small actions have negligible outcomes? In Gordon's *Anarchism and Political Theory*, the author goes to great pains to assert that:

“The concept of accountability has a great deal of currency from the position of movements for social change. Many activists talk about holding corporations accountable for their abuses, or about holding politicians accountable to the public. Anarchists, who believe that corporations and politicians should be abolished, might have less use for such a concept — [1] *but even with them it retains some rhetorical strength in the immediate term*. In the case of both corporations and politicians, this is because the demand for accountability is directed towards an entity that is *more* powerful than the source of the demand. Anarchists do not intuitively feel that there is a problem with establishing a [2] *corrective mechanism for mitigating the possible abuses of that entity's disproportionate power, as long as it exists*. So one must always clarify *who* is said to be accountable to *whom*, for *what*?”

(2007 [my emphasis on [1] & [2]])

Climate change acts as a time-sensitive example of where existing political structures should be employed to hold the abusers of power, in this case those in charge of utilizing natural resources, should be held accountable for their actions of misrepresentation and suppression of information.

As you may grow into anarchism, the amount of victimization of the anarchist can become such a tiring past-time it may become difficult to discern who an anarchist is meant to hold in contempt. Political doublespeak is the pitfall most apt for the libertarian to point out. When someone who is in power boasts of the opportunities available to others to achieve that power, we should immediately become skeptical, especially if that power is reserved for the few over the many. Imperfections within the system will be touted as unjust cause to dispose of that particular social order; *don't throw the baby out with the bathwater*, is an idiom you may hear in defense of a hierarchy that allows for gross disparities between worker and employer, men and women, ethnic majority and minority, among others. Criticisms will avail that the rights of the individual must be protected, in the very least, by some kind of power that can delegate these rights in such a way that fairness is ensured. I have already been alluding to how this cannot be trusted with any kind of lasting observance, given the

imperfections of executing human will within the dynamics of authority granting institutions.

A point we run up against in contemporary political discussion is if we are left simply chastising relevant structures without a positive contribution in order to consider new directions, we will be feasting from a meagre dining table. The openness, however, of this contribution is what makes the anarchist something of an anomaly among other persuasions the others may identify themselves with, in that anarchism is a quest for absence, rather than a plot for a legal authority. Leftists will need to confront Marx at some juncture in their politicizing, but an anarchist should feel the alignment with Marx's thought is an encouraging sign. To say that Marx was something of an anarchist would be to understate his aims in the progress of class struggles in history; to say he was interested in bringing about the state's absolute control over the public consciousness would be a lie. If the anarchist is interested in the dissemination of her convictions, than the transmission of these ideas to the next generation of politically active individuals is a crucible where the ideas of the libertarian on the possibilities of society collide with the beliefs about human nature. Alas, the age of neo-liberalism makes it difficult for us to envision desirable changes of a kind without the recognition of state power or authority.

There are historical examples of where anarchist collectives or communes existed, most briefly, and anarchists . In Catalonia decades later anarcho-sindicalist movements, before quashed under a violent fascist regime, enjoyed the kind of work cooperative befitting of a stateless society.

“Normally, the responsibilities of elected delegates had to be discharged after working hours. Almost all the evenings of anarchist militants were occupied with meetings of one sort or another. Whether at assemblies or committees, they argued, debated, voted, and administered, and when time afforded, they read and passionately discussed ‘the Idea’ to which they dedicated not only their leisure hours but their very lives.”

(Bookchin 1994)

The occupy movement was not without significant faults, but its virtues shined in the hustle of Wall Street surrounding its gathering. Horizontalism (a leaderless space) was a value that found expression in the park. During the consensus building process, occupiers could issue a “block”-represented in the crossing of the arms-that would halt the proposal and no action would be taken. However imperfect we may comment on the movements implementation of these proposals, the process by which they decided them was a challenge to the people and institutions who are adamantly in favor of or represent the majority-ruling-minority implicit in the American government's conception of democracy. The exclusivity expressed at occupy was geared towards an “...autonomy [that] meant making alliances with other political groups only on Occupy's

own terms. Some sneered at the ‘NGO–industrial complex,’ though sympathetic observers and even other occupiers thought they displayed a virtually paranoid fear of co-optation.”

