A Farewell to Post-Left Anarchy

Evan Jack

7 October 2021

Contents

I MYSELF AM WAR.

— Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess*[1]

Dedication

I dedicate this essay to six figures: Duane Rousselle, Keran Souare, Jasper Price, Feral Faun/Wolfi Landstreicher, and Max Stirner. Without Duane Rousselle, I would have never considered Georges Bataille a post-left anarchist or a post-anarchist and I would probably have rejected him. So, keep in mind that Duane Rousselle and his essay *Accursed Anarchism: Five Post-Anarchist Meditations on Bataille* are at the "origins" of this book and even everything I will write after this book. Keran Souare was the first other post-left anarchist I ever met and we quickly became friends. I thank him for his time, kindness, support, and interest. Jasper Price was the first person who I met that had an understanding of the theorist Max Stirner that was as, if not *more* complex as mine. Jasper has not only been a fellow theorist that has taught me more than I could ask, but he has also been a good friend. Jasper is a brilliant theorist in his own right. He has a blog called 'Deranged Misfit' that I recommend you check out (though by the time this book is published, he may not be publishing stuff there anymore, or may have deleted it). Wolfi Landstreicher (also known as Feral Faun) wrote the essays that got me into post-left anarchy. His works have provided me with hours of joy and wonder. He too is at the origins of this book, everything I have written since I first read him back in March of 2020, and everything I will write in the future. Lastly, Max Stirner (also known as Johann Kaspar Schmidt) was the first taste of theory I ever got; if I remember correctly I read him first back in August of 2019. He has been at the origins of almost everything I have ever written. He is at the origins of this book, as is Karl Marx (but he wasn't as big of an influence on me as one might think). Stirner too will be at the origins of most everything I write in the future, and though it may be hard to find his, Landstreicher, and Marx's influence, I promise it is there. But, ultimately, none of them are at the origin of this book because there is no origin to this book. This book came out of anguish and despair.

I started this essay in late June of 2021 (I wrote most of it in June), so if things seem disanalogous in writing style for example, that is why. Most of the essays in this book are written and finished before I start another one, but if I occupy myself with some other topic to write about, then I will push the essay aside for a moment. This essay has been pushed aside many moments, not because it is not important, but because I want to first go through most everything else relating to Bataille before I write about his complex politics in a more intimate and detailed manner (though I have already gone over his politics previously). The other reason this essay has been

[1] Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 239.

continuously written over the months is because I continue to learn of new political alternatives that can be derived from Bataille or which Bataille himself proposed. With every new thing I learn about his politics, I then add it to this essay. This will also explain any "misreadings" contained in this essay because my opinions on Bataille have most definitely shifted since I started writing this essay.

— Evan Jack, 08/26/2021

I remember first walking through the park trail by my house and listening to podcasts Wolfi Landstreicher was on back in March and April of 2020. Every day from March to June of 2020, I would just read as much post-left anarchist theory I could... Then I got a girlfriend and got into Baudrillard... Nevertheless, post-left anarchy will always be close to my heart.

— Evan Jack, 10/07/2021

Aims of this Essay

The goal of this essay is to formulate a critical appraisal of post-left anarchy from the position of the works of Georges Bataille.

This essay will be unique in terms of its cross comparative as well as critical analysis of the works of prominent post-left anarchists in relation to the works of Georges Bataille.

Introduction: Our Object of Analysis That is *Post-Left Anarchy*

Before we start, we must put forward the post-leftist's critical opinions on what defines the left. "According to post-leftists,"[2] what defines the left is six issues:

1. "[*O*]*ld* and *rigid* forms of organization".[3]
2. "[S]pecialization of roles, both within organizations and between radicals and the masses™".[4]
3. "[R]epresentation
4. [I]deological thinking
5. [C]ategorization of (or perpetuating the categorization of) people into state-sponsored identities (gender, skin color, religion, etc.)

