Crises Transformed: The Motivations Behind Engagement in Anarchy

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ABSTRACT

What motivates individuals to take part in anarchistic movements and spaces? For those who do, what occurs during engagement in anarchy? By collecting the oral histories of anarchistic activists, this study indicates how crisis, personal and collective, is a not only a motivating factor for why individuals join and engage in anarchistic movements and spaces, but how crises are, in turn, radically transformed through engagement in anarchical practice. To understand this process, this study explores crisis through the development of an eco-anarchistic dialectical framework—negate-subvert-create—to indicate how the crises of capital are embodied, consciously negated, subverted politically, and ultimately transformed through engagement in anarchy. Anarchy is accordingly conceptualized as a liminal spatio-temporality that allows individuals to reconnect their selves to their potentials to become something beyond the ecological destructive and dominant social world. These newfound potentials are realized through the embodiment of communitas, or collective liminality—a natural communality that individuals reconnect to engaging in anarchy. I end with an exploration of the possible outcomes and potential futures of anarchy by situating the current political, economic, social and ecological crises occurring around the globe within the eco-anarchistic framework developed in this study. Here, I indicate the importance of engaging in care practices and creating care-networks as a necessary outcome and future political practice for anarchistic movements as a way to mitigate and ultimately transform the crises of capital.
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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Why have anarchistic movements and spaces begun to germinate around the globe since the start of the 2008 global economic crisis? In the United States in particular, the Occupy movement (Occupy hereon) was one such anarchical manifestation that utilized spatial occupations to begin the process of radically creating alternatives to neoliberal social worlds. As Occupiers avowed, “another world became possible” within the few months of active occupations in late 2011—another world realized, albeit temporarily, through engagement in anarchistic practice. Further, following raids of various local occupations, activists proclaimed: “you cannot evict an idea whose time has come!” indicating the immeasurable potentialities embodied and sought by activists. But, what are these “unevictable” ideas and what really became possible within those moments? More specific to this study: what, at the level of individual motivation made these spatial occupations possible and, subsequently, what did the experience engaging in prefigurative politics make even further possible (if at all) for individuals involved?

Through several years of ethnographic research beginning in 2011 with the start of Occupy until the present—both place-based within the occupations themselves and utilizing social media—I discovered that crisis, personal and collective, is often a potentially motivating factor as to why individuals engage in anarchistic movements and practice. According to some scholar/activists whom I encountered while doing research with/in Occupy and, upon beginning my research into post-traumatic growth, the embodiment of crisis is synonymous to a liminal, ruminative state, whereby individuals begin to rethink their relationships to their selves and the social world. According to radical social movement scholars, within this framework, following crises, relations to dominant socialities can be “cracked” open (Holloway 2010), allowing for an “other-worldly consciousness” to spring forth (Heckert 2013). As such, “other-worlds” can, as
Occipiers proclaimed, become possible following crises, but contrary to materialist perspectives on social movements, these other-worlds begin with individual selves where crisis is embodied, ruminated upon, and, if overcome in positive and transformative ways, becomes inspirational.

Within the context of contemporary anarchistic movements such as Occupy, spatial occupations are seen as a necessary onto-political tactic that allows collectives to positively act on and appropriate the prevalent cultural, economic, political and ecological crises produced by capitalism, specifically within the neoliberal era. I conceptualize this process of awakening to and acting upon neoliberal crises as a dialectical rearrangement of spatio-temporalities—negation-subversion-creation—through which activists can become the crisis of capital (Holloway 2016). Focusing on anarchistic movements and spaces, Holloway (2016) insists that rather than thinking in universalistic and debilitating terms, whereby capital, for instance, is thought to exclusively create crisis, activists should instead claim that capital’s crisis is their very insubordination—“we are the crisis of capital, and proud of it!” (Holloway 2016: 1). When endured and acted on collectively, crises can manifest as a collective liminal embodiment, whereby individuals become consciously aware of, motivated to engage in subversive political acts, and ultimately, creatively inspired to transform the social world. When crises thus inspire collectives of individuals to engage in transformative acts, this provides a space for individuals to develop genuinely transformative socialities in crisis’ wake. With this dialectic in mind, I rearticulate engagement in anarchistic practice (in short, anarchy) as a liminal moment where dominant socialities are rendered obsolete, allowing activists to understand how to become the crises of capital.

This process of rearticulating spatio-temporalities is synonymous with what contemporary anarchistic activists refer to as prefigurative politics, of which spatial occupation is
one manifestation (Bray 2013; Dixon 2012; Graeber 2013; Khatib, Killjoy and McGuire 2012; Maeckelbergh 2009 and 2012; Stapp 2013; Williams 2012). Prefigurative politics, as Springer (2014) suggests, is direct action—a historically derived practice of anti-capitalist movements, specifically the anti-authoritarian, autonomist Marxist, anarchist, and other prefigurative anti-capitalist political milieus. From direct action, to DIY culture and other “immediatist” practices (Bey 1985 and 1994), these fundamental onto-political embodiments and practices represent the understanding that in order to create the changes that activists yearn for, these changes must be embodied and enacted in the present. There is no waiting for the change to come in the future and no political program established to create a future utopian world. As I will claim throughout, it is, indeed, in moments of crises that the necessity of prefigurative politics begins to germinate—an inevitable ontological outburst, or “eros effect” (Katsiaficas 2006), as a way to actively mitigate the effects of and drastically transform capital’s crises-ridden and ever-reaching and destructive tendencies, social institutionalizations and embodiments (socialities hereon).

Through the dialectic—negate-subvert-create—uncovered in this study, these anarchical outbursts are further understood as a response to the need for tapping back into what I conceptualize as the “communal spirit,” or the development of an “eco-consciousness.” An eco-consciousness is the product of a sociality that centers kincentricity (Armstrong 2008)—rather than the anthropocentric, possessive individualisms and thus oppressive socialities commonplace within capitalist socialities—as fundamental to natural processes and, by default, human relations, persistence and growth. Why an eco-consciousness? According to anarchistic theories of colonization and/or alienation, capitalism and neoliberalism are rooted in anthropocentric socialities, which lead to the removal of humans from their connections to nature and, by default, their own selves. Prefigurative politics is, accordingly, an onto-political response to what
Katsiaficas (2006) calls “the colonization of everyday life.” It is the conscious recognition of colonization—a socio-cultural, political and economic crisis brought on by capitalist and neoliberal global socialities. Reiterating the dialectic within an ecological framework, prefigurative politics allows individuals to consciously understand, actively resist the effects, deliberately subvert the power, and ultimately create alternatives to the many ways in which neoliberal globalization controls, enslaves, exploits, oppresses, murders, dismantles, starves, exiles, etc. humans and non-human beings around the globe. Rather than simply recognizing and becoming critical of their the colonization of everyday life, however, engaging in prefigurative politics allows individuals to recognize their alienation from their selves as a product of capitalism and once again, consciously recognize the integral role they play within the ecosystems they inhabit. This recognition then encourages individuals to go through the necessary processes of appropriating their selves and the social world to reflect the ecological understanding they embody engaging in anarchy.

The state, capitalism and all other bureaucratic and oppressive institutions and embodiments are products of anthropocentric socialities. As I develop in chapter four, this understanding reiterates the work of classical communal- and eco-anarchists such as Kropotkin (2009), Reclus (2013), and Landauer (1978), and Indigenous traditional activists such as Alfred (2005) and Deloria (2012), who understand that removing humans from nature not only led to the creation of pyramidal socialities, but, most importantly, removed individuals from their creative spiritual potentialities. These theorists thus recognize that the only way to transform dominant socialities (e.g., to decolonize) is to actively work towards creating a world free of domination—a social world that centers mutual aid as foundational to the creation of such a world. In total, prefigurative politics is a way to appropriate crisis by acting on what I refer to as
a eutopic yearning—the embodied consequence of enduring and becoming conscious of the systemic natures of neoliberal crises itself. This is why, as elaborated upon in chapter four, individuals feel almost intuitively pulled to engage in anarchistic movements and practice. By acting on their eutopic yearnings, activists intuitively begin to search for and exploit “cracks” in capital—in its logic, infrastructures, and the ways in which it is embodied. Activists learn to effectively subvert dominant socialities in order to make room for the creation of a social world that reflects their newfound, or rediscovered, ecological selves. In all, I refer to this as the ecology of crises, whereby crisis is an important analytic to understand the motives and practices of contemporary anarchistic activists, and to, most importantly, understand how such practices are imbued with the potentialities of human and social transformation.

*Research Questions: Why Study Activists’ Personal Motivations and Embodiments?*

This study began as a reflection upon my own personal growth as an activist, especially after I was honored with the privilege of reentering the academy. These reflections include almost a decade’s worth of memories and experiences engaging in anarchistic movements. The most recent of these memories includes my engagement in Occupy, which became foundational to my Master’s thesis (Stapp 2013). Most importantly to *this* study is that my participation in anarchistic movements grew out of my growing recognition of systemic oppressions as products of capitalist and neoliberal relations. This originated with a deeply personal trauma that I endured during my youth. Having arrived at understanding the affects this personal trauma had on my own life and most importantly, how it motivated me to engage in anarchistic movements, throughout my engagement in Occupy, I collected the memories of similar yet different stories of crises as shared amongst my comrades. These stories of trauma, crisis, struggle, and growth
shared with/by fellow activists encouraged me to formulate this study—to desperately search the literature for answers to the embodied realities and memories so commonly held amongst activists, including myself.

By participating in and reflecting upon Occupy, upon reentering the academy, sitting around the fire telling stories, lying in parks underneath the sun reading poetry, enjoying a beer in an old radical Leftist pub, collectively occupying spaces—storytelling proved quite effective for understanding the most intimate of embodiments and relations to neoliberal crises and transformative politics. In turn, as a reflection upon the movement as a whole, these memories of stories shared led me to wonder: if we could better understand ourselves and why we do what we do in the wake of state repression, then maybe, just maybe, we could better understand how to create the world we are yearning for. I believed (and still do) that if activists’ embodiments and relations to crises could be better understood, this could further inspire them to create stronger political platforms and practices—understanding the personal motivations of activists could encourage others to recognize the necessity of prefigurative politics as a tool to resist neoliberal globalization.

Based on these initial ruminations, as well as the discussion above, this study was accordingly driven by these fundamental questions:

1) *What motivates individuals to engage in anarchistic movements and practice?*

2) *If crisis and prefigurative politics allow individuals to embody and navigate liminal moments where spatio-temporalities are rearranged, what are the affective embodiments and outcomes of these moments?*

In order to give voice to the possibly motivating and potentially transformative experiences of crisis, I aimed to build upon the personal stories and memories that I had collectively shared with
fellow comrades from my past engagement in anarchistic movements. In doing so, I continued to collect the memories and stories of anarchistic activists through the use of militant research methods with an emphasis on oral historiography.

**Militant Research: Prefigurative Political Method/ologies**

*There is a great fork in the road ahead. For some, the path of least resistance will be too appealing to pass up: finding favor in the corporate university, acquiescing to the demands of bibliometrics, conducting uncontroversial and unpolitical research, living behind the veils of dense theoretical language and speaking in “proper” tones to small, “approving crowds.” We know these scholars well. It is our job never to become them."


In response to the waning of the social sciences within neoliberalizing educational institutions and, within the West, democracy in general (see also Brown 2005 and 2011), qualitative researchers Giardina and Denzin (2013) made the call for social scientists to become more militantly engaged scholars both in and outside of the academy. As previously discovered completing my Master’s thesis on Occupy (Stapp 2013), Militant Research (MR) is a method/ology that I believe meets the demands of Giardina and Denzin’s (2013) call to action. In fact, MR preceded their call (and used the same adjective), and as such the militant researchers that have engaged in MR for several decades—researchers from the “streets” as Giardina and Denzin (2013) imply—deserve the credit for making this call. It is the prefigurative political nature of MR that allows for qualitative researchers such as Giardina and Denzin to look past the already well-established grassroots methodologies, such as MR, used by
“militant” activists. Understanding and interrogating the history of MR is necessary to, indeed, “confront,” as Giardina and Denzin (2013) insist, but, most importantly, transform neoliberal institutionalizations and embodiments. In this section, I briefly highlight the reasons behind utilizing MR as well as incorporating oral historiography, as I do in this study, into the MR canon. In chapter six, I will return to this discussion to further explain the importance of utilizing MR within anarchistic movements. MR is a method/ology that can be used by activists within and outside of the academy (in all social spaces!) as a way to produce knowledge conducive to the movements and spaces activists find themselves embedded in. Further reflecting upon Giardina and Denzin’s (2013) article, I start by asking, why engage militantly in research now, generations into the Neoliberal era?

To understand the importance of MR, it is necessary to start first with a critique of mainstream academic research on social movements. Also preceding Giardina and Denzin (2013) within the academy and specifically within the social sciences, Bevington and Dixon (2005) developed one of the sternest critiques of dominant epistemological and methodological frameworks used to understand and study social movements. They insisted that contemporary social movement scholars should utilize “movement-relevant theories” to understand social movements, especially in relationship to radical movements such as Occupy. Cox and Nilsen (2007) echoed this critique, claiming that conventional social movement studies defaulted on deductive reasoning, which maintained abstract relations between scholars and activists and, in

1 Not so ironically, there is no mention at all of “Militant Research” in the special issue in Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies titled, “Confronting Neoliberalism,” in which Giardina and Denzin made this call. In fact, there is no mention of MR in the entire journal of Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies.
turn, had a tendency to produce knowledge about rather with and/or for movements. Most worrisome to these scholars, including myself, is how this about was and is often used as a way to discredit radical social movements, leading to the creation of misspecified and repressive understandings and relations to radical politics.

As a way to break from the oppressive outcomes of dominant social movement studies, Cox and Nilsen (2007) claimed that scholars should utilize a “sociology of emergences” framework that understands social movements as constantly moving and immanently grounded in a politic that is fluid and continually transcending spatio-temporalities (see also Springer 2014 for an analysis of the immanent nature of prefigurative politics in general). A “sociology of emergences” framework accordingly requires that those “studying” social movements be wholly embedded with/in the movements themselves. As Russell (2015) explains, MR and other radical social movement frameworks trouble the separation between activist and scholar, researcher and researched, activism and research, etc., whereby research is developed within/by/for activists involved in social movements. These authors developed similar critiques and relations to research because their a priori perceptions and identities were formulated from with/in radical social movements and communities. This is why, as Bevington and Dixon (2005) claim, it is necessary to utilize movement relevant theories to study radical social movements. As I discovered reentering the academy and attempting to engage in dialogue about what had occurred in Occupy, it is not possible to truly understand a radical movement’s purpose, and especially what transpires engaging in a movement, otherwise. With regards to prefigurative politics, this is indeed the case. If a movement’s message is what activists are actually doing in practice, then you have to see, feel, and experience this doing in order to truly understand the movement.
Further, grounded in an anarchistic framework, which is strictly anti-capitalist \textit{and} anti-authoritarian (a philosophy summarized in chapter two), militant researchers perceive the abstracted relations typified in mainstream social movements research as oppressively bound to dominant socialities. A removing of the self (i.e., the researcher) from what is being studied is unthinkable within MR paradigms. This inspiring “orientation and process,” as Russell (2015: 224) explains, contrasts with an “‘off-the-shelf’ set of techniques for measuring, recording and assessing the world according to academic standards.” Knowledge cannot be “disembodied, impartial and universal” (Russell 2015: 225), but is rather moving and constantly transformed from within movements, reiterating Cox and Nilsen’s (2007) call for an emergent sociological framework to study movements. Rather than “study” movements, radical activists that utilize MR actively engage and move with/in movements—they embody the movement’s politics (Apoifis 2016; Shukaitis and Graeber 2007). And, because militant researchers are actively involved in movements, they, in fact, constitute the movement itself. Militant researchers \textit{are} activists, whether “scholars” or not, and as such, the knowledge produced utilizing MR is a political tactic used to aid the movements under “study” (Casas-Cortés and Cobarrubias 2007: 114). In practice, militant researchers thus actively and constantly seek opportunities where transformations can effectively happen—like in a spatial occupation or during crises in general—providing experiences and opportunities to produce knowledge (e.g., political platforms, tactics and historical understandings, etc.) about how to resist dominant socialities. In relationship to this study, the question then becomes: if MR is used to develop knowledge as movements move, would understanding activists’ motivations and reminiscing about their embodiments engaging in movements be similarly helpful?
I began this study with the belief that understanding the whys of anarchistic activism (e.g., why activists do what they do), rather than focusing on the how-tos (e.g., how to change the world), would reveal something important for the movement. Understanding the whys, I surmised, could also help with understanding the how-tos—the how-tos of developing stronger political practices and tactics to empower others to engage in anarchistic practice. Because the intention of this study was to get to the heart of activists’ experiences before and during their engagement in anarchistic movements, rather than utilizing MR to create knowledge from with/in movements as they move, I utilized MR to tell activist’s stories about their embodied memories of moving, so to speak. Their stories allowed me to better understand not only what motivated activists, but also the changes activists endured engaging in anarchistic movements and practice.

Because my research questions focus on the level of individual experiences and embodiments, collecting the oral histories of anarchistic activists was an essential method to derive further meaning out of activists’ experiences and embodiments. It is also a method that I believe is necessary to more explicitly bring into the MR canon. As a way to contribute to the MR project, oral histories, as oral historians such as Portelli (1988) believed, can drastically affect the outcomes of individuals’ experiences engaging in activism and the ways they perceive their selves and what they are capable of as radical activists attempting to transform the social world. In the scope of this study, oral histories provided intimate and meaningful understanding about how crisis is potentially transformative and how prefigurative politics can be used to embolden such transformative experiences: that is, how, through engagement in

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2 Elsewhere, Apoifis (2016) develops a genealogy of militant research that encompasses the use of oral histories by Italian autonomists.
anarchistic practice, activists can become the crisis of capital. By collecting the oral histories of activists, I was also able to develop a historical and psycho-spiritual understanding of anarchistic movements and practice.

In order to bring oral historiography into the MR framework, I did not simply collect interviews of activists. In order to also bring in my own personal stories as well as the memories I had already collected engaging in anarchistic movements, I engaged in what Juris (2007) and Apoifis (2016) refer to as a militant ethnography. Conducting a militant ethnography allowed me not only to collect the oral histories of anarchistic activists, but also intentionally and mindfully embed myself in anarchistic spaces and networks. Being conscious of the spaces I navigated to collect activists’ stories allowed me to further interrogate how personal and collective changes occur before and after actions, events, and large manifestations of anarchistic practices such as what occurred during the zenith of Occupy. Militant ethnography, in this sense, is nothing out of the ordinary for activists and/or activist oral historians. In fact, with this in mind, oral histories might very well be one of the first examples of militant methods used to study anarchistic movements. Because they are more “traditional” and arguably less militant scholars, Giardina and Denzin (2013) were demanding the creation and use of research methods that had been and continue to be used, not just in radical social movements, but by those exiled within dominant socialities (e.g., “the streets”) since at least the mid-20th Century.

Oral Historiography: Old School Methods, New School Figurations

This ain't no neo soul even though its subtle and slow
The political is personal you suckas should know
It's why my body won't rest until my story been told
I won't rest until my stories have been told
...
I wrote the scroll flipped the script broke the mold
But my people ain’t free we just out on parole
My collection of records is for my son when he’s grown
He’ll appreciate the now when we call it the old
These Americans forgettin’ that they live on a globe
The same planet as those left abandoned in droves
Kept in bondage by the chain of a creditors loan
Their money is like a bboy stance, it stays froze
I prose what the world decomposes to show
The conditions that's depicted up in “Hustle and Flow”
From drafted to casket these soldiers come home
My craft spit the magic off the top of the dome
I’m walkin alone, often get exhausted and blown
Only six feet separate the coffin and throne
You cavemen insist on calling sisters a ho
You ain’t equipped to paint a picture of the city I roam
...
Working ’til the bone cracks over timezones
Push the pen to the paper nose to the grindstone

I won’t rest until my story been told
I won’t rest until my stories have been told


Oral history, past and present, was and is often still used to write histories from the standpoint of individuals involved in larger structural events such as war and other types of political-economic crises. In a more actively militant manner, oral histories were first put into practice by Passerini (1979) during the rise of fascism in Europe as well as the labor movements, which were often the collectives most involved in Fascist resistance. Although not always used to collect the stories of activists and those resisting power structures, as Passerini did, historians and other practitioners utilized oral histories to remember more than just the experiences living within fascist regimes, but to also record the histories of everyday people as a way to construct relevant theories and
practice about survival.\textsuperscript{3} One of the most prominent foundational accounts of oral histories collected within such a context is the work of Alessandro Portelli (1991), who saw the act of collecting oral histories about activists and workers during the workers’ uprisings in Italy as necessary to provide a cohesive story for activists to remember their experiences in relationship to the dominant historical narratives about the events. Portelli’s (1991) theoretical work on oral histories revealed how the collective memories about the lived experiences of the events under study resonated more powerfully for activists than any other account.

Conveyed in Portelli’s (1991) best-known collection, \textit{The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories}, the death of the activist, Trastulli, during a workers’ strike was differently remembered by activists involved in the movement and especially by those who witnessed the murder of Trastulli by the police. Portelli had begun assembling the stories he collected about the death of Trastulli to challenge the misspecifications about the events mobilized by those in power. Portelli found that the memories he collected often differed drastically from “actual historical facts,” and were just as important as, if not more important than, facticity. The significance of Portelli’s (1988; 1991) work in particular and oral histories of activism in general became not so much the deconstruction of misspecifications disseminated by those in power (although an important task), but rather a medium to provide a voice to the experiences and memories developed by “everyday” people during important historical events. The “uchronic histories” studied and conceptualized by Portelli (1988) as timeless and imaginative historical realities, allow activists to maintain hope that their critical relations to society and political agendas are still reasonable and plausible politics and beliefs to enact, even in the midst of

\textsuperscript{3} See Abrams (2010) and Ritchie (2011) for a more thorough historical overview of oral history as a subfield; Buhle (1981) regarding oral history of radical activism in particular.
political and economic crises. Oral histories, in a sense, are expressions of social change and the actual embodied, meaningful accounts and relationships to such changes. To live within a dominant historical narrative and yet embody memories and imaginative counter-histories was, Portelli (1988) believed, an indicator that activists still had the potential to change society and/or experience the alternative worlds they set out to create.

According to Buhle (1981), ensuring that movements have histories of their own creation is necessary for the evolution of any movement. This was precisely what the foundational oral historians set out to do and what became their agendas. By collecting the stories of activists in order to challenge dominant socialities and narratives about certain events, they not only discovered the importance of memories to everyday life experiences—both alone and in relation to the grander historical narratives—but they in turn helped to develop more practical, novel and meaningful theoretical observations about the movements they were a part of as well as the activists involved (Buhle 1981; Keniston 1968). In short, oral histories can help activists develop collective imaginations about what are and are not effective modes of resistance. As expressed in the hip-hop lyrics by Blue Scholars introducing this subsection, this is especially the case for colonized peoples who often lack a voice within mainstream accounts of social reality. Whether passed down orally or written, sung and/or poetically delivered, oral histories help everyday individuals to realize that they are not alone in their experiences and embodiments of the social world. Most importantly here, oral historiography, in whichever way it is used, imbues individuals with the potentialities to understand how to collectively survive, resist, and, ultimately, transform the social world.

Regarding this study in particular, oral histories can provide meaningful collective understandings about whether and how neoliberal and personal crises may be potentially and
positively transformed. Oral histories were the only way to intimately and thoroughly understand the experiences of quotidian breakdowns, traumatic growth, social alienation and the other motivations for involvement in activism that theories suggested activists would have (see chapter three for an analysis of these theories) and the personal implications and/or potential transformations of anarchistic activism. Regardless of whether a traumatic and/or a collective crisis was embodied prior to an activist’s radicalization, individuals involved still carry with them stories and memories that are fundamental to who they are and have become as activists. The topics I explored in the interviews I conducted thus included: understanding the nature and outcomes of any individual crisis with a particular focus on motivational outcomes; the process of quotidian breakdowns of individuals’ “assumptive worlds”; individual and/or communal experiences engaging in the world following breakdown and crisis; whether the experiences following crisis and/or engagement in prefigurative politics led to individual and/or collective transformation; and finally, how these changes are experienced and remembered in relationship to their work within the broader alter-globalization movement as aiding in the creation of an alternative social world. While conducting these interviews and embedding myself in anarchistic spaces and movements, I additionally began to explore the ways in which these experiences not only transformed individuals positively, but also affected them in general. This, as expressed in chapter six, allowed me to better understand what was necessary, by way of theory and practice, for the movement to continue moving.

_Dropping the Ditty: Collecting the Oral Histories of Anarchistic Activists_

_As myths emerge, the subtleties of history are eroded away, among them the chorus of voices that create our movements. The voices of some who gave their blood, their sweat, and their lives are pushed into the shadows, while others are undeservingly exalted. Our culture, our media and text- book histories are fixated on the myth of the good hero, so they distort the contributions of_
the many people who created the movement. What is left is like a broken mirror: a fragmented reflection instead of a whole.

-scott crow, Black Flags and Windmills

In order to gain access to the intimate oral histories of anarchistic activists, I depended heavily on my already established networks and relations with/in anarchistic communities—networks that I developed, mostly, as a product of my experiences engaging in the Occupy movement. This gave me easy access to a large transnational network of activists, which I do not believe could have been possible otherwise. In order to actually collect the oral histories about the motivations behind anarchistic activists as well as the effects that such activism has on activists’ everyday lives, I intentionally resituated myself within anarchistic activist spaces, on and offline.

Initially I began seeking out interviewees to whom I was already directly linked from past engagement in anarchistic movements and spaces, sending out messages to networks and posting fliers in activist spaces to ask for volunteers. These messages indicated that I was looking for activists engaged in anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist movements and spaces to engage in an oral history project to give voice to the whys of anarchistic movements. As I expressed in an anarchist activist listserv:

Generally, my project is focused on what motivates anarchists to become, well, anarchists and how involvement in the movement has changed them (us) overtime. We all have very unique stories about why we began to do what we do, so I am making it a point to collect these stories more formally. The hope here is to provide a way to (better?) understand the "how" questions that much of our energy is often given to (re: how to smash the state :D) by focusing on the...more personal and intimate "whys." Why are we the ones out here in the streets, occupying this park, doing anarchist scholarly research, etc.? What "woke us" to this understanding and embodiment, so to say?

Within days of sending this message to the anarchist listserves I am active on, I already was in contact with eight individuals, five of whom I was able to eventually interview either online or in-person. After completing my first three interviews, I also utilized snowball-sampling methods
to capture an array of voices from within the broad anarchistic movement in the United States adding eight more interviews to my list. During the process of planning and collecting these interviews, by nature of the anarchistic network I am a part of, a fellow activist found out about my work and eventually pointed me in the direction of an online blog, *At the Heart of an Occupation* (*ATHO*). The *ATHO* blog documents an oral history project that was completed during and shortly after the Occupy movement began in the United States by guerilla journalist and public historian, Stacy Lanyon.

I met with Stacy during a research trip to New York City, where I was able to learn about the *ATHO* interviews and why Stacy created the blog. As she explained, based on her own personal experiences engaging in Occupy and watching the dominant and misspecified narratives about the movement unfold, she felt inspired to collect the stories of activists as a way to shine a light on the beauty that was Occupy. This was precisely why Stacy named the blog accordingly—to tell activist’s stories was a way to get to the heart of the experiences within the encampments. In order to collect the oral histories of activists involved in Occupy, Stacy personally planned, recorded, took pictures of interviewees and transcribed and uploaded the 308 interviews now found on the *ATHO* blog. With Stacy’s permission and encouragement, I utilized a sample of the 308 interviews the *ATHO* provides to subsidize the data that I was collecting. Both sources of information provided rich accounts of activists’ motivations and embodiments engaging in anarchy. Without consciously embedding myself in activist spaces and networks doing my research, the outcome of this study would not be so fruitful—an example in itself of the importance of using militant ethnography.
I intentionally resituated myself in New York City, which allowed me to reconnect with and also interview activists in contemporary anarchistic spaces such as the BASE in Brooklyn, NY, which was established shortly after the Occupy encampment in NYC was raided. The BASE is an anarchist community space in a commercial building utilized as an alternative learning and community space where activists engage in lectures, reading groups, organizing committees, etc. It is primarily used as a hub for DIY projects and initiatives in the city, such as community composting programs, urban gardening education and practice (issues related to food sovereignty in general), and resistance to police brutality and gentrification—some of the major agendas that anarchistic activists are currently organizing around in NYC. The BASE is also used as a hub for anarchist affinity groups within the city, such as The Anarchist Black Cross—a prison abolitionist group that gathers weekly for community dinners and prisoner solidarity letter writing and informational gatherings.

In addition to visiting the BASE, being in New York allowed me to enter back into the activist network. In doing so, I was able to also attend several activist events, including the yearly hacker conference, HOPE, in Manhattan, #BlackLivesMatter rallies, and several discussions about issues currently addressed by anarchistic activists in the city—gentrification, food sovereignty, Indigenous justice, and mental health, etc. Several of these events led me to understand and think about the theories about activists’ motivations that I entered the field with as well as discover new understandings, specifically regarding social alienation. These iterations of previous theories as well as discoveries are discussed in chapter two.

