

Plural Desires: Feminist Epistemology as Anarchist Praxis

By

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A Thesis Submitted to
Saint Mary's University and Mount Saint Vincent University,
Halifax, Nova Scotia
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the joint Degree of Master of Arts in Women and Gender Studies

August 16, 2011 Halifax, Nova Scotia

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Date: August 16, 2011



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Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-80946-4
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-80946-4

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Abstract: This thesis explores feminist articulations and expressions within anarchist culture. Feminists within the anarchist movement have historically critiqued its male-dominated sphere and have, thus, created a new theoretical and practical framework: anarcha-feminism. Anarcha-feminist praxis challenges both anarchism and feminism by simultaneously critiquing and confronting capitalism and patriarchy. Interviews with anarcha-feminists and anarchist scholars reveal their experiences of “anarchosexism” and their resistance to “manarchy”. The re-telling of anarchist women's experiences show the ways in which patriarchal oppression is reproduced among their male “allies”. This research highlights the political and sexual pluralities that anarcha-feminists have historically fought for, which continue to be contested and appropriated by men. Addressing concepts of free love and plural sexuality, and patterns of sexual abuse and rape within anarchist communities, this thesis uncovers the complex struggle for (and against) womens’ liberation among anarchists. Examining feminist (under)representation at anarchist bookfairs, conferences, meetings, and schools provides further insight on the gendered tensions and negotiations. Centralizing female subjects as creators of knowledge offers a subversive feminist lens through which to view and critique the cultural, social and political manifestations of anarchism.

August 16, 2011

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Introduction: “That's a feminist issue. We're dealing with anarchism right here.”

Anarcha-feminists are not women who happen to be both anarchists and feminists. Anarchism and feminism are not closely linked. They are not related. They are one. By separating anarchism and feminism, men are able to marginalize women and our struggles and to effectively cut the heart and the social out of anarchist philosophy and theory. When we challenge internal group patriarchy, men quickly relegate that "issue" to the feminist realm. "Oh, that's a feminist issue. We're dealing with anarchism right here. You should go talk to NOW (National Organization of Women) about that one." Anarchism is not just about money, brothers. It's not just about economic class. (Sallydarity)¹

Anarchist theory views all hierarchies as oppressive and proposes replacing oppressive power with horizontal power-sharing. Feminist goals of eliminating gender oppression through the self determination of women incorporate anarchist principles of mutual aid, autonomy, and anti-authoritarian networks. Second-wave feminism is widely known for consciousness-raising groups among women discussing their personal political issues. American feminist Peggy Kronegger likens the format of these politicizing gatherings to grassroots anarchist groups:

The structure of women's groups bore a striking resemblance to that of anarchist affinity groups within anarcho-syndicalist unions in Spain, France, and many other countries. Yet, we had not called ourselves anarchists and consciously organised around anarchist principles."

Feminist theory is essential to anarchism; the ways in which anarchism is a feminist issue will be a recurring theme throughout this thesis. Through my research, I have observed patterns in gendered relations at anarchist events in urban Canadian settings. My thesis connects these observations to contemporary anarcha-feminist analysis from other regions as well as historical anarcha-feminist publications and cultural production. Recognizing the role that cultural production plays in the public assertion of anarcha-feminist ideals, I have produced a video using my research content as a means of returning my findings to

the studied communities, and initiating a feminist dialogue among anarchists. Violence against women is institutionalized within anarchist communities that sexually objectify and sexually abuse women. This thesis contributes a feminist narrative which disrupts the dominant male centric anarchist voice and serves as a means to address and prevent harm caused by male manipulation and violence.

Chapter 1 “No Pretence” highlights a series of related happenings in Canadian and US anarchist communities documented through feminist response to sexual attacks from male anarchists. These events indicate a disturbing pattern of unaccountability and denial of sexual assault in anarchist scenes. Chapter 2 “Feminist Methods” describes the mixed methods I have applied in generating data for this thesis. My research gathers commentary on anarchist events and their meanings with a focus on the political ideologies, influences, activism and goals of Canadian-based feminist anarchists.

Offering a glimpse into the lives of contemporary anarcha-feminists, Chapter 3 “Feminist Epistemology” reviews themes emerging from interviews with anarchists in the Canadian context as they share their personal and political struggles in relation to anarchism and patriarchy. Chapter 4 “We Want More Than Dirt and Worms” presents, in its entirety, an interview with members of the musical group Submission Hold as they reflect on the connections between gender, power, parenthood, misogyny, and the exclusion of anarcha-feminist praxis in anarchist communities.

Faced with epistemic and physical violence in the anarchist movement and in society at large, anarcha-feminists look to a history of resistance and multifaceted struggle. Anarcha-feminists view women's struggles as simultaneously feminist and anarchist. Chapter 5 “Confronting Anarcho-sexism” examines responses from

interviewees about these intersections and why they are widely unobserved in anarchist spaces. The backlash women continue to face when identifying rapists exemplifies the institutionalized misogyny within anarchist scenes and results in anarchists defending rapists and denying rape. Chapter 6: “Predator Pedagogies” considers the context in which male-determined sexual norms are promoted to female anarchists. The institutionalization of polyamory within anarchist communities dominated by male leadership promotes male privilege and sexual access of women, creating an environment where sexual abuse is perpetuated and excused. Deconstructing these patterns of abuse requires identifying the misogyny inherent in pedagogies of male anarchists. Chapter 7 analyses the content of my film project “With Tongue, Hands, and Heart” and observes gendered patterns in the documentary subjects.

Analyzing anarcha-feminist cultural production of music, speeches and video as well as reviewing feminist histories has provided me with historical examples of anarcha-feminist activism. Exploring the pluralities of anarcha-feminist expressions, this thesis will identify the reoccurrence of sexist patterns within anarchist culture and highlight contemporary anarcha-feminist resistance.

Chapter 1: No Pretence

“There will be no future for the anarchist movement if it doesn’t also identify as an anarcha-feminist movement...Our feminisms must be plural, they must be anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-homophobic. Our inspiration must come from the actions of feminists who have helped self-identified women reach revolutionary consciousness. Our feminisms must be revolutionary.” (No Pretence, 2009)

Revolutionary Anarchist Women's Kollektive (RAWK) formed in Toronto in the late nineties “in response to the continual onslaught of male dominance in punk, anarchist and activist spaces.” In January 1998, they claimed Monday evenings as a women's only space at “Who's Emma,” a collectively-run anarchist book and record store. In the first issue of their self-published zine, *Rage*ⁱⁱⁱ, RAWK focused on violence against women within anarchist and punk communities. A woman by the name of “L” rejects the idea that communities should work with the perpetrators of such violence :

I, however, strongly believe that to be supportive of rape survivors means not supporting rapists. Doing ally work with victimisers (rapists) within the punk/anarchist scene is not only a completely ineffective way of stopping rape in our community, but it is also a contradiction to what the “scene” stands for, which is the abolishment of the state and with it, all forms of oppression... The appropriate response to a rape within a community is to exile the perpetrator from the community. Men who rape don't stop unless they have to. Men rape because they can get away with it. Men who rape are obviously not “working on their shit”...^{iv}

Perpetrators of sexual assault in anarchist communities often engage in an informal conciliatory process commonly known as “working on their shit.”^v Men in anarchist communities may identify as “working on their shit” after being reproached for sexist and sexually coercive conduct. As a voluntary perpetrator-focused response to an assault, this approach is criticized by anarcha-feminists as it often results in rapists remaining an active part of the communities they have victimized. To hold the status of “working on

your shit” provides a process of redemption and repair for the perpetrators' social identity. A similar recourse of healing and destigmatization is not created for women who survive sexual assault and seek to maintain a dignified social identity in their community. Men can simply claim to be “working on their shit” and their sexual violence against women is excused. As known predators re-offend, the distance between theory and practice is infuriating for women who demand their communities uphold a basic standard of personal security for women. Asserting her understanding of rape as ongoing assault on women that continues as a result male impunity, “L” calls on her anarchist sisters to identify and expose rapists.

Any women who has been raped feels like killing her perpetrator RAGE is an appropriate response to RAPE. (Along with many other emotions). I want NAMES. Who are the men who have sexually assaulted my anarchist sisters? Who are the women who have been hurt? I will support these women 100%. I will do nothing for the rapists but spit in their face. I want NAMES, and I want my sisters to join me in defiling the reputation of these sick men with posters stating who and what they are. Let's put the shame and the blame where it belongs – on the rapist NOT the victim.^{vi}

Calls for direct action against rapists are one method employed by anarcha-feminists who are aware of generally inadequate resolutions when sexual assaults are reported to state authorities. Another method of challenging sexism and rape culture in anarchist communities has been educational initiatives directed at male anarchists to encourage critical reflection on misogynist behavior and attitudes.

In the 2001 online questionnaire, “Are you a Manarchist?”^{vii}, anarcha-feminists coined the term ‘Manarchy’ to name and challenge sexism within anarchist communities. Highlighting the contradictions of male anarchist subcultural norms, this term plays on the irony of men professing values of anti-oppression while reproducing sexist

hierarchies. Anarcha-feminism emerged in response to sexism within the anarchist movement.

The politics of anarcha-feminism have historically focused on reproductive and sexual justice for women. Issues of sexuality are featured in early anarcha-feminist writings including acknowledgement of sexual violence as a manifestation of male power employed by anarchist men.^{viii} In conjunction with broad observations of male privilege enacted in anarchist communities, anarcha-feminists connect their political expression to their lived experiences of sexism and abuse. The 2003 zine, “Baby, I’m a Manarchist”^{ix} is a disclosure by two radical anarcha-feminist women in Portland, Oregon who had been raped by an anarchist organizer. The zine was made as a last resort to inform their community after trying unsuccessfully to negotiate with the rapist to take responsibility.

In 2008, a Halifax zine entitled “Are you a Manarchist?”^x further demonstrated the prevalence of these ongoing issues. The female author of this zine satirizes open (non-monogamous) relationships as a qualifier of anarchist praxis. Non-monogamous relationship arrangements that require women's sexual compliance to heterosexual male demands are identified by anarcha-feminists as problematic. Drawing on anarcha-feminist, anarchist, and queer theory, this thesis will explore and deconstruct open relationships as a liberating method for women in a patriarchal structure. These subcultural relationship norms can lead to the alienation of women in open relationships with men; the benefits of non-monogamous sexual practices for men are supported by a mainstream patriarchal culture that views women as sexual objects and silences women's experiences of sexual coercion. The risks of non-monogamy related to sexual health, pregnancy, child rearing, and sexual assault disproportionately impact women and are

rarely addressed by male anarchists. Despite anarcha-feminist campaigns for accountability, my research reveals that disclosures of assault in progressive communities are often met with antagonism.

In August 2009, a poster and zine circulated in Halifax, Nova Scotia, identifying a man in the anarchist community as a rapist. Like the “Baby, I’m a Manarchist” zine, “Don’t Believe His Lies”^{xi} is written by two women who united to disclose their sexual assault by the same rapist. Not coincidentally, they faced similar backlash to the women in Portland. Members of the Portland anarchist community generally expressed concern for the rapist, and disdain for possible vigilanteism. One man I had previously interviewed for this thesis redefined and reduced one of the survivor's experience of rape as “only sexual assault” (#3, male, personal communication, 2009). The victim-blaming tendency of male-dominated activist scenes is witnessed in this man’s response to a woman’s disclosures of rape.

On June 7, 2009, masked anarcha-feminists disrupted the “Anarchist Movement Conference” in London, England to expose and confront sexist oppression within the anarchist movement. Using video, they highlighted male aggression in anarchist communities by juxtaposing images of protest culture with dominant patriarchal institutions. They created an anarcha-feminist campaign called “No Pretence”^{xii} which calls for feminist change among anarchists. The widespread anarchist belief that the State is the ultimate source of oppression often minimizes women’s issues as single-issue/identity politics. A feminist analysis is needed within anarchist communities that simultaneously deny and perpetuate sexism. The women involved in the “No Pretence”

campaign advanced a feminist agenda and identified the ways in which misogyny is reproduced from the mainstream to the margins.

If the anarchist movement doesn't recognize the power structures it reproduces, its resistance will be futile. For as well as fighting sexism 'out there' we must fight sexism 'in here' and stop pretending that oppressive systems disappear at the door of the squat or the social centre. Only a movement that understands and fights its own contradictions can provide fertile ground for real and effective resistance.^{xiii}

After the event, members of “No Pretence” circulated their video online and documented their experience. Reading their weblog, we learn about the reaction at the conference and beyond. At the time of the confrontation, a male participant in the audience yelled, “Are you going to do a sexy dance for us?” Comments made about the confrontation included a dialogue between two anonymous spectators. One person asked, “Bear, was there any hotties present?”, which was responded with, “A few. One of the radical feminists who disrupted it, and who I know looked really cute in a black hoodie.”^{xiv} These reactions highlight the patriarchal culture that sexually objectifies women and thereby dismisses women’s concerns. In contrast to the aforementioned sexist question, the masked women asked provoking questions of the audience which identified sexism and sexual assault within their movements:

Ask yourselves this – do you believe sexism exists within the movement? When a woman comrade says she’s experienced sexual abuse or assault from a male comrade – what do you think? ...Ask yourselves this – Why do fewer women speak in meetings? Because they think less? What is the gender of the factory worker? Why do more women do the washing up and run creches at meetings/events? What is the gender of the career at home? Now tell us if you believe sexism exists: tell us why men rape; why more women are battered than men; why more women are used by the state to do free and unwaged work. Tell us – are you a feminist?^{xv}

Chapter 2: Feminist Methods

Emphasis on multiplicity has revived less frequently used social research methods such as oral history, case studies, and content analysis. Because feminists value inclusiveness more than orthodoxy, we allow room for creativity in all aspects of the research process. (Reinharz)^{xvi}

The methodology for this thesis included an overview of literature related to anarcha-feminist projects spanning the twentieth century, attending anarchist events and conferences in Canada, surveying self-identified female anarchists and conducting in-depth interviews with anarchist and feminist scholars and cultural workers. During the open-ended interviews, questions concerning social identity, political ideologies, historical influences of anarchist and/or feminist women and involvement with direct action strategies were explored. Research participants were selected by invitation at anarchist events and through word of mouth. I have chosen participants who identify with anarcha-feminist principles, or have studied/written about or participated within anarchist subcultures. The data for this research project were generated through interviews with thirteen people who either identified as anarcha-feminist or who were engaged in anarcha-feminist work, e.g., projects, writing, music, events and/or collectives. Set questions about their beliefs, political ideologies and activism were open-ended and often emerged into a discussion. I wanted to explore anarcha-feminist expressions and to consider how anarchist women at the turn of the 20th century have helped shape contemporary anarcha-feminist ideology and practice. The participants' answers demonstrate the creative ways in which anarcha-feminists are resisting sexism in patriarchal capitalist society, and also within their own anarchist communities.

Throughout my research, I engaged in participant observation during anarchist organizing, anarchist book-fairs and anarchist direct action. From a grounded theory perspective, I use my data to generate theory. Women's production of knowledge is exemplified through the various mediums I explore as cultural artifacts such as music, zines, journals, letters, artwork and underground newspapers. Although academic research is often grounded in literary culture, Shulamit Reinharz challenges the notion that only print and literary culture (which is classed) can be considered text. Reinharz illustrates the many forms in which "'cultural artifacts' (documents that are produced by people) can come from any aspect of human life including the writing of individuals, 'high' culture, popular culture and organizational life...The only limit to what can be considered as a cultural artifact is the researcher's imagination."^{xvii} Reinharz advocates examining "artifacts produced by women, about women and for women."^{xviii} I attended anarchist events in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Victoria and Vancouver and documented the interviews, exhibits and workshops on video. This work culminated in a twenty minute video that documents anarchist workshops and gatherings as well as interview clips to illustrate a cultural background among anarcho-feminists. This project illustrates the struggle for feminists within the anarchist milieu.

Due to the accessible nature of the video, I can easily share my findings with a large audience in hopes of creating dialogue and positive change from within the anarchist community. One of the methodological challenges I faced was obtaining video data since many anarchists engage in subversive direct action. Direct action is assertive political action that circumvents state administered democracy and applies tactics of illegal sabotage to literally or symbolically disrupt targets using methods ranging from

graffiti to mass demonstrations to paramilitary resistance. Recording with a video camera caused immediate suspicion of me as a possible provocateur/infiltrator and relegated me to the position of outsider.

Within feminist research and feminist theory production, it is common, and often encouraged, to insert oneself into the research. This occurs through the use of personal narratives and by identifying one's social location. Heidi Gottfried (1996) stresses the relevance of oneself in the research process:

To her interaction with the participants, the researcher brings her social location, culture, motivations, limitations, ignorances, skills, education, resources, familiarity with theory and methodology, trained incapacities of socialization in dominant institutions, and an outside perspective that may be useful as well as troublesome...The researcher is transformed in the process of research – influenced and taught by her respondent-participants as she influences them. Theory and practice emerge from their interaction. The researcher is ultimately responsible for the final version, however. She cannot avoid this responsibility.^{xix}

Using a personal narrative in feminist research can be beneficial in breaking down the hierarchical structure inherent in a researcher/researched relationship. Inserting oneself into research also fosters accountability for the research. This feminist research process transgresses the dominant epistemological frameworks given the androcentric bias in traditional objectivist research. Traditional philosophy advocates for fact-value separation, whereas feminist epistemologies would argue that values and facts cannot be separated, that we bring value to everything. The fundamental difference between feminist epistemology and traditional epistemology is the explicit recognition of the social and historical location of the researcher. Although both rely on similar methods, the methodological frameworks and perspectives are critical to determining the results. Feminist epistemology disrupts the androcentric hegemony in the academy.

In this sense, building a close rapport with the research subject is ideal. Having insider status has the potential to not only resolve the ethical dilemmas of exploitative research, but also to enhance the research. This is especially true for qualitative research, where the knowledge that the participant shares is often contingent on the amount of trust that they have with the researcher. I found this evident in my conversations with the interview participants. The conversations we had developed organically and our ability to relate to one another was easily negotiated by a shared language and common experience in anarchist communities. Ann Oakley (1981) was a pioneer in advocating for the engaged qualitative interview that both yield richer qualitative results and advances women's rights when she argued that it was a valid scientific method to honor women's voices. In Gayle Letherby's discussion on Oakley's 'participatory model', she reiterated her sentiment: "Letting women speak for themselves and (in part at least) set the research agenda is likely to produce work which can be used by women to challenge stereotypes, oppression and exploitation."^{xx}

Researchers should be aware of their own bias, and continue to engage in reflexivity to examine how their own experience is shaping and influencing their research. My social location determines my access to knowledge, how it is shaped and, consequently, reproduced. As an insider, there was a risk in romanticizing participants or communities, neglecting to disclose relevant details, or overlooking things that may be taken for granted as an insider. There is also the potential to pick up on cultural cues, language and traditions that cannot be understood easily by an outsider. An insider might have a better understanding of boundaries, reducing the risk of breaking boundaries and potentially losing connections. Insider research has the potential to move the research

beyond the descriptive or voyeuristic and contribute scholarship that comes from the community that is being researched. One anticipated goal of this project is to benefit the anarcha-feminist community by distributing its findings through video documentation. The research I have completed to date has shown that sexism manifests even within anarchist communities that claim to be politically conscious, non-hierarchical and non-oppressive. This information could lead to real change through politicization, which opens the possibility of mobilization.

Sherry Gorelick (1996) reminds us that "the use of such techniques as interviews, participant observation, and oral history helps us describe the world as perceived by the persons studied, but it may remain confined within their perceptions and thus not be able to provide them with much more than they do not already know."^{xxi} It is then important as a feminist researcher to move beyond the research and into the praxis, where the knowledge acquired can move beyond existing theory within the academic community and toward practice within anarcha-feminist communities.