[2] Dot Matrix, *Anarchy 101* (Berkeley, CA: Aragorn Moser, 2012), 113.
[3] Dot Matrix, *Anarchy 101* (Berkeley, CA: Aragorn Moser, 2012), 113.
[4] Ibid., 113–114.

6. [V]alorization of work".[5]

Now that we know why the post-left wants to go beyond the left, let us look a little deeper. "*Post-left anarchy has* developed thought in 6 main areas:"[6]

1. "The Left".[7] Post-left anarchists see that the Left are "a failure" that is nothing more than "a counter productive force historically ('the left-wing of capital')".[8]

2. Ideology".[9] Within post-left anarchy, there is "a Stirner-esque critique of dogma and ideological thinking as a distinct phenomenon".[10] Post-left anarchists promote the alternative of "critical self-theory".[11]

3. "Morality".[12] Within post-left anarchy, there is "a moral nihilist critique of morality/reified values/moralism".[13]

4. "Organizationalism".[14] Post-left anarchists take issue with "permanent, formal, mass, mediated, rigid, *growth*-focused modes of organization in favor of temporary, informal, direct, spontaneous, intimate forms of relation" [emphasis mine].[15]

5. "Identity Politics".[16] Post-left anarchists critique "identity politics insofar as it preserves victimization-enabled identities and social roles (i.e. affirming rather than negating gender, class, etc.) and inflicts guilt, induced paralysis, amongst others".[17]

6. "Values".[18] Post-left anarchists want to move "beyond anarchISM as a static historical praxis into anarchY as a living praxis".[19] They focus "on daily life and the intersectionality thereof rather than dialectics / totalizing narratives" or in other words, post-left anarchists focus on the subject.[20] Post-left anarchists also critique a lot of notions I will identify and analyze in this essay.

---

[5] Ibid., 113–114.
[6] Ibid., 109.
[7] Ibid., 109.
[8] Ibid., 109.
[9] Ibid., 109.
[10] Ibid., 109.
[11] Ibid., 109.
[12] Ibid., 109.
[13] Ibid., 109.
[14] Ibid., 109.
[15] Ibid., 109.
[16] Ibid., 110.
[17] Ibid., 110.
[18] Ibid., 110.
[19] Ibid., 110.
[20] Ibid., 110.

Now, let us start this critical appraisal at one of the "founding texts" of post-left anarchy: *The Abolition of Work* written by Bob Black. Or in other words, let's do what Derrida suggested we do with Bataille, let's put post-left anarchy to its own test, its own critique of the left. Let's play post-left anarchy against itself.

On Bob Black: Work, Play, and Hegel

"No one *should* ever work," [emphasis mine] this is Bob Black's first claim and with it, the ground for a whole category of anarchist critique has been born.[21] It is arguable that the whole category of post-left anarchy, as we conventionally know it, was born with this text. But we must note that there is already a latent moralism within this claim which is that we *should*, that we *ought* to do something. What ought we do according to Black? We ought not work.

Why ought we not work, you may ask? Well, Black informs us that "[w]ork is the source of nearly all the misery in the world. Almost any evil you'd care to name comes from working or from living in a world designed for work. In order to stop suffering, we have to stop working".[22] Is this moralism not later denounced by post-left anarchists who see and hold morality and normative systems as domesticating and alienating systems?

Now, a common strawman arises: "If we don't work, will we all not die?". Bob Black puts forward the answer that will allow Bataille to step in. Bob Black responds to the strawman with the fact that no longer working "doesn't mean we have to stop doing things. It does mean creating a new way of life based on *play*" [emphasis mine].[23] It needs to be noted that Black also says something that sounds so profoundly "Batail-lean," he says, "I call for a collective adventure in *generalized* joy and freely interdependent *exuberance. Play isn't passive*" [emphasis mine].[24] Bataille agrees with Black that the alternative to work is play. For Bataille, play too isn't passive either, it is *transgressive*. It transgresses the limits of work. But before we get too deep into Bataille's concept of play, let's finish up with Black first.