In addition to being in NYC for seven weeks, as well as paying brief weeklong visits to anarchistic spaces and communities in Los Angeles (my activist home-base) and Philadelphia, I

4 https://thebasebk.org/about/
conducted seven interviews in total. I then transcribed and coded these interviews utilizing the qualitative data analysis software, *Atlas.ti* according to criteria based on my research questions. Two additional interviews were not fully completed due to the lack of access to proper communication technologies (no fault to the interviewees). Although these interviews were not fully recorded, transcribed or coded, what I did derive conducting them was enough to provide information to still reflect and build upon. The reason for lack of access to communication technologies is that both of these interviewees were busy working on projects that did not allow them the necessary time or space to communicate with me in such an intimate setting. Their presence at the #NoDAPL resistance camps as well as their building an eco-community, were more important, I believe, than collecting their stories. These activists are testaments to the dedication in the anarchistic ethos and, most importantly, anarchistic activists’ willingness to help fellow comrades and/or their communities, which are characteristics explained in more detail in chapter two.

I situated the interviews that I collected, as well as the *ATHO* interviews, alongside the stories and memories I carry in my own heart from my past and present experiences engaging in anarchistic movements. I was, of course, not the first to start collecting the oral histories of anarchistic activists involved in movements such as Occupy. Because of Stacy Lanyon’s creation of the *ATHO* and dedication to Occupy, I had access to 308 in-depth interviews of activists who were involved in Occupy before, during and after the raids. The *ATHO* interviews allowed me to more thoroughly understand, based on the criteria of Stacy’s own research interests (to give voice to the heart of the occupation), the embodiments and transformative
outcomes of engagement in anarchistic practice. Without Stacy, I would not have been able to formulate the analysis in this study, which is summarized in chapter five.5

When looking through and using the data provided on the ATHO blog, I utilized stratified sampling methods to select 10% of the interviews. To sift through the large collection of interviews, I used phrases and code words such as: “I chose to be,” “for me Occupy was,” “transformative,” “I became,” to better find interviews that provided personal accounts about experiences regarding motivations and engagement in the movement, rather than political diatribes or position papers. I took all data used from the ATHO interviews and coded and analyzed the interviews alongside the data from the oral histories I collected. The voices and experiences of these activists are expressed throughout this study, and are more intimately spotlighted in chapter five. In order to provide readers a more thorough understanding of the content of the ATHO interviews, a list of links to the interviews used in this study is provided in the appendices.

It is important to note that when bringing in the voices of those involved in this study, I resorted to gender-neutral pronouns. I also decided, and promised, to keep the names of interviewees confidential, to protect activists against state repression.6 As such, I simply refer to these voices throughout by directing attention to them in nameless, gender-neutral ways. For instance, I often only refer to the activists I interviewed as “interviewees” and/or use they/their/them pronouns. The ATHO interviewees are referred to by the names as expressed on the ATHO blog itself. I still use gender-neutral pronouns to address most of the ATHO

5 For this, I am forever grateful for and honored to have met Stacy during my research.
6 To the average onlooker, some anarchistic activists engage in “illegal” activity. I did not want to risk exposing activists by telling their stories and as such kept their stories anonymous.
interviewees unless otherwise known. I did not see the need to collect this information, nor to impose an identity on interviewees without their consent. Regardless, I am still delighted to say that the data used in this study reflects a very diverse group of individuals—young, old, queer, straight, trans, white, black, brown, Indigenous, etc. Geographically, there are activists from the West Coast, East, and South. Although historically and more recently, anarchistic movements, and specifically those that manifest in major US cities, are not as diverse as one would think, this study does highlight the diversity that does exist. Additionally, in order to bring in my own voice, each chapter begins with a vignette that allows me to express my own memories and experiences and/or those I have of other activists in relationship to the ideas that are then presented.

Outline

Chapter two provides a definition and brief genealogy of anarchistic movements in particular and resistance to neoliberal globalization in general. In doing so, I bring to the fore the fundamental critique of the anti-capitalism and anti-authoritarian movements under study, focusing specifically on the ways in which neoliberal globalization is articulated by these movements and, accordingly, why and how activists engage in prefigurative politics as a fundamental tactic of resistance. I then focus intimately on the present situation of the alter-globalization movement—since the occupation of Tahrir Square in 2011—describing and identifying the “anarchistic” characteristics and practices of these movements. Through an analysis of these characteristics, I then conceptualize how, situated in a psycho-spiritual framework, the study of contemporary anarchistic movements and practice in particular, is a important characteristic often neglected in the sociological research on resistance to neoliberal globalization.
Chapter three develops this psycho-spiritual framework through an exploration of the literature best suited to understand what motivates anarchistic activists to engage in prefigurative politics. This exploration is realized within the fields of social movements studies, positive psychology and critical theory, with a specific focus on research regarding quotidian breakdowns, traumatic growth, and alienation. Here we can begin to see how crisis—radically appropriated—can become a spiritually transformative experience and embodiment. In doing so, I build upon the dialectical rearrangement of spatio-temporalities discussed above—negate-subvert-create. Rearranging spatio-temporalities provides a conscious space for individuals and collectives to appropriate their selves and, subsequently, recognize the power within their selves to transform the social world—a dialectic that allows activists to understand how they can become capital’s crises.

Chapter four situates this dialectical rearrangement of spatio-temporalities within an ecological framework. Building upon anarchist and Indigenous ecologies, as well as eco-psychological literature, neoliberal crises are understood as products of the anthropocentric relations dominant within Western socialities. I build upon this literature by bringing in the stories of activists involved in anarchistic movements. Reiterating the dialectical framework I develop in chapter three, activists indicate that when individuals engage in anarchistic practice—within the liminal spaces between dominant and anarchical spatio-temporalities—they transcend dominant socialities by retuning their selves to the integral connections to the world around them. As activists express, through engagement in anarchy, they begin to develop an eco-consciousness, whereby they see how their alienation (from nature) is systemically bound to and a product of dominant socialities. This is why activists become inspired to further enact upon their newfound selves and relations to the social world. When utterly alienated from one’s own
nature, the process of appropriating one’s self instills in individuals (or makes abundantly apparent) an immanent yearning for eutopia—a yearning for the creation of a world that mirrors their newfound ecological selves.

In chapter five, I illuminate activists’ experiences in Occupy by pulling solely on the *ATHO* interviews. Here we see how Occupy allowed individuals to recognize their inherent and natural creative instincts as human beings to change their selves and the social world. This recognition typically began as a conscious realization of self-alienation and, as an act of ridding oneself of alienation, a conscious negation of dominant socialities, which inspired individuals to become embedded in the Occupy movement. When individuals then embody and embed themselves in anarchical spatio-temporalities (e.g., a spatial occupation) where social structures, especially neoliberal ones, are suspended, they become further empowered. By actively creating communal socialities, activists’ radical imaginations and eutopic desires flourished. Based on Occupiers’ memories, individuals and communities can, in fact, become inspired to begin the process of transcending their previous selves and, collectively, appropriate and create new social worlds by engaging in anarchy.

Chapter six interrogates the inspirational embodiments and eutopic yearnings of anarchistic activists to suggest the importance of these realities for anarchistic movements and resistance to neoliberal globalization in general. Based on the *ATHO* interviews as well as my own, I highlight how anarchistic activists need to move beyond the spontaneous and liminal spatio-temporalities of contemporary anarchistic practice. I then provide a critical articulation of activists’ eutopic yearnings to express the need for the creation of stronger and more sustainable communities and networks of care that allow for individuals to not only flourish and create something new, but focus resistance on healing and caring for everyone, inclusive of activists.
themselves and especially those still rendered helplessly and hopelessly victimized by neoliberalization. The creation of care-networks and spaces is a suggestion realized through an analysis of the different conceptions of power within anarchist theory: power-over, power-to, and power-with. I end with a discussion about how the method/ologies I used to develop and complete this study can be further used by activists involved in anarchistic movements, suggesting how militant research is a prefigurative political practice itself that allows for activists to recognize their power-to become as well as the necessity of building power-with, or care-spaces, as an act of resistance to neoliberal globalization.
INTERLUDE: “YOU CANNOT EVICT AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME.”

November 13th, 2011. The library at Portland State University is empty except for a few students, including myself, studying late. The university suddenly announces over the intercom—a system only used for extreme emergencies—that the entire campus is being evacuated. “Oh, this is not peculiar,” I think to myself.

I pack my things, grab my bike, and ride a few blocks away from the university. Police in riot gear are on every corner. Sirens and lights from all angles distort the senses. Tear gas peaks above and around the buildings. It feels like a warzone. It is a warzone. At this very moment, I am witnessing live one of the first nationally planned raids of the Occupy encampments in the United States. I am terrified. I become enraged.

The following day and throughout the rest of 2011, I continued to watch these brutal raids across the country via the live-streams of guerilla journalists involved in Occupy. Over and over I watched some of the most beautiful people I had and would ever have the pleasure of imagining another world with, be brutally beaten and arrested as they refused to let go of the hopes created in those encampments. Although I did not realize during the moments the raids were actually taking place, witnessing the state repression of a movement that was so impactful for my own life, changed me even more than the movement itself. Is this, in its totality, the movement’s reality?

Is this really the world we live in? Why don’t we, Occupiers, belong? What would another world look like? These ruminations, like for so many Occupiers, eventually encouraged people to drastically change their lives. Warzones not only distort the senses, they consciously break you down. They force you to rethink everything. I myself chose to drop out of graduate
school as the experiences I embodied during Occupy were only further repressed, as I soon discovered, within the halls of the academy.

I decided instead to spend some time traveling. For several months I reflected upon and began to restructure my self and the world around me; a life that had felt distorted well before Occupy began. My planned routes included major US cities with ongoing occupations and strong anarchist communities. Along the way, I met thousands of Occupiers from around the world and at each destination, everyone continued to hold each other and their hopes close. In Oakland, we held hands as we marched through walls of tear gas on May Day. In Philadelphia, we sang songs in public parks and camped in Quaker parking lots. We were always sharing stories and memories. We were always making and sharing food with our communities. We even started community gardens. We saved seeds; fed and housed the homeless. We started needle exchanges and radical mental health organizations. We started cooperatives and cared for abandoned homes. Some of us eventually decided to reenter the academy. We wrote. We studied. Soapboxes and poetry slams under starry nights and in old and new Leftist pubs.

Our oppressors, conscious or not, always said Occupy failed. It was gone the second it was evicted, but most of us joined other organizations. We evolved, individually and collectively. We spontaneously became Super Storm Sandy relief. We have always been Food Not Bombs and anti-fascist resistance. #OccupytheDNC. #BlackLivesMatter. #NoDAPL. We have and will always refuse to submit to the demands of those in power; to live in a world plagued by human domination in all of its many forms. As Buenaventura Durruti once said so eloquently, “We carry a new world here, in our hearts. That world is growing in this minute.” So, over and over and over again we will continue to say: “you cannot evict an idea whose time has come.”
CHAPTER 2: CRISIS: CAPITAL’S INHERENT NATURE AND NEMESIS

What are these unevictable ideas whose times have come, as Occupiers proclaimed following the raids? Why are Occupiers and those involved in similar movements the ones to yearn and fight for these ideas? To fully grasp what these “ideas” represent, in this chapter I construct a genealogy of radical thought conceptualized herein as “anarchistic.” This concept is deliberately chosen and developed in order to highlight the elements of anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian praxis—a specific manifestation of anti-capitalist thought and practice that is, contrary to previous and dominant anti-capitalist praxis, also firmly anti-statist—within the broader alter-globalization movement (AGM) becoming more commonplace today.

Starting with my own personal reflections upon my experiences within the Occupy movement, I trace a trail of spontaneous eruptions and manifestations of anarchical “ontopolitical” embodiments back to the 19th century—through movements that stress the importance, in theory and practice, of autonomous and communal self-determination. Studying “ontopolitical” embodiments, according to Connolly (2013), captures the spontaneous surges of political ways-of-being that uniquely manifest to challenge notions of what is and is not political—what is and is not a valid ontology. The “ideas” of contemporary anarchistic movements are not only acts of resistance to neoliberal globalization, as is the case today, but most importantly, they are historically rooted in a critique and active yearning to rid socialities of the many ways in which human domination manifests. Conceptualized today as prefigurative, it is this politic—the active yearning and creation of another world outside of pyramidal and destructive socialities—that is fundamental to anarchistic movements. By extension, prefigurative politics is central to this study.
Before moving on to discuss this anarchistic genealogy, it should be stressed that by no means do these onto-political expressions represent the totality of anti-capitalist thought, nor does this genealogy encompass the totality of thought embodied by the AGM. To better understand why I still develop this genealogy accordingly, I first provide a brief understanding of neoliberal globalization—capitalism’s newest and most destructively widespread variant. This leads into a discussion about the fundamental concerns and practices of contemporary anarchistic movements. A critical understanding of the effects of neoliberal globalization from an anarchistic standpoint, which is broadly situated within the radical Left’s critical repertoire, will help to make sense of how and why resistance to capitalism, by way of anarchistic praxis, is becoming more commonplace today.

*A Brief Understanding of Neoliberalism*

Since the mid-20th Century, neoliberalism has spread quickly around the globe. Building on previous theories and practices of *laissez-faire* economic liberalism, neoliberalism is a political economic theory first developed by prominent economists Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek. These theorists, grounded in Western market and capital-centric ontologies, believed that human wellbeing was dependent upon the expression of an individual’s entrepreneurial freedoms. This conceptualization of freedom, in the most negative of senses, stresses that the “decentralization” of the state’s control over the market is necessary to free capital’s power and reach—to free individuals to effectively and competitively engage in the market. Within this neoliberal logic, “humanity” is thus solely relegated to the realms of production and consumption. Social institutionalized realities (socialities hereon) are then created to reflect these market and capital-centric ontologies. Although this form of individualism is nothing new,
as it is easily traced through capitalist socialities in general and through its darker more
destructive side, colonization, neoliberalism is the new (thus the neo-) political-economic
framework that organizes capitalist modes of production within the now globalized and highly
networked era.

As an actual political-economic *practice* Peck and Tickell (2002) broadly conceptualize
neoliberalization as occurring in two waves throughout its short history: “roll-back” and “roll-
out.” The rolling-back phase began when neoliberalism was first adopted and implemented in
the UK and US by Western politicians during the well-known “Reagan-Thatcher Era.” As a way
to mobilize support for neoliberal policies, neoliberal politicians, a part of and backed by the
newly developed international governing bodies such as the World Bank (WB), World Trade
Organization (WTO), and International Monetary Fund (IMF), encouraged the restructuring and
development of nation states within the post-World War global economy. “Rolling-back”
describes how this era ushered in policies to literally nullify previous Keynesian liberal policies
and practices. Established to regulate the market—what Harvey (2005) referred to as “embedded
liberalism”—Keynesian liberalism insured that, in theory, the market was embedded within state
infrastructures that protected citizens from its unpredictability. Most importantly, in theory
Keynesian liberalism placed checks and balances on capital with the goal to ensure a more equal
distribution of wealth by guaranteeing “sustainable” policies to protect labor, for instance, and
provide basic social services, such as health care and food subsidies, for citizens incapable of
engaging in the dominant economic market and thus benefitting from its potentially prosperous
returns.

During the roll-back era, these Keynesian liberal socialities were not only uprooted, but
emphasis on the embodiment of neoliberal policies was also encouraged by politicians,
undermining any sort of collectivist politic and practice, effectively neoliberalizing the citizenry. This period saw the dismantlement and disintegration of unions throughout the Global North, where strong labor rights were, for decades, fought for and firmly established. However, in the Global South, now conceptualized and viewed as the “developing” world within neoliberal epistemologies, neoliberalization processes continued to spread colonial and imperialistic agendas, forcibly incorporating nation-states and individuals into the global economy and Western socialities in general. From the United States’ (US) Central Intelligence Agency-backed military coups in many Latin American countries that assisted the fall of socialist leaders, and/or the rise of neoliberal politicians through other less overt actions, such as the seemingly innocuous incorporation of South American political elites via US higher education as occurred in Chile with the Chicago Boys (Harvey 2005)—the roll-back phase of neoliberalism was violently implemented and more apparently resisted throughout the Global South.

Then saw the rolling-out phase of neoliberalization, which encouraged capital to take flight. Export tariffs were lifted. “Free” trade agreements were implemented and/or forcibly signed. This encouraged and awarded corporations, now transnational, the freedom to uproot production sites to the Global South. In search of cheap and unregulated labor in the now “developing” world, transnational corporations in turn ushered in the waning of industrialism in the Global North, drastically affecting both the North and South. The transfer of production sites to other countries, for instance, allowed transnational corporations to undermine and lay off workers in home nation-states in order to exploit the labor in countries where centuries of class-relations and proletarianization processes had not yet taken place (Harvey 2005). This practice forcibly incorporated “developing” nation-states into the global market. “Developing” thus simply meant assimilation into market and capital-centric ontologies.
In order to actively ensure the neoliberalization of nation-states, structural adjustment programs (SAPs) were created and implemented in order to “develop” and incorporate landscapes around the globe. Encouraged and/or enforced by international governing bodies onto nation-states and large urban centers within nation-states, SAPs, better known as austerity measures, administered the rolling-back of public expenditures and services such as health care, food subsidies, pensions, public sanitation and infrastructure, public transportation, etc., to make way for private “development.” Harvey (2005) uses the concept “accumulation by dispossession” to describe the global effects of neoliberalization that have masterminded the “conjuring” of new global markets (Tsing 2005), turning uncharted landscapes into resources and commodities, Southerners into efficient and cheap producers, and the North into even more of an individualistic consumer-oriented sociality.

In short, neoliberal globalization is dependent upon capital’s continual search for profitable resources and cheap and dependable (for profit maximization) labor. Robinson (2004) explains how this has given way to and was necessarily dependent upon the development of the “Transnational State,” whereby social and political relations are developed and embodied by those in power in order to ensure that labor and resources are kept cheap and that transnational capital is attracted to particular nation-states. This reality, however, is contradictory to neoliberal theory, which claims that the market functions best without state intervention (Dicken 2011). The state has not withered away during neoliberalism’s short history. It has instead given way to transnationalization processes, encouraging the embodiment of a “neoliberal political rationality” within both “developed” and “developing” countries (Brown 2005, 2010, 2011). From the education of political elites in the Global South (and in general), to the advertising of “nimble female fingers” and labor by Chinese government officials (Mies 1986)—these neoliberal
manifestations and embodiments are indicators as to how neoliberalism is not only externalized territorially through the development of neoliberal infrastructures, policies, and practices, but, most importantly, is internalized subjectively through the embodiment of neoliberal rationales.

Decolonial scholar Tsing (2005) best describes neoliberalism as a “frontier zone” where the different scales and spatio-temporalities of landscapes, cultures, ideologies, etc., are uprooted and replaced with something new. Whether in the Global North or South, internal or external, neoliberalism has thus left trails of destruction in its wake, which is why Harvey (2005) and Robinson (2004) emphasize that neoliberalism is definitively a political-economic praxis that guaranteed wealth, globally, found its way back into the private hands of capitalist elites following World War II and the Cold War. Neoliberalism is indeed a powerful political-economic praxis to defend and legitimize Western imperialism and class war forever, so it appears, seeing to the imminent formation of global frontiers.

Although the creation of a frontier and the concept itself are nothing new to capitalist modes of production, neoliberal frontiers are unique in that they are actively always expanding and opening up new terrains. They are not simply a “place or even a process,” as Tsing (2005: 32) explains, but “an imaginative project capable of molding both places and processes.” Neoliberalism’s engendering of unpredictable and spectacular conjuring practices to create frontiers (Tsing 2005) is what Cooper (2016) similarly refers to as a dialectical praxis of “territorialization and deterritorialization” (Cooper 2016). “To study colonization is to study the reorganization of space, the forging and unforging of linkages” (Cooper 2016: 520). This is why the innumerable ways in which neoliberalization processes manifest, from the North to the South, “from the body to the global,” are best understood, as Katz (2001) emphasizes, by dissecting the different topographical scales of neoliberal frontiers. Expressed so movingly in
Tsing’s (2005) ethnographic work, these scales are not simply geographical, political or economic, but cultural and ideological as well as. It is the latter two dimensions that lack attention, but which are often addressed most ardently by anarchistic activists.

Within cultural and ideological dimensions, hand in hand with the institutional and infrastructural changes brought about by neoliberalism, the “commons” has increasingly waned. Often encouraged by architectural and urban planning, which has restructured spaces according to neoliberal logic within major cities around the globe, genuine spaces to commune, along with communal ideologies and practices, have exponentially dissolved within the Neoliberal era. The construction of consumption-oriented places such as shopping malls on top of previously communalized spaces such as public parks, for instance, or the implementation of agro-industrial mono-cropping from self-sufficient agro-ecosystems in the Global South for export to the Global North—these are common neoliberalization practices that have uprooted communal spaces and cultures around the globe. As a response to the rolling-back of public expenditures, the destruction of the commons, and the transition of communal spaces and cultures into neoliberal-oriented socialities, activists are, however, also increasingly becoming aware of and resisting what Katsiaficas (2006) refers to as the “colonization of everyday life.” Indeed, described as friction, Tsing (2005) highlights how within frontiers—in liminal spatio-temporalities where old and new ontologies collide—hope for another world is born.

The colonization of everyday life, better, I believe, conceptualized as the colonization of landscapes, which includes the ways people view and relate to their selves and within their communities (Delson 2000; Greider and Garkovich 1994)), is an immanent critique developed in practice as a response to the ways in which neoliberal policies are incorporated into body politics. Since the late-19th century, this critique has addressed the ways in which individuals
have lost their ability to act, think and be fully autonomous-thinking human beings within capitalist socialties. Life becomes work. Freedom is emphasized in the negative. Social relations are individualized. Neighbors become competition. You win or you lose and if you lose, you are the only one to blame. Of most concern for anarchistic activists, the colonization of landscapes represents how individuals are separated from the recognition of their natural human tendencies to engage in the world communally, relegating their needs and values to the realm of consumption and their labor to the realm of capitalist production. Based on the classical communal anarchists, autonomous Marxists and anarchists involved in the New Left as well as the contemporary global occupations (i.e., anarchistic movements), the advance of this critique from within and outside of capitalist socialties has been formulated for centuries. This critique was most prominently developed by the Frankfurt School theorists and adopted by the New Left following the Second World War.

The Colonization of Landscapes: The Immanent Critique of Anarchistic Movements

Capitalism (and its many variants), according to Clark (2013), has fundamentally negated individuals’ instinctual abilities to nurture the communal spirit—a pre-categorical, free, communal, and self-created community. This is precisely because capitalism, as will be discussed more thoroughly in chapters two and three, commoditizes (human) nature, which in turn separates individuals from their ability to recognize the integral role they play in the planet’s ecosystem as a whole—within the communities in which they are dependent for life. This separation from nature, as the Frankfurt School theorists stressed, is what in turn led to human domination—the disintegration of communal ties between humans and all living beings (Gunderson 2015). The repression of the natural human connections within the ecosystems in
which humans are embedded emboldened the creation of pyramidal socialities that effectively “ensavaged” and dominated anything outside of the boundaries created by capitalist socialities. Although such socialities existed previous to capitalism, Frankfurt Theorists understood that the domination of nature was the fundamental aberration that contributed to and continues to legitimate authoritarian socialities within modernity (Gunderson 2015). Referred to as the “domination thesis” by Gunderson (2015), who has revived the Frankfurt School theorists within the field of environmental sociology, this “central and consistent thesis of critical theory” is used to explain how “humanity’s attempt to dominate (control, master) external, nonhuman nature is intimately and necessarily linked to the domination of other humans and internal human nature” (p. 227). Western epistemologies (Westernity hereon)—rationality, secularization and progressivism grounded in social Darwinian and Newtonian logic—encouraged the continual creation of capitalist, and (not so) naturally, colonial socialities.

Westernity is a process, as anarchistic practitioners feared and warned against most, that not only led to the creation of pyramidal socialities—of a centralized state and colonial system—but, most importantly, prevented individuals from transcending the selves they embodied and created by the categorizations of the system itself. As prophesied, capitalist socialities subordinated individuals’ subjectivities to the confines of the state. Modern individuals are not only thus bound to a colonial history and present, but are also colonized by embodying state rationalities, whether conscious of it or not. Foucault (2004) referred to the “raison d’etre” of the state—of that act of encouraging the embodiment of the state—as “bio-politics,” through which, as Brown (2005) further elaborates, individuals succumb to the subjective mandates of the state. Regarding the contemporary neoliberal predicament, Brown (2011, 2010, 2005) conceptualizes this as a neoliberal political rationality—a market-driven, consumptionist, patriarchal and
individualistic sociality and sense of self. The embodiment of this rationality helps perpetuate and maintain the status quo without a physically present force or Sovereign entity to discipline and punish bodies (Foucault 1995). This neoliberal rationality is thus further embedded in all social institutions—political, economic, educational and judicial systems, in urban planning and architecture, everyday social relations, etc.

Katsiaficas (2006), whose research focuses on the radical elements of the New Left that emerged during the mid-20th Century in Europe, also conceptualized the immanent critique of the embodiment of state rationalities (i.e., “the colonization of everyday life”). He describes not only how basic conditions for human survival are threatened under capitalism, but also how individuals are “consumed by the commodity form and criteria for profitability” in order to mask the conditioning of capitalist socialities and incorporate individuals into the system (p. 6). Jaeggi (2014) similarly refers to this as the “They”—“the subtle forms of structural heteronomy” or the “anonymous, dominating character of objectified relationships that appear to take on a life of their own over and against individual agents” (p. 24). We are, according to Jaeggi (2014), who pulls from Heidegger and Marx’s earlier work on alienation, simultaneously the creators of that which alienate us, which makes it difficult to become critical conscious of the “They.” Classical anarchist thinker Gustav Landauer (as expressed in Buber 1958) posed a similar thesis regarding anarchist conceptions of the state: “We are the state,” he proclaimed stressing that individuals need to demystify the state as solely an abstracted institution. As he emphasized further: the state is “a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behavior; we

[7] Both Harvey (2012) and Brown (2010) exemplify in their work how (neo)liberalism is embedded in physical structures such as walls, borders, and racially/class segregated cities, which is symbolic of the separation of the individual from the community in modernity.
destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another…” (Buber 1958: 46). This understanding of social relations in general, but regards the state in particular, is indicative of the main anarchistic belief that the only way to realize human freedom, concretely, is through the prefigured recreation of social relations. This precise understanding is why, as I will argue throughout, the autonomous and anarchist elements of the New Left as well as contemporary prefigurative movements are once again flourishing. These movements recognize that the everyday lives of citizens—bodies, minds, spirits and thus relations to the world they constitute—must be decolonized in order to transform society.

Such a thoroughly entrenched system is difficult to break free from, however. According to many contemporary anarchistic thinkers/practitioners, delinking from such a totalizing system often requires a traumatic experience that forcibly separates the individual from the dominant and modern socialities in which they are embedded. Clark (2013) refers to this as “disaster anarchism”: an embodiment that forces individuals and/or communities to see and ultimately confront the destructive world they are unconsciously or consciously maintaining. This is similar to the thesis developed by Jaeggi (2014) regarding alienation. Alienating embodiments can allow individuals to recognize that they are, indeed, in total control of the creation of their selves and the social world, which can, in turn, motivate individuals to actively reappropriate that world by redefining their selves and relations to and within it. This is why Jaeggi (2014) and others (Clark 2013; Holloway 2010 and 2016) understand that it is often the experience and embodiment of crises—social, individual, ecological, etc.—that allow individuals to rethink and rebuild their selves and their relations to the world. This thesis will be developed more thoroughly in chapter two, but first, I move on to describe the anarchistic genealogy that
embraces this thesis in practice. As an immanent critique, I start from praxis in order to look for clarification as to what gives potential to and validates these movements.

*A Brief Genealogy of Contemporary Anarchistic Movements*

The Occupy movement and other localized movements that constituted the transnational global occupations that began in 2011 are situated within the broader alter-globalization movement (AGM) that took prominence on an international stage in the late-20th Century. As a part of this phenomenon, and because of Occupy’s material manifestation as an outwardly anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian (i.e.: anarchistic) social movement, Occupy, tactically, politically, purposefully, is by no means a novel movement. As Kapoor (2013) highlights in her own brief genealogy of the movement, Occupy existed during, alongside and after similar movements that have evolved and contributed to the success of each other for centuries—movements, broadly, against global capitalism, the state, and all other forms of hierarchical socialities that are products of state and capitalist relations. A similar understanding can be applied to past anarchistic movements, from the autonomous movements of the mid-20th century to the present day global occupations. Developing such a genealogy and briefly describing it herein is still no easy task, however, as both anarchistic movements and the AGM itself consist of many different

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8 Alter-globalization movement and anti-neoliberal globalization are concepts often used interchangeably to embrace the many waves of resistance movements to neoliberal globalization. However, the former is, arguably, the more suitable umbrella term as it embraces not only the transnational coalescence of thought and practice that constitutes resistance to neoliberal globalization, but in its very name, it emphasizes the act of creating something else in the process. For clarity and focus, and most importantly, because the emphasis of this project is on the transformative realities of anarchistic praxis, I opt to utilize alter-globalization.
political ideologies and practices. Although Occupy, for instance, was explicitly *anarchist* in its foundational blueprints, its practice and what manifested materially in its unfolding, encompassed a superfluity of different ideologies and practices. Rather than develop a genealogical canon situating these movements into a historical pipeline towards a distinct movement of thought and practice, which is often done by way of anarchism (Williams 2012), I will instead explain some of the key *characteristics, tactics, and ideologies* prominently expressed by activists.