Chapter 3: Anarcha-feminist Epistemology

While anarchism has provided a framework for the transformation required, for far too long even this revolutionary ideology has been largely male identified; male articulated, male targeted and male exclusive in both its language and participation. It has therefore been unfortunately lacking in vital analysis especially with regard to the psychological and physical realities of oppression experienced by the majority of the human population: women. (Flick Ruby)^{xxii}

A popular understanding of anarchism as a liberatory theory and practice is encumbered by the many misconceptions about anarchy. The social construction of anarchists as violent terrorists has been created due to the threat that anarchists pose to the state, and this association with violence is sustained by mass media. Societal myths about anarchism illustrate the complex and subversive political arena that anarchism occupies in society. Similarly, feminism is distorted in mainstream and subcultural realms as a movement threatening to emasculate men and topple the mythical edifice that is the rational, stable patriarchal family and society. Stereotypes of feminists and anarchists often accompany narratives of repression in my historical overview, as well as the interviews featured in Chapters 4 and 5, these stereotypes are addressed by anarcha-feminists who seek to explain or dispel myths of crazed, violent activists.

Starting from the 1886 Haymarket Square as an event of extraordinary influence on anarcha-feminist Emma Goldman, this chapter traces the influence anarchist and feminist theory on anarcha-feminist projects in the late 19th and 20th century. On May 1, 1886, the Federation of Organized Trade and Labor Unions organized a general strike, demanding an eight-hour workday. Eighty thousand people participated in the strike,

marking the first May Day, which continues to be honored and celebrated among anarchists today. Anarchists held a demonstration at Haymarket Square in Chicago in response to police killing two strikers. Police attacked the crowd and a bomb exploded, leaving seven officers dead and over sixty civilians injured.^{xxiii} Eight anarchists went to trial for the bombing. Albert Parsons, August Spies, Louis Lingg, Adolph Fischer and George Engel were sentenced to die by hanging, Michael Schwabb and Samuel Fieldon were sentenced to life imprisonment, and August Neebe received fifteen years.^{xxiv} The judge's remarks illustrates the perceived threat anarchists posed to the state. "Not because you have caused the Haymarket bomb, but because you are Anarchists, you are on trial."^{xxv} The Haymarket Tragedy ignited a powerful anarchist critique of State power. Following the death of her husband Albert, Lucy Parsons gave an interview for the *New York World* magazine where she condemns government.

All political government must necessarily become despotic, because all government tends to become centralized in the hands of a few, who breed corruption among themselves from the body and in a very short time disconnect themselves from the body of the people. The American Republic is a good illustration.^{xxvi}

Anarchist thought was spreading among the working-class and the Haymarket Tragedy exemplified government violence and corruption. As anarchists became more of a political threat, the State retaliated with increasing resistance to radicals. William Preston, author of *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals*, argued that the Haymarket Tragedy marked the end of anarchism. He also discussed the ways in which the United States branded the stereotype of immigrant as radical into nativist images.

If the Haymarket riot finished off anarchism, it also created native stereotypes that lasted for many years and helped implant in the public mind the distorted image of the subversive foreigner. Although the bomb thrower of 1886 was never found, the community and the courts convicted the anarchists. In the future imagery of fear, “a ragged, unwashed, long-haired, wild-eyes fiend, armed with smoking revolver and bomb – to say nothing of the dagger he sometimes carried between his teeth” was to represent the anarchist at work. “No nativist image prevailed more widely than that of the immigrant as a lawless creature given over to violence and disorder.”^{xxvii}

While Preston asserted that anarchism died in 1886, it could be argued that the Haymarket tragedy was another birth of anarchism, despite the dominant representation of the violent anarchist. Emma Goldman, a well-known anarchist orator, references the Haymarket Tragedy as a “spiritual awakening” that inspired her to move to New York City and live in an anarchist commune.^{xxviii}

Goldman was born in Russia and spent her childhood living in a Jewish ghetto. She emigrated with her sister Helena from St. Petersburg, Russia to Rochester, New York and upon her arrival at age 17, she worked in the garment industry doing piece work. In her speech entitled, “An Anarchist Look at Life,” delivered at the 29th annual literary luncheon in 1933, she reminisces on this critical moment:

Then came America, America with its huge factories, the pedaling of a machine for ten hours a day at two dollars fifty a week. It was followed by the greatest event in my life, which made me what I am. It was the tragedy of Chicago, in 1887, when five of the noblest men were judicially murdered by the State of Illinois. They were the famous anarchists of America--Albert Parsons, Spies, Fischer, Engels and Lingg who were legally assassinated on the 11th of November, 1887. Brave young Lingg cheated his executioners, preferring to die by his own hand, while three other comrades of the executed--Neebe, Fielden and Schwab--were doomed to prison. The death of those Chicago martyrs was my spiritual birth: their ideal became the motive of my entire life.”^{xxix}

Goldman's ideas on love and marriage were particularly revolutionary considering women did not have citizenship rights and were considered property of man either by husband, father, or state. Emma Goldman advocated for free love and believed that marriage was a prison for women. Her personal choice to live communally with her comrades and have multiple lovers was intrinsically connected to her ideologies of autonomy, freedom and non-hierarchical living.

The institution of marriage makes a parasitic of woman, an absolute dependent. It incapacitates her for life's struggle, annihilates her social consciousness, paralyzes her imagination and then imposes its gracious protection, which is in reality a snare, a travesty on human character... Marriage but defiles, outrages, and corrupts her fulfillment. Does it not say to woman, only when you follow me shall you bring forth life? Does it not condemn her to the block, does it not degrade and shame her if she refuses to buy her right to motherhood by selling herself? Does not marriage only sanction motherhood, even though conceived in hatred, in compulsion? Yet, if motherhood be of free choice, of love, or ecstasy, of deviant passion, does it not place a crown of thorns upon as an innocent head and carve in letters of blood the hideous epithet, Bastard? Were marriage to contain all the virtues claimed for it, its crimes against motherhood would exclude it forever from the realm of love. Love, the strongest and deepest element in all life, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy; love, the defier of all laws, of all conventions; love, the freest, the most powerful moulder of human destiny; how can such an all-compelling force be synonymous with that poor little State and Church-begotten weed, marriage? Free love? As if love is anything but free!...^{xxx}

In her essay, "A Woman Without A Country," her feminist politics are explicit: "The unfortunate woman is literally without a country, with no legal right to live anywhere on earth, save by the temporary toleration of some passport officials."^{xxxi} Goldman was pioneering feminist rights within the anarchist movement. Her male anarchist comrades such as Peter Kropotkin, known as the grandfather of anarchy, neglected feminist issues. During a conversation they shared about the anarchist newspaper, *Free Society*,

Kropotkin commented “The paper is doing splendid work, but it would do so much more if it would not waste so much space discussing sex.”^{xxxii} Goldman writes about their argument in her autobiography and discloses that Kropotkin blamed the inequality of women on inferior intellect. Goldman eventually persuaded Kropotkin that the sex question was important.

On her speaking tours, Emma Goldman often addressed middle-class women, whereas her male comrades targeted working-class males. Her ability to try and bridge alliances with middle-class women was unique and helped advance her anarchist principles:

Anarchism, then, really stands for the liberation of the human mind from the domination of religion; the liberation of the human body from the dominion of property; liberation from the shackles and restraints of government. Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free groupings of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth; an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations. Anarchism does not stand for military drill and uniformity; it does, however, stand for the spirit of revolt, in whatever form against anything that hinders human growth. All anarchists agree in that, as they also agree in their opposition to the political machinery as a means of bringing about the great social change.^{xxxiii}

However, in her autobiography, Goldman recounts an experience when she was dancing with a comrade who suggested to her that an anarchist should not behave so recklessly, as it would hurt the Cause,

I did not believe that a Cause which stood for, a beautiful ideal, for anarchism, for release and freedom from conventions and prejudice, should demand the denial of life and joy. I insisted that our Cause could not expect me to become a nun and that the movement should not be turned into a cloister. If it meant that, I did not want it. "I want freedom, the right to self-expression, everybody's right to beautiful, radiant things." Anarchism meant that to me, and I would live it in spite of the whole world

--- prisons, persecution, everything. Yes, even in spite of the condemnation of my own closest comrades I would live my beautiful ideal.^{xxxiv}

For Goldman, the struggle for women's self-determination included individual autonomy and expression. She believed social change would occur by revolution and direct action would help achieve this goal. She explains in her essay, "Anarchism: What it Really Stands For":

Direct action against the authority in the shop, direct action against the authority of the law, direct action against the invasive, meddling authority of our moral code, is the logical, consistent method of Anarchism. Will it not lead to a revolution? Indeed, it will. No real social change has ever come about without a revolution. People are either not familiar with their history, or they have not yet learned that revolution is but thought carried into action.^{xxxv}

In 1906, Emma Goldman launched *Mother Earth*, an anarchist magazine which published many prominent anarchists such as Voltairine De Cleyre, Peter Kropotkin, Leo Tolstoy, and Margaret Anderson. Goldman wrote about her commitment to the reproductive rights of women in her 1916 essay, "The Social Aspect of Birth Control,"

I stand as one of the sponsors of a world-wide movement, a movement which aims to set women free from the terrible yoke and bondage of enforced pregnancy; a movement which demands the right for every child to be well born; a movement which shall help free labor from its eternal dependence; a movement which shall usher into the world a new kind of motherhood. I consider this movement important and vital enough to defy all the laws upon the statute books.^{xxxvi}

Goldman's anarcho-feminist standpoint on reproductive rights for women is evident when she says "nor will I make peace with a system which degrades women to a mere incubator."^{xxxvii} Her gendered analysis of state control is mirrored in the second wave feminist movement, which argued against the government legislating women's bodies.

Emma Goldman was a pioneer in reproductive rights for women and she propagandized for birth control. Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood, later took up this cause in her book “Woman Rebel” and cited Goldman as a huge influence. Sanger would later advocate for the sterilization of Third World women. She wrote that she had to “turn away from the wives of wage slaves, and toward women of wealth and intelligence for support.”^{xxxviii} Goldman was sentenced to prison for distributing birth control information in April of 1916, shortly after “The Social Aspects of Birth Control,” was published in the *Mother Earth* special edition “Birth Control Number.” Goldman linked the criminalization of birth control to economic pursuits and labor demands of capitalism. She notes the domestication of women, and the devaluation of caring work when she remarks:

There is a mental awakening of women, that plays no small part in behalf of Birth Control. For ages she has carried her burdens. Has done her duty a thousandfold more than the soldier on the battlefield. After all, the soldier's business is to take life. For that he is paid by the state, eulogized by political charlatans, and upheld by public hysteria. But women's function is to give life, yet neither the state nor politicians nor public opinion have ever made the slightest provision in return for the life women have given.^{xxxix}

Goldman critiqued first-wave feminists for their focus on suffrage, viewing this cause as merely illusionary in liberating woman. In her essay, “The Tragedy of Women’s Emancipation,” she explores these ideas in detail. While first-wave feminists advocated for temperance and suffrage, anarchist Emma Goldman rejected both of these pursuits. As she warned in *Mother Earth* “The ballot box is the most potent factor for well-ordered oppression and exploitation. It hypnotizes its victims into the belief of political sovereignty and independence, while at the same time still firmer riveting the chains of

bondage.”^{xl} Anarchist politics encompass feminist politics because they are committed to abolishing hierarchy and domination. Anarchism differs from mainstream feminism because it believes the state is an inherently oppressive institution. Goldman illustrates her feminist consciousness within anarchism:

The movement for woman's emancipation has so far made but the first step in that direction. It is to be hoped that it will gather strength to make another. The right to vote, or equal civil rights, may be good demands, but true emancipation begins neither in the polls or in the courts. It begins in woman's soul. History tells us that every oppressed class gained true liberation from its masters through its own efforts. It is necessary that woman learn that lesson, that she realize that her freedom will reach as far as her power to reach her freedom reaches. It is, therefore, far more important for her to begin with her inner regeneration, to cut loose from the weight of prejudices, traditions, and customs. The demand for equal rights in every vocation in life is just and fair; but, after all, the most vital right is the right to love and be loved. Indeed, if partial emancipation is to become a complete and true emancipation of woman, it will have to do away with the ridiculous notion that to be loved, to be sweetheart and mother, is synonymous with being slave or subordinate. It will have to do away with the absurd notion of the dualism of the sexes, or that man and woman represent two antagonistic worlds.^{xli}

Goldman's sentiments echoed those of Louise Michel, who was exiled from France for leading the anarchist Paris Commune in 1871. The book, “*Louise Michel*,” edited by Nick Maclellan, chronicles the important features of her life and politics as an anarchist woman. Michel was another anarcho-feminist who rejected suffrage although she pioneered women's rights. In 1888, she urged women to not be fooled by “the false promises of the suffrage, it is a mirage.”^{xlii}

Although Goldman engaged intimately with lesbian women like Louise Michel, she framed women's liberation within a context of heterosexual relationships. In “The Tragedy of Women's Emancipation,” she argued “Life's greatest treasure is the love of a

man and woman's most glorious privilege is the right to give birth to a child.”^{xliii} This heterosexist idea is further established in a letter written to Alexander Berkman in 1928: “...Really, the lesbians are a crazy lot. Their antagonism to the male is almost a disease with them. I simply can't bear such narrowness...”^{xliv} Bonny Haaland, author of “*Emma Goldman: Sexuality and the Impurity of the State*” emphasizes this point further, “For Emma, “intensely emotionally significant personal relationships” must possess a heterosexual element, despite the apparent contradiction of her own relationship with fellow anarchist, Louise Michel, which she described as “soul-expanding.””^{xlv} Goldman's dismissal of lesbians reflects the hetero-patriarchal framework in which her views on sexual liberation are formed.

During the Russian Revolution in 1917, the political climate between the Soviet Union and the United States, known as the “Red Scare,” brought about severe consequences for immigrants. Emma Goldman was arrested for conspiring to avoid the draft.^{xlvi} She was later indicted for violating the Espionage Act, a law which targeted radicals and anarchists. During her trial, Goldman had the opportunity to address the jury:

It is organized violence on top which creates individual violence at the bottom. It is the accumulated indignation against organized wrong, organized crime, organized injustice which drives the political offender to his act. To condemn him means to be blind to the causes which make him. I can no more do it, nor have I the right to, than the physician who were to condemn the patient for his disease. You and I and all of us who remain indifferent to the crimes of poverty, of war, of human degradation, are equally responsible for the act committed by the political offender. May I therefore be permitted to say, in the words of a great teacher: "He who is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." Does that mean advocating violence?^{xlvii}

Goldman's *Mother Earth*, was shut down in 1917 following a police raid.^{xlviii} On December 21, 1919, she was deported from the United States to the Soviet Union along

with 248 radicals. A political cartoon that circulated throughout Yiddish newspapers during this time featured Uncle Sam watching the deportees leave aboard the S.S. Buford stating “it is more blessed to give than to receive,” reflecting the deportation delirium in the United States and the growing anti-immigrant sentiment.^{xlix} In her book, *“Emma Goldman in Exile,”* Alice Wexler relates Goldman’s description of her deportation: “This is the greatest day in my life. I once found political freedom in America. Now the doors are closed there to free-thinkers, and the enemies of capitalism find once more sanctuary in Russia.”¹ She left Russia in 1921, in disillusionment with the Bolsheviks, and lived in Europe and Canada propagandizing for the anarchists in the Spanish Civil War until her death in 1940.

During the Spanish Civil War, an internationally networked broad-based anarcha-feminist movement was building in Spain. Mujeres Libres formed in 1936 to mobilize women in the anarchist revolution. Over 20,000 women joined the movement to advance an anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal analysis:

The organization led a triple-struggle: on the chauvinism (including anarchist) front, on the education and cultural front, and on the front of women’s place in the revolution. It is, to date, the only example in the world of a grassroots organization that closely links class struggle with anti-patriarchal struggle in order to culminate in a “proletarian feminism”^{li}

Members of Mujeres Libres rejected the term feminist as it was associated with liberalism and the West. They understood feminism to have little to do with abolishing capitalism and felt that many feminists were actually invested in capital and benefited from the capitalist system. However, the political ideology and practice of Mujeres Libres is widely considered to be intrinsically feminist because they organized for and by women,

resisted patriarchy, and rejected dominant gender roles. Their critiques of patriarchy were woven within an anti-capitalist framework as they saw both institutions interdependent.

And class struggle in all of that? Patriarchal oppression has repercussions on class struggle. We are visibly not all equals {in front of exploitation... To paraphrase Orwell: all of the proletariat is exploited, but some are more exploited than others! All indicators show that women are subjected to more than their share of exploitation and oppression. Women make up the bulk of the battalions of poverty, discrimination, precariousness and non-unionized. Today, the majority of the proletariat is made up of people who, in addition to "generic" class oppression, also live situations of specific oppressions (racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc.), we have to take that into account in our analyses and strategies. The image of a macho class struggle, between men, needs to be banished.¹¹¹

Mujeres Libres reclaimed a new anarchist narrative that is women-centered. They negotiated a critique of patriarchy that was unique to mainstream feminist rights-based causes. Like Emma Goldman, Mujeres Libres viewed marriage as an oppressive institution and advanced a model of free love:

We speak of sexual liberation in the same breath. Funny idea. The fact of living in a "union libre" (living together without being married - common law, I guess?), with or without children, does not mean that you are free to chose your type of relationship. In fact, these new kinds of "domesticities" are often imposed by the State through all kinds of policies, legislation and interventions related to marriage, divorce, child custody, etc. Secondly, heterosexuality and monogamy are always dominant models imposed and conditioned by advertising and the State. Finally, if living in cohabitation is now a choice that is respected, that is because there is nothing about it that is a concern (threat?) to the State. This choice corresponds more to a personal desire than an attempt to radically alter society.¹¹²

For Mujeres Libres, the revolution involved a sexual revolution determined by women.

Sheila Rowbotham's articles, "Anarchism and Rebel Women" and "Contemporary Anarchism," are particularly significant in anarcha-feminist theory and for the recovery of the history of anarchism from the 1940s to the 1970s because of the lack of historical

scholarship during this period. While William Preston marks the death of anarchism after the 1886 Haymarket tragedy, Sheila Rowbatham cites 1937 as the end of anarchism as a solidified and global movement and recalls the Anarchists International in Paris denouncing the Anarchists during the Spanish Civil War for negotiating with the Spanish government.^{liv} The monthly anarchist journal, *Anarchy*, published from 1961-1970 by Freedom Press is a rare example of anarchist thought developed in the sixties. The editor, Colin Ward, also edited a book with selected articles from *Anarchy*, called, *A Decade of Anarchy (1961-1970)*. This book is a collection of primary historical documents of the anarchist movement which continued to persevere long after the Haymarket tragedy and after the Spanish Civil War. This book also reprinted Sally Anne's 1930 article, "To Be or Not To Be a Female Delinquent." In it she writes about female delinquency and rebellion:

At the beginning of this article I stated that delinquency was a very useful weapon in the social and political sphere, and this, to my mind, appears to be one of the few constructive ways of viewing female delinquency. Lombroso's and Pollak's theories are bizarre, Freud's is laughable, and most of the physiologists and sociologists see only certain aspects. A female delinquent is very much part and parcel of society – at times she reflects its sick values, at other times her action is a positive rebellion against the values of society.^{lv}

Anne is the only female author in this book, and there is only one other female co-author. As theorists and activists, anarcha-feminists struggle within both their affiliated movements to improve anarchist analysis in feminist realms and promote feminist analysis in anarchist circles.