For the next couple pages, Bob Black is putting forward his critique of leftists as attached to work, Bataille agrees with this too. Bataille holds that the left is always defined by *teleological action*, by *productive negation* (work), to future-oriented action.

Bob Black says that he essentially wants the economy in our conventional understanding of it to cease and then he poses a question for us. He says that "[y]ou may be wondering if I'm joking or serious".[25] His response is where the critique will begin

[21] Bob Black, *Instead of Work* (Berkeley, CA: Aragorn Moser, 2015), 1.
[22] Bob Black, *Instead of Work* (Berkeley, CA: Aragorn Moser, 2015), 1.
[23] Bob Black, *Instead of Work* (Berkeley, CA: Aragorn Moser, 2015), 1.
[24] Bob Black, *Instead of Work* (Berkeley, CA: Aragorn Moser, 2015), 1.
[25] Ibid., 3.

later on in this section. Black answers by saying that he is both "joking *and* serious".[26] He then further explains what he means when he says that "[p]lay doesn't have to be frivolous ... very often we *ought* to take frivolity seriously" [emphasis mine].[27] Lastly, he says that he would "like life to be a game — but a game with high stakes. I want to play for *keeps*".[28] But our critique will not yet begin here, for he digs himself further into a hole. For Black, "[w]ork is production enforced by economic or political means, by the carrot or the stick".[29] The hole only gets deeper. Black argues against Bernie de Koven, who argues that play is without a temporal element of consequences (it is a suspension of "temporal domination"), that play is not without consequences or inconsequential.[30]

Firstly, for Bataille, death is a very serious thing in that it makes us (it is what self-consciousness is structured by) and it makes us serious (it makes us care about life). Work is nothing more than, in more Hegelian terms, productive negation. Work is always serious. But, again in a more Hegelian fashion, we must view the opposition between work and play as dialectical, as Bataille follows Hegel in this view.[31] Black, like Huizinga who both Black and Bataille critique, sees work and play as polar in that it is either the pole of work (coerced labor) or the pole of play (non-coerced labor). Bataille sees work and play as dialectical opposites because he correlates the latter with the master and the former with the slave of the master-slave dialectic. Obviously, as we hold the principle of insufficiency to be axiomatic (for more information on why it is axiomatic see the essay *Completing the System of German Idealism* above), the master-slave dialectic is necessarily true and Bataille's conception of play is too therefore.

Secondly, when Bob Black says that he wants to model life like a game, but he wants to "play for *keeps*,"[32] we must note that it is at this moment that the logic of the restricted economy takes hold. In other words, the logic of production and accumulation has taken hold of Black's concept of play. He exemplifies the logic of production when he says that the erotic encounter "is the paradigm of *productive* play" [emphasis mine].[33] Therefore, in terms of how Bataille understands it, Black's conception of play is nothing but work. Now, for Bataille, work is a form of ontological servility. Quite literally, we not only become reduced to an object, a *thing*, but at the same time things come to our level. In other words, Bataille sees that we are reified in any productive activity. In terms of Black's connection to the logic of accumulation,

[26] Ibid., 3.
[27] Ibid., 3.
[28] Ibid., 3.
[29] Ibid., 4.
[30] Ibid., 7.
[31] Christopher M. Gemerchak, *The Sunday of the Negative: Reading Bataille, Reading Hegel* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 63.
[32] Bob Black, *Instead of Work* (Berkeley, CA: Aragorn Moser, 2015), 3.
[33] Ibid., 31.

it must first be noted that accumulation comes out of a fear of death. We produce to accumulate in order to not die (this is the schema of the restricted economy in a single sentence). We become necessarily slaves to the future moment that "will never come," as we will never *experience* death. We become dominated by the future function. Thus, Black has two issues inherent to his concept of play besides the lack of dialectical structuring: temporality and teleology. Let us now explore these ideas further!