Anarchistic movements today are a part of a deeply historical and transnational anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian tradition—a tradition that is broadly non-violent, directly democratic, and has embodied different political identities and practices over time depending on historical and geographic contexts. In acknowledging this, the recognition of the spatio-temporalities of movements is fundamental to understanding how and why they manifest. For instance, in the case of Occupy, it is important to take into account that the movement manifested within a post-industrialized 21st Century spatio-temporality. This situates research on Occupy within the US and thus the genealogical exploration below reflects that arrangement. More importantly, with the use of the Internet and Information Communication Technologies (ICT) towards the end of the 20th Century and eventually Web 2.0 technologies in the beginning of the 21st, the transnational elements of the AGM were almost instantaneously felt and concretely reflected upon around the globe, affecting how any movement flowed from and unfolded in practice (Sancho 2014). There is no doubt that the rise of the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Mexico in 1994 and the Battle of Seattle in 1999 in Seattle, Washington, for instance, became pinnacle moments that contributed significantly to the unfolding of the AGM because of ICT. Today, through the use of social media and other Web 2.0 ICTs such as Twitter, this
transnational cyber-reality became even more apparent and effectively utilized for transnational inspiration and mobilization around the time in which Occupy gained an international spotlight (Juris 2012; Sancho 2014).

Because Zapatismo and Occupy are just raindrops that constitute a long historical anarchistic storm, their genealogies may be easily traced to the anarchist and autonomist Marxist movements that preceded the Zapatistas in Europe during the mid-20th century until the present (Katsiaficas 2006; Khasnabish 2012; Gautney 2009). Williams (2012) explains that although the horizontalism and direct democratic politics of Occupy are similarly characteristic of Zapatismo, Occupy is more explicitly and directly in line with anarchism itself. What might a genealogy of Occupy—which occurred in the Western world—by way of European and Western anti-capitalist movements such as autonomism and anarchism then look like? Although autonomism and anarchism diverge from each other when it comes to genealogical discussions of tactics and conceptions of power, they contemporarily arrive at similar critiques and conclusions as briefly described above (Gautney 2009).

In general, autonomist movements revolved around, before, alongside, and after the May 1968 General Strike in Europe. The General Strike, itself, was a spontaneous movement that is central to the unfolding of different branches of autonomous movements such as the Italian Autonomia Operaia (“autonomous workerist” movement) and the German Autonomen (Katsiaficas 2006). As Katsiaficas (2006) exemplifies in The Subversion of Politics, these movements eventually gave way to squatter and punk culture in European and non-European countries as well as to feminist autonomous Marxist movements—a product of the Italian Autonomia Operaia (see also Gautney 2009). From here, the influences on contemporary anarchistic movements are quite apparent—not only the act of occupation itself, but also the
relations to power developed by activists within the autonomist and anti-authoritarian tradition. Katsiaficas (2006) refers to this praxis as the act of political subversion and the decolonization of everyday life. “Autonomism”—movements that center autonomy and the self-determination of communities as a fundamental political agenda and organizing practice—is nothing out of the ordinary to the Zapatistas and other North, South and Central American indigenous movements past and present (see for instance Zibechi 2010), nor is it absent from the contemporary and specifically anarchist movements in North America, such as the Black Block, Monkey Wrenching Eco-anarchists, The Anarchist Black Cross, Food Not Bombs, etc. Of course, anti-authoritarian politics such as anarchism and autonomist Marxism arguably preceded the May ’68 General Strike as classical Marxist and Anarchist movements existed well into the mid-19th century.

Although stemming from 19th century anti-capitalist movements, the contemporary unfolding of autonomist Marxism and Anarchism is often understood to be more a product or coalescence of the practices and ideologies espoused by the anti-colonial, indigenous, radical feminist, anti-war and/or other direct-democratic anti-authoritarian politics of the New Left that gained prominence in the mid-20th century (Gautney 2009; Katsiaficas 2006).9 The tactical use of spatial occupations, in particular, is often attributed to the labor movements of the 1930s, as well as the power movements and occupations of the 1970s, including the occupations of federal buildings and prisons by Red Power, Civil Rights and Environmental activists, sit-ins, fish-ins, anti-war and anti-nuclear protests, Pentagon levitations, etc. Generally speaking, these were

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9 For an overview of Old and New Left as well as thorough analysis of the divergences between autonomous and anarchist thought within and after these broader anti-capitalist movements, see the work of Richard J. F. Day (2004 and 2005).
practices and tactics of the New Left. Cornell (2016) for instance, traces these tactics to the Movement for a New Society (MNS)—a back to the land movement that was prominent in the US in the 1970s and 1980s. Within MNS, emphasis was placed on participatory democratic, consensus-based decision-making tactics and anti-authoritarian politics, which are prominent characteristics of contemporary anarchistic movements. These tactics necessarily, as will be explained, allow for these movements to hold true to their desire to create an anarchistic world in practice—in the here and now. In short, they allow for a prefigurative politic to flourish.

The Prefigurative Politics of Anarchistic Movements

To begin this discussion, I first briefly conceptualize what is meant by anarchistic activism and thereby develop an overview of the many ways in which anarchistic moments, organizational strategies, and movements in general have manifested during, alongside, and after Occupy. It is important to note that anarchistic movements and activists do not always necessarily identify as anarchists per se, but are heavily influenced by and/or demonstrate a high level of consonance with “anarchistic” principles and practices (Graeber 2013; Stapp 2013; Williams 2012). Just like the AGM, the more radical and anarchistic elements of Occupy and other contemporary occupations do not constitute the whole of the entire movement. It is thus important to reemphasize that the communities and/or individuals involved in anarchistic movements are spatially and temporally bound, and as such, the material realities within and between movements and organizations can and do often differ. However, globally and locally, they co-constitute the whole of the “movement of movements” against neoliberal globalization (Cox and
Nilsen 2007). They are locally grounded, yet immanently global in perspective. Such is the product of the highly networked society in which these movements must act today (Castells 2009)—a society where social media, networking, and digital technologies play a prominent role in the unfolding and mobilization of their purpose and message, as well as the creation of links and coalitions within the network proper (see, for instance, Postill and Pink 2012 and Sancho 2014). Sometimes communities involved are in contention with each other, as occurred at Occupy when the actual anarchist activists resisted working and interacting with the more liberal democratic (and other dominant political) organizations (Stapp 2013). Most often, however, these groups work together to build alliances by sharing practices, successes, failures, etc., similar to the formative years of the Zapatistas as well as during the formative processes of the Battle in Seattle via the Direct Action Network in 1999. The “movement of movements” is a transnational ebb and flow of dialogue and praxis between different individuals, activist organizations, non-governmental organizations, etc. (Cox and Nilsen 2007).

Because the initial activists involved in organizing Occupy were self-identified anarchists, I utilize the language “anarchistic” to describe the anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian elements of Occupy; however, I do not mean to create an identity and categorical understanding of the activists involved. “Anarchistic” is rather a descriptor of the practices, onto-political embodiments, and political performances produced collectively by activists involved. By anarchistic, I thus mean and exemplify what Amster (2003) explains broadly as

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10 This is what the Zapatistas mean by the notion “a world of many worlds”—a community of communities of individuals who embody a particular social relationship to and within the neoliberal global world-system. Classical communitarian anarchists such as Bakunin (1987) and Reclus (2013) also advocated this understanding.
communities (of resistance) with “anarchistic tendencies.” These tendencies include: the enactment and/or a push to create a world “absent of coercive authority and codified law, a penchant for processes that are participatory and spontaneous, and an inherent impetus among community members to associate voluntarily and cooperatively” (Amster 2003: 10, emphasis added). Amster explains that communities who exemplify these anarchistic tendencies fall under the broad categories of: indigenous communities, some alternative and sub-cultural communities such as intentional communities, Punk, squatter, and DIY-culture, eco-anarchists, etc., as well as the utopian imaginaries found in fiction, such as the Cypher- and Solar-punk genres, and other sci-fi works and novels such as those by prominent anarchistic utopian writer, Ursula K. Le Guin. These imaginaries are not exclusive of other artistic mediums such as DADA and Afrofuturism. In total, Amster (2003) refers to these tendencies as indicative of an “indigenous-alternative-utopian perspective” (p. 10-11). Although “anarchist” may not be the literal identity that particular movements and activists claim, their tendencies are anarchistic in the sense exemplified above and as such this project will focus on those categorized accordingly.

Because this project is an extension of research that began with the start of the Occupy movement in 2011, I have actively chosen to focus on the more “alternative” elements that Amster (2003) addresses, specifically urban anarchist spaces and organizations—individuals and organizations attempting to build voluntary and cooperative-based social institutions as a product of and in order to replace the dominant and oppressive socialities of neoliberal globalization. This “alternative” approach is not exclusive of indigenism and other decolonial movements, nor non-anarchist identifying movements, but rather an element more commonly and prominently found within the post-industrial urban centers where Occupy took place. Nonetheless, genealogically and tactically, these movements share similar characteristics and as such the use
of “anarchistic” is the closest I can get to encompass the entirety of the spirit of the AGM. How then do these characteristics and “anarchist tendencies” manifest today?

In practice and within contemporary activist spaces in which anarchistic activists are heavily present, key tactics, organizing strategies and characteristics are commonplace. These include: horizontalism and other radical democratic practices such as consensus-based decision-making, an outright anti-racist, anti-imperialist, feminist, anti-neoliberal globalization—an anti-all forms of hierarchical and authoritarian social relations—politic. My own experiences and those of people directly engaging in these spaces, whether in the United States or abroad, embedded in occupations or dialoguing via social media,\textsuperscript{11} attest to the prominence of these anarchistic tendencies (Belcher 2011; Bray 2013; Dixon 2012; Graeber 2013; Khatib, Killjoy and McGuire 2012; Maeckelbergh 2009 and 2012; Postill and Pink 2012; Razsa and Krunik 2012; Stapp 2013). The most important and relatively novel conceptualization of the praxis and onto-political embodiments of these movements is the concept of prefigurative politics, which encompasses the overall characteristic of the movement. Prefigurative politics is much like the notion of “being the change” that Gandhi espoused, the Situationists’ theory about the “revolution of everyday life” (Van eijgem 2012), or, more recently, the concept TAZ (Temporary Autonomous Zone) theorized by prominent ontological anarchist, Hakim Bey (1985). These onto-politics stress the creation of spaces \textit{in the present} in order to enact the socialities yearned for by activists. This, according to anarchistic activists, is the only way to ensure that an anti-

\textsuperscript{11} See Postill and Pink (2012) for a thorough understanding about how social media is just as vital an element as actual physical presence within an occupation for instance. Neither is nor can be mutually exclusive as they affect each other significantly, either strictly for information or even viscerally.
capitalist future can manifest. Some activists go so far as saying that the future does not exist (e.g., the common punk proclamation, “No Future!”), because any abstract political project or utopian theory risks becoming a hierarchical project as was experienced within the Marxist and even Anarchist influenced movements of the late-19th and early 20th Centuries.

Because of the emphasis on prefigurative politics, another common thread prominent within contemporary anarchistic movements is the tactical practice of direct action in general and spatial occupations in particular. Although not unique to contemporary anarchistic movements, temporary urban spatial occupations became a prominent tactic practiced on a world scale with the Arab Awakening that began in 2010 with the occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt. Shortly after, it seemed that these urban spatial occupations proliferated: beginning in 2011, the Spanish Los Indignados (the indignants) the Greek Kínima Aganaktisménon Politón (Enraged Citizens' Movement), ¡Democracia Real Ya! (real democracy now!) in Mexico, the Occupy uprisings in the US in late-2011, Gezi Park in Taksim Square in Instanbul, Turkey in mid-2013 and so on. Historically and contemporarily, within these spatial occupations, projects to rethink and rebuild other socialities outside of the neoliberal global world-system have become possible (Halvorsen 2015a; Hammond 2013).

The similarities among these movements include not only the occupation of spaces—the creation of a communal space—but also their angry cries for real democracy and freedom, in the autonomous sense. This is witnessed in the practices and actual demands of each of these movements—demands that make it a point to express to the world that they are enraged at the injustices embedded and experienced in capitalist socialities, which have stripped individuals and societies of genuine forms of communion. Most importantly here, is that the names of these movements also exemplify that they are simply and finally saying “NO!” (Holloway 2002).
According to Holloway (2002), this NO! is symbolic of the moment in which individuals become inspired to “delink” from the system and are motivated to do “what-it-is-they-need-to-do” (Holloway 2002).

Spatial Occupations and the Appropriation of Crisis

Spatial occupations and moments of direct action in general, based on my own experiences and building upon the work of similar activists working within the academy, are commonly understood as “moments of rupture” where the “impossible becomes possible”—what Henri Lefebvre refers to as a moment of “impossible possibility” (see Halvorsen 2015a). Influenced by the Zapatistas and autonomist Marxism, John Holloway (2010) developed a related dialectical concept of the “crack,” whereby the act of negation-creation takes place. Negation, saying “NO!” to capital, standing up for one’s desires and beliefs, and thus insisting on actively creating another world, refusing to wait for that world in the future (Holloway 2005 and 2010)¹²—this is precisely what occurs during the processes of reclaiming public spaces. This is also why Holloway demands we claim ownership of crisis itself—“we are the crisis of capital” (Holloway 2016: 1). Our unwillingness to submit to the demands of capital—to refuse to navigate and become victims to racist and sexist institutions, to refuse to endure or take part in an alienating education system that hinders our imaginations and takes away all avenues of creative expression, to refuse enslavement to a potentially debt-ridden journey through life, to refuse to

¹² This is one of the key characteristics of anarchistic activism that distinguishes it from the liberal democratic elements within the “movement of movements.” They are strictly anti-statist and thus the future, at least in a linear progressive sense, becomes obsolete. There is no future to create, no politician to hope for, only the now, which is up to everyone to create.
work and submit ourselves to the whims of the dominant political-economic system, to refuse to allow our labor to be exploited, to refuse to allow common spaces to be framed, turned into and used as private consumerist-driven matters, etc.—is indeed a crisis for capital (Featherstone, Strauss and MacKinnon 2015; Holloway 2010). Acting insubordinately, taking ownership of their creation of the crisis, and creating alternative realities outside of capital, this dialectical process I will refer to throughout as a *rearrangement of spatio-temporalities*. This is a process whereby individuals negate dominant spatio-temporalities and, through direct action (an anarchical spatio-temporality), create a new arrangement in its wake. Negate-Subvert-Create: a radical dialectic to transform socialities.

To the detriment, however, of genuinely understanding how to formulate effective modes of resistance to capital, contemporary social movement researchers who study spatial occupations in particular and social movements more generally simply conceptualize these practices as material realities of negation-creation—the actual taking of space and the rebuilding of something new. From a strictly materialist perspective, this actually occurred within the occupations that began in 2011, from Occupy Wall Street to Gezi Park. As an example, the latter was a reaction to the privatization of the last remaining public park in Istanbul, Turkey as a product of the ushering in of neoliberal globalization and its stepchild, austerity (Gökay and Xypolia 2013). Austerity led to the negation of such dominant arrangements as the privatization of public assets and the push for a consumption-driven economic culture—the public park occupied was to be turned into a shopping mall. Thus, the occupation of public space and the creation of a new dynamic and communal space in its place led to the creation of Gezi Park—a radical democratic space, filled with exciting and creative testaments to the need for and rehabilitation of community (Korkman and Aciksoz 2013). Occupy Wall Street itself was a
negation of the corporatization and commodification of realities within the US—a reaction to the 2008 economic crisis in particular and the growing realization of the power of Wall Street in contributing to said crisis. Occupying Zuccotti Park was a way to create a space for those left out of the political-economic system in the US—a space to have their voices finally heard, to radically recreate democracy, and to build an infrastructure to protect the bodies of those left out of the dominant social systems by creating and enacting more just socialities. Both movements required direct action tactics (i.e., the occupation of space) and subsequently the continual recreation of such tactics in order to reproduce the socialities created within the occupied spaces. This is what Halvorsen (2015a) refers to as the recreation of everyday life, or “social reproduction” [See also Evren (2013) and Gambetti (2014) for more specific details on the everyday recreation of Gezi Park]. This moment, through which activists begin the subversion process, is, however, also an extremely fragile moment—discussed in chapter three as a liminal spatio-temporality—and as such, regardless of the labor and care used to maintain the occupations, the fragility of such a radical action ensured Occupy’s and Gezi’s vulnerability to and ultimate repression by the state. This became a difficult reality for anarchistic activists during occupation as bodies were often injured, voices were silenced and lives were also lost. Although repressed and dismantled physically, however, were they genuinely repressed, eliminated, never to exist again? Considering the intense and dangerous labor contributed to maintain the physical occupations themselves and, most importantly, protect the realities that flourished engaging in them, does such an experience really just go away?

In response to Occupy’s proclamation following the raids and dismantling of the movements in late-2011, “you cannot evict an idea whose time has come,” it is obvious that these spatial occupations are more than just physical material occupations of space. They should
be thought of as emotional, mental, and spiritual as well—they are *movements in consciousness*. Through a dialectical rearrangement in spatio-temporalities, whether conscious of it or not, activists engage in a deeply transformative experience. Within spatial occupations, which are duly anarchical moments, where *all* bodies navigate a liminal spatio-temporality, herein is where activists can subvert the logic of capital and free themselves of their chains. In short, here is where they find ways to transcend dominant spatio-temporalities and, contrary to materialists, these dimensionalities are not confined to tangible spatial realities alone, they are also temporal and spiritual; dimensionalities often overlooked (Holloway 2010). In order to develop a way to better understand these movements accordingly, in the next chapter, I reflect upon this alternative-dimensional understanding (i.e., *spiritual and transgressive*) as it is currently described in social movements studies, post-traumatic growth research, and critical literature on alienation. I illustrate these theories by bringing in the voices of those actively involved.
INTERLUDE: TO THE POET MAN

Seeing the Poet Man get beaten to the ground by a cop was the moment I felt most empowered to keep doing what I was doing. To think and be ourselves—to attempt to create another world outside of the one we were never welcomed in anyways—we’d have to fight for it, so it felt, like Sisyphus, constantly holding the weight of oppression on our shoulders and treading up mountains steeper than our abilities to imagine what the other side may look like. But we know, in our hearts, that it is worth it.

It was a hot summer. We were lying in the grass looking up at the sun. Trees were blocking the light casting shadows of dancing limbs around us. “I’m terrified of the smell of lipstick,” he’d mumble with tears in his eyes. He, the Poet Man, was but eight years old when a lone man abducted and dragged him to a nearby graveyard. He remembered the lone man applying a deep red shade of lipstick before he bent him over a coffin to be brutally raped.

That day will forever haunt him alongside the experience of growing up without the memories of a father. His father never existed physically in his life, but his potential memory did. He was the son of a first-generation Irish American man, first-gen Scots woman—a “bastard” child whose mother became widowed when he was but 30 weeks gestation. She watched him, pregnant and incapable of helping, drown in a lake at a family picnic. “I’m Scotch-Irish damnit!” he’d always say while guzzling down a beer or two.

That young red lipstick fearing boy was and had always been a lost and depressed soul. It was his teacher who “had a banner of Che Guavera in his classroom” that gave him a bit of hope for the first time. The flag, of course, represented his stern anti-capitalist ethos. He had hung that banner proudly until the day he was fired for his political beliefs—the same day the Poet Man’s new found hope felt to have suddenly vanished. Public libraries became shelters
where he’d bury his mind and heart in old Marxist and Anarchist texts. Although today he
never expresses it much, as he soon found himself helpless and living on the streets, that hope
continues to live on in his heart.

“The Poet Man” was what I eventually called him in my own poems about those days.
He was a poor rural White Southern boy raised embedded in oppressive racist, sexist and
classist socialities like all of us. His freed spirit thus manifested as a constant yearning to feel
comfort, love, and genuine community. “What really is a community?,” we would often ponder
aloud after Occupy was repressed. “What really would an anarchist world look like?”

The answers to these questions were always beautifully articulated in the poems he
read on the corners of city streets across the country. Almost yelling in the faces of passers-by
and the too good to listen-type folk—bankers, tourists, politicians—all were induced to listen.
That was the meta-irony of his prose. He was a man of few words and never taken seriously
by the too-goods, until the moment, that is, where he’d stand up tall and, with a deep
whimsical voice, delivered one of those poems, dropping all of those listening to their knees.
Hopeless he may always seem, the Poet Man is ceaselessly approaching, leaving vibrations of
hope in our wakes. “Gather ‘round all you beaten. Gather ‘round all you bruised. Gather
‘round all you poverty stricken outcasts...” he’d once said on the corner of a busy New York
City street, letting those listening recognize in themselves that they too should be hopeful.

Long are the days we’d leisurely rest in parks writing and reading poetry. Long are
the days we felt a part of something bigger; when we didn’t feel alone. To the Poet Man and
his constant yearnings and hopeful figurations for that something beautiful. Listen and feel
those vibrations: “To all the depressed souls of the world, I say, “Keep on!” Embrace your
sorrows and fire back! For when Earth is dead, the next one awaits your visions.”
CHAPTER 3: THE EMBODIMENT OF CRISIS: UNSTABLE WORLDS, EUTOPIAN YEARNINGS

*Crisis (n.): A Time of intense difficulty or danger; a time when a difficult or important decision must be made; a turning point of a disease when an important change takes place, indicating either recovery or death.*\(^{13}\)

Searching for literature to explain and develop the spiritually transgressive perspective necessary to understand the complex dimensionalities of anarchistic movements produced inadequate results within social movement studies in general and the sociological study of social movements in particular. When social movements studies became a prominent subfield within sociology during the mid-20\(^{th}\) Century, research was often situated within two broad paradigms: Resource Mobilization (RM) and, slightly later, New Social Movement (NSM) theory. RM often focused on understanding the “rational” characteristics of social movements as a way to study their overall “successes” and “failures”—a cost/benefit analysis that often typified activists as rational actors seeking resources and power in order to compete with other social organizations. Although still interested in mobilizations, as a reflection upon the rise of identity-based and radical movements in the mid-20\(^{th}\) Century, NSM provided a lens to focus more intimately on the identities, cultures and emotions of social movements and activists in particular in order to understand how and why social movements emerge (Benski and Langman 2013). Although the latter paradigm helpful for understanding the embodiments of activists involved in Occupy (see Langman 2013, for instance), social movement theory has yet to adequately rework these paradigms as a reflection upon the current anarchistic turn that began with the 2011 global occupations (Stapp 2013). Nonetheless, certain literature within the field of sociology, specifically that on revolutions, quotidian breakdowns, and other macro/micro analyses of crises

\(^{13}\) Derived from the Oxford English Dictionary: en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/crisis
and social change, combined with literature on traumatic growth, allowed me to puzzle together a more cohesive understanding of what my research within Occupy revealed.

As I set out to collect data on what motivates anarchistic activists—a deeply personal and spiritual approach to the study of movement emergences—I started by asking questions and gathering information about the praxis, stories and memories of activists involved in anarchistic movements in relationship to these preexisting theories. The oral histories of anarchistic activists, however, revealed that there is more to the picture than what was previously discussed about social movements. Trauma and quotidian breakdowns do explain certain motivating factors, but activists more often indicated that their personal reasons for acting involved the revelation that they felt social solidarity about “something” they had felt for so long. These remarks made me rethink crisis as systemic, yes, but simultaneously an affective embodiment. That “something” often proclaimed as the motivating factor for activists is therefore understood herein as social alienation.

Below I develop an understanding of activist motivational experiences moving between inductive and deductive theories, bringing in the voices of activists themselves. I begin with the previous inductive theories providing examples of these experiences as discussed with activists. I then move on to describe the pervasive experiences of alienation as often explicitly and implicitly suggested by activists, situating this understanding within anarchist and autonomist theories about alienation as well as decolonial scholarship on liminality. Together, these theories (and stories) help construct a more cohesive understanding about what motivates anarchistic activists today. They not only reveal the motivating embodiments of anarchistic activists as part of the broad milieu described in chapter one—the indigenous-alternative-utopian perspective described by Amster (2003)—but also highlight how individuals involved in socially
transformative movements both embody these social crises and are products of them. This latter idea is a poignant argument I develop in order to embrace an analysis that holistically encompasses the ecological—social, political, economic, cultural—crises of our times. This story provides an understanding necessary to transgress neoliberal socialities from within and outside of the modern world-system today—a story developed from the standpoint of activists themselves, yes, but a relevant critique for those not involved in radical anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian politics. I write it accordingly as a way for the anarchistic movement to understand the complexities of mobilization—why Occupy, for instance, was so difficult for outsiders to comprehend, allowing those in power to take over and coopt the discourse by misspecifying the ethos of the movement (Stapp 2013). If anarchistic activists are trying to change the world, then understanding their personal motivations in order to motivate others is the task at hand and what has driven this research all along.

*Individual Crisis: Quotidian Breakdowns and Trauma*

The elements of social movements studies—specifically theories about mobilizations and the emergence of collective action, social movements, and revolutions (see for instance Davies 1962, Geschwender 1968, Simmons 2014)—that are most conducive to understanding contemporary anarchistic movements were often sidelined within the broader social movement paradigms mentioned above. The institutionalization of the study of social movements neglected the realm of individual and collective transformation. Although contemporary social movement research on the New Social Movements has brought the cognitive and emotive elements of social movements to the fore, previous “strain” and “breakdown” theories also attempted to conceptualize these micro phenomena. Snow et al. (1998), for instance, developed theories on
social movement emergences in general in order to explain how social movements often emerge out of situations that hinder and disrupt individuals’ expectations of reality. They conceptualized the disruption of the quotidian as a fundamental factor as to why individuals engage in activism. These quotidian breakdowns are emblematic of the ways in which macro structural crises such as economic and political crises impact the micro—how individuals embody crises. Habermas (1975) similarly referred to this embodiment as a legitimation crisis whereby, when crises occur, the legitimate power of the state and other dominant institutionalized socialities can no longer obtain citizens’ allegiance, which in turn encourages individuals to interrogate that power and if necessary, subvert it in order to create something new.

Langman (2013), who builds upon the work of Habermas (1975) in order to better understand the 2011 global occupations, indicates how the crises of neoliberal globalization have galvanized an anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian response. In the US in particular, according to Langman (2013), this response was a product of the 2008 economic crisis and the US government’s corporate bailouts, which affected, according to breakdown theories, how individuals perceived themselves and their relations to the dominant socialities. Individuals recognized the illegitimate actions of the state through their own personal embodiments as well as the government’s response to the crises, which unveiled its collusive relationship with Wall Street. As Occupier, Dragonfly, adamantly articulated in response to why they thought the Occupy movement began:

People are realizing that it’s really a binary in this country. Either you’re for or against. Either you’re in or you’re out. Either you’re rich or you’re poor, and there are people who are really traumatized because they’re finding out for the first time in their lives, “Oh, I’m poor?” “My education won’t save me?” “My whiteness won’t save me?” “My maleness won’t save me?” “My fill in the blank won’t save me?”
Here we can see how the state’s legitimate power was compromised during the economic crisis and how individuals embodied the ensuing social and cultural crises. The crisis forced individuals to question, through their own personal embodiments, how the social problems affecting their lives were bound to a particular political-economic system.

Pulling from social psychology, Snow et al. (1998) further elaborate upon how quotidian embodiments of structural crises lead to movement emergences: “We contend that the kind of breakdown most likely to be associated with movement emergence is that which penetrates and disrupts, or threatens to disrupt, taken-for-granted, everyday routines and expectancies” (p.2). Such disruptions can take the form of threats to subsistence (Davies 1962, Geschwender 1968), threats to individuals’ everyday routines and practices, changes in social institutionalized structures of control as well as natural disasters (Snow et al. 1998) and, as the Occupier explains above, threats to and shifts in the ways in which individuals perceive themselves and the relations to the world around them.

Although the theory of quotidian breakdown (Snow et al. 1998; Borland and Sutton 2007) as well as that on grievances (Simmons 2014), which is similar and builds upon this argument, is helpful to understand what motivates individuals to engage in activism, Snow et al. (1998) do not position this motivation within a transformational framework. They relegate activism, instead, to the realm of “recouping” what was lost prior to the quotidian disruption, which does not take into account individuals who engage in activism in order to transform society. A breakdown of their everyday lives does not always develop into an individual or collective reactionary orientation and embodiment, whereby reestablishing what existed prior to the disruption is their objective. Rather, pulling from research on traumatic growth (Cadell, Regehr and Hemsworth 2003; Ickovics and Park 1998; Linley 2004; Parappully et al. 2002; Park
disruption can lead to the development of a transgressive orientation, whereby individuals rearticulate their relationship to reality, oftentimes recognizing the structural factors behind what caused the disruption, and thus seek to transform those very structures. Trauma provides an analytic to intimately understand how individuals embody crises and, most importantly, how crises can become potentially transformative.

Within theological and psychoanalytic fields of study regarding trauma, theoretical and empirical research emphasizes the importance of studying positive outcomes following adversity—a response to the negative and repressive approach to trauma and suffering discussed in chapter one. With regards to the emergence of collective action, theories about how individuals become more spiritual and “wiser” following ruptures of individuals’ “assumptive worlds” (Tedeschi, Park and Calhoun 1998) after traumatic life events run parallel to quotidian breakdown theories. According to Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004), an “assumptive world”—also referred to as individuals’ “fundamental schemas about the world” (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004; Parappully 2002)—is synonymous with an individuals’ worldview. Assumptive worlds embrace individuals’ epistemologies and ontologies, inclusive of notions of self, relations with and conceptions of others and social institutions, as well as imaginative figurations about reality.