In the mid 1970s, Peggy Kroneggar, editor of the American feminist magazine, *The Second Wave*, published an article titled "Anarchism, the Feminist Connection." She invites feminists to adopt an anarchist perspective, "If we want to "bring down the

patriarchy,” we need to talk about anarchism... Challenging sexism means challenging all hierarchy – economic, political, and personal. And that means an anarcha-feminist revolution.”^{lvi} In 1974, Lynne Farrow wrote a similar article for feminist magazine, *Aurora*, entitled “Feminism as Anarchism” which identified “feminism as practicing what anarchism preaches.”^{lvii} Rowbotham dedicates a section in her chapter, “Contemporary Anarchism,” (1992) to anarcha-feminism. She argues that feminist consciousness-raising groups, common in second-wave feminism, can be traced back to earlier dates with anarchist affinity groups. She notes that the politics of radical feminism during the late 1960s and early 1970s were similar to anarchist theory in the sense that they both targeted the family, the state, patriarchy, and the Judeo-Christian tradition as sources of oppression. In her essay, Rowbotham notes: “The anarcha-feminist critique of male power was even extended to the anarchist movement itself, which despite its libertarian ideals had failed to abolish the subjection of women, even among radicals. Feminism was perceived as vital to anarchism as anarchism was to feminism.”^{lviii} Carol Ehrlich’s 1977 essay, “Socialism, Anarchism, and Feminism,” addresses the similarities and differences between radical, socialist, and anarchist feminists.

There are, then, many issues on which radical feminists and anarchists agree. But anarchist feminists are concerned with something more. Because they are anarchists, they work to end all power relationships, all situations in which people oppress each other. Unlike some radical feminists, who are not anarchists, they do not believe that power in the hands of women could possibly lead to a non-coercive society. And unlike most socialist feminists, they do not believe that anything good can come from a mass movement with a leadership elite. In short, neither a worker’s state nor a matriarchy will end the oppression of everyone. The goal, then, is not to “seize” power, as the socialists are fond of urging, but to abolish power.^{lix}

The quarterly anarchist periodical, *Open Road* (1977- 1984), exemplifies textual lines drawn between anarchist and anarcha-feminist narratives. Published in Vancouver, *Open Road* notably included a regular column on anarcha-feminism. However, by relegating anarcha-feminist thought to a column in an entire paper, the message is clear: anarcha-feminism is a side-note in the anarchist text. Tensions caused by the token inclusion and/or outright aversion to feminist analysis contributes to the decline of anarchist projects. The gender analysis implicit in anarchist intentions is often not enough to address feminist issues. Anarcha-feminists observe that anarchist theory is not actually practiced by many anarchists as the expressions of women within and beyond their communities are devalued. Because anarchists presume to not privilege any one type of oppression, the material difference between women and men is often minimized or denied. Sheila Rowbotham notes that “anarchism’s claim to encompass all aspects of freedom made it particularly difficult for women to raise specific inequalities.”^{lx} Rowbotham comments on the many barriers that anarcha-feminists face within the male-dominated anarchist scene:

The rhetoric of freedom disguised as an implicit division of spheres in which men prevailed both culturally and theoretically. For example, in Europe, anarchist male culture was based in the cafés. So women with families were implicitly excluded... Also anarchist appeals for women to defy convention ignored the realities and consequences for women. Women who had children in free unions, like Rose Witcop and Lilian Wolfe, faced much greater difficulties than men because of both the economic situation of women and sexual attitudes.^{lxi}

The economic disadvantages and double-duty that women experience affect their abilities to participate in a male-dominated public arena. Rowbotham also remarks on a gendered

division of labor within anarchist circles. She notes the dichotomies between productive and reproductive labor are linked to traditional gender roles. She explains:

A theoretical fragmentation had arisen by the early twentieth century in which an encompassing vision of resistance against oppression, self-emancipation, and social emancipation was difficult. The dynamic faith in action that infused anarchism and syndicalism, as well as some strands of feminism had connected sexual control with women's autonomy internationally. For example, Hiratsuka Raicho's feminist journal in Japan translated Emma Goldman before World War I. But a dualism emerges by which male workers take control over production and women control reproduction. This preoccupation with control touched only the surface of the problem of how women were to redefine erotic union and autonomy^{lxii}.

Anarcha-feminists reconstitute and redefine their sexuality according to their pluralistic needs, redefining a sexist culture of domination and abuse with direct action and cultural production. Anarcha-feminist bands, such as the UK based Crass, (1977) positively influenced male dominated punk and protest subcultures through feminist direct action, political art, creative protest, and slogans.

The lyrics of Crass show the connections between the proliferation of anarchist politics in the 1970s and anarcha-feminist issues raised by anarchists like Emma Goldman at the turn of the century. Sheila Rowbotham acknowledges the political anarchist lyrics of punk music and cites the UK band the Sex Pistols, who largely appealed to mainstream, suburban youth.^{lxiii} In 1975 "Anarchy in the UK" by the Sex Pistols was a popular anthem of anarchist youth rebellion. The guitarist, "Sid Vicious," is widely known to have stabbed and murdered his girlfriend Nancy Spungen in 1978, as depicted (and glorified) in the popular punk movie, *Sid and Nancy*. Crass viewed the music business as a capitalist industry and criticized mainstream punk bands like the Sex Pistols who commercialized the image of punk, saying "too many promises have been

made from stages only to be forgotten on the streets.”^{lxiv} Crass developed their own authentic style of music, political activism and dress.

Born with the name, Bronwyn Lloyd Jones, Eve Libertine adopted her name when she joined the band Crass as a singer and songwriter. Each band member performed under symbolic pseudonyms, Joy de Vivre, Steve Ignorant, Penny Rimbaud, G. Sus, and Phil Free. But it was Eve Libertine and Joy de Vivre who explicitly advanced anarcho-feminism and dedicated an entire album to feminist politics. During the 1970s, Eve Libertine and Joy de Vivre pushed the boundaries of second-wave feminism by contributing an anarchist analysis and philosophy. Although many second-wave feminists viewed marriage as an institution oppressive to women, anarchists like Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre, Eve Libertine and Joy de Vivre considered all hierarchies, including privileging intimate relationships above platonic relationships to be problematic. Eve Libertine condemned all forms of romantic love, arguing it was obsessive and possessive. In her song, *Darling*, she uses wordplay to demonstrate her belief that romantic love was suppressive to one’s character:

*They sell us love as divinity, when it's only a social obscenity.
Underneath we're all lovable. Hello, hero, hero hello. Obscene
sentimental, hero, hello. Obsession, obsession, hello, hello. Desire for
protection, hero, hello. Protect your possession, enola hello. Possession,
possession, hero, hello. Obsession, obsession, hello, hello. Obscene
sentimental, hero, hello.*^{lxv}

This is reminiscent of Voltairine De Cleyre’s 1908 essay, “Those Who Marry do Ill”. De Cleyre denounces marriage and advocates instead for free-love, autonomy and true independence. She illuminates the oppressive nature of marriage as an institution when she says:

*That love and respect may last, I would have unions rare and
impermanent. That life may grow, I would have men and women remain
separate personalities. Have no common possessions with your lover
more than you might freely have with one not your lover. Because I
believe that marriage steals love, brings respect into contempt, outrages
all the privacies and limits the growth of both parties, I believe that "they
who marry do ill."*^{lxvi}

The Crass song, Berkertex Bride, implies marriage is a State tactic to control women and maintain their subordinate role under patriarchy.

*One God.
One Church.
One husband.
One wife.
Sordid sequences in brilliant life,
Supports and props and punctuation
To our flowing realities and realizations
We're talking with words that have been used before
To describe us as goddesses, mothers and whores
To describe us as women, describe us as men
To set out the rules of this ludicrous game
And it's all played carefully, a delicate balance,
A masculine/feminine perfect alliance
Does the winner take all?
What love is your grasping?
What vision is left and is anyone asking?
What vision is left and is anyone asking?
She's a Berkertex bride
Bride.
BRIBE.*^{lxvii}

The album *Penis Envy* (1981), mocked Sigmund Freud's sexist concept that women had penis envy of men. The song "Bata Motel" was charged under the 1959 Obscene Publication Act, but was later repealed after a ban was placed on the song. The lyrics of this song expose the many forms in which men physically brutalize women and maintain the subordination of women:

*I've got a five, four, three, two, one
I've got a pair of red heels on.*

*Strap my ankles, break my heels,
 Make me kneel, make me feel.
 Turn, turn, turn, like a clockwork doll,
 Put in your key and give me a whirl.
 Tease me, tease me, the reason to play,
 In my red high-heels I can't get away.
 I'll be your bonsai, your beautiful bonsai,
 Your black-eyed bonsai, erotically rotting.
 Will my tiny feet fit your desire?
 Warped and tied I walk on fire.
 Burn me out, twist my wrists,
 I promise not to shout, beat me with your fists.^{lxviii}*

This passage deals with the physical domination and domestication of women. Eve uses the metaphor of a bonsai to demonstrate the ways in which women are pruned and clipped by men. One of her examples of the physical shaping of women by men is through foot binding. She also uses the red high heels as a symbol of constructed femininity and illustrates the subordinate, domesticated position of women by representing her as an inanimate object, a doll. The impossible standards of the feminine ideal requires submission and repression and this is manifested physically e.g. the confining and shaping of bodies. In this song, the red high heel also evokes physical dependence on men, as women “can’t get away” in them. Eve Libertine’s emphasis on feminist politics solidifies the anarcha-feminist connection.

Overall, the reaction was positive, although there were a few punks who objected to a record with ‘just girls on it.’ Surprisingly, the press seemed to like the album, but that was completely undermined by their saying at the same time that the women in the band ‘were attractive enough to be taken seriously.’ Since that time, it is clear from the feedback I have received over the years that the album has had a hugely positive effect on women, and also on men, from all over the world.^{lxix}

This quote also demonstrates the sexism within punk culture and the sexual

objectification of women. Before the album *Penis Envy* was released, feminism was a prevalent issue woven into their politics and work. In Maria Raha's book, *Cinderella's Big Score, Women of the Punk and Indie Underground*, she highlights De Vivre's lyrics to the song "Woman":

*Fuck is women's money.
We pay with our bodies.
There is no purity in motherhood,
No beauty.
Just bribery.
It's all the fucking same.
We are all slaves to our sexual histories.*^{lxx}

Maria Raha argues that de Vivre's lyrics were uniquely non-academic with respect to the larger mainstream feminist movement, thereby creating an inclusiveness that helped make feminism more accessible. De Vivre and Libertine were able to connect to an audience on a grassroots level and introduced a feminist politic within their band. Libertine recounts her experience of joining the band through a gendered analysis:

Before I joined the band, I always went along to the gigs and was always moved by the raw energy. In the early days Crass quite often emptied venues, leaving me about the only person in the audience. Following a one-off series of gigs in New York, I began to feel there was a rather one-dimensional quality to what was then an all-male outfit – the onstage politics lacked a feminist angle, a problem that was easily solved by Joy and myself joining my band.^{lxxi}

As individual artists and collectively with Crass, Eve Libertine and Joy de Vivre helped create a resurgence in anarcho-feminism within punk subculture in the UK during the 1970s. The entire band lived on an anarchist commune and wore black clothing as a political statement against punk conformist culture and "as a protest against the narcissistic peacockery of fashion punks."^{lxxii} In his book, *"Reinventing Anarchy,"* Howard Ehrlich explains the deep significance of the color black for anarchists:

Why is our flag black? Black is a shade of negation. The black flag is the negation of all flags... It is anger and outrage at the insult to human intelligence implied in the pretenses, hypocrisies, and cheap chicaneries of governments. Black is also a color of mourning; the black flag which cancels out the nation also mourns its victims, the countless millions murdered in wars, external and internal, to the greater glory and stability of some bloody state. It mourns for those whose labor is robbed (taxed) to pay for the slaughter and oppression of other human beings. It mourns not only the death of the body but the crippling of the spirit under authoritarian and hierarchic systems; it mourns the millions of brain cells blacked out with never a chance to light up the world. It is a color of inconsolable grief. But black is also beautiful... It is a color of determination, of resolve, of strength, a color by which all others are clarified and defined. So black is negation, is anger, is outrage, is mourning, is beauty, is hope, is the fostering and sheltering of new forms of human life and relationship on and with this earth.^{lxxiii}

The black flag remains an important symbol for anarchists and interviews with contemporary anarchist women reveal that many choose to wear black as a political aesthetic.

In Germany during the 1970s, anarcha-feminists were organizing for reproductive and sexual justice. In an interview with the German based anarcha-feminist collective, Rote Zora (Red Zora), members of this direct action group state the motivations behind their activism.

"We strike back" - this slogan of the women of May 1968 is no longer as controversial today regarding individual violence against women. But it is still very controversial, most of the time taboo, as an answer to the power conditions that steadily produce this violence.^{lxxiv}

Published in 1984, this interview outlines the many militant actions that Rote Zora members carried out. Beginning in 1974 with the bombing of the Supreme Court in Kariaruhue in response to the court's withdrawal from a possible reform of restrictive abortion law in Germany, Rote Zora presented an anarcha-feminist critique of state supported sexism as well as patriarchal dynamics within the male-dominated Left.

We don't like the left "division of labour" under the motto: the women for the women's question, the men for the general political themes. Nobody can take away from us the responsibility for changing out everyday life. Therefore for example we have set fire to the fancy cars of lawyers of "slumlord" Kanssen, who were responsible for a series of brutal evictions.^{lxxv}

Employing tactics that ranged from different types of public graffiti to timely attacks on government buildings and sexist establishments, Rote Zora asserted that "the legal route is not sufficient because the usual repression and structures of violence are legal...oppression is only recognized through resistance."^{lxxvi} Members desired multiple avenues of resistance for women; they were wary when feminist demands were directed at state reforms leaving patriarchal capitalism and state power intact. They argued:

Our dream is that everywhere small bands of women will exist, that in every city a rapist, a women trader, a battering husband, a misogynist publisher, a porn trader, a pig gynecologist, should have to feel that a band of women will find them to attack them and make them look silly in public. For example that it will be written on his house who he is and what he did, on his car, at his job – women power everywhere!^{lxxvii}

As Rote Zora identified and sought to eliminate the violence, risks, and fear impacting women globally, they used an autonomous model that they hoped would inspire future decentralized resistance to patriarchal oppression.

In 1989, the revolutionary paper *Love and Rage* gathered and published anarchist writing from Mexico, the United States and Canada. It later solidified as a membership organization in 1993, The Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation. Despite their forwarding of anarchist thought and practice for nine years, they eventually fell apart as an organization. To present a critical analysis of the fall of *Love and Rage*, the Fire By Night Organizing Committee created a pamphlet to discuss the internal problems. They

named the pamphlet, “After Winter Must Come Spring: a Self-Critical Evaluation of the Life and Death of the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation.” The Committee cites sexism within the movement as one of the key contributing factors to its demise:

In the end, the individual and informal strategies we relied on were not enough to successfully combat the deeply entrenched domination in Love and Rage. Aside from our inconsistent work in the struggle for reproductive freedom, and welfare organizing done by one or two members, Love and Rage never did any other explicitly feminist long-term work.^{lxxviii}

A more recent example of international feminist resistance is found in the actions of street activists Mujeres Creando in Bolivia. Interviewed for *New Internationalist* magazine by Katherine Ainger, the founders of Mujeres Creando - Maria Galindo, Juileta Paredes, and Monica Mendoza – say in the traditional left movement that they “only served the tea or their role was a purely sexual one, or they were nothing more than secretaries.”^{lxxix} As an active street based movement connecting with low-income women involved in a campaign protesting odious debt from microcredit loans, the Mujeres Creando took part in a trip to La Paz on July 2, 2001. The protest occupied government buildings including the banking supervisory agency where 1,000 debtors detained 94 of the institution's functionaries.^{lxxx} This application of direct action led to the concession of having some debts excused and proves the efficacy of women-led social movements to get results from power.

Commenting on the conduct of their male supporters Bolivian anarcha-feminists describe a reality similar to North American anarchist scenes. The willingness of pro-feminist male-anarchists to support anarcha-feminists seems to fade at the prospect of men taking the initiative to organize other men to resist patriarchy.

The men that sympathize with us follow us if they're interested in everything, but they keep wanting us to be like their mothers, feeding them; they're a little lazy because they don't want to accept the challenge of making their own group.^{lxxxii}

Patriarchal gender roles are re-inscribed by supportive male allies within the anarchist milieu. This can be observed in the heterosexist male promotion of open relationships and polyamory in anarchist communities. This concept will be explored further in Chapter 6, “Predator Pedagogy”.

Radicals like Emma Goldman established an anarcha-feminist connection by engaging feminist thought with anarchist practice. This praxis and her voice, an anarcha-feminist voice, continues to speak to anarchists and radicals. The anarcha-feminist praxis of Emma Goldman initiated the hybrid relationship of anarcha-feminism that is explicitly adopted in the 1970s with Eve Libertine and Joy de Vivre who transgressed the boundaries of punk music, rejected gender roles and advanced feminist politics in their lyrics. One of the major accomplishments of contemporary anarcha-feminists is the riot grrrl movement which developed in the 1990s. Many feminist punk bands came out of this movement such as Spitboy, Bikini Kill, Detestation, and Submission Hold. Maria Raha rightly connects de Vivre’s lyrics (as well as Eve’s lyrics) to the riot grrrl phenomenon of the 1990’s.^{lxxxiii} The next chapter includes an in-depth interview with members of the band Submission Hold (1993-2005).

Chapter 4: “We Want More Than Dirt and Worms”

In addition to the aforementioned sexist barriers, anarchist communities in the Canadian context have a limited adaptivity to diversity and transitions in people's lives. A method I have chosen to reflect this inflexibility is the inclusion of an entire interview I conducted with two members of the well know Canadian anarcha-feminist punk band, Submission Hold. Using an appreciative inquiry technique that seeks to validate the expressions of research participants, rather than simply mine them for data, I recorded this interview and through its transcription discovered that it outlines a process of alienation related to anarchist manifestations of individualism, token solidarity, and misogyny. In an effort to fully illustrate the context in which their ideas were shared I have included the entire interview with Jen Thorpe and Andy Healy of Submission Hold. In 2007, I met with them in Vancouver where they live. This interview highlights the complexities for anarcha-feminists who are experiencing a lack of solidarity and support within their anarchist and feminist communities. Conversely, their hope and creativity are expressions of anarcha-feminist resilience and resistance.

JGH: How do you identify in a social setting?

JT: Right now I identify mostly with mother, I think it's the thing that's consuming my time and my life these days. The band, the musician, usually I would identify as a musician but I haven't been doing music for a while now. We are on kind of a hiatus. Mother is probably the biggest thing and artist too, I've been doing a lot of art.

AH: Yeah parent, I feel...

JT: ...fully immersed.

AH: Pretty parenty, I'm alright with it.

JGH: In what ways has your social identity influence your political ideologies?

AH: I've really learned a lot since (I became a parent) It's really opened my eyes to a lot of things like how unwelcoming a lot of the whole political activist scene is when you got a screaming kid coming along. On paper everyone is down with you, and everyone is going to support you and all that, but in real life what a lot of it had to do with was people just didn't realize the time commitment involved with kids. And they think, oh it's great, I'll embrace my inner child and I love to draw and everything, but it's not like that.

JT: I have been involved somewhat peripherally with a collective here called the 'Seam Rippers Collective'. Which is a collective of mostly women, some young men, but mostly women, who do arts and crafts and do workshops and put on workshops and stuff in a collective way and they have been pretty awesome as far as incorporating Sam and being welcoming to Sam. In fact I talked to one of them, Charlotte, yesterday, I had a craft fair last week that I was doing and Sam came to the second half of it, he was there for the last four hours and it was pretty hellish, it was a small space there was so much stimulus and people, and he just wanted to play the whole time, and I wanted to deal with people and you know talk about arts and crafts and sewing and stuff, and she told me "if it's any comfort, you were the only one that it was bothering." Which was kind of nice, I wasn't overly concerned that I was impinging on anyone's space because I feel pretty comfortable there and I knew, but it was nice that she said that.

JGH: Do you think there was a collective effort there?