Thirdly, Bataille sees that work sets out its own limits, and what transgresses this limit is play. Play though, is not teleological. It is not defined by temporality. This is the first split with "more traditional" post-left anarchists. Bataille doesn't see play as another mode of living, but a new mode of Being in that Being is achieved in play. In other words, we have "lower case b" being and then "uppercase B" Being. Being exists in excess of being, and thus for Bataille, excess is **the** ontological principle. It is in play that we forget our isolated being (the self) and enter into Being which is beyond ourselves. For Bataille, there is a form of ontological fragmentation when we put ourselves into temporally linear and teleological modes of action, which is the only form of action (even Mises and his praxeology agree with this definition of action). This is because we leave Being and enter into a mode of becoming-X, the X designates whatever the end of the action is. The element of time comes into *play*, pun not intended, by the fact that we must subordinate the present moment (Being) to the future (a future end), and we do this by projecting the self into the future. Thus, the first place of critique is that Black retains the element of temporality and teleology within his concept of play therefore domesticating it. Bataille avoids this as his concept of play is not limited by linear temporality or teleology as it is the dissolution of the subject into the present moment. If for some reason you still don't think Black falls into this trap of temporality then you need to hear Black's own words; Black says, "work would *still* make a mockery of all humanistic and democratic aspirations, just because it usurps so much of our *time*".[34] Black wants to liberate "free time" from being related to work, he wants to *free* time.

In this way, through Black's valorization of his concept of play, he falls into his own critique of the left and valorizes work. There is also this alienation that takes place as well. I say this because, in Black's concept of play, there is an alienation from the present moment. But we must follow Bataille out of this dark corridor to the next, as he has yet to be chained like Black has.

Lastly, I want to go over Bataille's more Hegelian conception of major and minor play. Gemerchak, in his interpretation of Bataille and Hegel, recognizes two forms of play: major and minor. Firstly, minor play "is the play that survives in those who accept work, which is tolerated as long as it serves future production, serves life itself".[35] Now, in this light, Black's concept of play, which furthers life, seems to be minor play. This

[34] Ibid., 11.

[35] Christopher M. Gemerchak, *The Sunday of the Negative: Reading Bataille, Reading Hegel* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 64.

would be correct as minor play also has consequences, whereas major play does not as linear temporality breaks down. So, what is major play? Major play is essentially Bataille's will-to-chance. The will to chance is a form of will (other forms of will are, for example, the will-to-life (Schopenhauer), the will-to-death (Mainländer), and the will-to-power (Nietzsche)). But the will to chance is unique because it is a form of will that is without will as it is without that which is required to will or to have will flow through it and this required thing for willing or will is an isolate being (an individual actor or a homogeneous community). The will to chance, which is major play, dissolves the subject and therefore will. Thus, major play is chance.

Interlude: Max Stirner

One of the theorists at the basis of the post-left anarchist critique of ideology and identity is Max Stirner. I have long liked Max Stirner but he will suffer the same fate as Bob Black: Bataille will go further, he will transgress the limit of their theories into the unknowable.

At first, Stirner seemingly surpasses all limits... but only *seemingly*.

Georges Bataille's Sovereign is NOTHING. It is not nothing as in not something, but rather NOTHING is outside the binary of something and nothing, just like the unknowable is outside the binary of the known and the unknown. So, when Stirner proclaims that "[i]f I base my affair on myself, the unique, then it stands on the transient, the mortal creator, who *consumes* himself, and I may say: I have based my affair on nothing," [emphasis mine] we realize that Stirner's Unique (which is nothing) is behind Bataille's Sovereign which is NOTHING.[36] Is Stirner's 'Unique' really just nothing though? Stirner says, "I am not nothing in the sense of emptiness, but am the creative nothing, the nothing out of which I myself *create* everything as creator".[37] Does this not mean that Stirner's 'Unique' is in a constant state of consumption but of creation, of production? Does Stirner's 'Unique' not perfectly represent the restricted economy that is predicated on the general economy? Is Stirner's 'Unique' then not in a process of production and productive consumption? Noting the parallel between restricted economy that is predicated on general economy and nothing that is predicated on NOTHING, is Stirner's Unique then not perfectly reflective of the nothing that is predicated on NOTHING?

