Anarchist roots & routes

Jamie Heckert

Anarchist Studies Network

Abstract

Following Andy Fisher's call for a radical ecopsychology – one which heals individuals and transforms social, philosophical and psychological systems of organisation and knowledge – this paper explores the anarchist pasts and possible futures of the field. While anarchists such as Kropotkin, Goodman, and Snyder are mentioned in Roszak's history of ecopsychology, these roots of the field have been little explored. There are clear affinities and overlaps between the two: ecopsychology's critique of disconnection is the flipside of anarchism's critique of hierarchy. In practising connection as interdependent equals, ecopsychology practitioners might look to anarchist traditions of direct relationship, direct action and direct democracy. These elements might weave themselves together into a radical, fractal network of networks replacing dominant and dominating systems of state and capital. This of course requires practice. The concluding section of the paper turns to the work of the anti-state feminists Wendy Brown and the subRosa Collective to hold on to both personal healing and political transformation in this challenging process of nurturing autonomy.

Keywords: anarchism, autonomy, radical, democracy

Introduction

> [Humans suffer] a nostalgia for which there is no remedy upon Earth except as is to be found in the enlightenment of the spirit – some ability to have a perceptive rather than an exploitative relationship with his *[sic]* fellow creatures (Bakunin, cited in Tifft & Sullivan, 1980: 2)

> Anarchists have often compared this open cooperative social structure to a biological organism. Organisms are living beings which evolve of their own free will through a process of perpetual becoming that is unbounded and non-deterministic. Similarly, an anarchist society emulates this openness through a harmonious social structure that is free, dynamic, and ever-evolving (Antliff, 2008: 6).

Andy Fisher has called for a recognition of ecopsychology as radical praxis – a

theoretically engaged and profoundly practical process of "increasing critical consciousness and reconstructing society" in order to address the deep sources of problems which are simultaneously psychosocial and ecological (2009: 61). In other words, individual ecotherapy can only ever be part of the process of undermining the dominant and institutionalised narrative of human beings as separate from, and superior to, the rest of life. Fisher looks to ecosocialism and Buddhism as resources for radicalising ecopsychology. Here, I suggest a third complementary body of resources: anarchism.

Anarchism as a tradition is both controversial and diverse. Whereas the mainstream represents anarchists as "violent" or "mindless thugs" (Donson, Chesters, Welsh & Tickle, 2004), my own experience has been very different. While anarchism does attract people whose idea of freedom is individualistic (arguably a notion more consistent with capitalism) and anarchist subcultures and movements frequently suffer from patterns of machismo and racism, these patterns of hierarchy are themselves challenged and transformed as an integral part of a movement which is a living tradition (Ackelsberg, 2005; Dark Star Collective, 2002; starr, 2007). Many groups and individuals are involved in numerous grass-roots projects working to nurture autonomy – our capacity to recognise our fundamental equality, interdependence and ability to live without domination (Clark, 2007; Notes from Nowhere, 2003; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006). Others work to challenge and/or subvert the official political economy (state and capitalism) and other hierarchies in "domination societies" (Rosenberg, 2003: 23) which are deeply intertwined with the presumption of a separate/superior humanity.

Whether or not a perfect anarchist society is achieved, or achievable, what arguably matters most is the practice: the process of understanding ourselves, our connections with each other and with the land. In this way, anarchism, like ecopsychology, is deeply concerned with the interdependence of human well-being with the well-being of the rest of the natural world. For human beings, more egalitarian societies are healthier (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010), and anarchism promotes the most equal societies of all: classless, stateless and without hierarchies of race, gender, sexuality or ability. For the rest of the natural world, the anarchist ethic of mutuality and recognition of interdependence promotes an awareness of "the complex interrelationship between global ecological and individual psychological problems" (Fox, 1985), leading one researcher to note that environmental issues are "so close to the central problem of anarchism that it is

perhaps the most directly relevant body of theory for many of the critical issues" (Ophuls, 1977: 235).

Anarchist roots

While anarchism is occasionally acknowledged in the history of ecopsychology, my invitation in this paper is to take a deeper look at anarchist traditions which might provide fruitful sources of inspiration for facing the challenges of nurturing into existence a profoundly emotionally and ecologically sustainably society. As a brief introduction to an enormous field of possibilities, I begin here by outlining the work of recognising anarchist roots of ecopsychology already undertaken.

Contemporary ecopsychology has roots not only in healing practices such as wilderness therapy but also in radical social movements, counter-cultures (Rhodes, 2008; Roszak, 1992/2001) and critical theory (Fisher, 2002). Anarchism, a diverse set of political traditions advocating and practising decentralised, interdependent, egalitarian and libertarian modes of living and relating, has been a part of all these.