When breakdowns occur following traumatic life events, individuals thus go through a moment in time whereby they must rearticulate their assumptive worlds, which is why existential psychology also conceptualizes meaning making, and subsequently, acting—becoming more proactive, wise, and in control of one’s life—as important outcomes of suffering and trauma (Tedeschi, Park, Calhoun 1998; Wilkinson 2005).
Studying traumatic growth, positive psychologists discovered that, during post-traumatic moments, individuals begin the process of reconstructing their assumptive worlds, which is variously referred to as “rumination” (Park 2004), “constructive cognitive processing” (Tedeschi 1999, Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004), “meaning-making” (Cadell, Regehr and Hemsworth 2003) and/or “reappraisal of fundamental schemas” (Parappully et al. 2002). All of these processes refer to the inner-dialectical conversations that individuals have with their old and new selves in order to redevelop their relationship to the world, and most importantly, their role within it (Ickovics and Park 1998, Tedeschi, Park and Calhoun 1999, Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004). If provided the space to explore, learn from and rework their assumptive worlds, an individual can also develop new enlightening and positive assumptive worlds, which is why traumatic growth scholars understand and articulate such positive outcomes as becoming “wiser” and more “engaged with the world.” The process of traumatic growth described above was best expressed to me by a longtime self-identified communitarian anarchist in relationship to their own traumatic break dealing with the disintegration of their family and watching the landscape of their home—what they described as their “world”—change drastically by way of capitalist expansion and neoliberalism from childhood to adulthood:

This trauma [change in their world] caused this split, which in a way could be defined as like a mental problem or something [laughs], but actually it was a very good thing because it was a kind of self-discovery and discovering what the deeper meaning was of things that I said I believed in.

The deeper meaning they speak of here is a reflection upon their politic, causing them to rethink and rework their relationship to the world and how they felt change needed to occur in the wake of crisis. They also express a concern (about going “mad”) that many contemporary anarchistic activists tend to embrace. The ruminative experiences following traumatic events are often expressed as similar to having multiple personalities. And, arguably, being in a dialectical
relationship between old and new selves, individuals experience this schizophrenic embodiment in a very true sense.

Although I do not address the negative realities of trauma in this project, it is important to note that these do exist. Remaining within the framework of traumatic theories, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder may be seen as a product of dealing with this inner-dialectic as well. For a veteran returning from war, for example, there is no doubt that who they were before leaving is often not the same person that returns. What is witnessed and embodied in warfare is plenty to force an individual into a ruminative state. However, positive traumatic theories suggest that these experiences can be good for individuals’ overall wellbeing if provided the lens and space to see and explore them accordingly. When viewed as positive (and this could be helpful for PTSD scholarship) post-traumatic ruminative states may appear “schizophrenic,” but pulling from lost literature of anti-psychiatric research, specifically the work of R. D. Laing (1967), the stigma of dissociative experiences such as schizophrenia (similar to post-traumatic states) may be reframed as transcendental. Laing (1967) believed that individuals dealing with dissociations were not “multiple personalities,” simply by virtue of the fact that the many personalities that an individual embodies are a part of a whole, the individual—body, mind and spirit. As social beings, we are always jumping in and out of different social roles and relations; always dreaming and imagining something “other-worldly” whether we are conscious of it or not. Dissociative experiences were rather a product of an individual reworking their selves, which is inclusive of an individual’s spiritual and higher self (Laing 1967). Laing came to this conclusion after working intimately with patients experiencing schizophrenic spells and discovering their almost intuitive and profound wisdom about social issues, that which, in fact, caused their dissociated embodiments in the first place. Of course, when Laing was developing these theories, he was
working against dominant psychiatric discourses on madness that viewed these experiences as
negative and destructive, something to sideline and repress rather than give space to flourish.
Davies (2012) highlights, although not explicitly, how the repression of the positive outcomes of
suffering, either through psychiatric discourse or as is commonly practiced today, through
psychotropic drugs, is a major factor that contributes to the flourishing of modern
institutionalized socialities today, inclusive of psychiatric discourse and practice itself. Lack of
space to question and rework crises prevents the ability to question and rework ourselves and our
relations to the social world. The concern here then is what this means in relationship to social
change and whether or not there are ways to actively create spaces, in a clinic or elsewhere, to
encourage transformative growth following crisis.

Repressive coercion aside, from a social psychological perspective, trauma and its
aftermath are thus phenomena whereby the individual can begin the process of transcending the
self once defined within the dominant socialities. Following adversity, this self is suddenly
viewed as an “inauthentic” self, forcing the individual to cognitively exculpate themselves,
critically engage with, and subsequently “delink” (Mignolo 2011) from the socialities with which
they once navigated the world. Anarchistic activists themselves often express this process of
delinking: “The greatest teachers I’ve ever had are the struggles and the sufferings and the
traumas because they gave me the space to explore, and the need to explore. It stripped away the
illusions. It pulled back that veil.” This process of “delinking”—or “pulling back the veil”—and
becoming cognitively absent of the dominant institutionalized socialities is thus similar to the
process of rumination as discussed above. Broadly speaking, theories about traumatic growth
help with understanding how the moments following ruptures in an individual’s “assumptive
world” can lead to spiritual growth and transgression (Park 2004; Tedeschi 1999; Tedeschi and
Calhoun 2004). If we see these moments as linked (often) to structural crises as quotidian breakdown theorists do, then it becomes quite obvious why the lack of a transgressive perspective on social movements is problematic. After collecting the stories of anarchistic activists, however, it became clear that these ruptures, breaks and traumas were not as epiphatically embodied as theories regarding quotidian breakdowns and traumatic growth would suggest. These theories do point to some of the stories expressed by activists as to why they got involved in anarchistic movements. However, activists often talk about their coming-to-realizations as what I call “yea-duh” moments—the longue durée, so it seems, of anarchistic social movements.

I use the slang of “yea-duh” to indicate several things. First, descriptions of people’s motivations often extend across times (often life-times) meaning that, although significant moments and traumatic breaks did occur and were expressed by activists, the systemic crises created by capitalism that encouraged their motivation were not suddenly felt. As discussed in chapter one, from the moment we come into existence, our entire lives (whether we become conscious of it or not) are thoroughly entrenched in dominant socialities and as such are plagued by crises, collective and/or personal. When asked why they felt motivated to engage in anarchistic activism, there was thus little talk of sudden epiphatic moments in which activists felt that they must act, but instead, they often described childhood and life-long experiences that led them to the moment in which they acted. When movements and spontaneous moments occurred where they felt inclined to engage with the world in new ways, activists simply reflected that they felt camaraderie with what they had felt for so long. They acted because they suddenly sensed social solidarity about something that they had already felt. But what is this previous something? In order to begin understanding this something, below I synthesize the experiences
of quotidian breakdowns and traumatic growth with a discussion of alienation and liminality, which together illuminate the anarchistic oral histories collected in this project. These theories get to the heart of the prevalent and destructive systemic crises of capital that activists feel. Most importantly, these theories help to further explain how crises can also lead to the development of a transformative framework that not only reworks an individual’s assumptive world, but also rearranges dominant socialities in practice (negate-subvert-create).

Alienation and Liminality: The Dissociative Embodiments of Structural Crises

By happenstance, on my second day after arriving in New York, a newer activist mental health collective called the Jane Addams Collective hosted an event titled: Combative Psyches in a now popularized post-Occupy anarchist space called The Base in Brooklyn, NYC. Over 30 people interested in discussing mental illness in relationship to modern societies and those engaged in transformative activisms attended the event, which was scheduled to last three hours. To my surprise, the event felt, based on the political solidarity of the group, like it could have comfortably lasted forever.

The conversations expressed many concerns of those involved in anarchistic movements, particular in relationship to post-Occupy experiences. Activists expressed that they felt very unsettled, and reasonably so, after the occupations were repressed. We discussed how our own personal crises were deeply transformative and motivational, similar to my own thoughts and experiences during my engagement in Occupy. We critically addressed these experiences in relationship to the dominant psychiatric discourses that often claim, by way of the DSM-V, that “oppositional defiance” (re: a textbook anarchist) and other experiences often embodied and ontologies expressed by anarchistic activists are something negative and to be repressed. We also discussed, most importantly here, the many ways in which individuals embody
“dissociative” experiences throughout their everyday lives in the United States. Either coming from the standpoint of the oppressed, as will be described in more detail below, or through the constant embodied experiences being a part of a world that oppresses, these dissociations are understood and embraced as fundamental conditions of modern citizens today. As an example, one activist explained how they felt that just knowing that they are wearing a shirt that is likely a product of the exploited labor of a women or child in the Global South and, by default, is likely to contribute to the destruction of our ecosystem, is something they sensed led to a lot of their anxieties. Many activists also explained how the constant mediatized images of war, famine, and other geopolitical crises made them feel constantly out of touch with the world. It became clear to me, after seeing activists agree and dialogue critically about these experiences, that the idea of alienation and the unconscious and pervasive embodiments of colonization and oppressions is a common reality for activists. This experience is not to be thought of as exclusive of non-activists however, and as such, might simultaneously be a contributing factor to the rise in psychopathologies in post-industrial societies today (Berardi 2011)—a world that represses, for its maintenance, the transformative embodiments and relations to suffering (Davies 2012).

What, then, is alienation? First conceptualized by Karl Marx (1988) in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx concerned himself with the ways in which workers were alienated from their labor in capitalist societies—how workers do not own the means of production and as such, do not benefit fully from that which they produce with their labor. Marx claimed that labor, the central creative authority through which humans realize themselves, became alien to the worker. Capitalist modes of production also determined worker’s relationship to time, whether work or leisure, which significantly affected their potential to think outside of and even apprehend their potential as human beings. Work, and thus workdays and
the clock necessary to construct capitalist temporalities, became a disciplinary method for production (see Thompson 1967 for an analysis of time and work discipline). Further, the products produced and consumed by workers were in turn fetishized and became alienating themselves, which is why Marx believed that consumerism became such a prominent cultural force in modern societies. Although Marx referred to religion as the dominant social institution that was the opium of the masses, he was clearly concerned with the ways in which capital and dominant institutionalized socialities within capitalism were alienating. Marx, however, is also often critiqued for his economic determinism (for instance see Bakunin 1987, Block and Somers 1984, Landauer 1978). Workers are not the only ones to experience alienation, broadly defined, by the simple fact that workers are not the only subjects oppressed within capitalist socialities. This prevented Marx from understanding the many ways in which alienation is embodied, especially for those living in the peripheries within and outside of the capitalist world-system. A fuller and more relevant conceptualization of alienation can be found, however, in anarchist classical and contemporary theory and decolonial studies that provides a more holistic (global, rather) conceptualization of alienation that embraces all individuals within and on the peripheries of capitalist, and by default, colonial socialities.

As discussed in chapter one, contemporary anarchistic activists understand capitalism as having colonized everyday life. Within this understanding, individuals are not only alienated from their labor, but also, by way of socialization, they are colonized to think about others and their selves and thus act, behave, and relate to the social world around them in preordered and oppressive ways. According to the Austin Anarchist Study Group (2012) there are two forms of domination, although not mutually exclusive, that are responsible for the creation of alienating embodiments in capitalist socialities: the Spectacle as originally theorized by the Situationists
(Debord 1956), which understands that capital governs everyday life though mediations (abstracted false social relations) and consumerism (abstracted and false needs); and, biopower, which is similar to the neoliberal rationality discussed in chapter one—the subtle structural forms of heteronomy that determine and govern existence. This is what the Columbia Anarchist League referred to as a “character”—the multifarious ways in which individuals internalize the hierarchical and alienating social structures around them. This is why anarchist theorists emphasize understanding alienation as not just simply the inability of being in control of something, of one’s labor and life for instance, but rather regards the inability to recognize one’s potential to become something—something beyond capitalist modes of production—not just simply be (Austin Anarchist Study Group 2012). It is the latter conceptualization (of simply being within the social world we exist in) that neoliberal politicians and capitalist elites mobilize around.

If alienation has more to do with our inability to think beyond—to dream, imagine, to figuratively transform the world around us—as anarchists claim, it is important to understand where this dissociation is rooted. Post-colonial critiques of the modern world claim that this alienation—the inability to become—stems from how Western societies, grounded in secularized and scientific rationalities and deterministic behaviors, strip individuals of their ability to transcend and think beyond that which exists in a truly metaphysical sense (Nandy 1995). This is also arguably why suffering is negatively stigmatized in the West. Individuals are afraid of transcendence and of not being in control of everything! This understanding of alienation is, however, somewhat counter to many contemporary critical conceptualizations of alienation as simply the inability for individuals to appropriate definitions of themselves and the social world (Jaeggi 2014). This schism is similarly reflective of the discussion above regarding the lack of a
transformative analysis of quotidian breakdowns in which I brought to the fore an analysis of traumatic growth. As such, if alienation is the inability of individuals to recognize their potentials to become something greater than what is, then how do individuals come to this realization if their potentials are, in fact, being kept from them? Put differently, if individuals live in a world that colonizes their everyday lives, how do they break free from such an entrenched and totalizing system?

Decolonial scholarship on liminality helps to understand how dissociative embodiments, although crippling, are also potentially liberating spatio-temporalities that can allow for individuals to become consciously aware of the need for social change. As derived from indigenous and decolonial scholarship, a by-product of colonization is the development of a bifurcated consciousness. This is what, for instance, Gloria Anzaldúa (1999) referred to as a mestiza consciousness and what W. E. B Dubois (1903) similarly referred to as a double-consciousness. Both embodiments exemplify the experiences of individuals that occupy the borderlands between two or many socialities. A bifurcated consciousness is indicative of the ways in which a colonized corporeality (the experiences and embodiments of everyday life) is split between what forcibly is (dominant socialities) and that which exists in one’s memories as what was and should have been prior to colonization as well as what could be as experienced in imaginative and eutopic expressions and yearnings. For indigenous and oppressed peoples, colonization in whichever forms it manifests is a lived reality for individuals and communities the world over. Stories recorded and passed down through oral histories of colonized embodiments thus exemplify, always, the process whereby the body and mind are colonized. For instance, the shaman Malidoma Patrice Somé, who was forced into a Catholic boarding school as a young child expressed: “No one could survive in an institution like this unless he
developed the habit of removing his mind from the ‘vocation’ that had been imposed on him” (Somé 1994: 101). Here he clearly expresses how his consciousness was bifurcated not by choice, but more importantly, for survival.

Pulling from indigenous ecologies whereby the Cartesian split is absent and thus the body/mind, in a holistic sense, is understood as the spirit (elaborated below), these conscious bifurcations force individuals to navigate a liminal spatio-temporality—an in-between, anti-structural spatio-temporality. Liminality is similar to the rumination process experienced after traumatic breaks, whereby the individual constantly engages in a self-dialectical process that is fixed between two socialities—what ought to have been and what now, in the case of the colonized, forcibly is. Coloniality is indeed, according to this understanding, the gruesome and dark side of modernity, which is why the colonial experience of alienation is incredibly important to understand the multifarious ways in which alienation is embodied and institutionalized in modern socialities today.

To control an individual’s spirit and force individuals to embody the dialectic between “what is” and “what ought to be” is a crippling force for individuals and/or communities. Similar to ruminative states, however, embodiments of liminality are never to be thought of as totalizing. These self-dialectical embodiments also force individuals to exist within an imaginative and inspirational state. The imaginative and eutopic dimensions of what could be can allow colonized individuals to gain control over their situations in order to break free from the fear of transcending the boundaries imposed on them. Thus begins the process of healing the “colonial wound” by providing a conscious space to first develop an “awareness of coloniality of being, of being out of place in the set of regulations (e.g., cosmology) or ‘modernity’” (Mignolo 2011: 109). As such, this is a process whereby the individual simultaneously negates that which
never did or no longer makes sense and begins to create that which could be and/or was before colonization—a long often lifetime process of healing and delinking from the system.

Jaeggi (2014) similarly explains how dealing with alienation allows individuals to recognize that they are, in fact, alienated, which can encourage them to actively begin consciously appropriating their selves and relationships to the social world around them. As such, the experience of alienation, in its totality and recognition, “reveals a potentiality” (Austin Anarchist Study Group 2012). It is always there, whether individuals are conscious of it or not—it manifests in subtle and sporadic ways no matter how hard dominant institutions attempt to repress individuals’ abilities to control their own fate and perceptions of self (Columbia Anarchist League 1985). This is also why Laing (1967) sensed schizophrenic spells occurred. Whether in dreams, sense perceptions, intuitive relations, psychopathological spells, dissociations, bifurcations in consciousness, and other forms of unknowingness and discomfort in one’s skin, alienation is always looming just below the surface looking for moments to burst forward. “It is a generalized, yet usually unconscious movement of negation which contains within itself the seeds of all potentially conscious movements for…social change” (Columbia Anarchist League 1986: 8). According to this logic, alienation is more than just simply the ability to appropriate one’s self—it is also necessary to recognize one’s fullest potential as a human being. The constant eutopic yearning for “something good,” change, hope—this is the effect of ridding one’s self of alienating institutionalizations and embodiments.

Conclusion

Individuals who experience traumatic events and/or become consciously aware of their alienation or oppression may begin to develop “an-other state of mind”—one outside of
dominant socialities. This awareness generates in the individual a need to search for other-worldly “wisdoms” and meaning—to appropriate their selves and the social world (Heckert 2013; Jaeggi 2014). According to Kovel, “to break from the Ego [as defined within dominant socialities]...requires a radical rupture with the system as a whole,” which in turn leads to what he refers to as a “spiritual politics” whereby the individual begins to work “prefiguratively within reality, rejecting the existing order, while studying it closely and moving with it” as they open their selves up to a “new way of being” (1991: 93). This process, according to contemporary communitarians, leads to the development of a more compassionate being whereby individuals selflessly devote themselves to others—to their community (Heckert 2013). Oral histories of activists, in addition to expressions of alienating embodiments, revealed that feelings of community and social solidarity led to their becoming engaged. Together, this is what I referred to above as a “yea-duh realization.”

Yea-duh realizations are nothing new to anarchists or those who are the victims of crises. For instance, as experienced following the aftermaths of environmental crises such as the natural disasters Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy (Clark 2013), individuals who were already delinked from the system rushed to help those in need in their communities. No questions asked, they felt naturally inclined to help. This act, most importantly here, cultivated the “communal spirit” in certain individuals and communities within these crises-ridden liminal spatio-temporalities, leading to the ultimate creation of permanent, cooperative and communal spaces (Clark 2013). Of course, as discussed above, it is important to reemphasize and always be aware that dissociations do not always lead to a reworking of the self or social world—a call to action—but are often, today, coopted by those in power. The realities of “disaster capitalism” whereby the state and capital feed off of the suffering of vulnerable populations during crises,
such as what occurred during Hurricane Katrina, are examples of this cooptation (Clark 2013). However, there is no denying that the communal spirit was cultivated in these moments. In fact, it became absolutely necessary for the survival of many individuals and communities during these crises.

In a society that “lives to work instead of working to live” and subsumes needs with market and consumer-driven wants (Mignolo 2011), that commodifies things that are unnecessary and in fact destructive to our ecosystems—these are indicative of a society with a fractured spirit according to ecopsychologists and communitarian anarchists. Relearning that we are interdependent beings is a needed lesson that anarchistic movements attempt to show in their everyday practice. However, there is a lack of radical critique within basic Western understandings of alienation that anarchists attempt to speak to although not often so explicitly.

Continuing to pull from indigenous and anarchistic ecologies and knowledge systems, the task now is to understanding the “nature” of crises and the “potential” that anarchistic activists claim comes from embodying individual and/or social crises. Further, is alienation really a necessary embodiment to allow individuals to recognize this potential? As anarchistic activists claim, is transcendence—the ability to become something beyond our selves—a natural human instinct or is it a by-product of alienating and colonial socialities? What does this “beyond-ness” look like and how do we even begin to understand and speak about this experience? Below, I explore these questions in relationship to research on ecopsychology—a field of study that recognizes that human potential to flourish, imagine and create other-worldly things, is, in fact, a part of human nature. Most importantly, I discuss theories of human nature in relationship to communitarianism and indigenous ecologies, bringing in the oral histories of anarchistic activists
themselves. This analysis will help demonstrate how community and the creation of communal dimensionalities are, in fact, where this potential springs forth.
INTERLUDE: BECOMING ALIVE

One day, as I was scrolling through an Occupier’s Facebook pictures, I came across a picture that made me realize the profound changes I, myself, had endured engaging in anarchist movements and practice. The picture was of a circle of activists playing instruments, singing, and dancing during the Occupy National Gathering in Philadelphia, PA in the summer of 2012. What caught my eye was myself, in the middle of it all dancing with my eyes closed. A light seemed to emanate from my body. At that moment, I was experiencing something beyond my tired and lonely self. I felt whole again.

It was late-November 2005 and my life would never be the same. My youngest cousin, Karilyn—an innocent beautiful little six-year-old girl—was kidnapped, brutally beaten, sodomized and left to die near her home in Spanish Lake, Missouri. Her victimizer, Sherman, was an adolescent himself who lived but a few houses down from my family. Sherman soon became the youngest child in the state of Missouri to be charged as an adult. He is now serving a life sentence with no chance of parole. A thirteen-year-old child who grew up in a predominantly poor black neighborhood was charged with a life sentence for abducting and attempting to murder a little girl. Why would a thirteen-year-old do this? Why Karilyn?

Several months after the sentencing of Sherman, I stumbled upon an online white nationalist blog called Stormfront not only making a mockery of Sherman, but also my aunt and cousin. These White Nationalists thought that, yes, Sherman deserved a life-sentence and even worse for simply “behaving like a typical black person,” but that Karilyn, whose mother is white and father is black, also deserved what happened to her. It was my aunt’s fault for choosing to marry a black man, exposing her children to “Africanism.” Why?
Today, after over a decade has passed, I can confidently look back and state that I psychologically dissociated in November 2005. I really only remember bits and pieces of information about anything going on in my life after the news broke out about Karilyn. Why Sherman? Why Karilyn? Why my family? What the hell kind of world is this? These questions were like ghosts haunting me following Karilyn’s abduction.

During my undergraduate education, I found an excuse to spend even longer nights ruminating about the world I lived in—ruminating about the world Karilyn and Sherman lived in. It was the moment I started burying my head in radical texts at the libraries at my university that I started to wake up. I finished my degree and in doing so learned to forgive Sherman. But, it really was not until Occupy began in 2011 that the ghosts finally started to fade away.

The moment I found that picture of myself standing in the circle of Occupiers was the moment I realized that Occupy gave me a radical notion of hope strong enough to let my mind know that it was okay to come out of hiding. For six years of my life, I was walking dead; my mind flew inward as my younger self had nowhere else to go. As I stood there in that park, eyes closed, hands facing upward, I, indeed, felt that the world was somewhere I could belong in again. I became alive. Most importantly, I learned that I would have to fight endlessly to create that world.

To all the Sherman and Karilyns of the world, it is for you that we fight to create another world. It is for you that we yearn for eutopia.
CHAPTER 4: THE ECOLOGY OF CRISIS: A ROOTED ANALYSIS OF ALIENATION AND ANARCHY

...an anarchist society, a society which organizes itself without authority, is always in existence, like a seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism, and its waste, privilege and its injustices, nationalism and its suicidal loyalties, religious differences and their superstitious separatism.

- Colin Ward, Anarchy in Action

How do we then arrive at anarchistic practice—at anarchy? What inspires contemporary anarchistic activists to embody and enact such a radically different sociality? In this chapter, I continue to build upon the role of alienation as a motivating factor for social transformation. I do so by situating the phenomena of social alienation and transformation within an ecological framework, specifically through an exploration of the literature on Indigenous ecologies, classical and contemporary eco- and anarchist geographies as well as ecopsychology (hereon referred together as anarchistic ecologies). Most important here is how these ecological frameworks conceptualize the root of alienation as stemming from the destructive human-nature relations within Western modernity. This radical critique allows for an analysis of how, when individuals and communities begin to consciously recognize their alienation, the natural and creative human potentialities hindered by Western modernity begin to germinate, in turn yielding an embodied eutopic yearning for that something “felt to be right.”

Upon developing this ecological framework, I conclude this chapter by reemphasizing how spatial occupations and prefigurative politics in general are key sites where liminal spatio-temporalities are embodied—where eutopic yearnings begin to physically emanate from the body, motivating and ultimately transforming individuals and collectives. Here is where dominant spatio-temporalities are suspended, providing a conscious and physical space to effectively interrogate and develop strategies to allow for the greatest and most creative
potentials within individuals and communities to erupt. This collective embodiment of liminality—what Turner (1967, 1987) referred to as communitas—is where anarchy is realized as a methodical and necessary component for human growth and social transformation. Alienation, as such, is the oxygen that germinates the anarchical seeds beneath the snow. In all, I conceptualize this embodiment as the ecology of crises (negate-subvert-create)—a radical dialectic to interrogate anarchical moments and practice as the conscious realization of the potential for individuals and communities to become the crises of capital.

Anarchistic Ecologies: Understanding the Roots of Alienation

Let’s be clear: certain “things” can be understood using the metaphysics of time, space and energy. However, a great deal of what we experience cannot be explained within the metaphysics of Western science, and that is the critical point. An entire realm of human experience in the world is marginalized, declared unknowable, and, consequently, left out of serious consideration.

-Vine Deloria Jr. and Daniel Wildcat, Power and Place

I begin with a discussion of anarchistic ecologies, as these worldviews articulate “alienation” (psychopathologies in general) as rooted in the West, specifically with the destruction of human nature and the creation of anthropocentric human-nature relations. I first briefly explore anarchist ecologies from within the West and then move on to more heavily focus on Indigenous ecologies. Broadly, anarchist ecologists conceptualize the root of alienation as the introduction of market-centric socialities and modes of production dependent upon the exploitation and thus removal of humans from nature. Here humans began to see themselves and their place within the world as exceptional—an anthropocentric worldview that, depending on the dominant market socialities of the epoch being critiqued, rendered certain human and non-human beings into commodities and/or commoditized labor. Most importantly, these abstracted and pyramidal
relations rendered anything (what constitutes life: experiences, sensations, beliefs, actions, embodiments, etc.) not conducive to the efficient functioning of the market as without spirit. ¹⁴

Without the ability to recognize and enact upon this component of existence, individuals become incapable of appropriating their selves and the social world. In short, they become alienated and prevented from recognizing the creative potentials within their selves to be and become something outside of the preordained roles and socialities imposed on them.

The Frankfurt theorists are often credited as the first to conceptualize the domination of human/nature within the West as a corollary to the domination of humans by other human beings (see Gunderson 2015). Marcuse’s (1964) work on one-dimensional thinking in particular is helpful for understanding alienation, but critical theories of alienation stem even further into history. Well before the Frankfurt school, resistance to and critical observations of capital had already begun to unfold. Indeed, as Andrej Grubačić and Denis O’Hearn (2016) express, exilic spaces of resistance have always existed outside of and/or within state- and capital- centric socialities. It is the creators of these exilic spaces I turn to in this chapter. Similar to the Frankfurters, as expressed in the work of anarchist geographers such as Reclus (2013) and Kropotkin (2009), alienation is, indeed, the product of capitalistic and market-centric modes of production. These anarchist political ecologists, however, grapple with critiques that move beyond the material, structural and even psychological concerns of the Frankfurt theorists.

With regards to the ecological analyses of alienation expressed by classical anarchists, Reclus (2013) in particular once famously wrote that “humanity” is simply “nature becoming self-conscious,” by severing connections to nature, humans also severed their connections to

¹⁴ By spirit I mean to suggest, as Kovel (1991) does, the elements of human existence that transcend the body/mind (e.g., moments of inspiration).
their selves (their own human nature), and thus their innate connections to all other human and non-human beings. ¹⁵ Reclus understood these alienated embodiments (although he does not use the actual term alienation) as going hand in hand with the “civilizing” processes of Western modernity—the creation of the state and other bureaucratic institutions and the subsequent institutionalization of freedom and individualistic notions of self. As an anarchist, however, Reclus contrarily believed that when humanity, as nature, became self-conscious, anthropocentrism did not have to be the only outcome. When consciously enacted, self-consciousness could instead allow for the growth of the species and the creation of socialities that magnified the natural interconnections of all sentient beings. This understanding was similarly expressed in the work of Kropotkin (2009) who studied how “mutual aid” and communal relations were necessary components for human survival, well-being, and growth.

Much like anarchist ecologists, Indigenous ecologies also stand opposed to the anthropocentric relations dominant in the West, although the experience of resistance is a product of one’s life being colonized by capital, rather than a praxis developed as a response to one’s own society becoming capital- and market-centric (although transformations of Indigenous communities have occurred as well). Indigenous ecologies are socialities that mirror the natural rhythms and functions of the ecosystems inhabited. Salmon (2000) describes the nature-human relationships within Indigenous communities as kincentric. All sentient beings, humans, non-

¹⁵ Similar expressions as Reclus’ here are also abounding within metaphysical paradigms. For instance, the spiritualist, Eckhart Tolle, stated: “You are the universe expressing itself as a human for a little while”; astrophysicist, Carl Sagan: “We are a way, for the cosmos, to know itself”; and Zen Buddhist, Alan Watts: “Life is the universe experiencing itself in endless variety.”
humans, and the planet as a living, breathing ecosystem itself, are considered kin. And as such, all beings assume integral and necessary roles within the larger ecosystems they inhabit, local, planetary, and even cosmic (see also Armstrong 2008).

In response to colonization, Indigenous peoples have recognized that reinvigorating traditional ecological knowledges is a necessary decolonial practice, firmly rooted in the practice of living in right relations within one’s community once again (see, for instance, Corntassel 2008 and Alfred 2005). Decolonization is dependent upon the transformation of dominant socialities, but this requires that humans reconnect to nature, and in so doing, their own selves. By embodying and enacting kincentric relations, radical ecopsychologists such as Fisher (2002) argue that settler and/or Indigenous peoples may overcome alienating/liminal embodiments and institutionalizations by actively resisting former socialities, which allows them to reinvigorate and ultimately express the instinctual needs within themselves to generate communal relations. For those embedded in Western socialities in particular, Indigenous ecological relations not only diverge from, also when embodied and enacted in practice, can drastically affect their worldviews. It is important, as such, to understand what is meant by human nature, especially for those embedded in Westerncentric worlds. To do so, I deeply explore the work of Indigenous ecologies below, interrogating dominant constructions and “settled expectations” of space, time and individuality (i.e., settler-colonial ecologies) within the West (Bang and Marin 2015). This will help with understanding the human potentialities (i.e., human nature) that emerge when individuals and communities embody relations to their selves and the worlds they inhabit as necessarily interconnected—as kincentric.