JT: Yeah, they provide childcare at all their workshops. They are very very open and welcoming, and I think sadly because they are mostly women there is more recognition there for that need, and not just lip service being paid to it, actual physical people there to help with it. Some of the folks at the craft fair were more than willing to help play with Sam, although he wasn't as willing to play with them. But what Andy was saying about being sometimes unwelcome, the anarchist scene goes the other way too because we found somewhat by our own choice on some levels, just because we had kids and we hooked up with other anarchist parents with kids, we found we didn't get along with them. Just because they were parents with kids, we thought because they are anarchists we would get along on so many different levels but it didn't always work out that way, but then on the flip side of that, the parents that we have hung out with that aren't anarchist, that are more mainstream, they are pretty cool about a lot of things but there is some weirdness there.

AH: It's definitely weird, since we had Sam, our whole support group of friends has gone from people who we had similar interests and things in common with to all of sudden the thing we have in common is that we have children the same age, you know what I mean?

JT: And that has kind of superseded everything else.

AH: You got kids and you've them until they are older, what can you do. So it's kind of disheartening sometimes when you are hanging out with people who eat at McDonalds and want nothing more than to buy a so-many-thousand dollar car and all that stuff. What can you do?

JT: The language is different too, we used to take for granted being able to talk to people and have them understand everything we were saying and DIY (do it yourself) and anarchist politics and the punk scene and music and everything and it's like these people just don't get it at all but there's a lot of good folks there too. It's been good in a way.

AH: I think probably the most positive thing is that it's opened my eyes to see this mainstream world and to see the good parts of it. I know a lot more mainstream people than I did in the past. It's kind of interesting to have a look at it and see that you're not a one dimensional human being and all you care about is shopping at the Wal-Mart or whatever right, so that is kind of nice, you get a better rounded view of the human species in town here.

JT: They are pretty respectful of our vegetarianism and of our parenting styles. Our parenting styles are pretty similar in a lot of ways.

JGH: Are you raising Sam vegetarian?

JT: Up until last Friday. (laughs)

AH: Yeah a guy across the street, we'll never know, he's got a kid, Sam's little friend Winston, and they play in the street and do their thing, and he comes over and he said he had an extra ticket for this Finding Nemo Ice Capades things, and Sam was like 'oh yeah' and so they went, and he brings him back and I talking to him and he's holding this toy and it's from the bloody happy meal at McDonalds, my heart sunk, I was like "So Sam, what'd you have there?"

JT: Anything's bad,

AH: And he's like "I don't know, some burger, and some fries" Was it meat? and he's like "I don't eat meat" but was it like I don't eat meat and I ate that thing?

JT: We aren't sure how far he understands, I don't think he did though, I had a conversation with him last night about it, and he said, "don't worry mom, I didn't even eat it, they got me a burger and I didn't even eat it" and he said that he "explained to the mother that he didn't eat meat".

JGH: Yeah that's happened to me before in childcare, I stressed so much that she is a vegetarian and the second day she was there they tried to feed her chicken, and Kayla was like "I'm a vegetarian" and they told her "it's good for you". And I disagree with that, and

it got resolved and everything. But do you find people are critical of that decision? I find people say that you're imposing your beliefs, and I think well so is feeding them meat.

AH: And as the kids parent, imposing my beliefs is part of parenting and passing things on to the child.

JT: I find it really disturbing actually when I'm out with my friends who eat meat and they are plying their kids with red meat and ham I'm just like whoa, I don't say anything because that's their prerogative, that is what they are doing, but if they say anything to me I'm going to come back at them. There as been a couple friends who have been looking down their noses at us.

AH: Generally in terms of criticism of our parenting there hasn't really been that much because we were older when we had him: mid-thirties. I think younger parents get more grief. But with us I think the world at large already saw us as a lost cause, that's the beauty of being in your mid-thirties.

JT: Well and you're a big guy, you're kind of imposing, you always look mean even though you're not. I think people find us a little bit imposing with tattoos and stuff so they just don't bother us. My friends breast-feeding they got in trouble, I never once had someone say something to me, if they had they would have had breast-milk squirted in their face. I was surprised, I thought why is this happening to them, I wanted someone to say something to me but they never did.

JGH: What political ideologies do you identify with?

JT: Probably the closest with anarchist.

AH: There was a time when I would have said anarchist right off the hop. Probably just the past few years with work and parenting and stuff I've seen the value of not limiting myself, in lots of things in everything and life, just why? To me that has always been one of the aspects of anarchism, like why limit yourself to something, why define yourself by someone else's definition.

JT: One ideology isn't going to work for everybody. Which is why it seems so strange to me why there isn't more experimentation with different ideologies within smaller settings, just North America or Canada for example. Why aren't their larger, I mean there's small pockets here and there of communities working under anarchist ideas, but there's nothing on a scale of city where people are trying to work things on a different way.

AH: You get close in some places, something like Arcadia California comes to mind, like green there having green parties on council. We had a friend there who was on city council and he went on to become the deputy mayor, and he identified as an anarchist. He caught tons of grief, "well hey you are an anarchist, why are you running for political office?" but was like well if I can take my anarchist beliefs too... He got lots of stuff done,

that was Arcadia, that was probably the closest any North American city has come anywhere like that.

JT: I guess things happen so slowly, change happens so slowly.

JGH: I think of the Zapatistas, I mean they certainly don't identify as anarchist, but I look at the that struggle and I sort of see how it molds into anarchist praxis. It's definitely autonomous

JT: And it's a good thing for them that they don't identify as anarchists because in the world at large they would be immediately condemned for doing that, because the word anarchy, just the word, sends most people into a frenzy because it's been demonized, incredibly by the media and by the governments and powers, they don't people to really know what it's about. It's about autonomy and self-governance, and self-rule, and self-respect, and compassion, and sustainability. It's about all good things but people look at it and go "Oh my god, people running amok in the streets."

JGH: Throwing molotov cocktails!

JT: and that's definitely an element of it but that's just the element that standing up and fighting against what's going on right now which is a lot of crap and bullshit that needs to be stood up to.

JGH: What is your stance on violence used as a political strategy, for example the Zapatistas?

JT: Personally I believe there is room for everything. I believe there is room for people who believe wholeheartedly in non-violent action and people that believe violence is a means to an end, I think there is room for everything. Understandably maybe those people won't get along so well, because they are so vehemently into their own thing. I can see the validity in both sides.

AH: This question always comes up and it's kind of like you'll never find a person who is violent all the time. I think if you need to defend yourself. I don't know

JT: You will find there are people who are peaceful all the time

AH: Myself I can see the point of it all, in reality in reality I'm not going to harm anybody. When push comes to shove I'm probably going to get pushed down. There has been some seriously big positive non-violent movements in the world.

JT: Look at Gandhi.

AH: Yeah I just started reading about this guy, this Vietnamese guy, he started under Gandhi's non-violent ways, he started this big non-violent movement in Vietnam, and got

lots and lots of change done. I'm more inclined to that side of the fence there. At the same time, I'm not going to tell the Zapatistas that they don't know what they are doing.

JT: Exactly and look at what they are up against. I think non-violence is an incredible thing to do and be involved in, and I think it involves incredible spiritual stores to do something like that. But God, at the end of the day when you are pissed off and angry and the people in power are just shitting down your neck constantly.

AH: You have to take every situation as it comes. Are you familiar with the Gustafson Lake stand off some years ago? It all started there was a Texas cattle rancher, I don't want to get too into it, but he had land in Northern BC and it was on this sacred land where they (indigenous people) would go and do the Sun Dance and all this stuff, and they were doing it and he ended up fencing it off and there was this big stand off, and if the warriors didn't take a violent stand they would have got clipped. The RCMP fired something like 60,000 rounds at them, what are you going to do not shoot back?

JGH: So there was a blockade?

JT: Yeah

JGH: Was that similar to the Oka crisis?

JT: Bit of a different scene, it didn't go quite as long and big as that, but it turned into the biggest military action within Canada. They used landmines, they somehow buried explosives in the thing and made it some sort of landmines up there.

JT: Oka was easier for the media to access, so the images and what was going on there was a little bit easier to access for the rest of the world, whereas this thing was a bit more isolated so there was less media.

AH: That was something else. That situation, we did some work with them after the fact, fundraising and stuff, and we've kept in contact with a couple of people, just knowing them and knowing where they are at, I know for a fact if i was up there at the time with them I would not have taken a non-violent stance, what do you do, at the same time I would still consider myself a non-violent person.

JGH: In terms of violence and self-defense then, how do you feel about property violence, when it is being used and people are arguing that it is being used in self-defense. For example like smashing a bank window?

JT: I am totally fine with that, I really don't have a problem. Small businesses, family run places like that, I do have a problem with, I just think you have the capacity to ruin someone's life. A family's life, but corporate violence...

AH: A lot of the time that is the only voice of the voiceless people. What are you going to do? How many times does someone stand up and take notice of someone standing there with a petition on the corner? Occasionally something might come of it a letter writing campaign or something. But if you have a whole bunch of people protesting or something smashing the windows of a bank all of sudden everybody knows about APEC, everybody know about WTO. Not because people were signing letters and all that stuff, which of course has a point, and has its place.

JT: You need extremes to bring people forward a little bit. Even though they might not agree with those extremes it might make them think about something in a different way that they wouldn't have normally. But the thing about property violence, that pisses me off, that when a Wal-mart is attacked, or a Starbucks or a bank or McDonalds, or whatever, and the cops go in there and start shooting, or someone gets hurt or killed because of it, or people think it's a horrible thing, it's just property, it's just stuff, it's just crap. It means nothing in the scheme of things. Your physical self, and your relations to the people you love and the people around you and your communities and how we get along, those are the things that matter. There has been such an emphasis on crap and material wealth in this corner of the world in particular, and it's spreading like wildfire it's such a shame.

JGH: And considering they are getting their profits through the exploitation of others. It is a form of violence if people are living in poverty.

JT: Totally, and the average person has been so blindfolded and brainwashed that they can't see what's going on in developing countries and how these people are being treated.

AH: And on the flipside of that how do you guys think of when there is protest and it turns into a big rock throwing thing, it's a major machismo thing. Is it a slap in the face of feminism or what?

JT: I was at the WTO, went down with some people, it was amazing to see how different factions dealt with things differently, there was non-violent protest and there was definitely violent protest. There was quite a large group of friends of mine from San Francisco, probably about ten or fifteen of them. They were so coordinated and organized, they were ready for anything, they wanted to go in non-violently but they were ready for violent action if they needed. They had head to toe waterproof suits with gas masks, they had walkie-talkies, they had things to do for pepper spray to get it out of your eyes, they had food rations, they were connected everywhere, they had it all setup they had the perimeter of the place they had the plans. It was just awesome to see them go, and there were a lot of women involved in that.

AH: Perhaps something like that seems like more an effort and there is a plan and there is consensus

JT:...beforehand.

AH: A lot of times when you go to protest and you think it's going to be non-violent and you bring your kid and some knucklehead starts whipping bricks and it's like "dude we weren't going to throw bricks". I got my kid here and you are throwing bricks and cops are hitting us. And then you end up running out of the place holding the kid.

JGH: That's the thing, it does set up some sort of exclusivity, where who do want to choose non-violence, and people who do want to bring their children or dogs, or whatever it is they sort of can't be in that location it's kind of dangerous, and if you don't have the support systems to risk being arrested. I feel there is a machismo thing, and a lack of understanding, not everybody can afford to risk going to jail again. Not everybody is in that position, some people are and some people aren't.

JT: I've seen it in action. We know some people. Definitely there is a definite machismo. It's weird too that it's not just macho but a exclusive mind and thought process behind there and a real martyr.

JGH: Yeah like, "I'm more credible because I'm willing to risk my life, I'm willing to go to jail."

JT: Well you have less to risk there pal.

AH: You go jail and you come out at the end of the weekend. I go to jail and they take my kid away. I don't need that right now.

JT: It's just an unwillingness sometimes there for these, and it is inevitably guys so sad to say, who just seem unwilling to want to, because they like that exciting adventure. And that's what they want to do. You can't please all the people all the time.

JGH: What women have been influential to your political thought and practice and why?

JT: My mom, to begin with when I was younger. My mom, when I was about 18 went through a very difficult divorce from my dad. Difficult for both of them. I was old enough that it wasn't really a problem for me, I understood a lot of what was going on, I was 18 so I knew what was happening. My mother spent maybe about a year crying trying to figure it all out. Divorced by father. My father's intense heartbreak, he still to this day is heartbroken over it. She went back to school, and put her self through school and got her Ph.D in Women's Studies, and she is now a Women's Studies professor at a university in the States. And just seeing her rebirth and discovery of herself. And her whole life The whole time she was explaining everything to me, I was very much a part of her going through this, because I was older enough for her to seem me as a confidant, not just her daughter. She had grown up in a society where she wanted to be a doctor, but because she was a women she couldn't. So she became a nurse and her brother became the doctor. Which led to some resentment on her part to her family, and society at large. Also she was expected to marry at a young age, so she did, and have kids, so she did all that stuff, and I

think there was a lot of resentment build up through the years and finally it just came crashing forth and she said enough and so she got out of this marriage, and went on to school and got her PhD. Just it was fantastic to watch her go through this whole thing, and see her strength. She was always a strong woman, always stood up for herself, but always within the context of the perimeters that society and her family had put on her. And she finally just broke free to those completely and became this immense figure in my head. She's a big woman to begin with. Physically she's tall and statuesque, and just emotionally and spiritually she's very large as well. Looms large in my life. Just to see her go through that process has been amazing for me, I mean feminism was huge for her, it helped her break through the constraints that had been put on her and in turn made me see what was available to me, and made me realize too that the women who come before us have provided the environment in which we live. That's why it disturbs me so much when I meet other women who are my age or younger who are so anti-feminist. It freaks me out. I'm like dude do you understand, we wouldn't even be here if it weren't for feminism, if it weren't for our mothers and the women who came before us. We wouldn't have the choices that are here and available to us, and it's so disturbing to me that they still have this weird thing about it's all about angry women, and lesbians, and man-haters, what? It's so crazy.

JGH: Yeah like “feminazi's”

AH: Yeah like equate feminism with nazism, yeah there ya go.

JT: That's another form of media brainwashing, and just I totally feel like taking these women and shaking them, but you have to slowly explain how it all works and stuff. Also in the punk scene, there is a dearth of women sometimes. One time we went on tour in the states and we played thirteen shows in a row with no women. Not one woman in any of the bands, three or four bands a night. Thirteen shows in a row. That's the longest.

AH: After that tour we went home and when I would book the tours and they would ask “what would you like” and I'd say we would like to play with bands of mixed gender. That kind of threw a lot of these kids for a loop right, because they were like “what well...well.. well... I don't know any,” Well you gotta find one. It doesn't have to be all women on the bill but we can't have the boys club. That was interesting. I think by doing that it really pushed a lot of these...a lot of them just thought we were stupid. “Why are you doing this?” We did a European tour once and did that, and it wasn't so well received in a lot of places.

JT: It was better received in the States, but the women who are involved in the punk scene, that I have met have been fantastic. I've formed some lasting friendships there, met some really incredible women there, just fantastic. I think it takes a certain kind of strength to remain in a male dominated area, just for the pure love of the music or the culture, because there is a lot of great stuff in the punk scene and the anarchist scene and where they overlap, a lot of good ideologies, and I mean it doesn't always come to fruition, but there is a lot of really great stuff and it can attract some really good people.

JGH: Did you want to comment on that at all?

AH: I just wanted to mention some women writers, not even so much the Emma Goldman types, but I'm thinking of Marge Piercy comes to mind, like a lot of this feminist science-fiction writers. Jen is really big on it.

JT: I've got them all. Octavia Butler...great.

AH: I haven't read as much as Jen, but the one I've read that's had a big effect on me.

JT: Octavia Butler is incredible, she's an African-American woman, feminist, who has written a series of science-fiction feminist dystopic, utopic, novels that are just incredible. The best one is "Kindred".

JGH: I'll check that out, you guys speak French right? Some of your music is in difference languages.

JT: I do.

JGH: I don't know if you've heard of Louky Bersianik? She's a Québécoise writer, she wrote "L'eugélonne" and I just picked it up, I'd like to bring it back to give to you guys. I'm only staying four blocks away, and I have a copy of it, but I saw it in used book store and it was cheap, and I was like I have to get this for somebody, and if you are really into science-fiction and can speak French, it's amazing.

JT: I might have an extra copy of the Kindred I can look for for you.

JGH: That would so fun to swap books, it's totally science-fiction and it's heavy on the feminist themes, it's really unique.

JT: There is a lot of great stuff out there. I really like speculative fiction because it explores the possibilities of where we could go as a society and as a species. I like the ones that remain on the earth, that stays here and explores where we are not and extrapolates from that. There is a really good book by a male author named John Berner called "Sheep Look Up", that one is scary. He foretold the existence of cell phones...What else?

AH: Mainly it seems to be about environmental collapse and was written in the seventies, and it mentions a ton of things where you go "oh yeah that's happening, that's here, that's here."

JT: Critical Mass came from that book.

JGH: Are there any current anarcha-feminists that you relate to? That you know explicitly identify that way? We know identities are fluid and stuff but have you ever heard somebody use that term?

JT: Oh yeah I have, a couple, nobody here in this city that I know of, well I know some people who probably would identify as that, who are parents...Gabriella.

AH: Yeah Gabriella, You see everybody is younger and they don't have kids and they are activist, and a lot of them were just getting into it all when we kind of fading out, changing diapers and stuff right so we know a lot of people on the periphery.

JT: But Brahula in san francisco, she definitely identifies as anarcha-feminist, she's a mom too. she writes a zine. Carrie Crawford, and Bozeman.

JGH: Can you describe some of the activist work you have been involved with? You recently played a benefit for Spartacus Books.

JT: Over the years we've done a lot, We've been involved in Critical Mass, and Food not Bombs, and Under the Volcano.

JGH: What's Under the Volcano?

JT: Every year they have a huge festival here, it's an all day long festival, about 10-15,000 people come to it, They've got music and workshops, poetry readings and art. A huge day of activist and leftist politics and local stuff.

AH: They say it is the only festival in Canada that is political and not backed by corporate backers. For many years it was just pay what can.

JT: A good friend of ours Meegan Maultsaid who sings in the band Che Chapter 127, she would be an anarcha-feminist, anyway she organizes the thing in a collective. The biggest thing we have done is through our music, is just the benefits. We have always made ourselves available, when we are playing, as I said right now we are on a bit of a hiatus. But when we are going and playing we've always made ourselves available. Because we saw that as a very important part of who were are as musicians and people too. And it was available to us, this is a very easy way we can be active by doing something that we love, and lending ourselves to political causes we believe in and then they can in turn hopefully make some money off of it to use for their various causes. And we've been along Spartacus all through their years. They are fantastic organization and great people, and they burnt down.

JGH: I know, did they open up?

AH: Yeah they got a space.

JT: I don't know if they are open yet

AH: No they aren't open yet. I was talking to one dude who was whatever the name for him is, coordinator guy, they got the place, they want to move in, at that point, they are a few weeks, maybe a month, they are basically waiting on other people, and they are waiting on someone to do the electric in the place, and get it up to code. They have got the money to do it, they are just waiting. He said they are waiting for other people's paint to dry. They'll be back.

JT: We both work in the Downtown Eastside Now, Andy works full-time, and I work part-time. And if you know anything about Downtown Eastside it's like a warzone. It's got the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in industrialized nations, and it's got a very high rate of overdose, and death due to overdose. It's got the first safe injection site in North America, that Andy worked at full-time.

JGH: Yeah I was there in January and same with the Portland Hotels Society.

JT: Yeah that's who we work for the PHS.

JGH: Those are great amazing programs.

JT: They aren't without their faults.