Pyotr Kropotkin

In his influential ecopsychology text, *The voice of the Earth*, Theodore Roszak (1992/2001) counts the anarchist geographer and political theorist Pyotr Kropotkin (1842 – 1921) as both "one of the founders of modern ecology" and "among the first ecopsychologists" (p. 228). While Darwin's theory of evolution was being interpreted to justify the white-supremacist global empires of European states (i.e., survival of those most capable of dominating), Kropotkin's painstaking fieldwork led him to a very different understanding. Rather than contributing to the naturalisation of hierarchy and competition, Kropotkin's observations led him to note that:

> when animals have to struggle against scarcity of food [...] the whole of that portion of the species which is affected by the calamity comes out of the ordeal so much impoverished in vigour and health that *no progressive evolution of the species can be based upon such periods of keen competition* (1902/2010, emphasis original).

He also noted the great extent to which mutual aid – that is, care and support among members of a species – contributes directly to their individual and collective well-being and thus their evolution. Rather than reinforcing the

dominant political stories that human societies require coercive institutions such as states or corporations to maintain themselves, Kropotkin pointed to the ways in which life is self-organising. As Roszak also notes, if an instinct for mutual aid or "an ethical unconscious did *not* exist, no amount of police force or bureaucracy could hold any society together. We form ourselves spontaneously into family, clan, band, tribe, guild, village, town" (2001: 229).

Paul Goodman

Roszak also acknowledged the role of Paul Goodman's ecological gestalt psychology in the development of ecopsychology. Taking inspiration from Kropotkin and Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* (for anarchist readings of the *Tao Te Ching*, see Le Guin, 1997; Morris, 1996; Rapp, 2009; Watts, 1975) among others, Goodman saw self-organisation, autonomy and interdependence as fundamental characteristics of humanity and of the ecosystems of which we are a part. Rather than seeing human beings as inherently violent, dangerous or otherwise pathological, Goodman viewed the individual as "innately healthy and capable, with pathology as a secondary disruption of an otherwise natural homeostatic equilibrium" (Aylward, 1999: 112). His anarchist-inspired gestalt therapy offers an alternative to those therapeutic approaches which emphasised adaptation to a society dependent on domination and ecological devastation. Instead, it nurtures autonomy through "trusting the body, the senses, and the natural environment to solve their problems in their own spontaneous way" (Roszak, 2001: 229). And like much recent anarchism, Goodman's politics and psychology (for they were one and the same) were prefigurative. That is, instead of waiting for 'the revolution', anarchist-inspired actors practice in the present the forms of social organisation they would love to see more fully developed in the future. The challenge, in Goodman's ecopsychological terms, is "to live in present society as if it were a natural society" (cited in Fisher, 2002: 182).

Gary Snyder

A third anarchist figure recognised by Roszak, among others, at the roots of ecopsychology is the Beat poet and bioregionalist, Gary Snyder. While Roszak refers to him only briefly, Rhodes (2008) devotes significant attention to Snyder in his own effort to synthesize an anarchist critique of hierarchy with ecopsychological efforts to recognise our connection with the rest of the natural

world. For Rhodes, the roots of ecopsychology lie less in ecology or psychotherapy and more in the Beatnik counter-culture with its blending of anarchist politics with Buddhist, Taoist and shamanic spiritual awareness. Fisher, too, quotes Snyder favourably (2002), though without any reference to his "Buddhist anarchism" (Snyder, 1961/2010) or his involvement in the non-hierarchical, grassroots union: the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.).

Anarcha-feminism

While ecofeminism is generally accepted as one of the roots of ecopsychology (Fisher, 2002; Roszak, 2001), the *anarcha-feminist* influences are rarely mentioned, though there are plenty which are due acknowledgement. The intersections of anarchism, pacifism and feminism were, for example, key influences in the evolution of Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (Roseneil, 2000) which drew connections between the personal, political and ecological aspects of a patriarchal culture which aims to create 'security' through control rather than through connection. Similarly, environmentalist and anarcha-feminist Judi Bari worked hard to nurture connections between radical ecological activists and loggers, bridging what was an apparent conflict of interests to promote sustainable harvest of trees for generations to come. For her efforts, she was a targeted by the FBI and was the subject of attempted murder by car bombing (Shantz, 2005). In both these cases autonomy is nurtured through diverse practices including direct action, consensus decision-making and crafting cultures of resistance.

The ecofeminist and anarchist philosopher Chaia Heller is someone I look to for ecopsychological inspiration. In *Ecology of everyday life: Rethinking the desire for nature*, she wrote that "the antidote to capitalist rationalization is a new relationality, an empathetic, sensual, and rational way of relating that is deeply cooperative, pleasurable, and meaningful" (1999: 93). This new relationality includes both humans and the "more than human world" (Abram, 1997). Likewise, Ursula Le Guin might also be considered an ecopsychologist. Inspired by the anarchism of Kropotkin and Goodman, and the insights of Taoism, as well as being a colleague of Snyder, Le Guin links a deep respect for indigenous cultures with a passion for social justice and ecological sustainability throughout her works. One of her most famous novels, *The dispossessed* (1974), explicitly links the connection of self to nature with the practices of freedom advocated by

the anarchists who inspired her to write it (Stillman & Davis, 2006); these anarchist links are still very present, though implicit, in her later eco-utopia, *Always coming home* (1985). In addition, the sensual anarcha-indigenism of Jay Griffiths' travel log, *Wild: An elemental journey* (2008), is currently influencing ecopsychologists, as might the similarly shamanic and 'post-anarchist'[1] ecofeminist writings of Sian Sullivan (see 2008a; 2008b).