The work of Vine Deloria, Jr., specifically his 1979 (2012) magnum opus (in my opinion), *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence* (*Metaphysics* hereon), is one of the most
profound Indigenous critiques of Western existence to date and thus is extraordinarily helpful for grounding this discussion. As became abundantly clear in *Metaphysics*, Deloria’s life project was to “discover” (as a response to colonization) a different way of perceiving and engaging with/in the Westernizing world. This understanding was not simply a pre- or post-colonial epistemology, but one that was capable of properly dissecting and ultimately transcending modern existence. In *Metaphysics*, he searches for Western epistemologies that parallel his own embodied cosmologies as an Indigenous scholar. Engaging in this philosophical comparative analysis was necessary, Deloria believed, in order to effectively express what human nature is and what is lost, by way of human potential, through colonization. The decision to engage in this comparative philosophical approach was a way for him to readily validate and more effectively translate to indigenous, and most importantly, Western audiences, what he felt and knew to be right.

The use of comparative philosophical analyses was also a way for Deloria to validate his claims opposing Western science—a critique that affirmed the role of Western science in legitimizing the colonial experience. Deloria similarly and fearfully recognized how Western modernity led to the insistence upon secularized “worldly” epistemologies grounded in the belief that humans (the rational thinking mind in particular) were, indeed, “factually” exceptional. Similar to the immanent critique of anarchists, from an indigenous standpoint these Western epistemologies (anthropocentrism in particular) legitimized the colonization and oppression of human and non-human beings. This was so, as he explains elsewhere with Wildcat (Deloria and Wildcat 2001), because Western epistemologies removed the body and thus felt-experience from

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16 I pull heavily on Deloria here for this very reason, as breaking free of the dialectic with capital is precisely the ultimate objective of anarchistic practice—a point I will return to in chapter six.
knowledge-production and scientific inquiry. If humans continued to remove themselves from the equation—from experiencing that which they observed and the relations they developed to the world around them in the process—they would continue to create oppressive and repressive socialities. In contrast to empiricism, Deloria believed that Western science prevented individuals from embodying and understanding real, meaningful, and necessary experiences and thus from producing knowledge to share and develop the relations that come of these experiences. Distinct from embodied experiences, which remain in the realm of materiality, Deloria indicated how human nature is necessarily kincentric and thus deeply spiritual. Humans are not simply bodies with rational minds, but are conscious beings capable of transcending material dimensionalities.

Deloria further emphasized how the split between the body and the mind and between felt-experience and objective reality prevented individuals from understanding the inherent need for kincentric relations. The destructive Cartesian-Newtonian paradigms that effectively institutionalized the dichotomous relations between the rational mind and the sensate body ushered in objectivism and secularism as necessary components of scientific inquiry in the West (Harrison 2002). When the body is separated from the mind, Deloria believed that the individual was effectively despirited, which led to a relation to the self that was severed from reality and, more broadly, embedded in a sociality that deemed individuals, fully removed from nature, exceptional. This echoes the anarchist ecological thesis discussed briefly above. Most worrisome, once fully incorporated, anthropocentric socialities prevented individuals from recognizing that there is truly no self, in a separate and individualized sense, in relationship to the universe. Humans are not a separate egoic self (a concept created by the West and thus a Western reality); however, when individuals believe this to be true, they are prevented from
understanding experience beyond material dimensionalities, beyond the body, indeed beyond any embodied experience outside of dominant socialities.

Deloria’s critique of Western science’s dependence on empiricism and thus its neglect and rendering of the spiritual dimensions of existence obsolete, was deeply rooted in native ontologies, which understand knowledge as derived from not only the five senses, especially ocular perception, but also from the cosmos (see Cajete 2000, Salmond 2012; Smith 2012; and Wilson 2008 for an understanding of native science and inquiry). Indeed, the interrelations with the cosmos and all of existence foundational to Indigenous ecologies were, according to Samples (1976), built upon the knowledge derived from the balance between the rational and the metaphoric mind. The metaphoric mind, which is often expressed naturally by young children, is the creative and inspirational side of human existence—what Samples feared was crushed by the dependence on rational thought within the West. The metaphoric mind, according to Samples (1976), is the “mirror image of the rational mind”—it is the intuitive conscious understandings of the world around us (p. 2), which is akin to what Jung referred to as the “collective unconscious” (1981). As such, the metaphoric mind was not based on objective reasoning, much less trial and error observations alone, like in the West, but more so on the intuitive relations, felt-sensations, and spiritual embodiments experienced in ceremony and ritual practices—all of which are wholly dismissed within Western science as valid sources of knowledge. The collective and ancient knowledge derived from acting on kincentric relations was where we learned about the nature of existence, according to Deloria. In order to emphasize the importance of reestablishing kincentric relations, Deloria set out to indicate how this understanding was not exclusive to Indigenous peoples alone.
In order to break free of the destructive elements of modern existence, Deloria thus firmly spoke of the need for a “revolution.” Contrary to the decolonial movements manifesting during the time in which Deloria was writing *Metaphysics*, his understanding of revolution was not dependent upon taking power in an abstracted sense—political, economic, cultural. Deloria believed that these practices and conceptions of power and revolution were still deeply grounded within dominant worldviews that understood humans as exceptional, preventing the fundamental transformations he believed were necessary to transcend modern existence.\(^{17}\) Rather, this revolutionary change was dependent upon a radical transformation of the ways in which humans view and interact with/in the world around them—a transformation that came not from outside, but rather from the power instinctively with/in the individual\(^{18}\). He turned to the work of physicists and transpersonal psychologists (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Carl Jung, in particular, who were both heavily influenced by spiritualist and indigenous traditions) to ground this revolutionary understanding. Conscious evolution, he believed, was absolutely necessary to transcend modern existence—an existence that was highly destructive to all of humanity, indigenous and settler alike.\(^{19}\) In doing so, Deloria repudiated teleological or social Darwinian

\(^{17}\) Arguably Deloria foresaw the implications caused by not dismantling the anthropocentric worldviews of Western modernity within the 20\(^{th}\) Century decolonial movements [see for instance *Custer Died for Your Sins* for Deloria’s (1969) critique of Marxisms].

\(^{18}\) This understanding of revolution was also advocated by decolonial thinkers such as Franz Fanon (2005), Paulo Freire (2000), Ivan Illich (1970), and Ghandi. Indeed, we must mirror the world we want see, as we are the world.

\(^{19}\) Consciousness itself, according to Chardin, was indicative of the potential for humans to evolve.
conceptions of human and to ultimately deconstructed Western mis/conceptions of energy, and as such time and space, drastically challenging Western ecologies.

What is time and space, according to Indigenous ecologies? As Deloria explains, there are (at least) two different ways of perceiving time. There is Kairos: “the fullness of time when qualitative experiences are present” and/or when the “experience of the whole person” is felt (Deloria 1979: 38). This is similar to the temporal and embodied effects when “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi 1997), creativity and inspiration (Russ 1999), and the awestricken embodiments and wonder of the beauty of things take hold of the individual (White 1987). Simply put, these embodied experiences of Kairos are often commonly expressed as the moment when time stops (Mainemelis 2001; see also Rickert 2007 and White 1987 for a more thorough elaboration on Kairos and creativity in particular). In contrast to this more lively conception and embodiment of time, there is also Chronos: “mathematical time: clocks, seasons, sequences,” which is the conception of time heavily expressed in the West. Chronos is the divided and disciplined embodiment of time, often reflective of the dominant modes of production of a given society (see, for instance, Thompson 1967). Chronos is also expressed within Indigenous communities, but is often a reflection upon the knowledge derived from embodiments of Kairos—the natural cyclical rhythms and relations to and with nature (see, for instance, Bender 2008 for a description of the medicine wheel and its temporal relations to the cosmos). As a correlate to secularism and objectivism, embodying time solely as Chronos was incredibly problematic to Deloria, as the human experience is recognized as infinitely complex when felt through Kairos. The recognition and embodiment of Kairos is fundamental to the human experience. Such an experience allows individuals to become conscious of their fullest
potentials and how they are, indeed, a self-conscious being apart of and connected to the vast universe.

These different temporalities, especially Kairos, also drastically disintegrate Western conceptions of space. The inspirational embodiments felt embedded in Kairos can allow individuals to not only recognize the greatness that composes the embodied self, but how, in turn, everything is a product of relations. The awestruck timelessness of Karios allows for the recognition of the deeply spiritually and innate kincentric relations constitutive of the universe. Humans are neither separate from, nor greater than the cosmos, as believed in the West. If everything that constitutes the cosmos is a product of relations, then, according to Indigenous ecologies, there is no such thing as space, as the separation between material things. Space, rather, is composed of intrarelations. In order to grasp this understanding of space, Deloria turns to Teilhard de Chardin in particular—a physicist well ahead of his time whose work parallels that of quantum physics today, specifically research regarding consciousness and nonlocality, such as the work of Radin (2006) and Rosenblum and Kuttner (2011). With quantum physics in mind, it is important first to discuss energies (i.e., quanta), before continuing to interrogate Western conceptions of space.

In Chardin’s most famous study, The Phenomenon of Man (Teilhard de Chardin 1959), he theorizes energies, claiming that there are two kinds of energies that make up existence: radial, or the energies of mind/consciousness; and tangential, that which constitutes physical matter. Chardin believed that existence was composed mostly of radial energies, so I will concentrate more intimately on what these energies are, especially because they are neither readily understood nor expressed in the West. Radial energies are the “psychic energies” or accomplishments of the spirit (Deloria 1979: 88). These energies are often expressed (and
sometimes unconsciously so) as the “feeling something is right” or “wrong”—they are the intuitive bodily responses to certain experiences (Fisher 2002, emphasis added). These energies are also analogously conceptualized as auras, intuitions, sense perceptions, feelings, etc.

A further explanation of what is meant by radial energies in a way that is more digestible for Western and lay readers is what younger generations today refer to as “vibes.” Although likely unconscious of why such a relation to certain spaces and felt experiences occurs, some people use “vibes” as simply modern slang to describe the ways in which humans experience life through “bodily felt intensions” (Fisher 2002). A “good vibe” is necessary for enjoyment, fulfillment, and creativity, as proclaimed by those who deploy the term. These intuitive bodily responses to relations, as Fisher (2002) explains, can also have a “mind” of their own. The body, whether the mind is present or not, self-organizes—it fights or flights. Radial energies, as such, are most often consciously felt through the embodiments and sensations embedded in Kairos as described above. They are not exclusive to these temporal embodiments alone, however, but are rather always present, as they are constitutive of all beings in the universe.

The transpersonal psychologist Carl Jung intimately studied “how the body can have a mind of its own.” In doing so, either through psychotherapy or ecological musings, he concluded that consciousness was composed of both conscious and unconscious dimensionalities (cited in Deloria 1979). The latter attends to what Jung believed to be the universal collective knowledge that conscious beings embody, which is why the body that houses the conscious mind can move and shift, perceive and feel, without the mind present. For instance, without mind present, anybody who has ever experienced becoming well after a minor cold knows how the body naturally begins to self-organize in order to rid itself of whatever entered into and created an imbalance in its ecosystem. The nose starts to run, the body convulses and coughs. The
temperature of the body and heart rate increase, forcing the body to breathe oxygen in faster, boosting the body’s metabolic rate, etc. How does it know to do this? This example may seem like common sense, but important here and often missed is how the mind can be/come conscious of the body’s ability to perceive and respond to the energies with/in the ecosystems it inhabits. This is commonly expressed by “spiritual healers,” “shamans,” and holistic health practitioners today as “mind over matter”—the now modernized lexicon to describe the capabilities that human beings have when they are consciously in-tune with their bodies (referred to as a balance between radial and tangential energies). If the mind is present with the body, then self-organization and balance can quickly and more effectively occur.

Mind/body interactions are what allow conscious beings to determine whether or not they should remove themselves from certain spaces that simply “don’t feel right.” When the body’s own energetic emanations conflict with outside energies (e.g., “bad vibes”) certain minds will “shut down” and behave “differently.” General irritations, stutters, excessive blinking, and even psychological dissociations are said to be, within this understanding of energies, a product of the mind/body sensing energies indifferent to its own (see also Laing’s 1967 understanding of schizophrenia). This is why, I believe, Chardin referred to these energies as radial. In doing so, he actually and metaphorically indicates how entities not only host particular energies, but how these energies emanate out of and interact with the other energies that enter into their radius. Quantum theorists call these interactions entanglements (for instance, see the work of Fuwa et. al. 2015), indicating the interconnections of all matter that constitutes the universe, inclusive, of
course, of consciousness. This, as Chardin and Deloria claim, is indicative of how humans are naturally relational beings and how space itself is an entanglement.

Within the anthropocentric and secularized West, however, radial energies are often, at the expense of understanding the true nature of human existence, ignored, repressed, and/or pathologized as “irrational” and “savage” characteristics to embody and express. This is what is lost with the introduction of Cartesianism, as Deloria warned. In the West, human existence is instead thought to solely be composed of tangential energies, or matter, materially, itself. This is the case, within Western epistemologies in particular, because tangential energies are more easily observed and measured. The dependence upon understanding and observing existence as solely composed of tangential energies, hindered, as Deloria believed, human growth and transcendence. When existence is understood and felt as being composed mostly of radial energies, however, Deloria believed, much like Chardin, that the “basic agent of change is the individual” (Deloria 1979: 86). If individuals recognize that they are more than simply material matter, but rather entities that transcend material manifestations via radial energies, then responding to and expanding radial energies can have a drastic effect upon the social world. An Occupier named Luigi described this innate quality of human existence as follows:

I feel people are losing touch with who they really are, with what their role is as human beings in this world. Becoming aware of that is a big step in healing the world. It’s the first step—to be aware of our capability of changing the dynamic of this world and the negativity in this world. When you see negativity like this, it comes down to the individual’s vibrations. Where are these negative thoughts coming from? Going back to

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20 See also the work of physicist Chris Fields for the research collective, Science and Nonduality: https://www.scienceandnonduality.com/?s=chris+fields

21 Today scientists have actually created the technologies to observe radial energies, such as the observation of bio-energetic waves and quantum entanglements (see for instance Rubik 2009).
yourself and really changing that first thought that comes to mind into being a positive thought will vibrate into a much larger positive attraction where other people will feel it, and then you’ll see the whole world shifting toward vibrating on that.

As described in this quote, radial energies immanently push human consciousness, and thus all of reality, towards greater complexity and understanding—towards transcendence. This expansion, as Deloria indicates, is necessarily dependent upon the balance between radial and tangential energies (i.e., entanglements). Deloria believed that when humans are consciously aware of how sense-feelings guide them, what Del Gandio (2012) refers to as sentient embodiments, they would find answers about how to transcend modern existence.

Understanding existence as a product of entanglements between radial and tangential energies, Deloria concludes that socio-biological evolution is solely a product of catastrophe. Catastrophe leads to a necessary rearrangement of elements—a change in nature—in the “state of consciousness of particles in the universe” (Deloria 1979: 97). This process is what Chardin conceptualizes as cosmogenesis, which he developed to describe the “process of universal evolution in which all parts of the universe participate” (Deloria 1979: 76). And, if humans are simple one materialized entanglement in the vast interconnected universe, then evolution most importantly includes consciousness, which Chardin conceptualizes as noogenesis. A change in consciousness can manifest materially in tangential energies as discussed above—the spirit/mind/body, and thus, potentially, the ecosystems they inhabit, begin to self-organize.

According to Deloria and Chardin, applying this understanding to social reality is the only way to transcend modern existence—a “spiritual evolution” that, through a fundamental shift in human consciousness, can drastically reshape the social world.

When discussing the experiences and embodiments of crises they had endured throughout their life and how it affected their relationships to the social world, an activist expressed the
transformative sentiments of Deloria-Chardin during one of my interviews. As they explained: “In a certain sense, what I am saying is that *every time* something big like this happened” such as watching their childhood backyard become a deforested landscape of nothingness, “it completely transformed, or not completely, but it *significantly* transformed what something like anarchism would mean to me.” This activist went on to explain how this phenomenon—what they referred to as a transformation of their “world”—occurred throughout their lifetime. These shifts and changes in worlds, or, ontological relations to the social world, Deloria believed, are absolutely dependent upon catastrophic events in all the many ways in which they manifest (ecological, economic, political, social, cultural, etc.). This dialectic between old and new worlds and the embodiments during the transitory phases between them I refer to hereon as the ecology of crisis. Reconnecting to nature and embodying the recognition that humans are nature becoming self-conscious, according to Reclus and radical ecopsychologists such as Fisher (2002), allows humans to recognize again that they are spiritual beings—that they are capable of transcending old and new selves, spatial and temporal dimensionalities, etc. With this ecological framework now set, I turn to reinterpret spatial occupations and their emergence as a common tactic within contemporary anarchistic movements and resistance to neoliberal globalization today. By seeing spatial occupations as moments of ecological crises, they are more readily understood as socially transformative moments as well, which is why Katsiaficas (2006) refers to the global occupations in particular, and the rise of autonomous movements since May 1968 in general, as the embodiment of an “eros effect” spreading throughout the globe.

*Liminality and Communitas: The Nature of Anarchy and Transformation*
All of us, without exception, are obliged to live, more or less, in contradiction with our ideals; but we are anarchists and socialists because, and in so far as, we suffer by this contradiction, and seek to make it as small as possible.

-Errico Malatesta, *L’Anarchia*, August 1896

According to Butler (2015), the 2011 global spatial occupations and those that followed were a direct response of the “citizenry” recognizing that, within neoliberal socialities, they have lost the ability to and thus demand the right to appear. The “plural and performative right to appear,” Butler (2015) explains, “one that asserts and instates the body in the midst of the political field,” is an embodied “demand for a more livable set of economic, social and political conditions no longer afflicted by induced forms of precarity” (p. 11). This bodily demand for recognition is a product of the colonization of everyday life within neoliberal socialities. Unfortunately, by nature of Butler’s theoretical disposition, she does not conceptualize the right to appear as anything outside of the materiality of subsistence and recognition. However, the ecology of crisis approach allows for a more thorough understanding about how, when individuals demand recognition, they may also be acting upon the growing recognition of not just the depletion of the commons and communing, as concerns Butler, but also their alienation from human nature.

Slightly different from Butler, I argue that, rather than a bodily demand to appear within a material dimension, it is also a bodily demand rooted in the eutopic yearnings of individuals and communities to reinvigorate the communal spirit. This entails not only the demand for one’s life to be recognized as worth living, but also enactment of the freedom to remove one self from the world that denies one’s life and begin the ruminative process in order to transform one’s self and the social world. To *demand* to appear remains within the scope of liberal politics; publicly
enacting one’s refusal to submit to the demands of dominant socialities belongs to the realm of spiritually transformative practice.

In chapter three, I conceptualized the motivation behind the now prolific and spontaneous uprisings around the globe as a response by individuals beginning to recognize how modern socialities have negated their subjectivities; a negation that simultaneously generates an alienated existence, whereby individuals immanently yearn for genuine community in the wake of neoliberalization. Through an initial conscious break, this eutopic yearning is then explicitly expressed in practice. Although the appearance of bodies and the demand for a “livable life,” as Butler addresses, is undeniably what is happening within the global occupations, common analyses of these spaces fail to grasp the conscious transformative embodiments occurring within the individuals involved. Halvorsen (2015a) and Butler (2015) have both taken steps forward by proclaiming the need to understand the spatialities of occupations as not only “moments of rupture” but also moments of care and places of possibility. Halvorsen (2015a) rightly insists upon critiquing the wholly expected lack of attention within social movements studies to the social reproduction occurring within occupied spaces, but I would add that the spiritual dimensions and human possibilities taking place in these spaces are even more problematically absent in the literature. Once individuals reject the world that has created their alienation, they must demand to appear, as Butler proclaims; however, this requires that individuals resist not just mentally (as in becoming enraged) and physically (through the occupation of space and social reproduction), but most importantly, spiritually (through inspirational embodiments). This is precisely what Alfred (2009) means by “practical decolonization”—recognition that without the active creation of more livable socialities, the demand to be recognized (i.e., the right to appear) is nothing short of that, a demand. Most importantly, without action, the alienation that modern
individuals embody (where eutopic yearnings are rooted) will only continue to threaten the sustainability of this planet and thus all living beings, human and non-human alike.

Alfred’s “practical decolonization” is referred to by communitarian anarchists as the moment when individuals begin to Act (Clark 2013)—a dialectical process embodied by individuals who actively negate their alienation and simultaneously begin the process of creative self-determination and transformation. An activist described this spiritual Act after I told them a story about a group of friends that refused to define their actions of “caring” for an abandoned mansion as squatting—the liberal and criminalized definition of what they felt they were doing. The activist and I began this discussion in response to the current “care work” they are engaged in and how this practice of care resonated with a Sanskrit word, appamāda, that was foundational to their own relation to anarchism. Appamāda was one of the last words that Buddha spoke upon his death; a word roughly translated in English as mindful, heedless, care. As the interviewee explained, appamāda is the embodied and conscious effect that occurs after a “spiritual process of awakening.” Appamāda is the active intuition to engage in self and communal care—to actively creative the good in one’s everyday life. As they further elaborate, mirroring the ecology of crises (negate-subvert-create):

To overcome indoctrination, socialization, ideology; to wake up to human and actual [embodied] realities and then care for [these] human natures…. I love the idea, that they think that they are caring for the house. And it just absolutely happens to be true, that [the house] was being neglected and wasted and not cared for.

Mignolo (2011) also enlists this concept of the Act to describe how the colonized, through the practice of “geo- and body-politics,” negates their own self-negation (alienation) and simultaneously affirms their existence as dignified beings—a “delinking process” that always requires actually doing. The task of decolonization is thus, as Mignolo (2011) proclaims, to unveil “the rhetoric and promises of modernity, showing its darker side [and] advocating and
building global futures that aspire to the fullness of life” (p. 124), which is precisely what the activists mentioned above were doing caring for abandoned homes. Indeed, in the 21st Century, the Act requires physical space as neoliberalization has literally robbed individuals of their ability to act in ways conducive to the creation of the eutopic socialities for which they are yearning. In the view of those yearning for social transformation today, occupations must thus be understood as spatio-temporalities where liminal (formerly alienated) embodiments are politicized. Through anarchical practice, liminality becomes a means for social transformation. I have already discussed the ways in which liminality affects the individual by way of trauma and alienation, but what happens when individuals who are alienated and/or colonized and have become conscious of their alienation/colonization, resist collectively? Most importantly, what does this mean from within an ecological framework?

To begin, what is liminality? Liminality was first conceptualized by Van Gennep (1960) in Rites of Passage, and then popularized in Turner’s (1969) anthropological studies of Indigenous peoples. As Turner’s work thoroughly expresses, liminality was used to describe the anti-structural experiences embodied by Indigenous peoples engaging in ceremonial and ritual practice. Turner conceptualized the communal liminal spatio-temporalities embodied within these as communitas. It is this embodiment of communitas that is fundamental to the experiences of engaging in anarchy. Although Turner was the first to articulate this embodiment to a Western audience, he still remained within structuralist paradigms, rendering these experiences to the phenomenal realm. Victor’s partner, Edith Turner (2012), however, has continued to develop the concept of communitas in her anthropological studies of individual and social transformation, indicating how experiences of communitas are a natural part of the human
experience. This is why, as Edith Turner (2012) indicates, in moments of crises, such as a natural disaster and during revolution throughout history, communitas naturally unfolds.

According to Alfred (2009), a traditional Mohawk scholar, ceremonies and rituals are not just phenomenal experiences, but are rather absolutely necessary experiences for human beings to recognize their fullest selves—to remember and stay true to the interconnectedness of human existence, within the cosmos as well as within ones communities, between human and non-human beings. The liminal embodiments experienced engaging in ceremonies and rituals are, according to Alfred (2009: 249):

…real needs in human beings. And they serve real purposes in grounding us and keeping us together as persons and as communities, in spite of the disintegrating tendencies of the world we live in. Through them, we have the opportunity to experience life outside of our own material beings, freed for a time from the needs and wants of our own bodies to experience a higher truth, a spirituality.

Alfred goes on to ask: “How can anyone confront the depressing, disintegrating reality of this world without the restorative strength provided by spirituality?” The “spirit power” individuals are filled with during ceremonies (Kovel 1991)—what I referred to elsewhere as the communal spirit and above as the emanation of radial energies—is the power, as Kovel (1991) explains, that flows into “practical activity,” when an individual and/or community is inspired to do what they intuitively feel is right. Here, the inspirational power derived in practice leads to the recognition of communal power, of communitas. In fact, without communitas, inspirational power does not come to fruition. Inspiration is not an individualized experience—it comes from beyond the individual.

Today, however, not all cultures have such rewarding rituals and ceremonies anymore. For Indigenous peoples, the processes of colonization, especially through the assimilative boarding school era in North America, criminalized Indigenous peoples’ ceremonial practices
This practice effectively “ensavaged” any individual engaged in such “uncivil” (i.e., non-Christian, non-liberal, non-capitalist, non-White, non-upper-class) performances, which is why the revitalization of ceremony is imperative to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination today (Alfred 2009; Corntassel 2008). And, for those in the West, the institutionalization of religion and the pathologization of otherworldly embodiments seemed to repress ceremony as well (see Ehrenreich 2007 for an analysis of the waning of communal rituals, of “dancing in the streets,” within Western socialities). If ceremony has effectively been repressed in the modern world, how then do individuals who become conscious of their alienation and enter into a liminal state? How do they begin to heal and resist dominating socialities when they lack such important and rewarding communal practices and even spaces to engage accordingly? What would be uncovered if spatial occupations and anarchistic practices in general were understood as an embodiment of communitas?

With regards to social movements in particular, Yang (2000) argues that, to the extent that social movements are “anti-structural” (i.e., anarchistic), individuals and/or communities may experience liminality. Developed out of Turner’s (1969) work, Yang (2000) indicates that anarchistic social movements entail three specific moments whereby the individual begins to develop the means to transcend dominant socialities. The first moment entails separation—when the individual or community is stripped from their ability to navigate the quotidian as they once did. The second step is the actual process of embodying liminality itself—when individuals enter into “anti-structural” spatio-temporalities and become capable of “fostering human creativity” and a “sense of community” (Yang 2000: 383). In this stage, individuals become inspired as “what has been bound by social structure is ‘liberated’ and the transgression of norms and conventions becomes possible” (Yang 2000: 383). According to Virilio and Rose (2008),
these moments are filled with potential inspiration. They are “spiritual moments,” as “what has been bound by social structure is ‘liberated’ and the transgression of norms and conventions becomes possible” (Yang 2000: 383). After such moments subside, individuals eventually go through a process of aggregation whereby the individual steps back into a new sociality, physically, mentally, and/or spiritually. As Yang (2000) draws forth, the liminal embodiments experienced in anarchic moments allow individuals to actively negate and suspend “normal” socialities, allowing them to engage in a self-dialectical process.

Luigi eloquently described this experience of liminality that they understood was fundamental to what occurred during Occupy:

We’re not only destroying our ecological systems, other animals, we’re destroying ourselves. We’re the most harmful species on this planet. Each of us needs to acknowledge in ourselves what it is that we’re doing. It’s like fixing the inner shadow. It’s kind of like going through hell to get to heaven, finding out what it is within ourselves that’s not working right and transforming that. First, it's having the thought that you can do it and then applying that in your actions. Then, that creates the feeling. I like to call it your energy feeling. They say everything is energy. Everyone is energy. Your energy radiates out to you by your feelings. If we’re feeling stress, that’s what we’re putting out there. If we’re feeling feelings of love, then that’s what we’re putting out there.

Based on the analysis above, in a social movement context, communitas can have profound effects on social reality. Luigi continues to explain the transformations they underwent and the affects they believed were occurring within those “waking up” and joining movements like Occupy:

A lot of things are going to break down, and they’re breaking down already. It’s a glorious thing that’s happening. However, while we’re going through the breaking down of it, it may seem very chaotic. It’s kind of like before the caterpillar becomes the butterfly. He didn’t know he was going to become a butterfly. The caterpillar constantly consumes. Then, its starts to consume itself. The caterpillar is like, “Oh my god, what the fuck is going on?” Then, it becomes a butterfly. What we’re going through, what humanity, what our species is going through is I believe the same process. If we can keep that thought in our mind, that this is what’s happening, then we’ll be able to flow through it much smoother. It’s up to us to acknowledge that shit is breaking down. Shit that
doesn’t work is breaking down, so we can give birth to something new that works for everybody.

Collective embodiments of liminality, of anarchy, are thus synonymous to communitas.

Katsiaficas’ (2006) own ontological experience engaging in and analyzing autonomous communities of resistance in Europe similarly encouraged him to conclude that engaging in anarchistic movements and spaces allows individuals to “embody the concrete realization of freedom…” wherein “genuine individuality emerges as human beings situate themselves in collective contexts that negate their individualism” (p. 259). The effects of communitas are also evident in the stories of activists involved in anarchistic spaces in the US, as I document in chapter five. For now, however, as one activist eloquently confirmed after discussing their engagement in a guerilla medical collective, these are the moments “that we are most ourselves; that we are the most creative.” The activist believed that this understanding was precisely the embodiment that individuals needed in order to heal from the pain living in an alienating world (or “utterly nightmarish” as they expressed). “We become fearless” in these spaces, they excitedly expressed. Alfred (2009) discusses this embodiment of freedom and creative potential during moments of insurrection as well:

The true spirit of revolt [becomes]...an invocation to the spirit of freedom, a drive to move mentally and physically away from the reactive state of being compelled by danger and fear and to begin to act on intelligence and vision to generate a new identity and set of relations that transcend the cultural assumptions and political imperatives of empire and therefore to be free (pp. 201).