Stiner is thus stuck within the restricted economy. Stirner is still stuck with an ontology of production. Now, one may argue that Stirner's Unique is not ontological and this is fine, as Bataille's Sovereign is not ontological either, so even if this were true, Stirner wouldn't outdo Bataille. Bataille will always outdo Stirner though because of the fact that the Unique still has experience (even McQuinn admits this in the intro-

[36] Max Stirner, *The Unique and Its Property*, trans. Wolfi Landstreicher (Baltimore, MD: Underworld Amusements, 2017), 377.

[37] Ibid., 27.

duction to *Stirner's Critics*).[38] The Sovereign on the other hand is NOTHING which is inner experience. Inner experience is the experience of going beyond oneself and thus is not an experience at all as the phenomenological subject dissolves. Ultimately, Stirner's Unique is limited by the fact that it is phenomenological which is not contestable. I say that the idea that the Unique is phenomenological is not contestable for a single reason: Property, in the way Stirner uses it, means "all the traits, experiences, actions, things, etc. that make an individual in the moment utterly unlike any other individual".[39] It is to be noted that the Unique is stuck within the "ontological" mode of action, whereas the Sovereign is beyond it. To make another note, it is clear that the Unique is still some form of isolate being that is surpassed by the Sovereign which is Being. There is no argument against this because Stirner agrees with us when he says that "[y]ou, the unique, are 'the unique' *only together with 'your property'*".[40] Now, these words from Stirner are important as well because it also reveals that the Unique is definitively a isolate being as it has accumulated property (though note that property in Stirner's sense isn't always material, is never the bourgeois sense of property, and can be those abstractions, which once dominated you, that you now dominate and make your property). Stirner's Unique is some*thing* that can be dominated by abstraction and at the same time is some*thing* that can dominate abstractions. Is it not therefore true that Stirner's Unique is stuck within the world of *things* and therefore is constantly reified and alienated? Now, you may ask "is Bataille's sovereign not phenomenological too?". I would respond to this question with the answer of "no". I say this because "sovereignty is no longer a figure in the continuous chain of phenomenology".[41]

In another sense, *Stirner does not go far enough.* Stirner and all of the post-left anarchists who use him as a framework, implicitly or explicitly, for critiquing leftist identity politics and ideology are therefore only critiquing themselves. I say this because the individual is an institution. But before I say anymore. I do not fall into the post-left anarchist critique of individualism here as I am not arguing that the individual is not a unique entity or that it is the "character armor of individuality" (which is of the *social* individual).[42] So, when I use individual, you can swap that out with the Stirner's Unique, the subject, subjectivity, etc. I really don't care, I am using them interchangeably here. The subject is homogeneous. It is an obelisk. It is because of this that post-left anarchists fall into their own critique of identity politics and society.

---

[38] Max Stirner and Jason McQuinn, "Stirner's Critics," in *Stirner's Critics*, ed. Wolfi Landstreicher (Oakland, CA: LBC Books, 2012), pp. 5–45, 20.

[39] Landstreicher, Wolfi, and Max Stirner. "Introduction". Introduction. In *The Unique and Its Property*, trans. by Wolfi Landstreicher (Baltimore, MD: Underworld Amusements, 2017), pp. 7–21, 17.

[40] Max Stirner, *Stirner's Critics*, trans. by Wolfi Landstreicher (Oakland, CA: LBC Books, 2012), 63.

[41] Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans.Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 256.

[42] Feral Faun, *Feral Revolution: essays and polemics of Feral Faun* (Oakland, CA: LBC Books, 2013), 24.

"Why?" you may ask. Well, to answer that question we must go through the writings of Feral Faun/Wolfi Landstreicher.