AH: A lot of people are very critical of them, they have their points. Having worked there for so long, and having know a lot of people personally who live and use their services and stuff. I know the positivity that has come into people's lives through the organization, and to me a lot of people are going off half-cocked, they don't know what they are talking about. But at the same time go ahead say it, the place needs to be criticized. When I started working for them they were a lot smaller and then they blew up and got really big, and with that they put themselves open for criticism. I worked at the injection site there for about six months, and that seems to be the going rate for employees there, about six months. It's a tough job, it just will knock you out.

JT: Watching people kill themselves slowly.

AH: You go in there, and my very first day I walked in there, and always in the back of my head, I was like "God, I hope I don't see any friends in there", because I have a lot of friends from back in the day who go down one path or another. And I walk in there first day and there is an old friend from back in the day, and it's like, ok I guess I need to face to this one right here right now. A few overdoses a week.

JT: You see people getting saved, their lives are getting saved, and you see a few people's lives getting turned around, it's not too many but it does happen. Just to witness that it makes to realize that is making a difference. It's not making a huge hundreds and hundreds of people difference, but it's making a difference and that's enough.

JGH: Is there a distribution of crack pipes? Is that happening as well?

AH: Yeah we are working on it, there are some people who are doing it. There is a nurse down there, Kim, she is on my soccer team. Last I talked to her there were making these little crack kits, with clean things, and plungers. They put this brillo in there they use that for the filter, and it's like sucking in all the nasty chemicals. You know it's just healthier, smoking crack isn't healthy, it's kind of like all the emphasis isn't really on IV. Rightly so, people are doing it, there are needles everywhere. When I was working at the site some old-timers are telling me that back in the day in the sixties and seventies you couldn't even find needles, you couldn't get them, one guy would be like, "Ok I have one, we'll use it until it's dull". So everybody's using it. So now even tons of the old timers are like "I don't share rigs anymore." It hasn't hit the crack smoking scene, they smoke with these busted up nasty pipes, all abscesses on their mouth. They say the life of crack pipe down there is that it goes through 200 different people before it's life is over, so that is a definite public health issue.

JGH: When I worked for Youthlink in Toronto, that was a big issue that we were distributing crack pipes illegally. It wasn't legal so outreach workers were at risk.

JT: When did you work there?

JGH: I worked there from 1998 until I moved in 2002.

JGH: Are there any bands and music in particular that you find influential with respect to anarchism or feminism?

AH: There are these friends of ours in the Bay Area, they have done some bands that although there were never widely popular. I think they were really influential on us, just the way they did things, and their approach to everything. When we first met them there was a band called Q-Factor.

JT: Wonderful people.

AH: There were an awesome bunch of people, fun and hilarious, but just their politics were just dead on, really active and everything. And then you know how a band ends up breaking up and doing whatever. There was another band called Former Members of Alphonso, their politics were crazy, really thought out, they put out these really limited run records and stuff, but just the package and the writing...

JT: Was Carrie in that one?

AH: Yeah, Carrie was on that one.

JT: And Mike too, Torches to Rome

AH: And that whole crowd down there the kind of got bigger, this friend of ours Mike Kirsh I don't know why but he had a little golden touch with a band. I think he was in a band sort of indie rock band back in the day, so it seems that whatever band he was in, everyone just flocked to, and rightly so he was smart guy and a good musician. And the latest incarnation of this group of friends their band is called Please Inform the Captain This is a Hijack. They started that band the summer before September 2001, and then that hit and we were like oh they are going to have fun going on tour in the US. But at that time there was some discussion like "should we keep this band name?" ...but they ended up doing it.

JT: There are some other band that we identify with like Anti Product, who are sadly no longer around, the broke up a couple of years ago. 1905 who are still around they are good folks and we have done quite a few shows with them and done a little bit of touring with them. They are fabulous fabulous people, really active, in the East Coast and Washington.

AH: The singer from Anti-Product Taina, she's from upstate New York but she is of Puerto-Rican descent, she's in a band called Rican-struction from New York, they are kind of like this mesh of hard rock and hip-hop and they have bit of a salsa feel in there.

JT: That would be here, she is always trying to teach me to salsa and merengue but I can't do it.

AH: She is doing stuff with them. They are all Puerto-Rican.

JT: She lives in the MOVE House in Philadelphia, she has a son a baby now. And some other bands that we like that we have met but haven't done extensive stuff with is "the Ex" from Amsterdam, they are real inspiration they have been making music for like 25 years.

AH: And they are still really out there and they try new things, now there have been around for quite a long time and they can do things that bands couldn't do. They came up with the politics and the music at the same time that Chumbawumba was starting and they remained friends with them. So when Chumbawumba got all the loot, at one point one of the guys in "the Ex" went on a trip around Africa he got really into the music and stuff and he was like guys we need to go to Ethiopia, we have to play there no Western band had ever played there before. So he went and set it up and Chumbawumba bought them equipment, they went down and left their stuff with the music school, they had no equipment in Ethiopia right. And they have done a couple of tours now of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Usually you see a band get complacent in their own little rut after they have been around for 25 years.

JT: They stopped identifying as punk or anarchist because they don't feel like they don't want to be boxed in like that. But their actions speak louder than words. They really do a

lot of amazing things and they are very supportive in their community. Just really nice folks, great music. Have you heard them?

JGH: No, I really excited to check them out.

JT: “The Ex” They have a woman drummer and she is fantastic and she sings too. Great band. Their lyrics are great, really good lyrics, great band. They did a whole thing on the Spanish Civil War (do you want to show it to her?) a little book with a CD. Their last few things haven't been as good but their work in the past, they have done some amazing stuff in the past.

JGH: That's funny, yeah I have that CD. My friend just gave that to me. I didn't make the connection.

JT: You've listened to it then. It's hard to listen to this though.

AH: Their sound is a bit more pleasing to the ear now. They did some stuff, two albums, with a New York cellist named Tom Cora, those albums are among the best stuff.

JT: What's that other band, “Guts Pie Earshot” from Germany. I really like women singers.

JGH: Me too. Definitely.

JT: I have a real thing for women singers. Also, lately I've getting into world music something I never really though I would, really enjoying it. There is a band called the Warsaw Village Band, they are fantastic, really cool, they meld traditional music in with modern elements. On their newest CD that I have they have a guy doing scratching, on records there, or whatever the kids call it these days.

AH: Deejaying.

JT: Deejaying.

JT: They are like modern Polish folk music.

JT: Then they have these old folks like probably in their eighties or nineties in singing on there, and their voices are awesome, incredible. And there are these young people, two or three women and two or three men who playing a variety of traditional instruments and modern instruments and they are great. I don't know, Andy has really been getting into classic rock lately. (laughs)

AH: I don't really want to talk about that. I don't feel the need to express my musical tastes. (laughs)

JGH: Are there any reservations you would have about calling yourself an anarchist or a feminist?

JT: The only problem I have with any of those labels is how they can possibly alienate other people, and how they might prevent other people from seeing you as a fellow human being able to communicate with you. A lot of people but blinders up when they hear those words, anarchist or feminist. Which is a shame because it's unnecessary.

AH: I recently read an interview with a guy writing about this, he's a real animal rights sort of guy and he says now when talking to people about it he will never use the word vegan or vegetarian. But obviously the guy identifies that way, and amongst friends he'll say it but when he heads out in the real world he won't say it. I think perhaps anarchism and feminism is the same way. So you can talk to people and share your ideas and a lot of the time people are agreeing with you all the way up to it.

JT: And then you drop the bomb on them and then they are surprised. "Oh really?"

JGH: "Oh gotta go."

JT: These weird labels sometimes totally alienate people. We all do it, no one is immune to it, but you try not to.

JGH: Do you think that anarchy-feminists are discriminated against or marginalized?

JT: Well it's kind of a double whammy. Anarchist and feminist, sometimes if someone is treating you poorly because you are a feminist and they find out you are an anarchist too it reinforces their distrust or dislike of you, and vice-versa right. But it can also be really empowering thing for some women to stand up and say I'm an anarchist and I'm a feminist. This is who I am, take me as I am or leave me be. And that can be really empowering.

JGH: What are some of the challenges within your local activist scene facing anarchist women?

JT: I think in some senses for anarchist women to have things completely open and available to them they have to provide the space for it themselves. Rather than have it be made available to them within the scene at large. You know what I mean. There are a couple of local houses, and people will put on festivals and put on shows at their house and stuff, and it's all great and women are obviously more than welcome to participate and be involved. But for there to be a singularly open and receptive audience to the concerns of these women they have to provide...recently there was an anarchy-feminist festival put on by this young woman Gabriella and this other woman who works in the Downtown Eastside. They just got some local bands together and a couple of bands from out of town, and they had some workshops and a couple of things and the focus was

entirely on that. So sometimes to be recognized they had to remove it from the whole situation at large, and make it specifically about that.

JGH: I find in anarchist organizing there tends to be a theme of wanting to delegate women's issues to women. And childcare tends to fall on...

JT: ...women's shoulders.

JGH: Yeah the people who have children have to provide the childcare. Typically that tends to be women. Just in my own experience, so it's interesting. I don't think any of that's intentional. I think men in particular, anarchist men definitely are conscious and are trying to, but just perhaps unconsciously these things sort of manifest.

JT: And it's just human nature, too. If you aren't actively involved in something and know a lot about it then you don't necessarily. A lot of people don't have kids, and don't want kids, and don't want to be involved in there....which is understandable but it's a shame. But it's understandable. I respect that.

JGH: In the scene that I'm in I don't think a lot of people have children.

JT: Well there is a lot of anti-pregnancy anti-child philosophy in the punk scene.

JGH: I know, totally.

JT: Because of the whole overpopulation, the world stinks, it sucks why should we be bringing any more people into it that whole thing. But to me my son and children in general are a symbol of hope. Andy recently was quoting a Bob Dylan song recently, he was online with a friend and they were talking about vasectomies; Andy had a vasectomy after our son was born, we decided we just wanted to have one child. He was talking about his decision to have one child and then have a vasectomy, and how he had changed from thinking that the world is shit it's overpopulated we have no right to bring more people into this world to thinking "no, they don't have the right to tell me, the people in power and the shittiness in world doesn't have the right to dictate to me that I can't have love in my life and family in my life and the opportunity to bring hope into this world expressed in the form of a child, that I can teach values and teach community, and teach love and respect, and these are the things that can make a difference". And what's that line from Bob Dylan...

AH: Oh yeah yeah that one, something about the fear to bring children into the world. "you've thrown the worst fear that can ever be hurled, the fear to bring children into this world." And I started thinking that really struck home, not having children because of what a shitty world it is. And it's like you have this power over me, that I can't bring a child into the world because you have ruined the world all that much. Well you know what fuck off, you aren't going to have that power over me, I'm not going to admit defeat....you know what I mean...fucking children.

JT: But on the flip-side I do think that it's necessary for there to be people out there who are refusing to have kids.

AH: Sure you don't want to have kids: you don't want to have kids.

JGH: You don't have to have kids.

JT: For sure, but respect my decision.

AH: We thought that within the scene that we were in that we were going to catch flack for having a kid, we thought there was a big resentment to that, I found myself we caught more flack for only having one. I've got tons. "Why did you have a vasectomy, you are going to want another one, don't do it".

JT: That's weird. Remember that band in the States

AH: Some band wouldn't play with us because we had a kid. Fuck off.

JT: Never met them, didn't know them from a hole in the ground. But they just made this value judgement, the woman the singer, decided she hated us, she was talking to a friend and she just went on a tirade. Yeah interesting.

AH: But the last laugh was on them we knew nothing about this band. They shall remain nameless, but we saw a review of their record and they got compared to us. Haha.

JGH: How do you guys feel about two things, about marriage and about voting.

AH: I see the point of marriage from a legal standpoint. I've heard stories of people, their loved one is dying in the hospital, and they don't have any say. You're not married, your lying in a coma, and I can't make the decision. Legal reason.

JT: Also gay marriage, if people want to express a commitment to each other in this form they should be allowed. But on the flip-side the whole institution of marriage came about as a form of property. Women as property. That irks me, I don't like that aspect of it, and the whole multi-billion dollar industry that surrounds weddings, that's ugly, nothing attractive about that. The whole you have to buy a gift, there are just a lot of traditions around it, that are weird and don't make a lot of sense and very sexist and patriarchal and I don't agree with that. But if somebody devises their own commitment ceremony and they want to show their love to each other and twist it up and switch it around a little bit that has some validity.

JGH: Yeah or even marriage for citizenship, or like you said gay marriage or inter-racial marriage.

JT: Heterosexual marriage is just fraught with landmines and weirdness. I have no desire, I never have, not even when I was kid. I've never had a desire to get married.

AH: I told Sam that we would get married if he wanted.

JT: We've often joked that if we are still together when we are eighty we'll get married.

AH: Nude wedding. All nude.

JT: Spanking nude tattoos of each other 'sportrait on the cheek of our ass.

AH: Eighty, nude wedding.

JGH: What about voting? It was just election day.

JT: I didn't vote.

AH: But I did.

JGH: Walking down the street yesterday I was just inundated, hounded by people asking "did you vote, did you vote?"

JT: I think small municipal civil people...

AH: ...you can effect people. The person who is running city hall can have a impact on the programs in a city and all that kind of stuff, as you get bigger I think it means less but at the same time, who knows. I think if I was a US voter in that George Bush election, I probably like do anything so this clown isn't the president, and then worry about things later.

JT: I think you can vote and be an anarchist. For sure, so many people would condemn anarchists for voting. Saying "Well you can't vote if you are an anarchist" Sure I can. As if that's the be all and end all, and if you vote you are negating all your other activism and work that you do.

AH: One vote... well, hand in your anarchist card.

JT: No, you can vote. It's an extremely flawed process, just fraught with mishandling and bullshit, and who knows if it is very effective. But it's something, a very small something a tiny little thing you can do and don't let that define what you do as an activist or a participatory citizen in your community. It's a very small thing and keep doing all the great anarchist things that you go out and do.

AH: I think the problem with voting is that people see it as that is was you do as a citizen. My thing to do is that I go out and I vote. I'll just leave it to everyone else. And they'll say

“Well if you don't vote then you can't have a say.” Well thanks for that, thanks for giving me nothing.

JT: That ties into that whole thing of “Well if you don't like what is going on with this country then why are you living in it.” It irks me so much.

AH: There was a time in my life that I was anti-voting, like spoil your ballot and whatnot, but over time it's like whatever.

JT: Me too and I think those people are necessary to bring attention to obviously flawed process. And I'm not voting. And Jaggi burning his ballot or running around eating it or whatever. I think that's awesome, it brings attention that something that needs attention brought to it.

JGH: Are there particular ways that you express your political ideologies aesthetically?

JT: Oh definitely, I do, he's just a grey blob. (laughs)

AH: There was a time when I would wear a pin

JT: A tiny little black pin,

AH: Or a t-shirt. You know when I was younger.

JT: You wear your St. Pauli t-shirt which is an anarchist football team.

AH: That's my only logoed piece.

JT: No you wear you 'fuck cars' shirt.

AH: No, not anymore. That was back in the day

JT: Andy's a weirdo.

AH: Faded tattoos are the only thing that gives me away. (Laughs)

JT: For me, I love the whole aesthetic of punk and anarchism. The artistic movement behind it all. I'm an artist and I incorporate it into my clothing, and into my son's clothing. He's got a t-shirt that says “when I grow up, I want to smash the state”.

JGH: Do you find you get flack for that?

JT: No not really, more often then not they think it's really cute. I used to do tons of stickers, and buttons, and clothes, and t-shirts and patches, when I had time to do all that. When we would go on tour we would bring all that stuff with us we would have all kinds

of political stuff. People would love it because we would show up in these small towns, where kids were dying just dying for this stuff, and we'd sell it for super cheap, and we'd sell it for cheap for cost. To recoup our costs. It was really available and they loved it. For the stuff I do now, I've gotten away from the really obvious cliché stuff, into more subversive graphics, and things I really like it.

JGH: Are there any changes that you think modern anarchy-feminists have made in your local and global community?

JT: Well for sure there are definitely women out there who are affecting change, I don't know of any huge names off-hand. There are women putting out magazines, putting out zines and putting on shows and festivals, Meeghan you know, doing stuff all over the place. It's weird that when women do those things they don't really get lauded. They don't get a lot of attention in the press for doing that kind of things. When men do it they get a big slap on the back.

AH: It's really hard to quantify the work that people do. If you write a zine and make 50 copies and some kid reads it and then changes her mind about something. And perhaps she'll go on and do something more or bigger, and you write a song and put it on your record and people hear it.

JT: That's the best way it gets done, but when it get completely huge it gets commodified and watered down the message is lost. It can still be a door and gateway for people to get into something, but what Andy said is really vital and necessary for these small bursts of realization that people are people out there who feel the same way I do who are struggling the same way I do, especially for young women. And I think that's vital.

AH: Often times people would say to us is that you people are preaching to the choir. Your show was blah blah, it's all been said. My take on it is similar to what we were just talking about. It's young scene. We've been doing the band for 15 years and it's not like there are rooms of people who are 35 years old at our show. People move on and go out more often then not they are not in the choir anymore, they go on with their mainstream life the do it and they take their ideas with them. In the same way that is how anarchy-feminist ideas make their way around.

JGH: Do you find anarchy-feminists are represented in a big way in anarchist scenes?

JT: No, no.

AH: It's kind of hard for us to tell, because the people that we know and that we meet and that put themselves out there and introduce themselves to meet us are very feminist based so when we travel and stuff we tend to see that whole movement more than perhaps the anarchist scene that is excluding them.

JT: That's true

AH: Our perception probably has been different that most. We can go to a town and go “oh that's great there are these young women just sticking it to the man there, it's huge they make up the whole scene” It's great, but in reality when you are living there it's a handful of people who doing that and those are the handful of people who are upfront at the show, and we meet them, and they show us around.

JT: I still think it's small, it's marginalized, it's kind of funneled and it's like ok, you guys over here. That's not fair, it's hard to say. When we go on tour when we meet these people we are just there for a couple of days and then we are gone, it's hard to know what goes on in the larger scheme. And in the past couple of years, we have been almost fully insular in our lives with Sam and parenting. I'm almost at a loss for what's going on in the world. We've gone on a couple of tours here and there but we aren't really connected as much as we used to in the past.

AH: We are almost are becoming historical in our knowledge. I can tell you about the last century...

JGH: Where do you see the anarcha-feminist movement in the years to come? I think the reason people called themselves anarcha-feminists is because in anarchist scenes women's issues are pushed onto women. Do you think that need will always remain or will eventually anarchism involve liberation for women beyond a theoretical commitment?

JT: Hopefully, obviously, people would just identify as anarchists because the feminist thing would just be part of that. Like what Andy was saying not knowing, but just from looking online in the past year or so and talking to some friends it seems there is quite a large anarcha-feminist movement building in the States. Not so much that I know of in Canada, but down in Philadelphia, and Minneapolis, New Orleans. There have been some huge things going on down there like the Clitfest in Minneapolis, and in Philadelphia with whole allegations of sexual assault and rape that were going with the Pointless Fest. A huge thing came up out of that with a whole group of women and men who started this preemptive collective inviting all these women and men to part of saying this is what we are going to at future shows and future events, we are going to have a preemptive strike so that people will feel empower and safe to come out to these events, and this is how we are going to deal with it rather than dealing with it after the fact which has always been kind of meh. And finally, people have been talking about that type of thing for ages.

AJ: I think the thing is that no one wants to admit that they are involved in this scene that is inherently sexist and that there are rapists in the scene and all that stuff. They don't want to admit it and now they are, and this is what we are doing about it and they are saying you can come to our town.

The plurality of accepting violent and non-violent resistance, acknowledging the needs of women, parents, and children, and balancing an uneasy connection to anarchism and feminism brings Jen and Andy to the periphery of an anarchist community that they have supported and challenged through their work as musicians and artists. As a youth-driven subculture, one of anarchism's failings in the Canadian context has been its inability to develop a network of support related to issues of reproductive justice. The same individualist and misogynist currents that compromise women's physical safety and sexual autonomy fail to provide a safe environment for children and their parents.