Finally, the most famous anarcha-feminist Emma Goldman was both a student of Kropotkin and a profound anarchist theorist in her own right (Jose, 2005). Editor of the anarchist monthly *Mother Earth*, she acknowledged that we, too, are nature:

> A natural law is that factor in man *[sic]* which asserts itself spontaneously without any external force, in harmony with the requirements of nature. For instance, the demand for nutrition, for sex gratification, for light, air and exercise, is natural. But its expression needs not the machinery of government, needs not the club, the gun, the handcuff, or the prison. To obey such laws, if we may call it obedience, requires only spontaneity and free opportunity. That governments do not maintain themselves through such harmonious factors is proven by the terrible array of violence, force, and coersion all governments use in order to live (Goldman, 1969: 58).

This may be read as a naive optimism toward human nature: a frequent critique of anarchism. In the same essay, Goldman countered this by noting the radical changes in behaviour among animals in captivity. Are we not also animals in captivity, she asks? What can we say about human nature, about human potential, based on our experiences in a culture of control? Goldman, in other words, challenges the human exceptionalism paradigm (Catton & Dunlap, 1978). Unless you believe in an interventionist God, and Goldman vociferously did not, nature has no ruler, no state. Humans only need the state if we really are exceptional in nature, a view challenged by anarcha-feminists and ecopsychologists alike.

Social ecology

This is also a view challenged by social ecologists, one of the major eco-anarchist traditions. Founded by Murray Bookchin, social ecology, like the work of Pyotr

---

[1]   Post-anarchism is the linking of poststructuralist political theories (including Deleuze, Guattari, Foucault, Derrida, Lacan and Butler) with anarchism. Gregory Bateson, a key figure in ecopsychology, was also a major influence on Deleuze and Guattari, indicating another rich vein of connections between anarchist and ecopsychological traditions. For more details, see Rousselle & Evren (in-press).

Kropotkin, is something of a permaculture version of anarchism. In other words, anarchist principals of organisation are developed from observations of nature. And for Bookchin:

> What renders social ecology so important is that it offers no case whatsoever for hierarchy in nature and society; it decisively challenges the very function of hierarchy as a stabilising or ordering principle in both realms. The association of order as such with hierarchy is ruptured. [...] Our continuity with non-hierarchical nature suggests that a non-hierarchical society is no less random than an ecosystem (Bookchin, 1991/2003: 37).

As John Clark comments, this approach "demands that a new *ecological sensibility* pervade all aspects of social existence", transforming society, individual consciousness and humanity's relationship with the rest of the natural world (1990: 8). And, like many other anarchists, Bookchin declared it "axiomatic that *there can be no separation of the revolutionary process from the revolutionary goal*" (1971/1974: 45, original emphasis). In other words, if the ideal is an organic, self-organising society which nurtures the autonomy and diversity of individuality (human and otherwise), then the methods of working toward that ideal must be as consistent as possible. Freedom, equality and ecological sensibility cannot be legislated; they can only be practised, nurtured.

It is perhaps unsurprising that ecopsychology and anarchism might overlap in so many ways. Anarchism, after all, has made major contributions to modern environmental movements (Bookchin, 1974; McKay, 1998; Best & Nocella, 2006) and green political thought (Carter, 1999; Davidson, 2009). Their objects of critique, too, are intertwined. For many in ecopsychology, disconnection is the source of ecological and emotional unsustainability. For anarchists, hierarchy is at the root of social and ecological problems[2] (Bookchin, 2003). Are these not too different ways of saying much the same thing? To imagine oneself hierarchically superior or inferior to another requires a denial of human embodied interdependence (Beasley & Bacchi, 2007), of our dynamic embedment in nature (Stevens, in-press) or, in other words, our kinship with other living and nonliving beings (Bookchin, 2003; LaDuke, 1999). The state, with its hierarchies, borders and policing, its arms and armies, its judges and judgements, is always a state of separation, of disconnection.

---

2   There is, of course, debate here. Is the hierarchy of class primary? Are all hierarchies equally problematic and deeply intertwined? While anarchists share a critique of hierarchy and domination, the nature of the critique varies widely.

Anarchist routes

Both anarchists and ecopsychologists realise the emotional and social benefits of relating directly with each other, minimising the mediations of technology, bureaucracy and money (Bey, 1994; Gordon; 2008; Glendinning, 1994). Whereas state politics are characterised by representation – what Delueze (1977) called "the indignity of speaking for others" – anarchism, which is simultaneously personal and political, replaces this with the dignity of speaking for oneself, of being listened to and of listening to others (human and otherwise) in direct relationship (Heckert, 2010). While shallow environmentalism is characterised by abstract problem-solving, deep ecology-inspired ecopsychology highlights the importance of a directly experienced relationship with the natural world for both promoting pro-environmental behaviour and emotional well-being (Kals, Schumacher & Montada, 1999). In this way, we can recognise that we are co-creators of the ecosystems of which we are an integral part (Macy & Brown, 1998). The same applies to social systems: while we are led to believe that only some people are in power, we are all already co-creators of our social worlds.