(Hammond, p. 301)

The language is provocative here. Though I do not mean to suggest total agreement with the alleged criticism of “paranoi[a]”, I can at least give a few hopes for how an anarchist might reflect on these notions. NGOs are guilty of taking major sums of money from organizations ranging from PR fishing banks to morally bankrupt financial firms. How an anarchist is to choose between which NGOs to give air time and which to leave out of the conversation is a matter of sticking to principles that may vary by individual, hence the uneasiness over how different organizations were going to infiltrate the horizontally run occupy movement.

We cannot pretend that anarchism has had the best representatives through history (see anarcho-primitivist Ted Kaczynski, or european anarchists from the 19th century) which has led intellectuals, such as Conrad, to ridicule the activism of anarchist leanings. In Conrad’s book, *Mr. Vladimир*, an agent from a foreign land, convinces the protagonist that “[a] bomb outrage to have any influence on public opinion now must go beyond the intention of vengeance or terrorism. It must be purely destructive. It must be that, and only that, beyond the faintest suspicion of any other object. You anarchists should make it clear that you are perfectly determined to make a clean sweep of the whole social creation.” (Conrad 1907) The attack on the observatory in the secret agent, not only an attack on the people of London but an attack on scientific thought, revealed the anarchist as something of a political pawn, a mislead buffoon whose cultural contributions include pornography, contraceptives, and curios.

Primitivism is still one of the most perplexing trends in contemporary anarchist thought. In an essay by Kevin Tucker, filled with a vague spirituality, centered around an encounter with owls, tied up with his social program.

“The AP [anarcho-primitivist] critique is a short hand (sic) way of saying that civilization is killing the earth and that the domestication process is perpetually taking its toll on our lives in every sense of the word.”² And further, “We are born hunter-gatherers, everything that domesticators have sought to impose is working against that basis.”

² Without citing his sources, Tucker invites us to consider an innate human epistemology that runs counter to “the *Tabula Rasa*, the ‘clean slate’, that Plato and his predecessors had described.” Firstly, Plato’s dialogues contain much back-and-forth over how much a person can learn and how much knowledge a person possesses innately in virtue of possessing a *soul*. Tucker’s reference here to the philosopher is misplaced, but the conversation about human nature is important. Secondly, if Plato’s predecessors are meant to include Socrates and the pre-Socratics, then company is rather scant in trying to locate who these *tabula rasa* theorists might be.

Couple things here. The personification of Earth is a well worn environmentalist tactic to amplify emotional attachments towards "...harming" [*changing*] the climate. You are not only reversing thousands of years of glacial freeze, you are also murdering a living (and apparently *feeling*) thing. While the ideological fallout from such convictions may lead to positive change, embodying these beliefs in practice is a spiritual fixation that seems to take away from the more immediate importance of environmentalism; humanity simply cannot continue as it is without destroying itself, a fear that should be worry enough for most without getting them worried about their earth mother/father. To suggest that civilization is "killing the earth" is, in my view, a moot point. Earth will exist happily long after humanity has perished; the life on the planet, however, is responsible for its own existence. Finally, human beings might certainly have been born hunter gatherer, but we also were born with life spans less than half of what we enjoy now, a higher infant mortality rate, and a fear of scarcity, to name three things technological advances have steered us away from. I would like to hear some serious arguments against these issues before I rescind my criticism of AP.

So aside from the weekly anarchist reading group, what kinds of political change is the anarchist push for? In other words, where do their allegiances lead to political action? It is not difficult to see that people disagree on what radical thinking, i.e. the complete dissolution of coercive power, should translate into action.