Feral Faun/Wolfi Landstreicher: Society, the Individual, and Identity

Before we get to the main point of this section, I want to first note that Landstreicher's "description" of the universe as chaotic is so similar to Bataille's "description" of the universe as formless. Landstreicher tells us that "[t]he universe is naturally chaotic. When someone tries to impose order on some small part of it, the order will inevitably come into conflict with the chaotic universe and will start to break down".[43] And Landstreicher's demand is so similar to Bataille's. Landstreicher calls on us to "not be masters of our lives, but rather to truly *LIVE*, to end every separation within ourselves so that we ARE our lives" [emphasis mine].[44] Let's not forget maybe the most Bataillean moment in Landstreicher's work: "Chaos is a dance, a flowing dance of life, and this dance is erotic. Civilization hates chaos and, therefore, also hates Eros ... civilization represses the erotic".[45]

Wolfi Landstreicher's critique of society is quite interesting. It is what originally drew me to him as what could get more radical than the very abolition of society itself? Landstreicher explains how society is ultimately the "final enemy," it has social roles which define individuals and reproduce society.[46] These social roles "make individuals useful to society".[47] Ultimately, society is "the domestication of human beings — the transformation of potentially creative, playful, wild beings who can relate freely in terms of their desires into deformed beings using each other to try to meet desperate needs, but succeeding only at reproducing the need and the system of relationships based on it".[48] Society is restricted economy. Or rather, society is based upon the restricted economic perspective. So, it is established here that society is going to inevitably rise from the restricted economic perspective because that is the perspective of need. How does Landstreicher propose we abolish society? Well, he doesn't; "[t]he path of this struggle cannot be mapped out because its basis is the confrontation between

[43] Wolfi Landstreicher, "Feral Revolution," The Anarchist Library, accessed June 12, 2021, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/feral-faun-essays`.

[44] Wolfi Landstreicher, "Feral Revolution," The Anarchist Library, accessed June 12, 2021, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/feral-faun-essays`.

[45] Wolfi Landstreicher, "Feral Revolution," The Anarchist Library, accessed June 12, 2021, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/feral-faun-essays`.

[46] Wolfi Landstreicher, "Feral Revolution," The Anarchist Library, accessed June 12, 2021, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/feral-faun-essays`.

[47] Wolfi Landstreicher, "Feral Revolution," The Anarchist Library, accessed June 12, 2021, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/feral-faun-essays`.

[48] Wolfi Landstreicher, "Feral Revolution," The Anarchist Library, accessed June 12, 2021, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/feral-faun-essays`.

the desires of the free-spirited individual and the demands of society".[49] Thus, even though Landstreicher has a very Nietzschean (and therefore Bataillean) tone when he says, for example, "[t]he unpredictability of humor and playfulness are essential, evoking a *Dionysian chaos*" [emphasis mine],[50] he never actually abolished or escapes society. He reinforces it. It is only the general economic view of Georges Bataille that abolishes the domesticating machine and homogeneous body that is society. And Landstreicher's prior emphasis on the individual is not just in that prior example, nor is it understated. In fact, it is overstated. Landstreicher, falling into the trap of restricted economy and therefore reproducing society, says that "[e]ach of us needs to make what is unique to us — our own desires, passions, relations, and experiences — the center of our activity ... [*t*]*he rebellion of the individual against the constraints of society — against the processes of domestication — is the basis from which the revolutionary project has to grow*" [emphasis mine].[51] For Landstreicher, the unique individual is the starting point for everything, all of his theoretics, all of his forms of praxis, etc. And this latter fact is his failure.

The individual is the starting point for restricted economics. Only with discontinuous beings are discontinuous relations, relations between things, formed. The composite being that is society is formed by the relations of discontinuous beings. The individual is negativity. The individual is action. Only "by his transforming action" can the individual "experience" and it is "only by negating all present states of things" can the individual "prove his essence".[52] When Landstreicher speaks of alienation as "a social process through which the institutions of social reproduction wrest our creative energy,"[53] we need to look at it from the perspective of general economics. In light of this latter exigency, alienation is nothing other than the process through which restricted economy pauses the flow of solar energy. Thus, the individual is an institution, it is inherently alienating. But how can the self alienate itself from itself? Quite simply, it is alienating itself from the present moment because of its teleological mode of being that is the defining characteristic of beings that circulate within the restricted economy.