It seems clear to me that the questions facing ecopsychologists and anarchists are intertwined. What knowledge, practices or experiences help people recognise the ways in which we are all capable of creating change? How do we learn to let go of strategies of domination in our relations with ourselves, other beings and the land? How might we work together to further the ongoing process of co-creating the psychic, organisational and cultural infrastructure for sustainable societies? I'm in agreement with Fisher that these questions cannot be answered by individual therapy alone and suggest that anarchist ethics and practices can offer support for the practical, psychological, critical and philosophical tasks of renewing the radicalism at the roots of ecopsychology (Fisher, 2002).

Direct action

Ecopsychology faces a dilemma: if the best way for people to recognise that they, too, are nature is to spend time in wild spaces, and if this recognition is key to addressing our current ecological crisis, how might those who fear the wild be encouraged to (re)connect with it?

We, too, are wild, and nurturing relationships between people is another way of

remembering this. Shared experiences of working together directly to meet the needs of the people involved can be profoundly nurturing, profoundly connecting. Anarchism advocates direct action, itself a connection to the wild; it is to connect to our own will, individually and collectively. "The wildest things and people are the most self-willed, self-governing and, an-archic. Since will is wild, to damage someone else's will is both unkind and unwild" (Griffiths, 2006: 148). Indirect action – voting, lobbying, ethical consumerism, petitioning – all rely on submitting one's will to those claiming authority. This is undignified, unkind, unwild: disconnected.

Where it might be difficult for some people to take up the invitation of direct connection with the land for fear of getting dirty, or connecting with others in workshops dismissed as hippyish, other forms of direct action might be more appealing. As Franks notes, direct action is undertaken by those directly affected, thus connecting directly with their own immediate needs whether for housing, community, food or autonomy (2003). And, as others have noted, this can be profoundly empowering.

> On the Green a hunched woman in her 80s was crying. She had always felt powerless, but when she pushed the fences down with hundreds of others, she said she felt powerful for the first time in her life. Empowerment is direct action's magic, and the spell was spreading (Anonymous, 2003: 14; see also Begg, 2000).

In addition to other empowering and therapeutic methods, ecopsychological practitioners might consider supporting themselves and others to nurture a sense of awareness of the hierarchical patterns of relationships (institutional and otherwise) affecting them and how they might act directly in order to transform, undermine or overflow them. After all, the textbook definition of stress is a perceived discrepancy between needed and available resources. Direct action, involving mutual support among participants and the sharing of resources emotional and otherwise, addresses the root of stress. As well as looking to practices of environmental direct action (see Best & Nocella, 2006; Seel, Paterson & Doherty, 2000), the evolution of ecopsychology might draw sustenance from other forms of direct action: autonomous feminist health movements (Gordon & Griffiths, 2007; Griffiths & Gordon, 2007; Lisa, 2008), anarchist mental health projects (e.g., The Icarus Project in New York) and Soma, a playful and political group therapeutic process developed in Brazil to undermine the psychological effects of military

dictatorship (Goia, 2008).

Direct democracy

Rather than any indirect system, including representative democracy, anarchist praxis tends to emphasise consensus-based decision-making and other forms of *direct* democracy so the people affected by decisions are involved in making them. Collective decision-making is counterbalanced by the appreciation of spontaneity and individual initiative.

Direct democracy is not a new improved system designed to replace an inferior one, but an ethic, a process. It's something that people work out how to do, together, with practice. As Carole Pateman has pointed out, "participation develops and fosters the very qualities necessary for it; the more individuals participate the better able they become to do so" (1970: 42-3). Workers' cooperatives, housing co-ops (Radical Routes, 2010), neighbourhood assemblies, affinity groups, research & popular education collectives, community gardens, artists collectives, support groups, food coops, herb study groups, grass-roots unions and so many more forms of direct democracy contribute to vibrant anarchist(ic) cultures.

Ecopsychology can sometimes appear remote from everyday politics, focused on helping individuals (re)form their connections with the natural world but not addressing the dominant systems that rely on disconnection. Fulfilling Fisher's tasks to build an ecological society requires practising reciprocity in our relationships, addressing issues of isolation and disempowerment and critically analysing the underlying structures that maintain these divisions. While conventional approaches might turn to official forms of politics to address these, eco-anarchist Davidson (2009: 47) argues that "centralised systems of coercive powers" are not needed to organise ecologically sustainable societies. Indeed, they create institutionalised forms of disconnection.