As Chomsky has emphasized: "[t]he consistent anarchist, then, should be a *socialist*, but a socialist of a particular sort. He will not only oppose alienated and specialized labor and look forward to the appropriation of capital by the whole body of workers, but he will also insist that this appropriation be *direct, not exercised by some elite force acting in the name of the proletariat.*" (1970 [my emphasis])

This notion of direct action is important historically and for practical reasons. The so-called dictatorship of the proletariat throughout the 20th century had been co-opted by megalomaniacal stewards of a revolutionary lexicon, and whereas history should make us skeptical towards similar trends, we should investigate why it is against the spirit of the anarchist to impose a *dictatorship* of any kind, else we act as hypocrites within our principles of individualism.

Chomsky's words are duly to be inwardly reflected, but even he knows that in actual practice there is not much that an American is to do in 2016 without looking for some kind of authority overseeing the exploitative conditions the private owners ask of their wage-earners. A republican elected into the white house in November will put the government in a worse position than a democrat. I have been in conversations with anarchists who are skeptical that such differences between parties exist, arguing that they are mostly superficial and incite negligible change within the political sphere. Their pessimism is warranted, but historically inscrutable. The election of someone who voted against the Iraq war might have saved us from additional conflicts in the middle

east, against such possible candidate invasion locations as ISIL or Iran, or it might not. Both sides have to be careful in how they speak of alternative historical possibilities; we simply cannot know.

Additionally, Chomsky discusses the libertarian trend in left-Marxists that worries about “...state ownership and management will lead[ing] to bureaucratic despotism.” (1987) It may begin to become unclear what about Marx specifically the anarchist is meant to differentiate herself from, but that should not unsettle one’s political persuasions. If the socialist is convinced that government is the best instrument to ensure the rights of individuals, then the anarchist can lean away from this assurance and retain a persistent skepticism of the state’s functioning. No politician is safe against criticism from the anarchist, because they are members of the institution the anarchist hopes to see disintegrate. In the meantime, however, curbing the tyranny of private enterprise can be achieved through state actors who are represented public good, and, oftentimes, public opinion, such as in the case of gun control, views on capital punishment, and insured equality for homosexuals.

Committing to the consumption of local goods and commodities is a good start to begin to value the economic practices happening in your immediate community. These are not inherently middle class concerns, although they often can become marketed to those with a hefty disposable income. While much cynicism grows over consumer concerns over origins of products or goods³, those guilty of an obsessive attachment to these consumer behaviors are far less worrying than those who shrug at conscientious purchases altogether. If partaking in a capitalist schema is something the anarchist is reluctantly choosing to do, then attempting to minimize recuperation, co-opting, and exploitation is their duty to see through.

In this essay, I hope I have given the anarchist something of a reassurance about their political commitments in contemporary discourses. They need not be committed to the false associations of a destructive tendency towards state power, a philosophy that holds them to tradition-bashing, or the charge that they are idealistic and utopian-minded in the face of practical change in their day-to-day social, economic, and political engagement. Instead, the anarchist must defend the rights of an individual in the face of an overwhelmingly inequitable power structure that takes every opportunity in order to undermine the maximize obedience and complacency. These worries are legitimate insofar as political actors are able to articulate the discrepancy between the actions taken by institutions acting in a manner disinterested in, but not limited to, public support, objections from minority opinion, or the public good. Much of the struggle is in ensuring that: “...every one (sic) must see that as the *bonds of servitude are formed merely by the mutual dependence of men on one another and the*

³ IFC’s *Portlandia*, justifiably, sends-up precious restaurateurs who are concerned over the welfare of their slaughtered animal.

reciprocal needs that unite them, it is impossible to make any man a slave, unless he be first reduced to a situation in which he cannot do without the help of others...” (Rousseau [my emphasis]) According to Rousseau, our inclination to make others obedient to our wills arises from the difficulty of negotiating what there is to be done in a world with a plurality of wills. Anarchism as a stridently leaderless movement requires that before we anticipate what we should do with each other, we must acknowledge that we are dependent on each other. Herein lies an important measure on how we define our relationships and how we will acknowledge the individual equally before we ask things of them. The anarchist will indubitably find herself as a hare in a fight with a lion, but the lifetime of the anarchist is measured by a commitment to principles looking towards the protection of others, and that is also how their success is understood.

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