Through anarchy, individuals reconnect to their “creative potentialities” whereby the “concrete realization of freedom” is recognized (Connolly 2013: 76). Yang (2000) similarly refers to anarchy, or communitas, as “a nourishing environment for creative action and thought” (pp. 384). If anarchistic social movements extend the liminal spatio-temporal embodiments of alienated and/or colonized individuals, the claim that liminality is not only a product of but also
the very means to transcend modern existence is affirmed. In relationship to Deloria’s belief that post-catastrophic conscious transformations were necessary for evolution, is anarchy, then, necessary for social transformation?

Returning to the above discussion of energies, in order to allow for radial energies to emanate from the body in ways that individuals intuitively move in transformative directions, individuals and collectives have to first free themselves of their conscious allegiance to dominant socialities. This is why Del Gandio (2014) believes that those involved in anarchistic movements already embody a liminal existence, that the “gravitational force” or “eros effect” of these movements “attracts particular bodies” (the liminal body, so to say). These are bodies, according to Del Gandio (2014) that are “already attuned to one another at some level of vibrational experience,” but whose “oppressive conditions inhibited them from recognizing and acting on that attunement” (p. 147). Further, “true liberation,” occurs when “each and every body is capable of moving in accordance with its own sentient, emanating, reality-creating trajectory” (Del Gandio 2014: 148, emphasis added). Luigi further described this process:

I would love to see a world of peace, love, harmony, people looking out for each other, people looking out for themselves first by doing what they need to do first to create an inner harmony…. I see a birth of spirituality where it’s not a control issue but more self-empowering, where people are made aware of their inner being. I see a lot of the lies being brought out. I see a lot of people getting pissed off from it, and I also see the opportunity for people to rise above it. Some people rise above it quicker than others, but everybody has the ability to rise above it. I would just love everybody to know that within themselves they have all of the answers. The answers are not out there. It’s all in here.

The anarchical embodiments experienced within spatial occupations allow individuals to dissect, observe and subvert power, which gives way to the creation of potentially transformative socialities. Most importantly, as emphasized in the quote above, the ecology of crisis indicates how anarchy is a necessary experience that allows individuals to retune themselves to the natural
interdependent relations with their selves as spiritual beings, with other humans and the ecosystems they inhabit. Communitas “connects us to the earth and to our true, natural existences as human beings” (Alfred 2009). In occupied spaces, by suspending oppressive and alienating spatio-temporalities, individuals become capable of seeing and feeling what it is that, as an integral part of nature, they know to be right. Without structured states of being, individuals become inspired to enact their eutopic desires. I now turn in chapter five to the voices of individuals involved in Occupy as a way to illustrate this newfound understanding of the ecology of crisis as well as ground the preceding theoretical discussions. Telling stories is, as Edith Turner (2012) explains, the only way to truly understand how communitas has not only arisen throughout history in times of crises, but how it is fundamental to social transformation.
In the early months of 2011, Canadian anarchist magazine, Adbusters, announced the need for and inevitability of a “Tahrir moment” in the United States—the heart of the Global Empire. As a response to this call, activists in New York City started organizing the initial plans to “occupy Wall Street”—a protest outside One Chase Manhattan Plaza in the Financial District. By protesting on Wall Street, the intent was to symbolize the heart of the alter-globalization movement’s message and purpose—that global income inequality was real, growing and that corporate capital and state collusive relations had blood on its hands.

On September 17, 2011—the planned date for the protest—police were prepared to keep activists at bay. As pawns of a militarized state, they were prepared to protect the life force of the Empire. They were not prepared, however, for the spontaneous and decentralized tactics of the movement. Zuccotti Park—itself just blocks away from the Financial District—soon became the temporary home to thousands of activists. Within weeks, the creation of genuine community—a bike-powered communal kitchen, the People’s Library, daily General Assemblies—came to life. Thus, too, saw the beginnings of the United States’ largest “anarchic swarm,” as Adbusters called it, in the recent past.

After the initial occupation of Zuccotti Park began, activists immediately started to strategically work in prefigurative and horizontal ways delivering their messages to the world. Activists also quickly learned how to creatively respond to the many obstacles placed in their paths by the New York City Police Department. “You are breaking sanitation codes!” so activists created a sanitation team and were constantly, morning, noon and night, maintaining the park. “You cannot use bullhorns, the city requires a permit to use ‘amplified sound!’” so activists created the human mic to amplify and project their voices collectively and without
technology. The established codes and spontaneous adjudications that those in power would constantly throw at Occupiers were always just as spontaneously met with creative responses that subverted Power’s logic. The creativity of Occupiers was astounding, but, as soon learned, it was also threateningly powerful.

On September 24, 2011 activists planned a wildcat march through Wall Street to express their growing strength to those they opposed, the 1%. Not long after the march began, however, two young women found themselves kneeling on the ground—both had their eyes closed tight and hands in the air. One was painfully screaming for help. Both women were, as witnessed and live-streamed by bystanders and other activists, point blank sprayed with tear gas. In the images of this moment, juxtaposed to the teargassed women, was a group of activists corralled behind orange fencing—a repressive tool the NYPD began using to keep protesters away from and confined to certain spaces. The video of the women being teargassed quickly went viral across social media networks. On YouTube alone, over one million people around the globe witnessed the repression of the movement within a few days. It was not until this day that it became evident that police had actively begun to violently repress the movement. It was not until this exact moment, the trickle of activists joining the movement each day during the first week, turned into a tidal wave. The police state was real. The movement was growing.

On October 1, 2011, over 800 Occupiers attempted to march across the Brooklyn Bridge. Images of the march look as expected—the front lines of a class war. On one side stood a handful of heavily armed police officers equipped with dozens of disposable handcuffs—on the other, hundreds of joyous nonviolent protesters. As soon as the swarm of activists began to march across the bridge individuals in the front of the line holding a sign declaring, “We the People,” sat down. They could no longer move beyond the human blockade of police officers. It
was a standoff. By the end of the day, over 700 Occupiers were handcuffed and taken to nearby precincts. Within that same week, hundreds of other occupations appeared across the United States as well as around the globe.

It is in the moments where activists witness and embody the dialectic between capital and subject that, as scott crow claims, individuals develop an “emergency heart.” It is “love,” that motivates activists. Crow came to this realization through his own experiences organizing with the Common Ground Collective—a Hurricane Katrina response and relief effort created and upheld by anarchists. Emergency hearts drive individuals to “action...in the face of repression and against all odds. An emergency heart gets people into the streets to resist injustice and create something better.” Indeed, once unleashed and as hard as those in power try to repress it, emergency hearts, radical hopes and desires cannot be contained. Those in power know this, but we know it too.

Above: two women are sprayed with tear gas on September 24, 2011 during a wildcat march on Wall Street.

Above: NYPD equips themselves with disposable handcuffs on October 1, 2011 as activists who have already been arrested wait in the background.

Left: NYPD and Occupiers meet head on during the now infamous October 1, 2011 Brooklyn Bridge March.
CHAPTER 5: OCCUPY: A CASE STUDY

Prospero, you are the master of illusion.
Lying is your trademark.
And you have lied so much to me
(Lied about the world, lied about me)
That you have ended by imposing on me
An image of myself.
Underdeveloped, you brand me, inferior,
That is the way you have forced me to see myself
I detest that image! What's more, it's a lie!
But now I know you, you old cancer,
And I know myself as well.

--Caliban, in Aime Cesaire's A Tempest [as quoted in Lorde 2007]

Building upon the oral histories I collected as well as the interviews recorded, transcribed and shared publically on the blog site, At the Heart of an Occupation (ATHO), by grassroots journalist and public historian Stacey Lanyon, the ecological framework developed in previous chapters—negate-subvert-create—provides an analytic for understanding what motivates individuals to engage in anarchistic movements. This analytic also allows for an understanding of the subsequent inspirational embodiments activists experience in anarchistic practice. From motivations to inspirations, the dialectical movement between anarchical and dominant spatio-temporalities is necessary for those involved in anarchistic movements. Navigating the liminal spatio-temporalities of anarchy (e.g.: communitas) imbues activists with the knowledge and realization of how to transform their selves and the social world. As a reflection upon these embodiments, activists express how they developed stronger tactics, political platforms, and creative aspirations. In this chapter, by pulling heavily from the At the Heart of an Occupation (ATHO) interviews, I intimately highlight these experiences with a specific focus on the Occupy movement.
The organization of this chapter reflects the ecological framework foundational to this study—negate-subvert-create. I begin with an elaboration upon the alienation felt by activists previous to their joining Occupy, which allows for a further elaboration upon the ways in which the conscious recognition of alienation leads individuals to negate that which they recognize caused their alienation. Following this realization and the subsequent and necessary ruminations that individuals undergo to appropriate their selves, I highlight how activists also feel an intuitive pull to engage in subversive political acts. Although it may occur simultaneously, engaging in subversive political acts is not to be equated with activists’ initial radicalizations, however. Neither should the dialectic—negate-subvert-create—be perceived as linear and chronological. Rather, this dialectic has a cyclical modus operandi. For example, appropriating one’s self is indistinguishable from the conscious subversions that occur within the individual during ruminative processes. To negate old selves and relations to the social world requires the creation of something new, which ultimately inspires individuals to fully embed themselves in radical movements such as Occupy. Here, activists indicate their feelings and sense perceptions witnessing and engaging in the movement, which, through the power they derive from this encounter, they are then further inspired to engage in the subversive acts. I move on to highlight the inspirational embodiments that activists experience engaging in anarchical moments—experiences they claim are personally and, together, collectively transformative. I end with an analysis of the creative outcomes and what I call eco-conscious figurations produced in these transformations.

Consciously Recognizing Alienation: Negation → Subversion

The ways in which activists express their realizations of alienation—what created it, how it maintains itself, how people become conscious of it—abound in the ATHO interviews. The
interviews indicate that the process of negation begins with conscious recognitions of alienation and the subsequent appropriation of selves, whereby individuals are then motivated to engage in subversive acts to make room for the creation of their selves and worlds anew. I start by highlighting the conscious negations that occur when individuals recognize their alienation and then indicate how this affects their relationships to the world around them. This then leads into a discussion about subsequent political subversions (e.g., anarchy) that activists engage in.

Based upon the core slogan of the Occupy movement: “We are the 99%,” it is obvious that Occupiers understood and were thus contesting neoliberal globalization’s material effects—global economic inequality—on individuals around the globe. What is often missed in this message is that many Occupiers are also critically conscious of the ways in which dominant socialities—political and economic institutions, cultural expressions, and socio-ecological relations—are internalized. It is this internalization of dominant socialities that causes alienation. This externalization/internalization of dominant socialities is better articulated, and poetically so, by an activist named Dragonfly: “I feel like for all the money and ammo and bullets and bullshit that goes on overseas, it’s nothing compared to the social, cultural, political, environmental attack that everyday people in America and elsewhere don’t even know that they’re under.” Here, Dragonfly gets to the heart of the ways in which individuals are alienated by dominant socialities and how this is a necessary component for the maintenance of neoliberal globalization at home and abroad. Activists express the internalization of dominant socialities in numerous ways: I follow these expressions below through a life-course chronology.

To begin, many activists proclaim that, as Dragonfly calls it above, the “attack”—the imposition of alienating institutions and embodiments on the self and social world—begins with the family and is subsequently reinforced by the compulsory education system in the United
States. Activists indicated that neither of these institutions is a space that allows for the creative expression and freedom of the child to flourish, but they are rather sites for conditioning. This familial conditioning was expressed by Occupier Sam Santosha Barnes, who was one of the many teachers involved in the Occupy Yoga affinity group in New York City:

I was raised to value things that have no value. When times have called for me to cash my chips in, I’ve discovered again and again that what I thought I had was worth nothing, was of limited power, was of limited potential and was coming from a very particular cultural scope.

Here Sam highlights how the problem is not simply patriotic conditioning to a particular political-economic system, but to the complex reality of what Brown (2005) refers to as neoliberal rationality. Conditioning defines and maintains social institutions as guerrilla journalist, Jeff Durkin, explains: “…kids are often taught that they can’t do this or that. The schools, the education system is obviously an indoctrination to be obedient to the state. School is not for knowledge. It’s for making you obedient.” But, as Sam eloquently expresses above, conditioning also includes the creation and maintenance of, as Clark (2013) describes in his own radical dialectic, social ideologies, social ethae, and social imaginaries that reflect dominant institutions such as the State. Our “values,” as Sam explains, reflect institutionalized interests. Most important here is that both Sam and Jeff elaborate how children are born with imaginations and creative aspirations, but this is stripped from them once they enter into the educational system: “We are so creative when we are younger, and we ask questions,” as Jeff emphasizes. “When we are older, we are told to sit down and shut up in school. That shuts off the creativity. People stop thinking for themselves. They stop thinking logically and critically. We’re taught to just repeat what we are taught.”
Another Occupier, Diego Ibanez, firmly expresses the sentiments described above regarding familial and educational conditioning. They go further, however, indicating how indoctrination into the state renders individuals without the tools to change their circumstances:

From the time that you’re born, everything is set for you. Everything already has instructions. If you’re like, “I want to change the world,” they’re like, “Oh, we know how to do that. Here are the instructions. You’ve gotta create a 501c3. You’ve gotta join one of these organizations.” Even changing the world is in the rulebook for us.

These sentiments regarding the repression of the imagination and creative potentials of individuals get to the heart of an anarchistic critique of alienation. Without the ability to imagine and think beyond oneself—to become inspired—individuals lose the ability to understand transformation as well as the natural interconnections to the world around them. This prevents individuals from the ability to not only overcome personal crises in transformative ways, but also transform the social world. Familial and educational indoctrination into a political economic system, however, is just the tip of the iceberg.

In addition to social conditioning, Occupiers often approach alienation in ways that more explicitly address how political and economic institutions and discourses keep individuals, whether conscious of it or not, complacent and fearful of doing anything out of the “ordinary.” Occupier Hero Vincent, for instance, explains how the maintenance of indoctrination occurs by way of fear mongering: “I understand why we are so complacent. We are a product of years and years of fear mongering. If we don’t do what we’re told, we can lose our job, our family, our passion. We can lose everything. Some people have no choice but to be complacent.” As Hero indicates here, alienation is not only internalized in ways that make individuals complacent, but political and economic environments carry implicit threats that induce fear.

Occupier Zoltán Gück further explains this conditioning of political-economic landscapes, “I think that people feel totally beaten down and not in control of their lives, beaten
down by economic circumstances or beaten down by political systems that they have no control over.” Another Occupier, Richie, emphasizes this point by expressing how their privileged positionalities made political and economic demands on them to be something they were not. “The intense pressure to be a strong and straight little boy who was meant to grow into a strong man who made a lot of money,” Richie explains, “was debilitating and all-consuming. I couldn't ever feel comfortable being who I was.” Reemphasizing what Sam elucidates above, Richie discusses here how, along with the political and economic demands of individuals to maintain certain positionalities, social and cultural demands require certain embodiments as well—be straight, be masculine, and value money, above all else. A neoliberal rationality, indeed, instills hegemonic discourses within the individual around class, race, gender, heterosexuality, religion, politics and other cultural attributes.

Occupiers also often passionately discuss their recognition of how dominant cultural realities—the morals, values and ethics of the “1%”—are alienating and firmly bound to maintaining the political-economic system. For instance, Dragonfly further articulates:

What’s considered interesting to them is so far removed from what real people find interesting unless they have been indoctrinated by the mainstream media that tells people that they have to be more like the 1% to be somebody or be interesting rather than being a regular working class hero, like that John Lennon song…. What are they doing to creation? They’re fracking and raping and pillaging with pipelines and tar sands, mountain top removal, and they keep us blind on purpose….

Here, as Dragonfly eloquently explains, the demands to internalize elite cultural practices, aesthetics and ecologies are implemented through mainstream media. As Dragonfly further exemplified, although some do not explicitly situate their critiques within an ecological framework, activists do understand how dominant socialities firmly embrace anthropocentric worldviews and how this is bound to social inequality. Activist Brook Packard explains anthropocentrism accordingly: “I think Occupy gave voice to a kind of disquietude I’ve had ever
since Ronald Reagan was elected president. There’s been this kind of creeping calcification of our morals and values and a *scarring of our landscape and people*” (emphasis added).

Dragonfly builds upon this understanding of anthropocentricity by indicating how this is turned against human beings who are not born into the “1%”: “Everybody, as far as I’m concerned, is a child slave to the 1%. We’re all property. Property and people are just a dollar tag to them.”

Dragonfly goes on to indicate that enslavement is nothing new to them, nor the world—a reflective critique built upon their own personal understanding of dominant socialities having come from a lineage of enslaved peoples.

Indeed, activists understand how indoctrination, as Dragonfly explains, is nothing new, not even unique to capitalism. “It’s almost like we’re going to have to deprogram hundreds of thousands of years of programming that has led to this,” Darah McJimsey conveys. Like Brook having felt a “disquietude” since the Reagan administration, alienation is understood as a product of dominant socialities. Following the genealogy of anarchical uprisings that Katsiaficas (2006) and I similarly follow, Occupy, as these activists learned in practice, was the first time in the United States that such a large and global mass of individuals engaging in anarchistic activism occurred since the autonomous movements in late 1960s and 1970s. “I’ve always been looking for something better, looking for what’s really important,” Brook further explains, indicating that it was not until Occupy occurred that she finally found a way out—a way to ease the eutopic yearnings she had embodied since the Reagan Administration, if not before.

Through such realizations of alienation, individuals begin the process of consciously subverting their alienation. It is the ruminative nature of this process that necessarily leads to the process of negation. For instance, Occupier Luigi Pepe explains:

What I’ve noticed with my own experience is the more I’ve detached myself from the constructs of society, the more I’ve been able to see it clearer. As we’re in there and
competing and we’re doing all this shit, it’s hard to see it. You know it. I know it. I didn’t know it exactly, but I knew shit wasn’t right. A lot of people feel that, and the more we’re able to, each of us, detach as much as we can, the more clear it becomes that this shit ain’t working. It ain’t working.

Sam expresses how upon becoming consciously aware of their familial indoctrination, described above, they began to feel empowered to search for something more enriching to their lives:

So I started looking for what matters and what "wealth" is. Although I know that I’m just at the beginning of this inquiry, I feel rich. I feel powerful. I feel full of potential, and it comes not from me, but it comes from recognizing it in everyone I meet, everyone I see. We have a responsibility to each other to revel in that and to expand upon that, to amplify that. I’ve realized that everyone and every encounter is absolute genius. Some are harder than others. Some people don’t even know what it could be or would never be allowed to become it until the antiquated and repressive and restrictive systems in which we live our day-to-day lives falls away.

As indicated by Sam and Luigi, it is clear that once individuals become consciously aware of their alienation and how it is bound to an oppressive sociality, they may begin going through the process of consciously omitting those socialities from their everyday lives. Both Sam and Luigi also express how, once aware of alienation, they feel intuitively pulled towards something better. These eutopic yearnings, however, are not often consciously recognized until individuals make the first step to enact upon their newfound realizations of alienation.

*Political Subversions (v): To Overtur [Politics and Power] from the Foundation*  

The subversion of politics, as discussed in the work of Katsiaficas (2006), is the practice of creating alternative democracies, visions, and worlds in the midst of the crises of state authoritarian and capitalist regimes. Contrary to common belief, Katsiaficas (2006) suggests that during moments when subversion (i.e., anarchy) is taking place, the upheaval of a political system and the taking of that regime’s power do not occur. In fact, by nature of anarchistic

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[22] Slightly altered definition derived from: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/subvert
philosophy and practice, an actual and immediate coup d’état—a taking of state power and control—is not the intent of anarchistic movements. Day (2005) elucidates what actual anarchical “coup[s]” look like, echoing previous discussions about alienated/colonized embodiments:

…states require subjects who desire not only to repress others, but also desire their own repression, subjects who are willing to trade away their autonomy for the promise of security. *Warding off the state, then, means primarily enabling and empowering individuals and communities*” (p. 141, emphasis added).

If enabling and empowering individuals and communities is how to “change the world without taking power,” as Holloway (2002) states, then this process must be better understood. To start, I equate empowerment with the moment individuals recognize their potential to creatively appropriate their selves and the social world. It is not until engagement in subversive politics, however, that individuals become capable of *actually* enacting this realization.

Further reflecting on their alienation, activists recognize how by joining the movement and entering into a communalized landscape—a community of individuals with shared ontological-political viewpoints and experiences—they begin to recognize how their alienation was a product of dominant socialities. As Richie explains:

It wasn't just the stories people told me that changed me. The early gatherings that were actively critical of authority, power and lack of access gave me a vocabulary and the strength to resist social controls that I had not had prior to the occupation…. Being around those people gave me the tools and confidence I needed to transcend the limitations I had placed on myself since I was a kid, because of all of the social conditioning. I met others like me who were on similar journeys, who were fun and really nice and really wanted to see things get better for everyone, and who were really interested in actively liberating themselves from all of the things that had kept and continue to keep us trapped—old ways of behaving and being. We all found each other.

Indeed, as Richie so eloquently expresses here, it was through *collective* self-empowerment that individuals began to understand how their alienation was an inherent function of dominant socialities. And, as a response to this realization, activists then began to develop cogent political
critiques and onto-politics to defend their selves against becoming victims (i.e.: alienated) once again. As Luigi so passionately explains:

> It’s forgetting everything that we’re not in order to remember everything that we are…. We’re more than just what the structure of the society told us that we are. We’re much more than that, every one of us. It’s each person’s job to discover that in themselves. It starts by starting to break down the constructs in the thought process of, “I have a position in this company. I work 9-5. I’m a father of three.” Or whatever it may be. Everybody has got their labels that society has put on them. What’s helped me a lot to break through that is that I’ve stopped putting those labels on people…. We’re all in this shit together, whether we want to acknowledge each other or not. It’s up to each person, but the truth is that we’re all in this shit together. If we don’t come together, if we don’t resolve our differences and put aside the labels that society has put on us, then we are still hiding.

As these activists indicate, when they finally made the step forward to engage with their fellow human beings in anarchy, they began the process of not only appropriating their selves, but also understanding that they can create new worlds.

Jaeggi (2014) explains how alienation is a product of “a mismatch between the nature of human beings and their social life,” which is why, as activists indicate, when individuals begin to realize what has created their alienation, they then yearn to go “back to an unalienated” life (p. 27). Jaeggi (2014) further suggests that this means a return “to the human beings purpose or nature” (p. 27). The question then is how individuals actually begin to live unalienated lives? If it is “natural” what does this “nature” look like? Does this truly, as I claimed in chapter three, require engagement in anarchy? Although not enough, it is clear that through conscious negations, individuals begin to recognize how dominant socialities are responsible for their alienation and thus, how they must be resisted. To create an “unalienating” world, however, requires transcending dominant socialities, which requires anarchical (i.e., liminal) spatio-temporalities so that individuals can engage with the necessary collective processes of rearranging their selves and the social world.
Reflecting on the movement as a whole, Zoltán expresses how engaging in a liminal spatio-temporality allowed them to see and experience this different world they were yearning for:

I think that that type of being in the world, the kind of being in the world that has a creative/imaginative relationship...is something that we should have in our lives as human beings.... Being able to have meaningful exchanges about those politics in a public space in a way that felt important—that you could potentially see change as a real possibility, and that you might have a say in what that change might be—was a really powerful experience for a lot of people. I wish that that was a part of our everyday lives, that we had more power over our lives politically, more meaningful connection with people, more spaces which to engage with all sorts of people, but also form long term political bonds.

Another Occupier, Damien Crisp, articulated their relationship to the eutopic liminal embodiments they navigated engaging in Occupy:

These moments that we’d take the streets or march onto the bridge, they were very beautiful moments. For a while, nothing could really go wrong. The whole group seemed to be moving together and making the right decisions together. Everything from the self-created media, to the signs, to what people were saying. It was beautiful. For a while, there was this unbelievable suspension. It was a perfect little movement.

It was, indeed, the nature of Occupy having created a space that was free, in theory, of oppression, domination, capitalist relations in general, etc., that allowed individuals to experience the nature, if only for a brief moment in time, of an unalienating existence. Here, activists also recognize that an unalienating existence is firmly grounded in genuine communal relations. However, although expressed as beautiful and euphoric, the liminal nature of actively rearranging spatio-temporalities is by no means a unilateral moment of glory. Instead, it is a physically and emotionally contentious moment as well. When actively engaging in anarchy, (all too commonly) the reality for anarchistic movements and activists is filled with experiences of state violence and repression. During public actions, police arresting, beating, and using “non-lethal” weapons such as water cannons, tear gas and concussion grenades, etc., against non-
violent activists are common experiences. Here, activists learn that, as Audre Lorde (2007) once famously stated, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house,” which gives way to a flourishing of anarchical practice. As Lorde (2007) further indicates, reciting a line from Caliban in Aime Cesaire’s *The Tempest* (as quoted in the beginning of this chapter), it is the recognition of the inhuman and undignified behaviors and institutions of those in power that allows the colonized/alienated to recognize their own alienation. Both the master and the master’s tools create alienating embodiments and institutionalizations and as such, neither allows for the greatest potentials within individuals and societies to erupt. Activists express, however, that state violence can further encourage the conscious subversions occurring within those involved. When the contentious relations between dominant and anarchical socialities are actualized, activists may be inspired to develop stronger networks, tactics, political platforms and, ultimately, mobilize others to get involved.

Contrary to the state’s intent, and this point must be emphasized, state violence allows for individuals to further see the state for what it is, and in turn, their relations to the state are even more drastically transformed. When bodies appear and make the initial step forward to engage in anarchy, these experiences allow individuals to effectively begin the process of subverting their internalized alienation—their embodiments of authoritarian beliefs, and their potential allegiances, conscious or not, to dominant socialities. Police violence thus often further severs these allegiances as it renders the paternalistic and legitimate power of the state—mechanisms that maintain alienation, through fear mongering and economic inequality—redundant. This then inspires individuals and/or collectives to refuse to submit to the demands of the state, specifically the demand they go away and/or stop engaging in anarchy. Damien, for instance, describes watching, before his eyes, how the contentious relations between dominant
and anarchical spatio-temporalities gave momentum to the movement:

I went on some of those early marches late at night, down into the canyons of Wall Street. There were guys with giant tear gas guns. It was pretty wild. I saw the police state for the first time. I was always kind of locked away in art school. That became my focus—as the momentum built, what the system did to try to contain it or subvert it. A lot of that had to do with a growth in people and horrific or oppressive police tactics, and the two bouncing back and forth. Within that, the people were trying to clear a space and come up with new ideas for a better world, while all of this was going on around them in that space.

Another Occupier named Dani Alvarez-Gavela, who began their activist journey in Madrid, Spain apart of the Indignados movement (e.g., Movimiento 15-M), describes the inspirational effects of state violence that occurred in Madrid:

A few hardcore activists decided that night that after the protest they hadn’t quite had enough, that they wanted to do more about it. It wasn’t enough for them to just go and be protesting on the streets, so they decided to go and spend the night in La Puerta del Sol, which is the central square in Madrid. The police evicted them that night. In solidarity the next day, instead of 15 people, there were about 100, and they were evicted again. In further solidarity the next day, there were a few thousand, and the police could do nothing. Over the course of a few days, a whole city was created out of nothing. It was extremely spontaneous.

Similar to the increase in participation at La Puerta del Sol described by Dani, activists express how police violence was similarly inspirational for the Occupy movement. “When the girls were pepper sprayed in Union Square,” as Diego reminisces, “it was the first time I thought that I needed to go there [to Occupy]…. My first march was the Brooklyn Bridge march…. That was very inspiring.” The Brooklyn Bridge March described by Diego, as well as figured in the introductory vignette to this chapter, led to over 700 arrests during the early months of the occupations. Several Occupiers indicated that these precise moments—watching the women get
pepper sprayed\textsuperscript{23} and the Brooklyn Bridge march\textsuperscript{24}—are what led to their becoming fully embedded and/or more active in the movement.

Indeed, state repression can not only inspire individuals to finally make that first step forward and join the movement in solidarity, but it also can inspire those already involved to become more effective and creative in their subversive endeavors. Classical communitarian anarchist Gustav Landauer suggests that the practice of “warding off the state” (i.e., engaging in anarchy) renders “the state redundant,” which then requires individuals to watch “very closely that it remains that way” (as cited in Day 2005: 41). As Occupiers suggest, building stronger networks, learning new tactics, developing cogent political platforms, and empowering others to join the movement, is what this “watching closely” looks like. Dani further articulates this experience rather poignantly:

In Spain, 15 people decided to stay one night and were sleeping on cardboard boxes, and by the end of the week, there were a couple kitchens installed. There were all kinds of tents and tarps and strings pulled over light posts. The city was growing, demanding real democracy now, demanding that economics and politics serve the people. It had the same special character of a very politicalized action, party free, banner free and logo free, just letting aside all ideologies and dogmas and instead concentrating on human dignity. By the end of the week, camps had strung up in squares in cities all over Spain, similar to the way it happened later in the US.

As Dani explains, it is quite evident how, during anarchical moments, individuals become inspired to create spaces and practices that allow for genuine community and communal practices. Most important here is that through this experience—the practice of “concentrating on


\textsuperscript{24} See as well: http://www.npr.org/2011/10/01/140983353/about-500-arrested-after-protest-on-brooklyn-bridge
human dignity,” as Dani explains—individuals embody relations that allow them to retune to the integral and essential connections to their selves, others, and within the ecosystems where they are embedded more generally. This instills in them the recognition of the potentialities they derive from engagement in anarchy as firmly bound to creating a genuine community where all human beings can live unalienated lives. The collective is thus inspired, in practice, to begin engaging in prefigurative practices that reflect their yearnings for these eutopic worlds.