Eco-anarchists have disagreements as to the particular forms direct democracy might take. Bioregionalists tend to have a commitment to autonomous communities, self-sufficient through their connection with the immediate landscape. For social ecologists, libertarian municipalism is key with village meetings offering a source of inspiration for decentralised cities and confederated eco-communities with a shared commitment to sustainability and freedom (Davidson, 2009). For green syndicalists, democratic control of labour and the

creation of ecological guilds are central (Shantz & Adam, 1999). Drawing from these rich and diverse anarchist traditions of direct democracy, ecopsychologists can contribute to the development of emotionally and ecologically sustainable political systems.

Networks of networks

That's all well and good for small groups, you might say, but how do you run a whole country (or perhaps a bioregion)? Fractally, in a word. Fractals are the geometry of nature: zooming in or out, we see replicating patterns. Forking of root and branch, the curve and sweep of coastlines from near or far, the iterative patterns of rivers, snowflakes and mountain ranges are all fractals. Hierarchies, too, are fractal. Patterns of domination found at the macro-level – wars between states and corporate ecological exploitation – are repeated at the mezzo and micro-levels of inter-group, interpersonal and internal relationships. This is not the only fractal pattern available to us. Inspired by organisational examples and theories, Sian Sullivan "affirms the possibility of a *proliferation* of democratic processes [...] in which people participate and which people self-organise, together with fostering the dynamic feedback possible via connectivity between scales. A *fractal democracy*, in other words" (Sullivan, 2005: 380, footnote 45). At large-scale actions, such as those held at organising meetings of the G8 or WTO or in solidarity with imprisoned migrants, the spokescouncil has evolved as one method by which small autonomous groups work together to make larger decisions. One temporary recallable delegate (rather than elected representative) from each affinity group meets with other delegates to feed in perspectives from their group and then to report back. With these feedback cycles, a large-scale horizontal and fractal decision-making structure develops. Similar methods were used in Buenos Aires during and after the popular rebellion of 2001 when the official economy collapsed and ordinary people found extraordinary ways of meeting their needs. Workers continued to run factories after wealthy bosses fled the country, realising that they didn't need a boss after all and that everyone could be a leader (Lavaca Collective, 2007). Neighbourhood assemblies involving people who didn't normally participate in 'politics' met to make decisions and to find ways to create an alternative infrastructure of organic gardens, community kitchens, bartering systems and transforming abandoned banks into community centres. Systems akin to spokescouncils evolved in order to build connections between neighbourhoods

and workplaces. They call this *horizontalidad* (Sitrin, 2006). This network of networks continues to grow as social movements in Argentina make connections with other movements throughout Latin America and around the world including indigenous direct democracies such as the Zapatistas, the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), and the Aymara, (on indigenous democracy without states, see Alfred, 2005; Conant, 2010; Coulthard & Lasky, in-press; Esteva & Prakash, 1998; Graeber, 2004; Grinde & Johansen, 1990; Scott, 2009; Smith, 2005; Zibechi, 2010). This 'movement of movements' is not anti-globalisation as some commentators have put it, but *alterglobalisation*: another world is possible. In this other possible world, the social practices of connecting as equals both directly and through symbiotic networks of networks (Halpin & Summer, 2008) are harmonious with other natural systems which work on the same principals (Litfin, 2010).

Nurturing autonomy

> Autonomy is not a fixed, essential state. Like gender, autonomy is created through its performance, by doing/becoming; it is a political practice. To become autonomous is to refuse authoritarian and compulsory cultures of separation and hierarchy through embodied practices of welcoming difference. Becoming autonomous is a political position for it thwarts the exclusions of proprietary knowledge and jealous hoarding of resources, and replaces the social and economic hierarchies on which these depend with a politics of skill exchange, welcome, and collaboration. Freely sharing these with others creates a common wealth of knowledge and power that subverts the domination and hegemony of the master's rule (subRosa Collective, 2003: 12-13).

If a certain tendency in ecopsychology exists to overemphasise despair in the face of ecological uncertainty, a similar tendency exists in anarchism toward resentment in the face of inequality and control. Both can be radically disempowering, undermining capacities for autonomy. Both may function as an anaesthetising response to pain: why isn't the world the radically egalitarian, libertarian and ecological one in which you or I yearn to live?

Asking how ostensibly emancipatory political movements of the excluded come to focus on state-centred strategies which maintain their position as excluded minorities in need of protection, Wendy Brown turns to Nietzsche's notion of "*ressentiment*, the moralizing revenge of the powerless" (1995: 66). Liberal democracy, she suggests, makes promises of liberty and equality that it cannot

keep and is therefore particularly prone to *ressentiment*. This is strengthened by the individualistic logic of independence, rather than interdependence, at the core of liberal political philosophy. Encouraged to think of ourselves as independent individuals living in free and equal societies, who must we blame when we do not experience that freedom, that equality? Brown suggests we might blame either ourselves, doubling the pain, or we project that blame on to those we imagine to be other to ourselves in terms of race, class, sexuality, nationality, species or other social classification. Either strategy is one of disconnection and the reinforcement of hierarchy.