Chapter 5: Confronting “Anarcho-sexism”

I speak for myself and don't represent anybody...I've said it and I'll say it again that we're not anarchists by Bakunin or the CNT, but rather by our grandmothers, and that's a beautiful school of anarchism. Julieta Paredis, - Mujeres Creando^{lxxxiii}

Women experience gender-based discrimination and occupy subordinate social positions to men in anarchist circles. Anarcha-feminists speak out against this “anarcho-sexism” practiced by “manarchists.” For this research project, I conducted interviews with nine women and four men. Their political influences, theories, beliefs, and goals of anarcha-feminism are discussed, as well as some of the barriers within the anarchist movement. Through the responses of interviewees, this chapter identifies the tenets of anarcha-feminism and explores the expressions of contemporary anarcha-feminists.

The interview participants in this project were diverse in character, but shared a common political ideology or practical support for anarcha-feminism. Among the participants, some of the social identities that they identified were: womyn, male, queer, bi-sexual, pagan, christian, atheist, punk, street youth, working-class, student, sex-trade worker, vegetarian, vegan, abuse survivor, anarcha-feminist, anarchist, anti-capitalist, atheist, bi-sexual, individual, goddess-worshipping, sex-radical human, mother, mum, parent, non-ideological anarchist, political activist, employee, poly-amorous, punk, social ecologist. The various political ideologies that were discussed in relation to anarcha-feminism were anti-capitalism, anti-racism, queer theory, anarcho-communism, autonomism, libertarian socialism, radical feminism, individualism and an analysis of animal rights.

In some cases, the participants discussed their own privileges, namely, race, nationality, socio-economic class, sex, gender and education. The participants also reflected on their own marginalized position in society and oppressions they faced. Participant ages ranged from 18-68, though the majority were in their twenties and thirties. Their self-identified “home” locations ranged from the United Kingdom, Victoria, Saskatchewan, Calgary, Toronto, Halifax, a rural region of Nova Scotia, Mohawk and Huron Territories, on Turtle Island.

For the most part, participants chose to have their names protected despite their willingness to be videotaped. The participants who wish to be anonymous will be referred to by numbers assigned to their interview, e.g. participant #2, female or participant #4, male. Others chose to be identified such as Jen Thorpe and Andy Healy (whose transcribed interview I included verbatim in the earlier chapter), art historian Alan Antliff and feminist historian Sheilagh Rowbotham, whose videotaped interviews will be discussed in Chapter 7 using content analysis of the video. This chapter focuses mainly on the data obtained in the remainder six in-depth interviews.

The groups represented among the participants include Anarchist-U, Bike Pirates, Block the Empire, Food Not Bombs, Halifax Anarchist Collective, Halifax Anti-Poverty Initiative, Halifax Coalition Against Poverty, No One Is Illegal, North Eastern Federation of Anarchist Communists, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, Punching Out, Safety and Information League of Revolutionaries, Sex Workers Collective, SOS Eau Water Sakwan anti-privatization group, Students Against Sweatshops, Seam Rippers, Radical Cheerleaders, Women’s Centres. Some of the actions that participants engaged in protest included Active Resistance, G7 Finance Ministers summit in Halifax, Take The Capital

protest, the Seven Year Squat in Ottawa, the FTAA summit in Quebec City, WTO Seattle.

Many of the participants noted family, community members, comrade activists and friends as their biggest influences and most important relationships. The issue of marginality of anarcha-feminist voices was raised again and again. The participants often named music and books that were influential, but rarely was a historical anarcha-feminist figure mentioned with the exception of Emma Goldman as a political influence. A male participant identified Goldman as a key figure to his own politicization. Interestingly, he also discusses the band Crass:

When I was younger I had a somewhat naïve conception of anarchism and how the world could change. However, I began to read Emma Goldman's autobiography at this time which opened up a whole new world for myself in terms of understanding anarchism. I never fully understood a lot of what Goldman was saying at the time but over the years I've learned from her story and ideas, and can keep going back to her writings for further anarchist and life lessons. The anarcha-feminism of punk/hardcore bands like Crass and Infect have influenced me as well. I have always found it important to have critical things said in music. (#5, male)

A female participant also highlights Emma Goldman as the first anarcha-feminist that influenced her. She recalls:

Emma Goldman of course is the classical anarchist writer/speaker that I started with. I particularly was inspired by her touring and speaking, her views on free love, birth control and free association, her defense of immigrants and working women, organizing for health care/nursing and for unions, especially among garment workers. Although I wouldn't say she was much of a theoretician, she took anarchist ideas and presented them in a simple, direct down-to-earth fashion and that's what I like about her. Also, she lived in Toronto next door to where I used to live, and when we organized "Active Resistance 1998," a huge radical gathering of over 1000 anarchists, we housed people on the roof of the old Labour Lyceum where she spoke in 1937. (#4, female)

The participants shared how they became politicized and their answers showed drastically diverse experiences. Some cited personal experiences with sexism or classism, some noted witnessing racism, others cited the witnessing of destitution in war-torn countries:

When I was 19 years old, I spent some time working in refugee camps during the Kosovo crisis in Albania and was totally radicalized by not only what I saw in the refugee camps, but also the poverty in Albania and the actions of NATO. When I returned to Canada, I seriously started researching global issues, and then I got involved with anti-WTO stuff and anti-OIL activism in Alberta – it kind of grew from there. (#2, female)

Another participant describes his politicization as a result of witnessing his father's racism.

I grew up in a rural region of Nova Scotia and my father was racist. I remember as early as ten or twelve years old arguing with my father about comments he had made. I can't really explain this other than that it didn't make sense for anyone to not like another simply due to the color of their skin. I developed an affinity to protest music, mainly punk at first, fairly early on, some of which inspired me to read further on certain subjects. (#3, male)

Similarly, a female participant cites her home as a source of injustice, and consequently, the source of politicization: "When I was 7 years old and saw the violence and inequity in my home and family." (#1, female) Such varied experiences reflect the multiplicities in identity and experience among anarcha-feminists.

All of the participants critiqued marriage for its foundation and reliance with the State, yet the female participants gave a much more thorough gendered analysis of marriage. One participant self-reflects on her own experience with marriage. She offers a gendered analysis which is the result of first-hand experience.

I do not want to be tied to someone like that again - economically, property, children, etc. it's very difficult to get yourself untied and I refuse to go through this crap again. So my answer is that, for the most part, it's a patriarchal trap for women who can barely survive economically on their own and can serve as a playground for abuse and violence. (#1, female)

The critique of marriage as a form of male ownership of women is a common second-wave feminist critique and is illustrated below:

I think marriage, as an institution, has historic ties to the oppression of women, and of society-at-large, and it comes in many different forms. One could look at it as the passing of ownership between father to husband. One could look at it as a way to oppress various communities, where marriage was forbidden (between people of different races, during periods of slavery in the United States where it was illegal for slaves to marry, between people of the same sex...) So, in that sense I think that removing restriction/preventing restriction on marriage is an important thing to believe in. I don't think I would want to block people from making a commitment to one another; my goal would not be to tell people what to do or not do. Rather, I think that the current representation of marriage, and the meanings attached to marriage only serve to maintain power relations between women and men, and women and institutions such as the church or the state. (#6, female)

Another female participant rejects marriage as well and presents an anarcho-feminist approach to childcare and community. When asked about marriage she replied:

It sucks. Who needs the state to recognize your relationship in order for it to be valid? I think gay marriage arguments are a real error, a bourgeoisification of the queer liberation movement. But even if, like in Spain in the 20's, you could get married in the union hall, by your union's power, I still don't feel marriage is that healthy a form of social organization. It is not so good for raising kids, where I dream that a more communal approach would offer less hierarchy, more positive reinforcement of role models (rotation of tasks and more breaks for primary caregivers, and for kids, an alternative shoulder to cry on when you're feeling oppressed by your parents.) (#4, female)

Instead of marriage, she advocates for: "love, free association, mutual aid,

negotiated co-parenting agreements, free, communal housing, free co-operative daycare, free communal laundromats.”

Another woman identified reproductive rights for women as a priority for anarchists. “There are a lot of a folk who want to stop funding abortion and that’s a huge issue for me. Childcare isn’t too big a priority either. Imagine that. There’s still tons of sexism and rampant homophobia.” (#1, female) Her use of sarcasm when she says “imagine that” indicates her knowing of the long-standing history of sexism and homophobia. None of the other participants raised the issue of reproductive rights. Vivien Labaton and Dawn Lundy Martin remind us in *The Fire This Time: Young Activists and the New Feminism* that the social, political and economic position young feminists are born into affects their understanding of social justice differently than our fore-mothers.

One of the luxuries that our generation has enjoyed is that we’ve reaped the benefits of all the social justice movements that have come before us; we have come of age in a world that has been shaped by feminism, queer liberation movements, anti-racist movements, labor movements and others. Consequently, many young women and men not only have an understanding of the interconnection of social justice issues but also see them as inextricable from one another.^{xxxiv}

Contemporary anarchists have been born into an era which has benefited from feminist advances won by women like Emma Goldman and second wave feminists. However, the struggle for reproductive and sexual justice continues.

The future endeavors of anarcha-feminists seem to be endless and participants agreed that making the movement more accessible and diverse is a priority.

Clearly I feel we need to connect up with the struggles of immigrant women, mothers and low-income women. I recently wrote an article (also with my partner) about the Wages for Housework movement in the 70’s to now... I think it’s important to make the links globally between feminists to learn lessons of our history, in order to not repeat

mistakes in our future. And of course, to end the isolation which traps many women who are fighting for change. With NEFAC, we have created an "anti-patriarchy watch", and we try to make these links in various ways in our collectives, even if it's just subscribing to as many different feminist journals as we can, and trying to keep in touch with women around the world. (#4, female)

The struggle to diversify anarcha-feminism recalls the homogenous tendencies of second wave feminism. However, the value of consciousness-raising groups continues to empower and unite anarchist women.

There have been periods of time in my activist 'career' when anarchist women would get together and discuss issues both personally and politically. We also organized together as women, around issues of sexism. This has been some of the most influential experiences and inspiring times because it is real. There is solidarity with women who are experiencing so many similar things, and it is empowering to organize as women and to address these issues. (#4, female)

The various ways in which anarcha-feminists are resisting often take shape in the form of direct action.

I guess a few examples would be, to pursue anarchist ways of making decisions not only within organizing groups, but also within relationships and community. Challenging privilege and racism, ableism, heterosexism, sexism, etc., in my community and my own thinking. Building communities that are based on ideas of mutual aid and autonomy. Cooking free food for people. Reclaiming things that are thrown away, but reusable. Stealing from large corporations. Working in solidarity with other oppressed groups. Challenging authority in every aspect of my life. Starting and supporting structures that provide things without an exchange of capital such as free school, free space. (#2, female)

Another participant articulates her direct action involvement as do-it-yourself.

Some work has been DIY-- silk-screening, posterizing, erasing racist graffiti, blogging while other activism has been more collective. Some of this work has been part of a larger group of people (occupying the bank as part of a protest against tuition, disrupting a Heritage Front meeting, sitting down in the middle of the road and disrupting traffic, blocking entrances to buildings, etc.) (#6, female)

Anarchist women are actively involved in direct action. Another female participant described some of the feminist activities she has been involved with.

For about five years, I was involved with my campus womyn's center. I was involved in a number of things: writing for our monthly 'zine, organizing events, fundraisers, rallies, peer counselling, facilitation and coordination of an abortion support group. I was involved with food not bombs for about a year and a half - quit because the group wasn't child friendly. I helped start and run an anti-capitalist collective. I was core in a group called SWS (sex workers collective) in which we provided street outreach and support as well as tried to start a sex workers union. I co-operated a (zine) distro, had a website and a small printing press, wrote and compiled my own zines. I am in the process of starting a single mums group, aimed at womyn in the community who are activist/feminist/progressive. I lead workshops and circles on things like radical parenting, genderqueer issues, safer sex for kinks, self and community empowerment in times of political despair. (#1, female)

Another interviewee recalls the anarcha-feminist collective direct action of Ontario

Coalition Against Poverty:

One of the best stories of OCAP anarcha-feminist direct action: One of the hundreds of film shoots that come to Toronto every year set up their caravan near the OCAP office where lots of women work the street. The film company paid restitution of \$200/day to the small businesses on the corner, whose foot traffic was disrupted by the shoot. But of course, when the prostitutes asked for some money for their lost business, they were laughed at, and told to 'bring their tax receipts' if they wanted any recognition. Three women came to OCAP, and we decided to take a delegation immediately and directly over to the shoot. We disrupted, and threatened to stay and make a bigger disruption if these women were refused compensation. It was pretty funny, because the company realized immediately that it would cost them thousands of dollars per hour to stop the filming, and they also had major actors coming out to take our side. They quickly agreed, and we received \$600 in cash in an unmarked envelope at our office the next day. The women were quite pleased. Direct action gets the goods! (#4, female)

The direct action that anarcha-feminists have been involved with often mirrors with do-it-yourself (DIY) ethics. The concept of do-it-yourself embodies agency, capacity and

power of individuals. People who are engaged in DIY culture challenge consumerism in their quest to make, build and create things with the tools and resources available.

Examples of DIY activism include pirate radio, wheat-paste postering, radical cheerleading, and puppet-making for protests. Radical cheerleaders engage in grassroots social protest by culture jamming, juxtaposing cheerleaders and radical anarchist politics. Allyson Mitchell takes an in-depth look at the effectiveness of DIY activism in her 2001 essay, “The Writing on the Wall: Feminist and Lesbian Graffiti as Cultural Production”.

Feminist graffiti comes out of subcultures that are created by lesbian-feminist-punk rock-riot grrrl-youth-alternative cultural politics. DIY is the link that connects these subcultures – the Do It Yourself politics that urges people to create their own culture and not rely on the mainstream to do it for them. Making a zine about how to report a rape, organizing a women's self-defense collective, creating a homemade sticker campaign, gathering a group to teach women how to use a sound board and writing a message of girl-on-girl love in a washroom stalls are all forms of cultural production.^{lxxxv}

Many of the interviewees talked about their DIY projects:

I've done some silk-screening... in the last batch, I had patches that say "Class War", "Free the Kids", "No One is Illegal (in English and in Farsi), and more. I crochet. I want to join a local 'Stitch 'n' Bitch' circle of socialist and anarchist feminist, but I've been so busy with the baby I haven't made it out yet. Usually, I make hats and scarves and stuff but now I've got this neat pattern for a star, which I'm making in red and black to starch and sell at the Montreal Anarchist Bookfair. (#4, female)

Another participant references an anarchist conference that she attended which influenced and validated her thoughts on informal education by offering concepts of do-it-yourself ethics in terms of education.

This distinction, between formal and informal education (and the climate they create/cause) was illustrated to me when I attended an anarchist conference a couple of months ago. Used to the formality and hierarchies associated with academic conferences (and environments), I felt as though the conference was based more on knowledge and idea sharing, rather

than networking toward a tenure track position or advancement of a career. While there were many academics presenting papers, the breadth of subjects, seminars and sessions went well beyond what I was used to in previous conference experiences. I don't know, it just seemed like anyone could be an expert – whether or not they had received their degree at an Ivy League school – or from simply living life. (#6, female)

When asked about political expression and aesthetics most referred to their clothing and style of dress, while others referred to aesthetics of the body as illustrated in this example:

I write, I try to paint every now and then. Sometimes I pick stuff out of the garbage and stick it all together in a way that makes me happy. I sew sometimes. I grow food and herbs. I chalk all over the sidewalk. I poster, I propagandize. I cook magical food. Street theatre. Radical cheerleading. (#1, female)

Others chose to style themselves with punk aesthetics such as political patches and buttons with political slogans and still others did not care for dress at all. One interviewee comments on the hegemony of Western anarchists who wear all black like a uniform.

I heard once an activist joke about “you know you’re an anarchist when...” and the very last statement was I think quintessentially North American ‘anarchist’: “you know you’re an anarchist when all your clothes are black and all your friends are white.” I think its funny that so many north American anarchists are dressed like they are part of the black bloc all the time; however, I am caught wearing black clothes and ‘hoodies’ more often than not. I think I have my share of black clothes that I wear often. Carhart pants seem to be quintessential anarchist – I have a pair of those. Other than those two things I can’t really think of what else. I think wearing political patches or buttons is something I make a habit of – it makes a statement, and often incites conversation when people inquire about what you are wearing. I think the fact that I don’t wear new clothes, they are either second hand, stolen or I make them is part of my political ideology. I refuse to consume products from corporations that are profiting off the labor of others – more often than not, the labor of those in underdeveloped countries. Challenging oppression through the ‘aesthetic’ choices I make is important to me, and definitely influenced by my political ideology. (#2, female)

Reflecting on her complicity in upholding this dominant image, she later considers “challenging privilege and racism, ableism, heterosexism, sexism etc, in my community and my own thinking.”

Extending from an individual practice of intentional lifestyle choices, the concept of free school is advocated by anarchists as a means to promote grassroots knowledge and create a collectively defined understanding of anarchism. Many of the interview participants had either helped establish a free school within their community, or they had experience in facilitating or attending workshops. The principle behind free school relies on a common feminist practice of valuing experiential knowledge. Free school initiatives operate on the principle that we are all teachers and learners in life and that we each have something valuable to contribute to our individual and collective developments. The anarchist gathering in 1998, mentioned earlier, “Active Resistance,” offered a plethora of anarchist workshops and free school sessions and ultimately staged a demonstration in solidarity with street youth. This manifestation embodied DIY ethics and was a form of grassroots activism. The protest incorporated street theater, speakers, and performance art. Active Resistance hosted many of the free school session in the aforementioned Toronto based anarchist collective, “*Who’s Emma?*,” named after revolutionary Emma Goldman. “*Who’s Emma?*” was an anarchist space maintained by volunteers as a collective. There was a library, books and records for sale, local consignment items, a basement for local performers and bands, and a café space. “*Who’s Emma?*” hosted a variety of workshops open to the community and, during the anarchy-feminist meetings, “*Who’s Emma?*” was a women-only space.

One of the participants offered her understanding of anarchism and

anarcha-feminism, which she sees as an extension of anarchism which focuses on not only capitalism and hierarchy but also patriarchy. Her articulation of anarcha-feminism resembles Goldman's pronunciation of anarchism:

Anarcha-feminism would be the belief that oppression of women is caused by both patriarchy and capitalism, and that the struggle is against both capitalism and authority against all people, but also the oppression of women. As an anarcha-feminist I believe that the solution for women is not found in more female representation among elite, governing classes, but in a removal of all authoritative structures, and organization without power or 'prime ministers'. (#2, female)

On the topic of violence, all of the participants had a common theme woven into their answers. They all agreed that violence needed to be distinguished from “property violence,” which they felt was acceptable and strategically effective.

I used to be more committed to strategies of non-violence, but in recent years I have become increasingly more open to the idea that violence can be a useful tool for change. However, I am unsure of how to define violence, and whether or not I should include qualifiers onto this statement. If it is an act of 'property damage' or an act that is in response to oppression/violence, I would (even if I was not personally involved) be willing to support such an act. Acts of resistance are too often spun as unwarranted/unprovoked in the media or by the state's tools of enforcement. (#6, female)

This reminder is consistent with the earlier representations of anarchists as violent that we saw at the turn of the 20th century. “I think violence is widely misunderstood. There are a lot of people who are repulsed by 'violence,' yet they lend support to a system of monopolized violence. The monopolization of violence coincides with the deprivation of individuals' abilities to use violence in an effort to change the world around them.” (male, #3) Both of these analyses of violence requires a conceptual shift in the way we have come to understand violence. Their ability to discern between property violence and violence against living beings is important. Another participant notes that poverty is

violence, and that violence as a tool of resistance should be viewed as self-defense. She raises the issue of sexual violence when she asserts:

Any time we, or our mothers, daughters, sisters, brothers, lovers or comrades are attacked, or threatened, I do feel that we should step up to the plate and organize self-defense. I do NOT call the cops. Rapists should be swiftly, severely and directly dealt with... The state is violent and brutal. I believe that poverty is violence. (#1, female)

She also identifies male domination when she cites “sexism, misogyny, and abuse within the left/progressive/anarchist/activist communities” as issues that are pressing for anarcha-feminists. When asked if she believed anarcha-feminists are marginalized, her response referred to the left-social justice movement as an old boys club, the same term used to describe the patriarchal history of conventional politics.