The Inspirational Embodiments and Creative Outcomes of Anarchy

It was beautiful because every morning I’d wake up and hear, “Oh, good morning brother. Good morning sister. How are you doing?” There was such love. It was this indescribable, beautiful feeling of love. It was an incredibly close family, and there are still people that when I see them, they’re family now. It’s so wonderful whenever I see these people. There’s really nothing like it that I’ve ever experienced…. It was just beautiful.

-Captain, Occupy Wall Street guerrilla medic

The inspirational embodiments that activist experienced witnessing and engaging in anarchistic moments are profoundly expressed throughout the ATHO interviews. To further highlight the importance of these embodiments and how they give way to both eutopic yearnings and thus the creative push to engage in prefigurative politics, I bring in the voices of activists who affectingly describe these embodiments in the ATHO interviews. This allows for a more intimate understanding of what activists experience when they begin actively and collectively appropriating their selves and social worlds.

Following the ecological framework developed in chapter three, I first highlight how activists felt intuitively pulled into the movement. I then move on to highlight how the anarchical dimensionalities of Occupy not only inspired individuals, but how many believe this inspiration actually carries an “energy” that emanated from the collectives of individuals
involved. Activists’ reflections upon the movement after the encampments were dismantled suggest that they believe this “energy” created within the occupation was not only profoundly inspirational, but would be so in the future when capital, as they believed inevitable, would fall further into crisis. I end with an analysis of the creative outcomes and eco-conscious figurations activists experienced and embodied engaging in Occupy.

To begin, I understand the innate pull to the movement that activists describe as a product of their eutopic yearnings—it is the intuitive pull towards what they feel, whether conscious or not, to be good. I referred to this pull elsewhere as a “yea-duh” moment as the activists I interviewed often expressed that when they witnessed Occupy or other outbursts of anarchical movements, it awoke something in them that they had felt for so long. In the ATHO interviews activists often express this “yea-duh” as a product of witnessing the global uprisings that began in Tahrir Square in 2011 as well as the other occupations, including Occupy itself, which occurred around the globe throughout 2011-2012. This is precisely what Katsiaficas (2006) means when he discusses the “eros effect” of anarchical moments as well as what crow (2011) refers to as an “emergency heart”—moments that have occurred throughout history, but especially since the swarm of anarchistic movements that began in the 1960s.

After watching the global occupations occur throughout 2011 via social media, Richie voices how the “eros effect” inspired them to eventually join Occupy:

Around August 11th, someone put out a tweet inviting people to an action-planning meeting for Occupy Wall Street. I went down to Tompkins Square Park that Saturday…. At the time, going to the meeting was mostly an attempt to make sense of all the words and images of resistance that I had begun to see springing up around the world that were so absent from my day-to-day experience. I wanted to feel like what was happening all over the globe was real and being done for real reasons. I wanted to not have to feel crazy for being angry. I wanted to know that there were actual people out there I could connect with, not just Twitter handles, who cared about everyone's survival and well being.
As activist Brook explained above, she also expressed this “eros effect,” or more so in her case, this “eutopic yearning,” as a feeling she had felt since the Reagan Administration. She further describes how she was unable to articulate why she had felt this way until she witnessed or engaged in Occupy. “I went down to Occupy with my husband…and really felt community there,” as Brook explained. “It just felt like a new energy coming in. That’s really what drew me. It gave voice to something that had been quietly eating away at me for over thirty years.”

Regardless of timelines, expressions of these intuitive pulls to take part in Occupy are abundant in the *ATHO* interviews. As Luigi explains:

> What drew me to Occupy was the sudden impulse of a mass of people to join together and do something. As soon as I heard of it, I knew that someway, somehow I would be part of that because this is what we need. We need to come together because no one is going to come out of the sky and save us. We have to do it. That’s why we’re here. When this movement finally broke out, I was like, “Finally, there’s something I can give my support to and give my energy to help bring about something better for everybody.”

And further as the activist Adriana Natasha Tavarez explains:

> I said to myself, “I want to be part of this. This is a big deal. This actually speaks to me in volume.” I contacted one of the organizers and got involved right away. I quickly built relationships. I fell in love with it because I felt like I was at home. It’s the first thing I’ve been really excited about in a long time.

As Luigi and Adriana indicate, this feeling of home they felt at Occupy is arguably synonymous with eutopia. Home, eutopic communities, anarchical moments, etc., all of these figurations reflect Jaeggi’s (2014) argument that to experience an unalienated existence is indicative of a return to an individual’s nature. Further, following Jaeggi’s (2014) argument, the conscious and material spaces that individuals embody within Occupy indicate that the occupation itself was “unalienating.” Home, as Luigi and Adriana describe, is precisely the conscious and materially aligned space between individuals and the social world. It makes individuals feel whole—it is a space of love, where memories are made, inspiration, creativity, etc. It is where *Kairos*, so to
say, takes hold of the individual.

An Occupier named Nash describes the natural feelings of home and eutopia they experienced engaging in Occupy:

It was amazing. I realized that there were a lot of things that I had felt and believed and hadn’t really had a community that shared those beliefs and saw the world in the same way that I was seeing it. Suddenly, there was this group of people that were really impassioned about all of these important issues and wanted to address them in a way that felt really natural to me. I think that's what kept me there.

Following the ecological framework described in chapter three, this pull towards the movement that Nash describes could arguably be understood as a product of the movement’s collective energy resonating with an individual’s own (a model that could arguably also be applied to any movement). The sensate emanations of the individuals involved in the movement—the emanations of people enacting the good—when felt, witnessed, embodied, etc.—can awaken, as activists describe, others from their alienated stupor.

This idea that witnessing individuals enact the good can carry a power that can also awaken in others their desire for eutopia is expressed by Lauren as an inadvertent pull towards the movement:

I found the Occupation completely by accident one day walking by. I heard the drum circle, and I immediately became drawn in and fascinated and curious, and after that day of watching the drum circle for hours and really being inspired by the energy of this eclectic group of people, I kept coming back every day. The first day I came was day seven, and by the beginning of October, I had decided to occupy full-time. I packed up a suitcase. I came down. I was really inspired by the first general assembly I ever saw with all the hand signals. It was just an incredible thing that I had no idea was happening in the city, and I felt like that was the reason I had just moved back to New York was to find that. I feel like it was meant to be. I just dove in head first and never looked back.

Like Lauren, other activists express the inspirational realities of Occupy as reeling and keeping them in the movement, but also compelling them to continue building upon this energy of the movement in their practice in order to allow for the power of the movement to stay alive. This
idea of the power of the movement is similar to Weber’s (1946) analysis of charismatic leadership. Although, in the case of Occupy, the horizontal nature of the movement meant there were no leaders, or at least that was the intention, and as such, one could argue that it was the *communal landscape* of Occupy that carried charismatic potential.

Charisma is similarly discussed by anarchist theorists such as John P. Clark (2013) as a necessary component for social transformation. Charismatic landscapes, indeed, emanate an energy that speaks to the eutopic yearnings and desires of individuals. Hero expresses this reality by discussing how they viewed the activists dedicated to and involved in the movement and, in turn, what they sensed was necessary for those individuals to follow in the path they were awakened to in practice and beyond the occupations itself:

> I think the people who went out for Occupy, those were courageous people. Those were leaders. Every single one of them was a leader. They put their livelihood on the line to say something really important. They decided that they were not going to be held down by fear, or they didn’t let the fear conquer them. I'm struggling with the question of how we teach people. In my mind, it’s about inspiration. We must inspire people to be bigger than fear. How do we inspire those people who are still at home just watching, appalled like we are but don’t stand up and say anything? How do I inspire my mother and father to do all that they can? Because at the end of the day, my life is not about me. My life is about the experiences I have with other people. We have to realize that we’re all connected and learn how to build that connection, strengthen that connection. How do we build that connection? When we find the answer to that, we can overcome our fears together.

Hero also expresses here the understanding that engagement in Occupy allowed for the integral connections that are natural to human existence to flourish. This then inspired the prefigurative nature of the movement. “There was just an energy,” activist Joey Lopez describes, “Life was so different inside the park. It was like you completely left the system when you went inside the park. You went to a place that was freer, more open. People cooperated, worked together.”

Testaments to the inspirational power of the movement are abundant in the *ATHO* interviews.

> Thus far, I have mainly focused on the conscious subversions and spiritual
dimensionalities of Occupy. In order to describe the necessity of what transpired—the occupation of a public space and engagement in prefigurative politics—I will now highlight what actually unfolded in practice. Most important here is how activists understood that the conscious transformations they embodied could not have occurred without an actual physical space. In fact, the material space of Occupy was actually a reflection of their eutopic yearnings. To them, spatial occupations were absolutely necessary tactics to allow for the inspirational embodiments they experienced engaging in Occupy to occur.

Zoltán, who happens to also be an academic, expresses the material dimensionalities and potentialities of Occupy quite candidly:

What was so special about it? It was a space unlike any other space that we have in our urban existence where people come together to imagine a different possible political future. We don’t have that very often in our lives. As an academic, in theory you’re supposed to have it in seminars and workshops. It’s very, very different to have an academic conversation in a classroom than to actually live and experiment with it in an urban space. I don’t know if I’ve ever experienced that anywhere else. Maybe in moments of protest when it feels like anything is possible and you’re running through the streets on a wildcats march, but even then you’re in motion. Sitting and trying to make something happen in a public park and model the future was pretty fabulous.

The prefigurative reality of Occupy that allowed individuals to begin working towards creating the social world they envisioned together was what facilitated their inspirational embodiments. Without actually occupying a space, as Zoltán expresses above, the movement would not have carried such a powerful effect for those involved. “You have to be in the struggle to actually be able to formulate what comes after the struggle. It’s like, as we experience the struggle, we grow,” Diego explains. This struggle, of course, took form through a spatial occupation.

From the occupation of spaces to the conscious transformations that individuals eventually further enacted, it was action that individuals were yearning for—the act of actually creating a eutopic world. The Act is what carried the energy that pulled them into the
movement. Diego further expresses this reality of the movement—the practice of actually working towards the good—as a reflection of the conscious transformations occurring:

It was really the people, the consciousness that kept me. There’s a concentration of wealth and power that exists in our system. In order to fight that, I've always said that we need a concentration of consciousness…. Many people say, “Occupy doesn't know what the answer is.” That’s the point. We’re trying to come together, and Occupy Wall Street created a space with a process that we can all participate in to really start creating this new world. It was really more about having a concentration of consciousness more than it was about anything else, and for me that’s really special.

Indeed, activists were confident in speaking about how the spiritual and material dimensionalities of the movement were, together, so important. To be able to freely practice creating another world—to create an actual space free of coercion, authority and oppression—allowed individuals to transcend their alienated selves, and, once again, understand the importance of their integral connections to each other. As Sam expresses whimsically:

> There’s a desperate need for it. We can all feel it. We can smell it. We can taste it, and this is a privilege to taste these fumes and to smell these toxins because with them we can rebuild our body. The technology is available and becoming increasingly so. Now, we need to design ways to make it accessible…. In this city [New York], we live at the crossroads of consciousness, and if we can get ourselves to a point where we're clear and able to receive, to process, to take in air and breathe out love, inhale air and matter and exhale something far more than that, something ineffable, then we’re what’s right in the world. At that point, there’s no stopping it.

Building strong and genuine communal relations that allowed for these connections to flourish was necessarily dependent upon creating a space, or place, to facilitate this embodiment.

As Sam also suggests above, activists further interpreted the inspirational embodiments of communitas as carrying the potential to invigorate their ecological selves—what I have heretofore called the development of an eco-consciousness. Expressed here is not only how individuals involved in Occupy understand that the movement was tapping into something bigger—something spiritual—but that because of this, the movement was insuppressible. If an “unalienating” existence is what is “natural,” as Jaeggi (2014) suggests, then this may very well
be the case. Diego again explains this immanence of the movement as synonymous with the changes, if consciously awakened to this “nature,” that individuals endure throughout their lives:

All of us, every single person, especially organizers and activists, our main job is to be agitators. No matter where we are, we can push the limit in any situation we are in. Whether you are in a union or a teacher or in a reformist position, our goal is always to push for the most radical position because it actually only brings the rest of society like half way. Our demands can never be met. We always have to push as far as possible. Dylan wrote, “You always have to realize that you’re constantly in a state of becoming.” I feel like that’s where reality stands. Our job is really to push as much as we can. We are never going to be satisfied, and we have to be okay with that.

Simon Springer (2014) refers to this reality of anarchical practice as the “politics of immanence.”

When “self-realization” is understood “as a form of immanence,” as Springer (2014) explains:

…we don’t need a revolutionary event, and instead welcome the insurrectionary possibilities that are immediately available to us in each moment of every day. Immanence becomes a resource for prefigurative politics precisely because the here and now folds protest and process together in an integral embrace (p. 3)

Prefigurative politics is what is “natural” according to this onto-political understanding, because existence only exists in the present!

Lauren goes on to explain the immanent and prefigurative nature of the movement and how important and powerful this “nature” was and will be:

Yes, this occupation is a protest on Wall Street because Wall Street symbolizes the greed and the corruption and the lust after profit over people, but for me Occupy has become much deeper than that. It’s a personal journey about really looking in toward yourself, and you can’t ever expect that revolution until you have that revolution within yourself and you let go of the hang-ups and the bad habits and the ways that we perpetuate the same problems that will never allow us to have a true revolution. I think this is everything, and it’s going to mean everything to everyone eventually. I believe that it’s going to have that much of an impact. It’ll probably take years, but I think what’s so important about the community here is that we are developing a system within the system to become resilient and to deal and to cope and to start to heal from everything, and that’s what's going to get us through what is going to be even tougher times. What’s going to get us through is this community, and all we want is for people to be a part of it because they need it. They don’t have it out there. We’re making it here. It’s not perfect, but it’s a hell of a lot better than the alternative.

As Lauren suggests, the immanent and prefigurative nature of the movement is why Occupiers
firmly believe that, although the material occupations were “repressed,” you really cannot evict the ideas that were unleashed within them. Reverend Michael Ellick, a pastor who was, at the time of the occupations, a member of the Judson Church congregation in New York City as well as an organizer of the New Sanctuary movement, also explains the immanent and insuppressible nature of the movement:

I don’t think you could put the genie back in the bottle. I think this is it. I think this is a momentous event horizon thing, whatever metaphor—birth, butterfly, event-horizon, whatever. As the economy situation continues to decline, as the collapse continues to manifest in different ways, people will now remember, “Oh yeah, Occupy.” That will be in the bones of too many humans, and maybe we won’t call it Occupy.

As Rev. Ellick indicates here, many Occupiers believe that the further we proceed into neoliberal crises, the more individuals are going to begin yearning for and ultimately become inspired to engage in movements such as Occupy. It may not be Occupy that manifests when that time comes, but whatever it is, will be a reflection of this intuitive eutopic yearning. With this in mind, if Occupy was and will be inspirational for others, as activists claim, then it is important to highlight the creative outcomes of activists’ inspirational embodiments—outcomes that reflect the ecological nature of the movement.

The individual transformations and empowerments occurring within Occupy led most individuals involved to recognize the necessity of creating kincentric relations and, as such, eutopic socialities. As Rev. Ellick eloquently explains:

We’re a species that destroyed our environment and ate up all of the natural resources and grew fat and are killing ourselves. There’s another species that does this. Caterpillars do this. They eat up everything, and they destroy their own environment until there’s no food left. I’m kind of hopeful that Occupy is the first fluttering in that cocoon…we’ve eaten up everything and now we’re this bloated, miserable, and isolated thing. That wall of isolation and misery…is just us going through the change, and maybe now we’re fluttering. I’m hopeful. I don’t think nature makes mistakes…. I think that there is no accident that things are happening the way that they are. Nature tends to find a way, and I think that we’re part of that, and this is part of that. I know that’s true.
I want to emphasize here that the ecological and intuitive nature of the movement allowed for individuals from all different cultural backgrounds and social positions to come to the same embodiments and realizations, which indicates the concrete universality, and indeed, the immanence of the politics of anarchistic movements.

I begin with a quote from an activist who expressed the ecological nature of Occupy in their description of the transformations occurring in the park:

It was very beautiful seeing everyone working together for the common good. It was a real community. Everybody played a part in seeing it move, in seeing it breathe. That’s really what it was in the park. It was a breathing organism, and everybody who put something back into this organism gave it life, and you felt that life. It was pure. It was like being reborn. That’s one thing I miss the most—feeling like being reborn. It was a very, very beautiful experience.

Further building upon the introductory quote to this subsection, Rev. Ellick grounds their understanding of these transformations within Christian and Buddhist ontologies, further indicating the concrete universal power of the experiences within Occupy:

The act of being in love and taking care of people and having love for people is itself the process of waking up, realizing that we’re not separate things…a process of wakefulness that comes from compassion…. I can’t see it, but I believe we all feel it. I think that reality that I can’t see yet, all of us have immediate access to that when we love ourselves and when we love other people. Those two things cannot be done separately. They can only be done at the same time, so that’s the reality now, and I don’t think we necessarily have to wait. It was just the right moment. Occupy shot out just like a bolt of lightning and startled people. I don’t think that there are ways to manufacture it, but we have to keep trying, to be creative and innovative. Even in the times that we can’t be creative and innovative, we have to build strong foundations for how we want to be together, how we want to see that we belong to each other. That’s why I feel like this is important work. That’s why I’m attracted to Occupy. People wanted to be around each other. They wanted to experience something and shape something collectively. They didn’t want to have something pre-ordained.

Here Rev. Ellick also describes the idea of appamāda as expressed in chapter three—the subsequent push towards creating eutopic communities as a part of a “spiritual process of awakening” that is a fundamental experience for human beings.
Further expressions of the nature and need for what Occupy was able to fulfill are abundant in the *ATHO* interviews. As Lauren explains:

I want to see people realize the bigger picture and the bigger common ground that we have with each other, and it’s that we’re all human and that we all bleed red and that we are all hurting, and we’re all searching for happiness and beauty. That’s all humans want is to have a sense of beauty and happiness and fulfillment…. I want to see us realize that it’s not important to have material possessions, that it’s not important to have a bank account, that your status in society means nothing. There is no such thing as status. We make this up. Just like the pieces of paper in our wallet only have value when we say they have value, if we decided that people had value, they would. If we decided that money was not important, it wouldn’t be. If we made a commitment to each other to put our common bonds over the treasury bonds, if we decided to put the relationship between our hearts and our minds over the relationship between our jobs and our assets, we begin to see what life is really about, the meaning of life. What is the meaning of life? I believe it’s about the legacy you leave behind in others' memories and others' hearts.

As activists became inspired and empowered to change their selves and the social world, as Lauren suggests, they also began to actively hope for this world in the future.

Based on the transformations activists experienced engaging in Occupy, activists often speculated what a eutopic world would look like as a reflection upon the places created in the encampments. As Adriana tells:

Ultimately, that will look like peace for people. It would look pure, clean and healthy. It will be an ecology that’s working and functioning in such a fluid way that you have no choice but to be part of that positive energy and that positive force that’s creating humanity and creating the oxygen we breathe and the love that we share and the beautiful trees that we experience, the clean air that we breathe, the pure water that we drink. These are things that we always crave—our life source. We need this in our lives. When nature is in its natural form, it is happy and fulfilled. That’s how we will end up feeling when we live in that world.

*Conclusion*

The inspirational and transformative embodied realities of anarchistic movements and practice were felt throughout the active months during and following the Occupy encampments in the United States. Although these embodiments appear to be transformative for those involved and
even though activists indicate that these embodiments were immanent and insuppressible, the
eutopic places that Occupiers created were still materially repressed, which had profound effects
on those involved. Repression of the movement left activists continually yearning for eutopia in
ways that appeared to not be as positive as the outcomes described thus far. Once individuals’
eutopic yearnings are actively awakened, these embodiments cannot just simply go away. After
several months collecting the oral histories of activists, I began to realize that this embodied
eutopic yearning leaves individuals in liminal states that appeared even more difficult to embody
than their initial alienation. Indeed, because the social world has not been transformed—since
Occupy existed within a scission, within a liminal spatio-temporality—activists, although
transformed consciously, still navigate alienating institutions.

Hero expresses this experience of settling back into a “structured” and alienated state of
existence by indicating how they felt after the encampments were dismantled:

I think one of the reasons I went into isolation was because I don’t know if I will ever get
the chance to see the world we are working to build. So many people have done great
things, and we’ve come a long way, but look how long it’s taken. I don’t think I’ll be
able to see it, and that hurts. That saddens me, but I hope that one day we realize that it’s
not just about one religion. It’s not just about one color. It’s not about one thing at all.
It’s about everything. It’s very idealistic, and it’s very vague, but I hope that we all
realize that we are all one. The only one thing is everything. It all matters, so we have to
treat everything right, treat it with respect and treat it with love and with passion. That
needs to be our relationships with everything. I don’t know if I’ll get to see that, but I try
and live that way. It’s hard on a daily basis, but anything worth having is not easily
obtained, so I hope that we will struggle together. I hope we will look to the future
together with hope instead of a dark, grim foresight. I feel like that’s all I can hope for
right now, and I’ll just continue to do what I can on a daily basis to try and inspire people
to do that, one person at a time. If I inspire one person, maybe they’ll inspire a group….

Here we can see how Hero is actively still chasing after their eutopic desires and hopes, yet
simultaneously still mourning the loss of the eutopic moment they embodied in the
encampments. In fact, it almost became debilitating to them, whereby they found their self in
isolation after the raids of the encampments.
Hero also expresses another common outcome that I found a lot of activists struggling with—mental distress and even at times psychopathologies. Jeff forewarns this outcome, by suggesting ideas about how activists can remain diligent in the face of repressions and “dialogical” dismissals:

The mainstream media is never going to get the full story. They try and find the craziest person in the crowd, and then they say, “See, that’s Occupy out there protesting.” I want to inspire others to get involved. Don’t just look to us. The best thing to do is to go out there and start covering it yourself. It’s easy to get angry like I did when I first got involved, but you have to channel that anger towards what you want to do to bring about the change you want to see. Channel it to what your passion is, whether it be photography or whatever and use that to the best of your ability. Don't get caught up in the anger. Otherwise, you’re going to get stuck in that. You’re going to get depressed, and you’re not going to go anywhere. Instead, use that to the best of your ability to get involved. That’s what the system doesn’t want you to do. They want you to be fearful, but once you get out there, you realize that you’re not alone. There are plenty of people out there.

Similarly, another Occupier suggests a coping practice of individuals holding on to the power they found in themselves engaging in anarchy. Further illuminating the irrepressible transformations of the movement as well, Luigi explains this accordingly:

We can ease that pain and transition just by being able to acknowledge that we are the ones who can make the difference. We are making a difference and will be making a difference. It’s a process. There’s no finish line. It’s a journey. Everybody has their journey. It’s how we perceive our situation. It’s how we flow through it. Will we let the situation dictate us, or will we rise above it to dictate how the situation plays out? It could be something small. It could be something big. It could be anything. It’s a matter of taking a step outside of the box, or better yet getting rid of the box all together. Each of us has the ability to do it.

Before and/or after anarchical spatio-temporalities subside, it becomes clear how activists are absolutely aware of the dialectical relations they maintain with dominant socialities, inclusive, of course, of their eutopic yearnings. You have to “channel your anger” or “energy” towards something good, they indicate. Otherwise that energy will be easily coopted, repressed, and/or become debilitating when individuals step back into structured states of existence—especially
when those states are, again, alienating.

The powerful energy that was created and embodied in the encampments was also, as activists indicated, what they feared led to its repression. The movement’s strength was a legitimate threat to those in power. Luigi further conveys this sentiment by indicating how the eutopic yearnings, desires and hopes of activists made the movement a legitimate threat to those in power:

I followed the movement from day one, and they tried so many ways to break it up. They had the generators. They said it was a fire hazard, and they took the generators away. Then, they brought in this bicycle that generated electricity. It was very resilient and self-sufficient and self-sustaining. More than anything else, it showed that when people come together good things happen, so the system broke it down.

Although the embodiments of anarchy were fundamentally transformative for activists, it was this very nature of the movement—having existed solely within a liminal state—that made it difficult for the movement to withstand state repression and for activists to deal with the outcomes of such repression. Activists wanted to feel the beauty of the movement again, but no longer knew how to recreate it in sustainable ways. More so, they did not know how to recreate that beauty in ways that could drastically transform the social world. There is clearly much more theoretical and practical work for activists to do in order to create the eutopic worlds they yearn for. However, regardless of this repression and the psychological distress that individuals endured following the raids of the encampments, activists persist in believing that their experiences at Occupy were fundamental to what they imagine another world should be like.

By way of conclusion, Dani, from the Indignados movement, reflects upon the liminal nature of spatial occupations:

In the camps of the 15M, we took the squares of the whole country demanding social change and revolution. It was all based on an assembly process. We developed the process of consensus by facilitation that is now used all over Spain and all over the United States and in other places. A lot of the spirit of the quest for horizontal decision-
making, the quest for inclusiveness, the quest for solidarity, were some of the values that were agreed upon from the very start. After a few weeks, we understood that the camp had served a purpose, which was to get us organized, to get us together and to get us on a path, but that it wasn't a purpose in itself. It was only a tool, so the time had come to leave.

If “you cannot evict an idea whose time has come,” as Occupiers pronounced after the dismantlement of the encampments in late-2011, then how do activists transform these ideas into long-term sustainable practices? Is this even an objective anarchistic movements should pursue? Or, is the nature of anarchy solely to exist within liminal states? I move on to suggest some of the ways that anarchistic activists are currently working towards creating sustainable eutopic worlds that can foster the individual and collective inspirations and transformations they embodied engaging in anarchy.
INTERLUDE: THE EMPEROR IS NAKED AND EVERYONE KNOWS!

One day, the Emperor, a man who thinks he is above all else and is too vain to see the truth, is tricked by two seamstresses who promise him that his new clothes—a consumerist obsession of the Emperor’s—are made of the finest of cloth only visible to individuals as powerful, fit, and wise as the Emperor himself. In actuality, however, the seamstresses trick the Emperor, clothing him in nothing at all. The seamstresses then encourage the Emperor to parade around declaring his glory to the townsfolk. As they watch the Emperor parade around naked, the people know in their hearts they see nothing but a naked man. However, too embarrassed to admit they may not be fit and intelligent enough to see the Emperor’s new clothes, and, most importantly, too afraid to say anything that may question the Emperor’s power, they opt to say nothing at all.

As he proudly parades around naked, the Emperor’s new clothes are finally seen, or, in actuality, not seen, by an innocent child yet to be fooled by the abstract power embodied by the Emperor as well as the townsfolk. The child, without hesitation and simply as children do, speaks from a crowd mobilized to watch the Emperor: “but he has not got anything on!” Upon this child’s obviously truthful proclamation, only then do the townsfolk follow suit, whereby they admit that the Emperor is, indeed, naked. Upon the Emperor feeling a mighty cold breeze, he himself finally realizes the truth of his nakedness. Contrary to what one would believe he may do, the realization of his nakedness does not stop the Emperor from continuing to parade around, nor does it stop his nobleman from continuing to pretend to hold his invisible train. Why? Because, well, he is the Emperor! Sovereign, naked Power is all-mighty, so it seems.
CHAPTER 6: EMBODYING CRISSES, PRACTICING CARE: TO CHANGE THE WORLD WE MUST CARE FOR OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER

By way of conclusion, this chapter refocuses on resistance to neoliberal globalization by suggesting how activists can utilize the ecological framework of crises—negate-subvert-create—developed in this study to build and sustain anarchistic movements. This suggestion originates in the crucial practices that activists involved in this study are currently taking part in, all of which revolve around care. As an outgrowth of their eutopic yearnings and experiences engaging in anarchy, care is realized as an important praxis necessary to sustain resistance, and ultimately, create a world free of oppression. Care is a product of the eutopic hopes and desires that have and will continue to flourish so long as capital is the dominant force that shapes and controls the social world. Anarchistic politics, until now, however, has remained within a dialectical (e.g., liminal) space, mentally and physically, which is why it is up to anarchistic practitioners to seek ways to radically burst out of and transcend this dialectic. Through the active creation of care-networks and spaces, this transcendence can take place in individual and collective hearts and worlds—care for selves and communities might very well be the necessary act of resistance capable of radically transforming neoliberal globalization.

In this chapter, I offer a discussion of anarchists’ conceptions of power—power-over, power-to, power-with—to make sense of how to claim crises as an act of resistance through practicing care. In doing so, I highlight some of the concerns articulated by activists involved in this study about the movement as a whole, bringing in their more intimate suggestions about where they think we should go from here. These suggestions all revolve around the importance of building care-networks and spaces as sustainable acts of resistance—to build, shape and reshape anarchistic movements as they move into the 21st century. Here, care is seen as not only necessary to mitigate the effects of capital’s crises, but, utilizing the ecology of crises, is a
practice that can allow for the potential of anarchistic movements to sustainably grow. I end this chapter by going full-circle to suggest how acts of care can be used as militant research methods that allow anarchistic activists to look for and create spaces and practice to not only become the crises of capital, but to radically transform them.