I suggest the same logic might be at work in environmental politics calling for state protection of our powerless and vulnerable (though sometimes angry and vengeful) Mother Earth. She, who existed for millions of years without humans and who will exist long after humans become extinct, is not weak and needing protection. Rather, it seems to me a certain kind of environmental politics project human desires for a particular ecological configuration which suits us (and other species) on to the planet as a whole, thus evading the vulnerability of speaking our own feelings and desires. This is a strategy which is both moralising – the good environmentalists who want to save the Earth versus the bad capitalists who want only profit – and putting both the environment and environmentalists in a position of powerlessness, dependent on the protection of the state. For those who recognise that the nation-state and the market economy are one and the same (Polyani, 2001), this strategy is particularly likely to lead to despair.

If holding on to pain, if basing one's sense of self on loss, resentment or despair, reinforces a sense of powerlessness, what is to be done with pain and loss? Brown argues that "all that such pain may long for – more than revenge – is the chance to be heard into a certain release" (2005: 74). Like Fisher, Brown reminds us that individual healing is insufficient. Instead, she asks, how might we nurture into being radically democratic – autonomous – cultures which do not both produce and depend upon subjectivities fuelled by *ressentiment* while at the same time recognising that individual healing is part of this process?

Whereas the liberal democratic state claims to be already achieved, based on a social contract to which we are all presumed to have consented, and freedom something we have because of the protection we receive from this, the subRosa Collective remind us that autonomy is a process, a practice. It's not something we

have, it's something we *do*. While anarchists and others advocating and practising politics without the state may be attracted to particular visions of an ecological social order (P.M., 2009) and may find those visions helpful in many ways, anarchy is necessarily organic. When it becomes rigid, as explored in Le Guin's *The dispossessed*, "an anarchist critique of anarchism" (Clark, 2009: 22) is required. Like any other ecosystem, social systems are living things constantly in process, never accomplished or achieved. And, like the ecosocialism Fisher (2009) looks to for inspiration, anarchism is prefigurative – practising in the present ethics and structures desired, thus contributing to the unfolding of the future.

In conclusion, this paper is a recognition of the anarchist influences in ecopsychology as well as an invitation to ecopsychology to nurture autonomy. The therapeutic practices of ecopsychology have a crucial role in this process of liberation. Anarchist ideas and practices provide a valuable complement, offering inspiration for egalitarian, libertarian and ecological social systems as well as renewing our relationships with ourselves, each other and the land. Anarchist praxis, when done with care, can offer the direct experience of just how nurturing autonomy can be.

References

Abram, D. (1997). *The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more-than-human world*. New York: Vintage.

Ackelsberg, M. (2005). *Free women of Spain: Anarchism and the struggle for the emancipation of women*. Edinburgh/Oakland: AK Press.

Alfred, T. (2005). *Wasáse: Indigenous pathways of action and freedom*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.

Anonymous (2003). Down with the Empire! Up with the Spring! *Do or die: Voices from the ecological resistance* 10: 1-101.

Antliff, A. (2008). Open form and the abstract imperative: Herbert Read and contemporary anarchist art. *Anarchist Studies 16*(1): 6-19.

Aylward, J. (1999). The contributions of Paul Goodman to the clinical, social, and political implications of boundary disturbances. *Gestalt Review* 3(2): 107-118.

Beasley, C. & Bacchi, C. (2007). Envisaging a new politics for an ethical future: Beyond trust, care and generosity – towards an ethic of "social flesh". *Feminist Theory* 8(3): 279-298.

Begg, A. (2000). *Empowering the Earth: Strategies for social change*. Foxhole: Green Books.

Best, S. & Nocella, A. (eds.) (2006). *Igniting a revolution: Voices in defense of the Earth*. Oakland/Edinburgh: AK Press.

Bey, H. (1994). *Immediatism*. Edinburgh/San Francisco: AK Press.

Bookchin, M. (1974). *Post-scarcity anarchism*. London: Wildhouse Press.

Bookchin, M. (2003). *The ecology of freedom: The emergence and dissolution of hierarchy* (3rd Edition).

Warner, NH: Silver Brook Press.

Brown, W. (1995). *States of injury: Power and freedom in late modernity*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Carter, A. (1999). *A radical green political theory*. London: Routledge.

Catton, W.R. & Dunlap, R.E. (1978). Environmental sociology: A new paradigm. *American Sociologist*, 13, 41-49.

Clark, J. (1990). "What is social ecology", in J. Clark (ed.). *Renewing the Earth: The promise of social ecology: A celebration of the work of Murray Bookchin*. London: Green Print.

Clark, J. (2009). "Anarchy and the Dialectic of Utopia", in L. Davis & R. Kinna (eds.). *Anarchism and Utopianism* (pp. 9-29). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Clark, S. (2007). *Living without domination: The possibility of an anarchist utopia.* Farnham: Ashgate.

Conant, J. (2010). *A poetics of resistance: The revolutionary public relations of the Zapatista Insurgency*. Oakland/Edinburgh: AK Press.