Yes, yes, yes. Because we are womyn. because many of us are queer, of color, disabled, old, young, sex workers, single mums, on welfare, etc, etc. because we are a direct challenge to the system and, perhaps more importantly, to the old boys club that is the left-social justice movement. Because we will not sit still and silently. Because we are angry and beautiful and strong and divine. (#1, female)

Her emphasis on anarcha-feminists challenging their patriarchal tendencies in the left social justice movement shows a desire to start resistance at a community level. She articulates issues of violence within her local community:

Locally, we are in the middle of dealing with rape and abuse of our sisters by our anarchist brothers. We are very much struggling and tired of trying to work together and starting to get pissed...we have brought issues of violence and abuse within our community to the forefront. We have carved out womyn only spaces. We have created a circle of support for each other. (#1, female)

The notion of sexism among anarchists has been consistently documented throughout this paper, voiced through historical anarchist writings, and among contemporary

anarcha-feminists. One male anarchist notes the sexist behavior among anarchist men, when asked if anarcha-feminists are marginalized:

Definitely. Men who consider themselves anarchists haven't necessarily rid themselves of a material outlook towards women. One might hear inappropriate comments, sexist language, inattention to women at meetings, women delegated to the shit work, etc. Non-anarchists also see anarchism as male dominated, despite the fact women are very often more involved than men. (#5, male)

On an independent web page, Sallydarity writes a personal narrative from the standpoint of an anarcha-feminist struggling in a male-dominated scene. She addresses her male comrades:

So it's time for you to do something truly revolutionary, brothers. It's time to fight patriarchy. For some reason, this is an incredibly difficult task for many men (or people in general). I've seen men throw molotov cocktails at police officers; I've seen them take over abandoned houses with homeless people, and I've seen them make moving speeches about oppressed people they've never seen or talked to for more than five minutes. However, I've seen these same men's backs as they walk (or more like run) away from me when I need their support in challenging sexism within our own community. So here it is. This is your big chance to do something revolutionary instead of just talking about it. This is something critical that depends upon your actions. But you're too busy shutting down the WTO and fighting capitalism (whatever that means), all the while stepping over my battered body and the bodies of my sisters. This isn't some difficult-to-grasp theory, or some long, drawn-out battle plan.^{lxxxvi}

Sallydarity argues that there is a lack of anarcha-feminist space on an anarchist resource space on the internet, Infoshop, noting that all of the women listed are dead anarcha-feminists. Further, she targets her male comrades for violence against women within the movement when she writes:

I keep hearing about my anarchist sisters being threatened and beaten and raped by anarchist men. These are the problems I face as an anarchist woman in the year 2001. Reading essays about how capitalism oppresses me and how great dead anarchist women were when they weren't dead

isn't helping me deal with the hell I'm going through right now. (#4, female)

Her personal narrative captures an urgency to create and sustain anarchist communities that are just for women. The fact that the Infoshop website is mediated by a man is evident by the lack of contemporary scholarship and available resources for anarchist women. Sexism among male anarchists is exemplified in this testimony:

being a part of a community which is often dominated by white, North American males who have been criticized for and often have a difficult time dealing with homophobia, sexism and racism. (#5, male)

His comments are important because they demonstrate how deeply rooted sexism is within anarchist thought. His acknowledgement of male privilege and expressed desire to eradicate sexist behavior is part of the reason he chooses to identify as an anarcha-feminist and not simply an anarchist. Anarchist men need to prioritize feminist issues by challenging and rejecting sexism in practice. One female participant asserts one of the goals of anarcha-feminism is to “move from a position where only women in anarchist communities are anarcha-feminists and anarchist men start identifying and working towards an anarcha-feminist analysis.” (#2 female) Rather than anarcha-feminists remaining obligated to assert their politics through collective consciousness raising, survivor support, and gendered organizing, anarchist men should more readily adopt the philosophies behind anarcha-feminism. Similarly, L. Susan Brown (1996) argues that anarchism is inherently feminist, as it challenges all hierarchical and oppressive relations.

An anarchist who supports male domination contradicts that implicit critique of power which is the fundamental principle upon which all of anarchism is built. Sexist anarchists do indeed exist, but only by virtue of directly contradicting their own anarchism. This contradiction leaves

sexist anarchists open to criticism on their own terms. Anarchism must be feminist if it is to remain self-consistent^{lxxxvii}.

According to this conception, a sexist anarchist is, therefore, a contradiction in terms.

However, the fact that anarcha-feminists have had to name themselves apart from anarchists is indicative of such a contradiction. Nonetheless, this thesis has demonstrated the pervasiveness of sexism within male dominated anarchist circles. Notably, all of the participants discussed sexism within their movement as an area that needed to be addressed.

In terms of themes that anarcha-feminists should be most compelled to address, the scope is broad. Dealing with the sexism that exists external and internal to the anarchist 'community' is a necessary problem to deal with. The ability for women to maintain autonomy over their bodies and their lives is also going to factor in largely, especially under the neo-conservative movement that appears to be growing stronger over the last number of years. (#6, female)

Addressing sexism in the anarchist community has proven to be a difficult and ongoing task for anarcha-feminists. Considering that male anarchists still offer an analysis which claims to be equal to all, a lack of gender analysis contradicts and undermines the anarchist community. Although anarchist men believe they are part of an anti-sexist movement, anti-sexist practice requires action. Women are faced with the material reality of inequality and battle sexism while anarchist men, at best, only state good intentions and very few are actively joining in solidarity with anarcha-feminists.

The data obtained from interviews reveals the unique tenets of anarcha-feminism which connect to broader anarchist and feminist communities. Like Emma Goldman and Eve Libertine, anarcha-feminists continue to use their voices as a political tool. Contemporary oration of anarcha-feminists takes shape in the form of Radical

Cheerleading, Riot Grrrl punk music, as well as in meetings, workshops and conferences. In protests and street theatre they are shouting, proclaiming the injustices in capitalist patriarchal society. On community radio stations and in free school sessions anarcha-feminist are asserting their voices and sharing their knowledge with their communities. Anarcha-feminists are found on the front lines of anti-globalization movements, anti-war and peace movements, affinity groups, activist coalitions, anti-poverty groups, and do-it-yourself activism. They are involved in free schools, zine publications, anarchist conferences, organizations and gatherings. Anarcha-feminist ideology is subversive, revolutionizing communities in significant ways by challenging gender norms and oppression.

The anarcha-feminists that I know of in the local community have been involved in direct action against poverty and issues of housing, access to education, anti-racist action, war, and different corporations that profit from war. On a larger scale, anarcha-feminists have been part of activism for more collective, egalitarian communities that exist in non-hierarchical/oppressive relationships. (#6, female)

Chapter 6: Predator Pedagogy

We have a right to be angry when the communities we build that are supposed to be the model for a better, more just world harbor the same kinds of antiqueer, antiwoman, racist violence that pervades society. As radical organizers we must hold each other accountable and not enable misogynists to assert so much power in these spaces. not allow them to be the faces, voices, and leaders of these movements. not allow them to rape a compañera and then be on the fucking five o' clock news. (Morris)^{lxxxviii}

A political ideology of individualistic anarchism and spontaneous violent insurgency is promoted by anarchist men who are disconnected from the realities of women's sexuality under patriarchy. These realities include women bearing the burden of coping with male-perpetrated sexual assault, child rearing, and sexist barriers that prevent women's sexual, economic, and political self-determination. The physical, social, and economic risk for women in heterosexual relations with men increase in an environment that institutionalizes male leadership, asserts a man's right to be violent, and glorifies anonymity (and thus unaccountability) as a political strategy. Within this male desire-driven ideology, monogamy is associated with oppressive control. Through their actions, published works (freely distributed zines such as *With Open Hands: A Handbook on Open Relationships*^{lxxxix}), and educational workshops, male anarchists promote polyamory and espouse feminist critiques of monogamy in order to attain or justify sexual access to multiple women. The normalizing of a polyamorous sexual practice by older straight males that preys on the political idealism of young women promotes a culture of rape and exploitation under patriarchy. This chapter will address the prevalent issue of sexual violence in anarchist communities and its connection to male anarchist misappropriation of feminist sexual politics.

The promotion of polyamory by male anarchists is accompanied by a critique of monogamy as a product of patriarchal society. This pseudo-feminist analysis stops short of examining motivations of predatory male heterosexuality. In *A Green Anarchist Project on Freedom and Love*, author “mae bee” reflects the rationale behind this selective critique of monogamy.

This piece is not advocating another option, another “choice” of relating for couples. It is rather a recognition that our “common project” - the abolition of all power relations – includes the abolition of coercive/closed relationships. These are those relationships with fixed stature, those relationships with rules or permanent contracts. These relationships cannot really be part of a free society. and just as with other coercive relations at odds with our freedom they must be confronted by all who seek such freedom and communities.^{xc}

Representing an individual's lack of sexual availability as coercion imposed on the community at large denies agency and self-determination expressed in the “fixed stature” and stability of a monogamous commitment. Positive aspects of monogamy relating to queer positivity, childcare, child-rearing, disability, care-giving and trust are unaddressed by the rhetoric of “freedom.” Responsibilities and risk factors faced by monogamous and polyamorous women are marginal within this male narrative while the sexual voracity of men is centered and rewarded through broader social approval for male promiscuities.

Community is more than one and it is more than two also. To create self-governing, self-sufficient small communities there cannot be the tyranny of individualism or of coupledness. To create wild and anarchistic communities we must also forsake the idea of sacrificing individual desires for the sake of the community. We have been so programmed by the mega-machine that it is hard to imagine such a world where cooperation rather than competition does not elicit us as without. Even harder to imagine is a world where we are free to take our pleasures and our desires openly....^{xc1}

The vilification of monogamy as tyrannical, and a product of the “mega-machine” is part of a hegemonic approach taken by predatory males as they conflate unlearning monogamy with unlearning sexism and seek a non-competitive alternative in open relationships.

The September 2004 issue of the feminist news journal *Off Our Backs* dedicated a “Special Issue on Men” to highlight male responsibility for gendered oppression. Its cover displays “Men Can Stop Rape, and Domestic Violence, and Incest, and Terrorism, and Sexual Abuse, and Sex Trafficking, and Gay Bashing, and Torture, and War.”^{xcii} In a later issue of the journal, Kimberley Kreutzer highlights the re-occurrence of a liberation deception used to increase sexual access to women by 'progressive' heterosexual males:

The recent rise of polyamory as the preferred lifestyle in the radical leftist/anarchist circles parallels the "sexual revolution" of the late 1960s. In both instances, the supposed sexual freedom for women has not been done for our benefit, but for the benefit of men. It is not our sexuality that we are "reclaiming," but the sexuality that men desire us to have because it benefits them. Being open to the fuck, as all polyamorous women are supposed to be, is men's definition of liberated female sexuality.^{xciii}

A nuanced feminist approach to open relationships critiques the role of women as “chattel” and highlights women's self-determination as a necessary factor in women's sexual liberation. Exclusion of women as legitimate political actors occurs through the reinforcement of conservative gender roles positioning women as sexual objects, irrational impediments to male goals, and/or biologically predetermined care-givers, Kreutzer continues:

Having multiple partners at any given time is not liberating for women, for we are not seen as human, but as sexual chattel to be passed back and forth between brothers in arms. An activist man once told me that the main reason men became activists was to get laid. I could not

believe him at the time, thinking that people became activists because they could not bear to allow injustices to continue, but the actions of these "activist" men have proven his statement to be true. I have seen men aggressively pursue new women in these groups until the women finally give in and sleep with the overly aggressive men. They are then used, discarded and disappear from the group entirely.^{xciv}

Anarchist culture features a masculine catharses of violence against the state.

Within mass media and community-based anarchist cultural production, dominant images of violent resistance to state power are male. These archetypes for anarchist males include working-class heroes and progressive activists creating myths of a radical community as a 'safe' and 'free.' Heterosexual males promoting polyamory believe their sexual access is limited by the internalized sexism of women who will not sleep with them. Mae Bee suggests that negotiating consent is a marker of complicity within a system of coercion:

...to not act on my desiring in loving who i will when i will, is to be complicit in a system of coercion, of control and of ownership that i am opposed to. no, i do not and cannot, accept the rules of "your" relationship. in a free society we will not be asking for the consent of one person to sleep with another anymore than we would ask a father for the "right" to marry his daughter. and here and now, we can also live that out. to "respect" restrictive relationships is to uphold them.^{xcv}

Omitting the possibility of coercion through sexual imposition silences survivors of sexual assault and shames women who set their own sexual boundaries. Kreutzer is familiar with the consequences of this relationship model on women:

...If the move towards polyamory is supposed to be liberating, why then does it create the same absentee fathers, and alienated mother/child pairs? Where is the day care or the support for mothers within the revolutionary movements? Why is revolution inaccessible to them?^{xcvi}

This inaccessibility emerges from a sexist cycle of domination and alienation. Women's needs and experiences as mothers are not supported as a result of male-centered priorities.

Heterosexual open relationships are idealized as the epitome of anarchist principles while minimizing male accountability for social reproduction.

Manipulation and alienation of women within volunteer projects can be insidious as men intentionally use their gendered power to achieve sexual ends. In Vancouver, British Columbia a group called “Fire This Time” employed tactics of planned out coercion and extortion, to extract goods and volunteer time from their members. Since 2002 this took place under the male dominated leadership of Ali Yerevani that was exposed by former “Fire This Time” member, Ivan Drury who left FTT In February 2008. In attempting to repair his reputation and relationships in the community, Drury writes:

I watched Yerevani (and helped him) employ the same tactics in every group or coalition we were (allowed to be) members of. The same stood for student groups, like the Social Justice Centre at UBC. While recruiting, Yerevani would use his charm and charisma to make young people, and predominately young women, feel important and exceptional. However, this sense of exceptionalism came with the steep price of complete devotion to Yerevani... If a member was letting their ‘petty bourgeois tendencies’ show— whether in a political mistake they made, or by how they dressed, or if they looked tired or were feeling grumpy—Yerevani would show up at their door or call and demand a “meeting.” This meeting would usually take place in his bedroom, and he would bring along a witness, like me. The last of these meetings I attended was in the living room of the house that six of us lived in. Yerevani had three witnesses at that meeting, and let them do most of the interrogation. The subject was being berated for her ‘petty bourgeois tendencies.’ The specific charge? That she was too attached to her parents. The evidence? That she was refusing to steal from their credit card to buy a computer for “our movement.” The meeting lasted over three hours. In the end, she caved to our extortion. I sat through the entire meeting and never spoke out against what was going on. I knew that I should have, even at the time. But I didn’t.^{xcvii}

As self-proclaimed teachers and representatives of a monolithic anarchist movement, dominant males position themselves in roles which often bear resemblance to cult

leadership. These men often lure women to participate in anarchist projects with a covert plan for them to fulfill restrictive secretarial, sexual, and care-giving roles. Young women are invited by men into political action groups that claim to share egalitarian value for the contributions of their members. Age differences are often minimized by older men who take a postmodern approach to power conferred by age and gender.

Any problems with these men are dismissed as personal problems, not a problem the group has with allowing and enabling men to abuse women and perpetuate misogynistic behaviors. Often, men ask women to join groups not because of what they can offer the group through ideas or work, but because men want them to enhance and fill their dating pool. Once women join these groups they are treated like "fresh meat" and are aggressively pursued by men. Once in a group, women gain further access in the group not by being attached to one man, but by being polyamorous: by being accessible to all the men of the group.^{xcviii}

Failing to address these power dynamics ignores how existing rape culture and widespread male perpetrated sexual assault impacts women. For men to promote unobstructed pursuit of desires through multiple female partners, women's liberation is constructed under hetero-patriarchal terms, e.g., open sexual access to women's bodies. Male anarchists identify and oppose behaviours of class privilege such as material accumulation, whereas male-privileged values of militant physical aggression, individualism, and sexual promiscuity are promoted. In my research, I have observed that educational gatherings of anarchists frequently involve training sessions on the aforementioned male-privileged values as an indicator of their currency within this milieu.

As part of my research in Halifax, Nova Scotia, I attended an anarchist workshop on polyamory that was co-facilitated by a young female and an older male. The male

facilitator, identifying as feminist, insisted that polyamory was a requirement for sexual liberation for women and argued with female participants about their hesitation towards non-monogamy. When a participant commented that she “just preferred being with one person at a time.” the male facilitator suggested she didn't know what she wanted because of socialization and that her monogamous preference was fulfilling a capitalist agenda:

Men justify their behaviour by arguing that polyamory is freeing for women; it releases us from the old idea of ownership. But this is not true. In polyamory, instead of being owned by one man, we are owned by many. We become a fuck all men can enjoy, instead of just one. All this is done in the name of women's sexual liberation, which is defined by men as polyamory. If these types of polyamorous relationships were actually liberating why do women need to be coerced into them? Liberation does not require underhanded tactics that leftist men use such as shaming and name-calling.^{xcix}

The female facilitator stated early on that she “had problems with polyamory” and alluded to some bad experiences, but was unable to elaborate because the male facilitator monopolized and controlled the conversation. Anarchist men accuse women of being jealous, competitive, and counter-revolutionary if they refuse the sexual philosophies of their male peers. Kreutzer's description of “underhanded tactics that leftist men use such as shaming and name-calling ” does not include the sexual assault, physical violence, and rape used by men seeking power over women.

On a popular interactive anarchist website, Anarchist News^c, men frequently contribute misogynist ideas that reinforce women's subordinate societal and sexual roles. In numerous posts related to women's experiences of sexual violence, anarcha-feminists advocating for direct action against rapists and misogynists are silenced by men who call them “crazy bitches”. Often these sexist insults equate feminist direct action with fascism, yet, hypocritically advocate for a state monopoly on violence and 'justice.' The "Boston

Anarchist Drinking Brigade" published an article in 1995 titled "An Anarchist Defense of Pornography" in *Anarchy: A Journal of Desired Armed*. They reject feminist criticisms of sexism within pornography:

More objectionable to anarchists, however, are the anti-porn activists who are frankly censorious; While sharing the views of anti-porners who seek to protect others from porn, these people go a step further and use coercive force to achieve their ends. This is totally incompatible with the kind of voluntary society sought by most anarchists, and should be denounced by all freedom-lovers...^{ci}

Ironically, this same framework is used by anarchist men to reject women's freedom of expression in relation to rape. The anti-censorship, individualist rights approach is one that commonly accepts sexism and rejects feminism. When male anarchists label anarcho-feminist resistance to sexism as 'coercive force,' the coercive force of anarcho-sexism is exposed. Francis Dupuis-Deri explains anarcho-sexism in his article "What about Patriarchy? Some thoughts of a heterosexual anarcho-male":

There are five hypothetical explanations of why anarchist men are anti-feminist and sexist in both their general political stance and in their sexual and affective relationships with women: (1) the effects of non-anarchist and patriarchal socialization; (2) the effects of sexist anarchist tradition; (3) anarchist machismo and anti-feminism; (4) strategic priority (anti-capitalism must come first); (5) the interests of men as a class. These hypotheses are not mutually exclusive but, on the contrary, mutually reinforcing.^{cii}

By giving license to sexual exploitation, within and beyond anarchist communities, anarcho-sexism continues to privilege men in radical-left environments. Applying a radical feminist critique of the hyper-sexualization of women, Andrea Dworkin identifies how feminism is distorted through the male-determined sexual liberation:

The pornographic conception of female power is fundamental to the antifeminism of sexual-liberation movements, in which unlimited sexual

use of women by men is defined as freedom for both: she wants it; he responds; voila! The revolution.^{ciii}

Male anarchist narratives promoting polyamory are frequently rooted in a hetero-patriarchal framework. In a heterosexist environment, queer relationships (monogamous or not) effectively disrupt the normative status quo nuclear family that is part of the capitalist agenda. Black lesbian feminist Cheryl Clarke asserts this point in her article “Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance”:

For a woman to be a lesbian in a male-supremacist, capitalist, misogynist, racist, homophobic, imperialist culture, such as that of North America, is an act of resistance... She has rebelled against becoming the slave master's concubine, viz. the male-dependent female, the female heterosexual... Men at all levels of privilege, all classes and colors have the potential to act out legalistically, moralistically, and violently when they cannot colonize women, when they cannot circumscribe our sexual, productive, reproductive creative prerogatives and energies.^{civ}

Anarchist women have been at the forefront of sexual liberation movements. When promoted by feminist women, non-monogamy can be a means of exploring anarchism and sexuality and resisting hetero-patriarchy:

Firstly, it is strategic because we want to participate in this larger process of queering anarchism and believe that a good starting point is including non-normative sexual practices that are not primarily organized around gender in our explorations. Secondly, non-monogamy already has a long history within anarchist theory and practice. Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman to Voltarine de Cleyre practiced non-monogamy openly and ‘condemned the institution of monogamy’ outright.^{cv}

Contemporary anarcha-feminists continue to fight for reproductive and sexual justice and advocate for community-based solutions on their own terms.