*The Third Wave of Neoliberalism*

Introduced in the opening-vignette to this chapter, *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, by Hans C. Anderson, is a short story that symbolizes the ways in which capital (or Sovereign power), and neoliberalism in particular, is hidden in plain sight through conscious colonization and fear mongering. This story is a perfect analogy of what I call the third wave of neoliberalization. As *The Emperor’s New Clothes* suggests, neoliberalism has always been naked (i.e., fascist). Today, however, never before has the Emperor blatantly known and continued to strut naked across the now global stage. In this context, more than ever anarchy is needed. As anarchistic movements continue to unfold in the 21st Century, anarchy will hopefully become a prominent Left force in the US and around the globe as this new wave of neoliberalism begins to engulf the world. To understand how to realize anarchy accordingly, we must first further decipher the materials used to make the Emperor’s new clothes.

In relationship to the analysis developed in chapter one with regards to the fundamental critique of anarchistic movements, capital, and neoliberalism in particular, is a force that colonizes everyday lives. This colonization of the life-world (Katsiaficas 2006) hinders individuals from the realization of their potentialities to become something beyond dominant socialities—something beyond their selves as creative and spiritual beings. Accordingly, to

25 http://www.andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/TheEmperorsNewClothes_e.html
anarchistic activists in the United States, there is no doubt that the election of Donald J. Trump (Trump) has brought into focus how individuals’ worlds are colonized. Most importantly, it has shown how individuals are not only suffering because of systemic self-alienation, but how fear-mongering is used by politicians, such as Trump, to co-opt this suffering (just like the Emperor!). Individuals who support Trump epitomize neoliberal globalization's ability to colonize the hearts and minds of people the world over. For example, as a reflection upon Trump’s nationalist and fascist politics, practices such as blaming and criminalizing the Other, terrorizing indigenous peoples and exploiting their lands, punishing and imprisoning anybody not willing to submit to, in whichever way it is required of their bodies, the demands of capital, are becoming commonplace discourses and embodied relations across the US. In fact, since Trump’s inauguration, hate crimes have increased significantly across the nation. 

Although this situation may seem hopeless, the peoples are screaming, both Left and Right literally, that capital is naked. Resistance in the US and even globally, is growing infinitely beyond what is and what is feared will come throughout Trump’s presidency—authoritarianism, fascism, racism, sexism, xenophobia, imperialism, ecological destruction, etc. More than anything, Trump has signaled the need for change in everyday life relations—a politic that transcends capitalist and neoliberal socialities. The world is in crises, but it is in moments of crises, where something new begins to unfold.

Crises, as indicated throughout this study, are contentious moments—they are dialectical dances where socialities begin to rearrange. Whether for good or ill, these crises-ridden moments can, according to anarchistic politics, give way to something entirely new. The

26 https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2016/12/16/update-1094-bias-related-incidents-month-following-election
question would then be, how can anarchistic movements, by nature of their radical orientation, create social arrangements that can burst out of and transcend the dialectic once and for all? As Deloria (2012) pondered in the mid-20th Century, how can movements transcend modern existence? More importantly to this study, how might the ecology of crises—negate-subvert-create—be utilized by activists to allow for anarchistic movements to flourish and sustain themselves in the 21st Century?

Power and Its Dis/contents: Interrogating the Liminality of Anarchy

In anarchist critiques of speaking for others and in practices of collective organizing, I hear a radical commitment to listening. In offering challenges to institutionalized domination and in demonstrating the power of mutual aid, I hear a radical commitment to care. In undermining the false futures of neoliberalism and stories of the ‘end of history’ and in practices of individual and collective empowerment and transformation, I hear a radical commitment to becoming.

-Jamie Heckert (2010)

When I began this study, I set out to understand what motivates anarchistic activists by pulling from my own personal experiences and the memories of fellow activists engaging in anarchistic movements. In doing so, I built upon the theories of quotidian breakdowns and post-traumatic growth, believing that, in general, anarchistic activists were motivated to engage in anarchistic movements as a product of a personal traumatic life event or crisis through which their own personal struggles and transformations encouraged them to then engage in radical social movements with the hopes of changing the world. As learned throughout, however, activists did not always characterize their motivations was an epiphatic traumatic or crisis-ridden experience, but rather, their relationships to trauma and suffering were expressed as pervasive life experiences. It was here that I began to find a commonality across the stories I collected as well as those from the ATHO blogs—that of social alienation. Indeed, it was social alienation—the
inability for individuals to define their selves as well as live in a world that reflected what they knew to be right—that led to the ruminative embodiments that I suspected were motivational for anarchistic activists. To overcome alienation, as activists learned engaging in anarchy, required the act—the act of actually creating and enacting relations that reflected the selves and eutopic world activists yearned for as a product of living in an alienating world. This is precisely why, as indicated throughout, contemporary alter-globalization movements are more commonly adopting prefiguration as a fundamental politic in the 21st Century.

Although the inspirational embodiments and creative outcomes, as I concluded chapter five, anarchistic activists often struggled even more with alienation than they did previous to their awakenings and engagement in anarchy. It is important here, as such, that we think back to why this might be the case. If anarchistic activists are motivated to engage in anarchy as a reflection upon their self-alienation, then the only way, as Jaeggi (2014) explains, for them to fully rid their selves of alienation, is to create and live in a world that is non-alienating—that is reflective of their eutopic yearnings. As such, although activists experience eutopic moments engaging in anarchy whereby inspirational embodiments and creativity are abounding, here I want to stress how the power derived engaging in anarchy, although often temporary and existing within liminal spatio-temporalities, is just the starting point for transformation.

Liminality, indeed, is what causes the internalized distress that anarchistic activists feel after engaging in anarchistic movements and practice; but it is also what motivated them. As activists involved in this study avowed, liminal embodiments are necessary as they are synonymous with the moments when crises are occurring, but dependence upon the liminal tendencies of anarchistic practice makes anarchistic movements unsustainable. As such, the liminal nature of anarchy should be seen as the first step forward; alone, it is simply not enough. How can
anarchistic activists begin to create more sustainable and permanent spaces and networks conducive to the creation of the social worlds they yearn for? To begin answering this question, I will first introduce the different conceptions of power embodied in the everyday as articulated by anarchistic activists. I then move on to discuss the issues that activists involved in this study are most concerned about with regards to sustaining the movement as a whole.

As Gordon (2008) explains, it is hierarchical power and the ways it manifests that anarchists theoretically and practically contest. Ironically, however, as many of those involved in anarchistic movements and spaces understand, anarchistic activists still embody certain relations to power that are not conducive to anarchical politics; it is power that anarchistic movements and activists still struggle with. Gordon (2008) suggests that, in relationship to the sexism and racism prominent within some anarchistic movements and spaces, the different conceptions of power need to be theorized collectively and acted upon within anarchistic movements and spaces before activists enact other socialities and power-relations within their communities, locally and globally.

Pulling on the work of anarchist activist and author, Starhawk, Gordon (2008) explains how there are three types of power: power-over, power-to, and power-with. Power-over is the oppressive and hierarchical relations experienced and embodied within dominant socialities. Power-over, simply put, is a relationality built upon the idea that certain beings have the ability and right to control and maintain dominance over others. This is the power that anarchists are strictly opposed to in theory and seek to negate in practice. Then there is the idea of power-to, or, as Gordon (2008) explains, what Starhawk (1987) refers to as power-from-within. This idea of power is precisely the power that individuals embody engaging in anarchy—it is the creative and inspirational embodiments derived within liminal spatio-temporalities where the power to
subvert capital is derived. Power-to is the potential to become something greater than the self. Power-to is what develops, through engagement in anarchy, into power-with. The transitory experience of power-to→power-with is where the creative potentialities of anarchy are fully realized, as here *communitas* is embodied. This transitory realization of power-to→power-with, however, is precisely what anarchistic activists sometimes fail to realize in practice and thus theory. Without engaging in mindful and collective reflection, the internalization of power-over socialities (e.g., the colonization of the lifeworld) can trample over the embodiments and realizations of power-with. It is this lack of mindful self-critique and practice within anarchistic movements and spaces that must be interrogated. It is here, as I will explain, that anarchistic activists lose sight of how to create sustainable practices.

This idea of power-to being realized *through* communing (e.g., power-with) mirrors Foucault’s (1986) genealogy of “the care of the self” as discussed in Volume Three of the *History of Sexuality* (see also Heckert 2010). As Foucault (1986) explained, the care of the self is necessarily dependent upon the care of the other, which is also synonymous to the concept _appamāda_ discussed in chapter four. Appamāda was Buddha’s final realization upon his deathbed—that enlightenment, or self-realization, was absolutely a factor of care. Mindful care, care of self, or, utilizing anarchistic discourses, mutual aid—these are (or should be) the foundational relationalities of anarchistic practice. However, as I experienced and witnessed engaging in Occupy and other anarchistic spaces, as Gordon (2008) and many of the activists in this study avowed, sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and all the other power-over relations anarchistic activists theoretically oppose are still expressed by anarchistic activists themselves. This indicates that, contrary to theory, activists still sometimes fail to recognize that sustained transformations of everyday relations (e.g., power-with) are necessary to fully enact
the power derived engaging in anarchy. In order to further interrogate these contradictions, I elaborate upon these conceptualizations of power by highlighting two specific dialogues I had with activists involved in this study; dialogues between one interviewee and another and through me, between interviewees.

When I started the process of collecting the oral histories of anarchistic activists, one of the initial and most impactful interviews led to my thinking through what the future of anarchical politics in the US in particular might look like—a thought that was continually reinforced throughout the data collection process of this study. This conversation began after I asked the interviewee about whether they felt that the movement carried an inspirational power capable of transforming the individuals involved. Without hesitation, the interviewee immediately went on a diatribe about how they believed that the spiritualist understandings and relations to anarchistic movements are problematic—a reflection upon not only their personal atheistic worldviews, but, most importantly here, their objection to representing the inspirational nature of anarchy as unique. As the interviewee rightfully claimed, inspirational embodiments are nothing unique to “radical politics,” which they emphasized by providing an example of how these embodiments are foundational to organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous as well. As they stated:

I always want to guard against radicals presuming that what they are doing is something special; that their emotional content confirms the truth of their opinions, which it doesn’t, because these are things that so many folks go through. I know plenty of people who got sober and can describe almost identically this kind of rising out of and connecting with others etc….and we know…the 12-step program is questionable…but that kind of emotional experience takes place in those steps. So are radical politics anything special in the human experience?

The interviewee also went on to describe their relationship to anarchistic practice and how dependence upon the liminal nature of anarchy (where these embodiments are realized) was also
problematic. As they explained describing their relationship to engaging in the alter-

globalization movement since the 1990s:

Being consciously Left…it is a lesson worth talking about…the subject I am working on, is that we consciously left the anti-globalization [movement] in 2000. We participated in the RNC in Philadelphia…May Day protests in Long Island…8/16 [direct actions] against the IMF and WB in DC…. Those direct actions proved to me the lack of depth—the lack of relationships and density relationships that are needed for these movements to succeed.

They go on to further exemplify this critique from their personal standpoint, specifically with regards to how, after several decades of engaging in anarchistic movements and spaces, when they experienced a personal trauma (i.e., the death of their partner who was also a prominent activist), they realized the movement carried no weight to address the real life experiences and embodiments of personal and collective crises. As they further emphasized:

I think the problem with so many of the anarchist and radical [spaces] I have participated in is they lack any real density…. Who the fuck do these people have affinity with besides each other? Nobody.

Their solution was the need to begin organizing around creating “density relationships,” or “care-giving” practices, real and sustainable.

This conversation made me rethink my original theses on crises, but it also made we wonder: just because the inspirational embodiments derived from engaging in anarchy may not be unique, does this mean that this experience is not important? If within these moments individuals experience and realize the importance of communitas, would this not be the embodiment that allows individuals to understand the importance of mutual aid and care? Is there any other way for anarchistic activists to come to the realization that care, as the interviewee suggested their self, was a fundamental practice to transform everyday life—to transcend capital? Because this conversation was one of the first stories I collected, it shadowed
me throughout my study, but it also allowed me to more mindfully interrogate the power-to-embodiments activists experienced engaging in anarchy.

Soon after this initial interview, I was quickly reassured that the relationship between anarchy and communitas was quite valid as many of the other interviewees in this study, as described in the oral histories as well as the *ATHO* interviewees, indicated the importance of communitas. In fact, as I intimately described in the case study provided in chapter five, the prevalence of communitas was abounding in Occupy. I also soon ironically found myself in conversation with another interviewee, Kai, closer to the completion of this study, about how they believed Therapeutic Communities, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, were important examples for anarchistic communities to model. They placed direct emphasis on the inspirational embodiments derived from anarchy and how care is a product of communitas—of being a part of a “compassionate community.” As this Kai expressed:

> Without the community, you can be as awakened as you want to be. You can know all the truths you want to be, but if you don’t have the compassionate community, you are in trouble. I was in trouble you know. And I just had this feeling of despair. I have not yet recovered from this, but I am a lot better off now.

As evoked in the last sentences above, Kai explained that they came to this realization from their struggle following Hurricane Katrina, which decimated their community. In addition to the natural and social disasters following Hurricane Katrina, Kai found their self taking care of their adult son who was wrongfully imprisoned, abused by prison authorities, and exited the prison system psychologically disturbed. Kai was left to solely take care of a son not only dealing with substance abuse problems, but also actively suicidal, all while in the process of their own mourning over the destruction created in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Having been an anarchistic activist for over four decades, Kai explained that never before did they feel so alone, which was similar to what occurred to the interviewee above whose partner unexpectedly passed
away. For instance, Kai came home one day to find their son actively trying to commit suicide. Needing help and not wanting to call the authorities because they knew they would just imprison their son again—Kai realized that they had nobody in this moment to rely on, no network to fall on in such a dire time. Unlike the interviewee above, however, this personal and collective crisis of Hurricane Katrina in its totality made Kai realize the importance of establishing community as a source of inspiration to transcend the crises they were enduring. This was profoundly realized, as Kai explained, organizing with the Common Ground Collective, and most importantly, watching their son drastically turn his life around for the better taking part in Alcoholics Anonymous.

As expressed in the dialogue above, Kai experienced the importance of the power-to-power-with transference and knew that this was fundamental to the kinds of changes they had yearned for so long engaging in anarchistic movements. As Kai further explained:

So, I mean what I have learned from all of this…is that everybody in this society needs a Therapeutic Community. They need that affinity group. They need that larger community that is made up of those kind of communities and, and that also gives us the strength to fight against terrible things because you burn out if you just fight.

This idea of a community of communities, or affinities of affinities, as the interview iterated, is a classic anarchist understanding, often referred to as mutualism or communalism, as expressed in the works of Landauer (1978), Reclus (2013), and Kropotkin (2009). Kai elaborated on this understanding by providing a brief history of Therapeutic Communities, indicating that they were, from the start, also grounded in anarchistic politics. These two particular conversations, as well as the majority of the voices in this study, allowed me to understand the importance of care-practice—of creating care-networks and spaces as the next step forward for anarchistic movements. For clarification before moving on: anarchy is a process that begins, first, with a profound experience of power-to and then, through mindful self-reflection and transformation,
individuals are intuitively pulled towards community. Anarchy is the process of walking towards the horizon engaging in mindful care, in appamāda.

*Creating Communities and Networks of Care*

*What does life look like without the struggle of food and shelter? What does art look like without the struggle? We’ve only had art cultivated in ways where it has come out of some type of pain; some type of harm. I am really curious, what does our world look like; what does art, creation, cultivation, look like without oppression? I’ve been able to find a space where I am able to be creative without the pressure of food and shelter. What that does to the psyche and how that has been so called liberating…. I am coming to terms that it is really about...love thy neighbor.... If your heart and your intentions and desires are in line...everything is yours.*


The insistence upon creating care communities and networks was, although not always explicitly stated, already practiced by many of the interviewees involved in this study. From actual eco-community institutes and communes, radical mental health organizations, and health services in general, such as a community needle-exchange, care was fundamental to a lot of the current practices individuals were engaged in and organizations that they were creating. In this section, I elaborate upon the idea of Therapeutic Communities (TC) before moving on to describe some of the care-practices of anarchistic movements today.

Dating back to the mid-20th Century, TCs were established as a community-based psychiatric practice that centered the creation of communal spaces to treat individuals suffering from mental illnesses and personality disorders, inclusive of drug abuse (Boyling 2011; Winship 2008). Although TCs began in the United Kingdom, they were established as a reflection upon the growing realization of the bureaucratization of psychiatric care in general—a practice that

27 https://soundcloud.com/on-resistance/words-shape-worlds-part-3
ran parallel to the rise of anti-psychiatric discourses and practice in the US discussed in chapter two. This is why Alcoholics Anonymous and other community based mental health and drug abuse organizations in the US reflect a similar genealogy to TCs, all of which stress the importance of participatory decision-making and community focused therapeutic practices to help individuals dealing with mental health issues and substance abuse. Understanding these connections between TCs and anarchistic practice, I started to rethink the relationship between anarchy and communitas, especially in relationship to sustainable practice—the need to care.

In addition to leaving movements such as Occupy feeling even more hopeless and alienated than before, there is no doubt that individuals also enter anarchistic movements with mental health issues and personality disorders. Although I do not want to equate racism and/or sexism with mental health, the abuse of power and internalized contradictions are still present, albeit not reflective of the movement’s politics or activists as a whole, within anarchistic movements and spaces. Based on the idea of TCs, I began to rethink what this meant in relationship to the ways in which anarchistic movements manifest today. How can anarchistic activists embrace and properly address the fact that what motivates individuals to engage in anarchy is their realization of self-alienation, and thus their navigating the world through a disassociated embodiment? If the ecology of crises indicates that it is the alienation of humans from nature and thus their selves that leads to the development of hierarchical and oppressive socialities, then everyday power-over relations are, in this framework, systemically bound to self-alienation. This is precisely why anti-psychiatrists believed that disassociations were protectors from unjust social relations. Either you fight or flight, and in this case, some individuals have no choice but to go inward if their only option is to fly. Most importantly here is that this experience is nothing unique. As described in chapter four, these experiences and
especially the inspirational embodiments derived engaging in anarchy are not invalid, however, because they are not unique—rather, they are incredibly important because these are the ways in which individuals deal with and free their selves of alienation.

This understanding of the human experience, although not explicitly stated, was emphasized during the conversation I had with the first interviewee described above, with specific regards to their critique of activists’ relations to activism. As the interviewee proclaimed, activists often embody an ironically hierarchical relation to what is and is not activism and who is and is not an activist. The insistence that activists are actively engaged in movements and activist spaces allows, as they expressed, for the unquestioned unfolding of relations to individuals who do not engage in activism, as not being activists. This idea that everyday people are not activists is simply not true, the interviewee explained, which is also why they defaulted on removing themselves from the understanding that anarchy uniquely allows individuals to experience inspirational embodiments.

The interviewee and I began to discuss this understanding of activism and how anarchy and anarchistic politics in general are practiced everyday, by “everyday” people, all the time, and in different places. It is here that anarchistic activists must embrace, as many often do, that they are simply a microcosm of the larger social worlds they constitute. This is why it makes sense to center TC models as a fundamental practice for community building and empowerment within the broader communities anarchistic movements and spaces build. If alienation is a prominent reality as product of capital’s crises—political, economic, social, and ecological—then mitigating the suffering of everyday people around the globe should be the fundamental practice of anarchistic movements. If anarchy is care—care for self and by default care for others—then building communities of healing and care is a necessary task for anarchistic activists and
communities. Although this idea of care and mutual aid is foundational to anarchistic theory, especially eco-anarchists and indigenous ecologists, care, as activists involved in this study explained, must be prioritized now more than ever.

The anarchistic activists involved in this study, as I found, are indeed enacting care today, and, not so ironically, those who engaged in such practices were often quite experienced in the movement—they have had many years to reflect and build their selves anew engaging in the movement. This in itself indicated the importance of realizing that the liminal nature of anarchy is just the first step forward. As an example of these care-practices, Marcus Why (as quoted in the beginning of this subsection who was also one of the interviewees I lost connection with during our personal interview and as such he insisted I listen to his radio show instead), was actively, using their language, “taking care” of homes left abandoned across Southern California after the 2008 economic crisis. In doing so, as Marcus expressed, they were not only providing a space for individuals in their communities to live without the struggle for food and shelter, effectively ridding themselves of capital relations, but were also able to realize their creative potentials to fully liberate themselves from their alienation. Knowing this activist personally, I knew these profound changes to be true. Another activist I spoke with was similarly creating an eco-community and educational institute far removed from capital, although still living on its peripheries. This institute reflects precisely, as they described, the conversations regarding TCs above—a space for collective healing and creation. These two examples indicate that not only are activists creating care spaces, but also, in doing so, are able to find their true selves as Marcus explains in the quote above. Indeed, Marcus, to me, is the embodiment of a spiritually transformed individual—dedicated, inspiring, incredibly wise—all of which are characteristics of
activists I have discovered throughout this study. To me these embodiments and practices are
the epitome of creating genuine, or “compassionate,” communities.

Unlike the above examples, however, to fully remove oneself from capital is not always
obtainable by everyone in the present. For some, practice has to begin where it must with the
goal of ultimately working towards that end-point (although fully removed, as they claimed, the
activists above were still living within the peripheries of dominant socialities). Andrej
Grubačić and Denis O’Hearn (2016) are correct in emphasizing the exilic nature of anarchy as
having always existed outside of or within dominant socialities. Regardless of where one’s
personality is, however, exilic spaces always exist in relationship to dominant socialities. Others
interviewed, were creating institutions within dominant ones in order to make room for that point
to be realized. One activist, for instance, started and is still organizing a free needle exchange
that, as they indicated, had already lowered the rates of domestic and sexual abuse where they
were organizing. This was precisely because the organization put the power into the hands of
users themselves, effectively creating a network of users who volunteered to carry pagers to help
out other users in need. This led to a decrease in domestic and sexual violence because, as the
interviewee explained, women often start using because a partner was a user and they never learn
to inject or rotate sites to prevent the development of abscesses. By creating a care-network of
users, when women users needed help, they paged for it, and help came, lessening their
dependence on abusive relations and providing them with the support to not get “dope sick,” and,
with hope, to come clean. This activist epitomized how care-networks can work within the
interstices of dominant social institutions such as health care in the US in order to create spaces
and genuine care that can take care of those most vulnerable to crises, and create models and
spaces to build upon and mirror onto other institutions in the future.
Working towards creating care-networks allowed this interviewee to understand the vulnerabilities of the dominant health care institutions in the US and also create a working-model to help mitigate crises. Creating a working-model rendered the dominant health care institutes redundant. This reiterates the understanding described in chapter one that prefigurative politics is indeed a research method. Care-networks and spaces, whether outside of capital or working within, should be seen as spatio-temporalities that allow for individuals to understand and work towards creating genuine communities. As the anarchist collective, CrimethInc, so beautifully expressed in an article critiquing dominant relations to health and, specifically, self-care:

Your human frailty is not a regrettable fault to be treated by proper self-care so you can get your nose back to the grindstone. Sickness, disability, and unproductivity are not anomalies to be weeded out; they are moments that occur in every life, offering a common ground on which we might come together. It we take these challenges seriously and make space to focus on them, they could point the way beyond the logic of capitalism to a way of living in which there is no dichotomy between care and liberation.28

I now move on to reiterate how care-practice can be used as a research method to allow for anarchistic movements to transcend capital.

Care-Practice as a Militant Research Method

Colectivo Situaciones (2002 and 2007), an activist collective formed in Argentina following the economic crises in 2004, was the first to use the term “Militant Research.” According to Colectivo Situaciones, liberatory politics is grounded in the creation of potencia, which contrasts with the idea of power as static and totalizing power (translation: poder). Potencia is the power-to described above—an immanent practice of becoming, transcending, and as such, transforming the dominant socialities that alienate and oppress individuals. This is why activists and

28 https://crimethinc.com/2013/05/31/selfcare
collectives around the globe (usually those with anarchistic tendencies) now commonly use MR. MR is a methodological practice utilized to rid a community’s everyday life of the structural inequalities (whether personally experienced or perceived). For MR, “…the universe of the dominated exists as a scission: as active servility and voluntary subordination, but also as a silent language that allows the circulation of jokes, rituals, and knowledges that forms the codes of resistance” (Colectivo Situaciones 2002). The point of MR is thus to co-produce knowledges within these “scissions,” or what I heretofore have called liminal spatio-temporalities. MR, as such, is a pedagogical practice that allows activists to reflect upon and critically/collectively engage with the issues, successes, and failures that occur and are experienced in practice—collective practice informs theory, and vice versa (Apoifes 2016; Colectivo Situaciones 2002 and 2007, Coté, Day and de Peuter 2006; Day 2005; Dixon 2012; Halvorsen 2015b; Russell 2015, Shukaitis and Graeber 2007).

As an anarchistic practice, MR conceptualizes the state and all dominant socialities as reflective of abstracted and reified forms of social relation—relations not imbued with the power to create or transform the social world. These are not the types of socialities where potencia can flourish. Imbued with potencia, however, liminal spaces allow for the opening up of the contradictions, or crises, produced by dominant socialities, providing what George Smith (1990) explains as a way to better understand how the “political-administrative regime” functions. In other words, liminal spaces (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual) allow for the further opening up of dominant socialities. As described above, the needle exchange clinic allowed for their collective to understand the vulnerabilities of the dominant health care system and, most importantly, how to effectively create practices of care to render dominant health “care” redundant. With this in mind, the militant researcher always works under hostile conditions,
seeking to render redundant and without power the boundaries and dualisms maintained by dominant socialities. Militant researchers look for the boundaries that hinder individuals’ imagination and abilities to express their selves to their fullest human potential (re: \textit{potencia})—spaces where care is most needed.

Following his engagement with the Gay liberation movements in the 1980s in Canada as both an AIDS and anti-police repression activist, George Smith (1990) developed the standpoint methodology Political Activist Ethnography (PAE). This methodology was elaborated upon in G. Smith’s 1990 publication “Political Activist as Ethnographer” and is used by anarchistic activists and militant researchers today (Frampton, Caelie, and Thompson 2006; see also Hussey 2012). By attempting to produce knowledge grounded in the concrete practices of everyday life from within the Gay liberation movement, G. Smith concerned himself with how activists often focused their grievances on abstract ideologies, which, in the context of G. Smith’s research, was “homophobia.” For G. Smith, activists were unable to fully comprehend how and why homophobia, simply conceptualized as an ideology regarding the oppression of homosexuals, became such a dominant reality for non-heteronormative individuals. They failed to ask how, for instance, homophobia was also a social ethos embodied and enacted upon publicly by powerful institutions and ordinary peoples and, thus, sometimes even activists themselves. Homophobia, yes, is a social ideology created by those in power, but done so to construct and maintain particular social relations that allow for the maintenance of power-over Othered sexualities. Asking how homophobia was put into practice and embodied by citizens was key for G. Smith, which is why he referred to these institutionalized socialties as a “political-administrative regime.”
For G. Smith, PAE became a method to understand how dominant socialities uphold power-over relations through the constant development and maintenance of the system as a whole. Methodologically speaking, G. Smith understood that the moments where the state’s power manifested itself physically, either through interpersonal relations with the police (police killing homosexuals and raiding bathhouses) or the judicial system (upon arrest, booking, or investigation), etc., were where contradictions were concretely embodied. Contradictions are where physical bodies face each other; where direct conflict manifests; and, most importantly, where power is contested. As G. Smith learned, in order to rid the LGBTQ communities’ everyday world of homophobia, activists needed to focus their energies on exposing these contradictions through such practices as direct action and community building.\(^\text{29}\) The everyday is where contradictions are easily exposed and rendered redundant through subversive acts, which is why prefigurative politics, imbued with care, is a centrally important practice to transcend neoliberal globalization.

Regarding anarchistic movements, AK Thompson (2006) exemplifies how direct action is actually and should be understood as a “research method” itself. Based on his own experiences engaging in anarchistic movements, Thompson (2006) explains that not only does direct action empower individuals, but it also opens up a space to understand how social reality is created, maintained, and ultimately transformed (Clark 2013). Although the liminal nature of anarchy is only the first step towards realizing how to concretely transform the social world, it is

\(^{29}\) Although not mentioned specifically herein, activist research in anthropology has come to similar conclusions collaborating with indigenous peoples (see for instance Hale 2006; Holloway 1998; Zibechi 2010).
precisely the power derived from this practice that allows individuals to continue to move in the
direction of creating a social world free of domination.

Telling stories about the motivations and transformative embodiments engaging in
anarchy is one such way to utilize MR to help activists build and sustain anarchistic movements
and practice. This is, I hope, a contribution of this study. As learned from the activists involved
in this study and by reflecting on my own memories of engagement in anarchistic movements
and spaces, anarchy is a continuous movement—an immanent onto-political embodiment
whereby activists constantly change and rearrange their selves and relations in order to prefigure
the eutopic worlds they yearn for. It is only through the constant movement between anarchy,
mindful self- and collective- reflection, and enacting upon anarchical relationalities through care-
practice, that activists are imbued with the knowledge and power to continue moving into the
future.

In conclusion, the words of Audre Lorde (2007) bear repeating: “the master’s tools will
never dismantle the master’s house.” As the world is undergoing major ecological crises,
anarchistic activists need to begin to effectively and sustainably become capital’s crises. Now,
more than ever, the world needs seamstresses willing to trick the Emperor, or even better,
innocent and honest peoples willing to call out and effectively subvert the logic of everything the
Emperor stands for. As learned engaging in anarchy, in order to negate-subvert and ultimately
create a world free of Emperors, we must do so by caring for our selves and each other.
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APPENDIX

Adriana Natasha Tavarez:

http://attheheartofanoccupation.blogspot.com/2013/10/adriana-natasha-tavarez.html?q

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Captain

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Damien Crisp:

http://attheheartofanoccupation.blogspot.com/2013/08/damien-crisp.html

Dani Alvarez-Gavela


Darah McJimsey:

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Diego Ibanez:


Dragonfly:

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Jeff Durkin:


Joey Lopez:

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