Coulthard, G. & Lasky, J. (eds.)(in-press). Working across difference for post-imperial futures: Intersections between anarchism, indigenism, and feminism. *Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture, and Action.*

Dark Star Collective (eds.)(2002). *Quiet rumours: An anarcha-feminist reader.* Edinburgh/Oakland, AK Press/Dark Star.

Davidson, S. (2009). Ecoanarchism: A critical defence. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 14(1): 47-67.

Deleuze, G. (1977). "Intellectuals and power: A conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze", in D. Bouchard (trans.), D. Bouchard & S. Simon (eds.). *Language, counter-memory, practice.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Accessed 2 May 2008 from http://libcom.org/library/intellectuals-power-a-conversation-between-michel-foucault-and-gilles-deleuze

Donson, F., Chesters, G., Welsh, I. & Tickle, A. (2004). Rebels with a cause, folk devils without a panic: Press jingoism, policing tactics and anti-capitalist protest in London and Prague. *Internet Journal of Criminology*. Accessed 23 September 2010 from http://www.internetjournalofcriminology.com/Donson%20et%20al%20-%20Folkdevils.pdf

Esteva, G. & Prakash, M.S. (1998). *Grassroots post-modernism: Remaking the soil of cultures.* London: Zed Books.

Fisher, A. (2002). *Radical ecopsychology: Psychology in the service of life*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Fisher, A. (2009). "Ecopsychology as radical praxis", in L. Buzzell & C. Chalquist (eds.). *Ecotherapy: Healing with nature in mind* (pp. 60-68). San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Franks, B. (2003). The direct action ethic: From 59 upwards. *Anarchist Studies* 11(1): 13-41.

Fox, D (1985). Psychology, ideology, utopia, and the commons. *American Psychologist* 40: 48-58. Accessed 20 May 2010 from http://dennisfox.net/papers/commons.html

Glendinning, C. (1994). *My name is Chellis and I'm in recovery from western civilization* (1st ed.). Shambhala: Boston & London.

Goldman, E. (1969). *Anarchism and other essays*. New York: Dover.

Goia, J. (2008). "Soma: An anarchist experiment", in G. Grindon (ed.). *Aesthetics and radical politics*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Gordon, T. & Griffiths, B. (2007). "How to manage your own health", in Trapeze Collective (eds.). *Do it yourself: A handbook for changing our world.*. London/Ann Arbor: Pluto Press.

Gordon, U. (2008). *Anarchy alive! Anti-authoritarian politics from practice to theory.* London/Ann

Arbor: Pluto.

Graeber, D. (2004). *Fragments of an anarchist anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.

Griffiths, B. & Gordon, T. (2007). "Why Society Is Making Us Sick", in Trapeze Collective (eds.). *Do it yourself: A handbook for changing our world.*. London/Ann Arbor: Pluto Press.

Griffiths, J. (2008). *Wild: An elemental journey*. London: Penguin.

Grinde, D. & Johansen, B. (1990). *Exemplar of liberty: Native America and the evolution of democracy*. Los Angeles: University of California Los Angeles.

Halpin, H. & Summer, K. (2008). Network organisation for the 21st century. *Turbulence* 4. Accessed 1 May 2010 from http://turbulence.org.uk/turbulence-4/network-organisation-for-the-21st-century/

Heckert, J. (2010). "Listening, caring, becoming: Anarchism as an ethics of direct relationships", in B. Franks & M. Wilson (eds.). *Anarchism and moral philosophy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Heller, C. (1999). *Ecology of everyday life: Rethinking the desire for nature.* Montreal: Black Rose Books.

Jose, J. (2005). 'Nowhere at home', not even in theory: Emma Goldman, anarchism and political theory. *Anarchist Studies* 13(1): 23-46.

Kals, E., Schumacher, D. & Montada, L. (1999). Emotional affinity toward nature as a motivational basis to protect nature. *Environment and Behavior* 31: 178-202.

Kropotkin, P. (2010). *Mutual aid: A factor of evolution*. Accessed 20 September 2010 from http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/ANARCHIST_ARCHIVES/kropotkin/mutaidcontents.html

LaDuke, W. (1999). *All our relations: Native struggles for land and life*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Lacava Collective (2007). *Sin patrón: Stories from Argentina's worker-run factories*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Le Guin, U.K. (1974). *The dispossessed: An ambiguous utopia*. New York: Harper & Row.

Le Guin, U.K. (1985). *Always coming home*. New York: Harper & Row.

Le Guin, U.K. (1997). *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching: A book about the Way and the power of the Wa*y. Boston: Shambhala.

Lisa (2008). *Threads: Changes during the menstrual cycle; feminism and anatomy; medical model of menstruation; politics of so-called PMS.* Glasgow: Self-published.

Litfin, K. (2010). "Principles of Gaian governance: A rough sketch", in E. Christ & H.B. Rinker (eds.). *Gaia in turmoil: Climate change, biodepletion, and Earth ethics in an age of* crisis (pp. 195-219). Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press.