Through projects like INCITE! Women of Colour Against Violence^{cvi}, CARA (Communities Against Rape and Abuse^{cvi}), The Revolution Starts at Home^{cvi},

UBUNTU^{cxix}, The Survivor Project^{cx}, Philly's Pissed, and Philly Stands Up^{cxii}, groups in the United States have attempted to organize grassroots campaigns to address and prevent sexual assault. These feminist campaigns, and the work of individual anarcha-feminists contribute to resilient anarcha-feminist praxis.

Chapter 7: With Tongue, Hands, and Heart

Anarcha-feminism is a site of cultural amnesia in anarchist and feminist narratives. The film I created, *With Tongues, Hands, and Heart*, identifies feminist (under)representation at anarchist happenings and offers a critical approach to collective memory in contemporary anarchist culture. Examples from Canadian anarchist educational events provide insight on gendered tensions/negotiations in anarchist movements. Centralizing female subjects as knowledge creators offers a subversive feminist lens to examine the cultural, social and political manifestations of anarchism. The re-telling of anarchist women's experiences reveals the ways in which patriarchal oppression is reproduced among their male “allies.” This research highlights the political and sexual pluralities that anarcha-feminists have historically fought for, which continue to be contested and appropriated by men. In the film, sexism in contemporary radical activist movements is observed as it is reproduced in gendered expression, political discourse, and leadership roles that maintain the subjugation of women. Paradoxically, anarchists often claim to prioritize women’s liberation. By contrasting the dominant male strategy of total liberation through state confrontation with the nuanced social intersections that constitute lived struggles against sexism, an anarcha-feminist epistemology emerges as a critical lens to deconstruct the actions and motivations of self-appointed feminist allies.

It is through this lens we can examine scenes of gendered power and resistance and confront sexism in anarchist environments. At anarchist bookfairs, conferences and meetings, I have observed a gendered division of labour as women often provide food

services and childcare while men often facilitate the educational sessions. On the rare occasions when women are facilitating, they are often accompanied by a man.

I found it easy to connect with three women who did not consider themselves within a leadership circle of their anarchist community. Their reflections on gender and leadership as represented in the film show a non-threatening reverence for male leadership that contrasts sharply with the confrontational stance of anarcha-feminists who name and challenge patriarchy as it manifests in their male peers. The existence of a servile class of women who fulfil gendered roles of care and compliment their male counterparts is not coincidental. This patriarchal arrangement is re-enforced by a strata of male leadership simultaneously valued as veteran mentors and infallible sons who deserve credit for the inclusion of women into their space.

There are very few of us women, and those who are in the 'scene' do a lot of the work. Some anarchist men do a lot of work, but I am personally very frustrated with the large number of anarchist intellectuals in our communities that do not engage themselves in small scale, anarchist community work, or activism. They talk the talk, but don't do much walking. I think we are not supportive enough to anarchist parents, and I think often the anarchist community I'm a part of, because we are so small, we end up doing so much 'good work' that we don't do so much 'good community building' among each other and we often treat each other in very anti-anarchist ways. I think the safe space for women in anarchist communities have been created because the women have moved in, with their elbows out, pushing and shoving, not because many men made conscious efforts to challenge their own sexism or patriarchy or authority issues. I think anarchist women are often excluded from intellectual anarchism, or they simply don't have time, because they are doing the work, to create anarchist community. Obviously this isn't all the time, just my observations of ways in which we have been marginalized. I think many men in the anarchist movement need to continue challenging their own socialized behaviour and attitudes towards women, as anarchists, as feminists etc. (#4, female)

As demonstrated by this comment from an interviewee and “No Pretence” project,

anarcha-feminists are challenging male privilege amidst this glorification of male power.

I named the video compilation of my research *With Tongue, Hands and Heart* after lyrics in the Submission Hold song, “Source of Fuck”^{xii}. I selected this song as the film's musical score as it recounts a first person narrative of sexist objectification and misogyny. The lines “your attraction to my destruction/ you witness my consumption” are directed at men in general and in particular at the self-professed male allies of anarchist feminism critiqued in my research. As a musical group well-known in Canadian anarchist subcultures, the sounds of Submission Hold, and singing of Jen Throwup introduces the film as the first scene opens with a live performance of the band Rule of Thumb.

Halifax punk band, Rule of Thumb, contributes female expression to a male-dominated aggressive music subculture consistently lacking in gender analysis amidst a stated class consciousness. Named after the a term associated with state sanctioned violence against women, a legal permission for a man to discipline his wife with a stick no wider than his thumb, the band Rule of Thumb opens the film with the song “Rent is Theft” passionately espousing the anarchist view that the ownership of private property results in the serfdom of the renting class. This opening scene is sharply juxtaposed with Alan Antliff leading a discussion about his activist accomplishments at the 2006 Victoria Anarchist bookfair. Dr. Antliff typifies an assertion of credibility that male anarchists employ whether they are certified academics or self-styled experts of revolution. Listing prior activist campaign experience as the legitimizing factor in holding leadership, and modelling the virtue of working on behalf of oppressed people, internationally as well as domestically, characterize this entitlement to group leadership. Dr. Antliff seems reluctant to say the word abortion and qualifies his involvement in pro-choice activism and anti-

apartheid activism as “very much embedded in single-issue politics.”

The distinction between “single issues politics” and “anarchist insurrection” is significant in anarchist subcultures and often dichotomies are formed that privilege the latter at the expense of the former. An anarchist insurrectionary politic is often used as a framework to pursue resistance that prioritizes hegemonic masculine values while single-issue politics is a feminized avenue of reform that is deemed ineffective, divisive, counter-revolutionary, and weak by its male anarchist critics.

The next clip is from a screening about the Network of Resistance and Solidarity in Brazil, highlighting women-led art projects used to mobilize communities. Presented at the 2006 Victoria Anarchist Bookfair, this session is one of the few women-focused workshops, and while highlighting what seems to be a successful events, the documentary contains problematic elements that reaffirm men's patronizing approach to women's self-determination. Specifically, the comment made by a young man in the video that “we are making the revolution happen for the women” and the voice-over of an impromptu male narrator describing the feminist project are examples of men co-opting women's resistance.

As a participant in feminist and women-focused sessions at Anarchist bookfairs across the country, I noticed some troubling patterns in their format and content. Feminist issues constitute a small fraction of the content of the anarchist canon. The subjects addressed usually takes the form of “An anarchist critique of _____” with the space filled in by a pressing global issue generally presented in a gender neutral fashion. Anarcha-feminist workshops occupy an historically located or emergent status that limits their acceptance into a male-organized curriculum.

This marginalizing placement also prevents a discussion of contemporary anarcha-feminist issues such as sexual assault in activist community, childcare, women's leadership and gendered oppressions that intersect with racism, ablism, and heterosexism. At these events, I witnessed how Canadian anarchism as a youth-driven subculture contains gendered strata of age-based authority. The dismissal of anarcha-feminist politics is common among older men who hold power and authority over younger women involved in anarchist communities.

At the 2007 Anarchist University in Toronto, I focused on the opinions and practices of women who did not occupy acknowledged leadership roles. These women were often young and enthusiastic about their recent discovery of a politically-minded radical community. The first interview from this gathering features a young woman speaking about a discussion she participated in about generosity. She mentions generosity and gender as a topic covered in the group and focuses on Bike Pirates as a Toronto based bike collective where “anyone can go in to fix their bike.” The Bike Pirates website^{cxiii} attests to internal struggles to make their space open to everyone and displays an invitation to women and transgendered people to access the Bike Pirates bike shop during “women and trans-only” Sunday afternoons that have been taking place since November 2008. While it is positive that this explicit invitation and accommodation is made to encourage 'anyone' to feel 'safe' in the collective, these efforts are indicators of an ongoing contestation of masculine hegemony by women and trans-people that has so far managed to win only an afternoon per week as a step towards equality.

In another interview, a woman at the Anarchist University was asked about the shared responsibility of tasks that are generally done by women. The interviewee

disagrees with observed patterns of a sexist division of labour by noting the exceptional nature of male anarchist leaders. One male facilitator provided food during workshops he led, another male group member brought leftovers from a restaurant, and she mentioned how he would “even cook in my kitchen.” While this woman proceeds to acknowledge that there are different standards that are upheld for men and women in terms of recognition of their contributions, she is hesitant while stating that women sometimes go to “more trouble” to accommodate the needs of the community. Accompanying this interviewee's reverence for leaders in the community is a denial of the privilege held by men in the community and their occasional exceptional behaviour of care provision is lauded rather than identified as a failing.

A young racialized woman highlights some of the issues mentioned in discussions about “sex and race and culture and those were issues that I had never really considered because I had never really felt those.” She continues to mention that she saw “people who were worried about it being a white boy party, and they were white boys, in that sense, but I never felt that way”. Feminist researcher Daphne Patai describes this process as “rhetorical manoeuvres that are rapidly acquiring the status of incantations”:

A currently popular strategy is that of “situating” oneself by prior announcement: “As a white working-class heterosexual...,” or “As a black feminist activist...” Sometimes these tropes sound like apologies, more often they are deployed as badges. Either way they give off their own aroma of fraud, for the underlying assumption seems to be that by such identification one has paid one's respects to “difference” owned up to bias, acknowledged privilege, or take possession of oppression – and is now home free.^{cxiv}

At the Anarchist U re-visioning day during an anti-oppression workshop, white men justified their privilege and dominance by advocating for a “diversity of ideas” and not

identities. The facilitator, Sharmeen Khan, the only woman of colour to sit on the editing board of the Canadian anarchist journal *Upping the Anti*,^{cxv} had been flown to Toronto and paid to lead the discussion. At a social gathering I attended after the session, the same group of “white boys” mentioned by the young interviewee argued that the anti-oppression workshop was a waste of resources and that they could have done the workshop themselves. This antagonism towards the involvement and commentary of accomplished anarchist and anti-oppression activist embodies the racist misogyny that many male anarchists claim to oppose.

Patriarchy is commonly viewed by male anarchists as a consequence of capitalism which will cease when the system is shut down. Feminist politics are often reduced to single-issue/identity politics rather than a gendered reality intersecting with all aspects of anarchism. Dividing the issues relegates women to assigned tasks and topics corresponding to their gender and limits the capacity of anarchists to critically analyse multiple oppressions. It is because male anarchists have ignored anarchist praxis with respect to gender that anarcha-feminism emerged.

The next scenes are a montage displaying art pieces at the Art and Anarchy Festival in Montreal to feature work addressing anarcha-feminist issues. Reproductive justice, militarism, ontological violence, sexual orientation, sexual objectification, racism, war and occupation, and violence against women are themes addressed by many of the artists present at this event, which was the largest of its kind in North America. Another scene from Montreal placed between interview clips is a mural commemorating missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada painted on the outside wall of an anarchist bookstore and library.

Feminist historian Sheila Rowbotham, reflects on Emma Goldman as an anarcho-feminist who inspired her to question a joyless stoicism that can accompany revolutionary politics. I spoke to Rowbotham in Kingston, Ontario at a conference called “The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness” and she recounted her involvement in the decentralized actions of the Committee of 100 and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, Rowbotham's work as a feminist historian has highlighted the contributions of anarchist women.

The 2007 Victoria Anarchist Bookfair's workshop on gender identity replayed a common narrative of conflating oppressions at the expense of critical feminist theory. An individual currently identifying as non-gendered led the session, and described his male upbringing where he witnessed transphobia. Specifically, he remembered feeling denigrated when called a female. According to the facilitator, this emasculation often stems from transphobia rather than homophobia. Describing the way homophobic violence is often targeted at individuals transgressing gender norms, the facilitator states that this oppressive response may have little to do with the attacker's understanding of the sexual orientation of their victim. Relating the example of boys bullying to men present in the group, the facilitator elicits chuckles from the men and proceeds to disassociate from a fixed sexual orientation and sex by saying “I don't identify as a boy or a girl”. Their identification in the workshop is affiliated with a male childhood experience of bewilderment at the intersections of transphobic, homophobic and (unmentioned) misogynist influences.

The Anarchist Bookfairs I attended during my research were as lacking in queer analysis as they were feminist analysis. By framing most homophobia as misidentified

transphobia and failing to mention misogyny as a determining factor in violence faced by queer women, the focus of the Victoria Anarchist Bookfair session remained androcentric. The struggle of being raised male and resisting hegemonic masculinity as a cis-gendered male is often presented as similar to women's experiences and the unique oppressions that women face because everyone deals with restrictive gender norms. This minimization of male power and the political difference between disassociating from a privileged identity as opposed to a subordinate identity was left unexamined within the discussions I witnessed.

Within these efforts aiming to “smash gender,” the reduction of sexism to gender anxieties is accompanied by a post-feminist refusal to acknowledge oppression done to women because they are women. Selective and simplistic attention is paid to women who are generally absent from white male-dominated anarchist communities. The exoticized and marginalized subjects of racialized women, indigenous women, women who are sex workers, queer women, and women with disabilities, are often objectified by a vanguard of white male anarchists, rather than seen as political actors whose resistance to state and patriarchal hegemony includes feminist issues that anarchists regularly disregard.

At the Montreal Anarchist Bookfair, we see a clip from a Francophone workshop about “Anarchism, Feminism, and War.” A standing anglophone male begins facilitating the workshop and omits feminism from the title and description. A gendered dynamic emerges as the seated women co-leading the workshop attempts to get his attention by raising her hand for permission to speak. She tells us that their group, Block the Empire, is committed to confronting “the roots of imperialism at home.” A male identified facilitator retells a story of women's resistance to sexism, while compromising the

capacity of women to be heard as knowers and teachers of their own history.

Using a clip from the “No Pretence”^{cxvi} disruption at The London Anarchist Movement Conference, I end the film with another juxtaposition: after repeatedly seeing women marginalized in male-dominated settings that claim to take women's struggles seriously, I hope this video project will generate discussion and critical reflection on the deliberate exclusion of competent women whose demands as anarcha-feminists are deemed secondary to a grand narrative of male class struggle.

Conclusion: Plural Desires

The theoretical and grassroots contributions of historical anarchist women like Emma Goldman and Voltarine de Cleyre, advanced women's rights in the 19th century. The group Mujeres Libres emerged during the Spanish Civil War to mobilize against women's oppression and organize a feminist resistance. Anarcha-feminist politics re-emerged in the 1970s punk subculture with musicians Eve Libertine and Joy de Vivre and in anarchist periodicals like Open Road. Militant anarcha-feminists in Europe (Rote Zora) and South America (Mujeres Creando) used direct action to advocate for women's autonomy. In my research, contemporary anarchist women in Canada have revealed how these influences have shaped their anarcha-feminist consciousness.

This particular anarchist theory engages directly with feminism, whereas anarchist men have too often assumed a theoretical gender equality, and thus denied the material and social inequality between women and men. Male violence and dominance over women is exposed by anarcha-feminists. As a female participant asserted during our conversation, "It's important to work against forms of authoritarianism or creeping hierarchy in our own organizations." Anarchist communities excuse sexual assault and male perpetrated violence using misogynist rationalizations that fail to take patriarchy into account. Historically, anarchist communities are male-dominated and ongoing sexism within the anarchist movement has influenced contemporary anarcha-feminist epistemology.

Anarcha-feminism embodies feminist theory and anarcha-feminists reject sexist oppression imposed by the state and their male comrades. The anarchist dismissal of

feminism as an inferior, single-issue politic is a major barrier in building healthy radical communities. Creative expressions, ideas, and political projects of anarcha-feminists strive to end marginalization of women and demand that anarchist men step down as revolutionary leaders in the public sphere until they resolve misogyny in the private sphere and beyond. The prevalence of sexism, sexual assault and rape in anarchist communities destroys the potential for social justice that anarchists and feminists idealize. Anarchist men have privilege and must take responsibility in actively fighting against sexism and other forms of oppression. This research demonstrates that further study is crucial to understanding internal struggles within anarchist, feminist and anarcha-feminist movements.

Anarchism is theoretically anti-sexist, yet, in practice, the subordination of women is reproduced. Disruptions of male hegemony have been achieved through the confronting of sexism. Conferences, collectives, meeting spaces, political campaigns, direct action groups, community networks, and intimate relationships have been sites of anarcha-feminist praxis, demanding an end to male power and all forms of oppressive power. As a text, an oral history, a mixed media production, and as an exploration of feminist theory, “Plural Desires: Feminist Epistemology as Anarchist Praxis” serves as a nexus of anarcha-feminist happenings. These events and social movements inspire further inquiry into the accomplishments of this marginalized political community.

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Interview Questions

- 1) How do you identify yourself in a social setting, i.e. queer, activist, student, etc? In what ways has your social identity influenced your political ideologies?
- 2) What is your understanding of anarchism and of feminism? What about anarcho-feminism?
- 3) What political ideologies do you identify with and why?
- 4) What women have been most influential to your political thought and practice and why?
- 5) Are there current anarcho-feminists that you relate to?
- 6) Identify the current social and political climate and how it relates to anarcho-feminism.
- 7) When did you first become politicized?
- 8) Please discuss any activist work you have been involved with, is it DIY (do it yourself), do you consider it feminist, anarchist, anarcho-feminist, etc.
- 9) What books or music did you find influential with respect to anarchism or feminism?
- 10) Are there particular ways in which you express your political ideologies aesthetically?
- 11) Please elaborate on your direct action involvement and your everyday involvement politically?
- 12) How have you related your political ideologies with practice?
- 13) What is your stance on violence used as a political strategy?
- 14) How do you feel about marriage as an institution?
- 15) What do you identify as the most pressing issues for anarcho-feminists today?
- 16) What, if any, reservations might you have in labeling yourself an anarcho-feminist?
- 17) What, if any, reservations might you have about anarchy or feminism in general?
- 18) What, if any, are some of the challenges within your local activist scene facing anarchist women?
- 19) Do you think anarcho-feminists are discriminated or marginalized? Why or why not?

20) What particular changes do you think anarcho-feminists have made in your local/global community?

21) Where do anarcho-feminists have a presence?

22) Where do you see the anarcho-feminist movement in the years to come?



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