Macy, J. & Brown, M.Y. (1998). *Coming back to life: practices to reconnect our lives, our world*. Gabriola Island: New Society Press.

McKay, G. (1998). *DIY culture: Party and protest in Nineties' Britain*. London: Verso.

Morris, B. (1996). *Anarchism & ecology: Essays and reviews on contemporary thought*. Malvern Wells: Images Publishing.

Notes from Nowhere (2003). *We are everywhere: The irresistible rise of global anticapitalism*. London, Verso.

Ophuls, W. (1977). *Ecology and the politics of scarcity: Prologue to a political theory of the steady state*. San Francisco: Freeman.

Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and democratic theory*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Pickerill, J. & Chatterton, P. (2006). Notes towards autonomous geographies. *Progress in Human Geography* 30(6): 1–17.

Polanyi, K. (2001). *The great transformation*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

P.M. (2009). It's all about potatoes and computers: Recipes for the cook-shops of the future. *Turbulence* 5. Accessed 9 May 2010 from http://turbulence.org.uk/turbulence-5/potatoes-and-computers/

Rapp, J. (2009). "Daoism as utopian or accomodationist: Radical Daoism re-examined in light of the Guodian manuscripts", in L. Davis & R. Kinna (eds.). *Anarchism and utopianism* (pp. 33-52). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Radical Routes (2010). Website accessed 9 May 2010 from http://www.radicalroutes.org.uk/

Rhodes, D (2008). *An anarchist psychotherapy: Ecopsychology and a pedagogy of life*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Accessed 25 May 2010 from http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/umi-uncg-1631.pdf

Rosenberg, M. (2003). *The heart of social change: How to make a difference in your world*. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press.

Roseneil, S. (2000). *Common women, uncommon practices: The queer feminisms of Greenham*. London, Cassell.

Roszak, T. (2001). *The voice of the Earth: An exploration of ecopsychology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press.

Rousselle, D. & Evren, S. (eds.)(in-press). *The postanarchism reader: Writings at the intersection of anarchism and poststructuralism.* Ann Arbor/London: Pluto Press.

Scott, J.C. (2009). *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Seel, B., Paterson, M., & Doherty, B. (2000). *Direct action in British environmentalism*. London: Routledge.

Shantz, J. & Adam, B. (1999). Ecology and class: The green syndicalism of IWW/Earth First local 1. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 19(7-8): 43-72 .

Shantz, J. (2005). Syndicalism, ecology and feminism: Judi Bari's vision. *Common Voice* 3. Accessed 21 September 2010 from http://www.cvoice.org/CV3shantz.pdf

Sitrin, M. (2006). *Horizontalism: Voices of popular power in Argentina.* Edinburgh/Oakland: AK Press.

Smith, A. (2005). *Conquest: Sexual violence and American Indian genocide*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Snyder, G. (2010). *Buddhist anarchism.* Accessed 20 September 2010 from http://www.cddc.vt.edu/bps/CF/garysnyder.htm

starr, a. (2007). "Grumpywarriorcool: What makes our movements white?", in S. Best & A.J. Nocella, II (eds.). *Igniting a revolution: Voices in defense of the Earth*. Edinburgh/Oakland: AK Press.

Stevens, P. (in-press). Embedment in the environment – A new paradigm for wellbeing? *Perspectives in Public Health.*

Stillman, P. & Davis, L. (2006). *The new utopian politics of Ursula K. Le Guin's 'The Dispossessed'*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

subRosa (2003). "Introduction: Practicing cyberfeminisms", in M. Fernandez, F. Wilding & M.M. Wright (eds.). *Domain errors! Cyberfeminist practices*. New York: Autonomedia.

Sullivan, S. (2005). An *other* world is possible? On representation, rationalism and romanticism in social forums. *Ephemera* 5(2): 370-392.

Sullivan, S. (2008a). Bioculturalism, shamanism and economics. *Resurgence* 250, September/October. Accessed 9 June 2010 from http://www.resurgence.org/magazine/article2631-Bioculturalism-Shamanism-Economics.html

Sullivan, S. (2008b). "Conceptualising glocal organisation: From rhizome to E=mc^2 in becoming post-

human", in M. Kornprobst, V. Pouliot, N. Shah & R. Zaiotti (eds.). *Metaphors of globalisation: Mirrors, magicians and mutinies (*pp. 149-166). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tifft, L. & Sullivan, D. (1980). *The struggle to be human: Crime, criminology, and anarchism*. Sanday: Cienfuegos Press.

Watts, A. (1975). *Tao: The watercourse way*. New York: Pantheon.

Wilkinson, R. & Pickett, K. (2010). *The spirit level: Why more equal societies almost always do better*. London: Penguin.

Zibechi, R. (2010). *Dispersing power: Social movements as anti-state forces*. Oakland/Edinburgh: AK Press.

Acknowledgements

Correspondence

Email: Jamie.Heckert@gmail.com