So, as we have seen so far, post-left anarchy fails to meet up to its critique of the left in the area of work (point 6A) and in the area of values (point 6B). But I'm to argue that post-left anarchy fails in the area of identity politics (point 6A and point 6B).

---

[49] Wolfi Landstreicher, "Feral Revolution," The Anarchist Library, accessed June 12, 2021, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/feral-faun-essays`.

[50] Wolfi Landstreicher, "Feral Revolution," The Anarchist Library, accessed June 12, 2021, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/feral-faun-essays`.

[51] Wolfi Landstreicher, "Feral Revolution," The Anarchist Library, accessed June 12, 2021, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/feral-faun-essays`.

[52] Robert Sasso, "Georges Bataille and the Challenge to Think," in *On Bataille: Critical Essays*, ed. Leslie Anne Boldt-Irons (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 41–49, 45.

[53] Wolfi Landstreicher, "Willful Disobedience Volume 2, Number 9," The Anarchist Library, 2001, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/various-authors-willful-disobedience-volume-2-number-9`.

I think that when Klossowski says that the self is "based on the servitude of identity,"[54] we can understand that, for Bataille, there is a sort of "violence" done to Being when it is "reduced" to being. There is a sort of murder of Being. No wonder Bataille holds that we are all guilty as our existence (being) is predicated on a murder. Thus, the imposition of identity is an issue for Bataille, and post-left anarchists recognize it as an issue as well.

The self itself is identity. It is categorization. The claim "we are all unique" or "we are all unique individuals" creates a sort of system of equivalence. Now, of course, in respect to the Stirnerites, this is not a critique. I say this because, for Stirner, the Unique is beyond description. It can only be described as nothing, the creative nothing. Ultimately though, it is the fact that we *are* that allows us to be identified as a thing, and from this identification, a system of equivalence can be created. But obviously this is not what post-left anarchists mean by identity politics right? Well, the issue is that the individual propagates society, it is an institution, it has negative psychological effects from the alienation it causes, it causes a multitude of more harms. So, what really is the difference? Because if it is simply the us versus them dichotomy then the self-other or subject-object dichotomy demonstrates perfectly why the ideological/ political position that it is the individual versus all that is not me or that which I oppose does not escape the realm of "identity politics" whatever that may be.

Interlude: The Italian Anarchists

The Italian anarchists from the early 1900s had a sizable amount of influence on post-left anarchy, so it is to be analyzed and critiqued in this essay.

Firstly, it is to be noted that many Italian anarchists (e.g., Renzo Novatore) identified as individualists. Now, obviously this is problematic for the reasons just mentioned above in the sections on Stirner and Landstreicher. Now, the post-left conception of anarchy as anarchY and not anarchISM may be confusing or odd to some, but in the light of the Italian anarchists, it all makes sense.

For the Italian anarchists, "[a]narchy is not a social form, but a method of individuation".[55] Thus, anarchy is the perpetuation of all the negatives of the individual that have already been lined out. What a sad and regrettable thing to fight in the name of. Why raise the black flag of anarchy for freedom if the flag you raise represents nothing more than the opposite of freedom, the opposite of evil, that is if it represents nothing more than servility and the good (in the sense of the "good use" of something)?

[54] Klossowski, Pierre. "Of the Simulacrum in Georges Bataille's Communication." Essay. In *On Bataille: Critical Essays*, edited by Leslie Anne Boldt-Irons, 147–55. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995, 154.

[55] Enzo Martucci, "On Renzo Novatore," The Anarchist Library, 1924, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/enzo-martucci-on-renzo-novatore`.

On Ideology and the Cops in our Heads: Base Materialism, Phantasms, and Thinking

For Bataille, thought is prison, it is a cop. This is because, as we know, the self is a prison, it is an institution, an obelisk. Thus, the cop in our head (in our mind, "in" us) is not *in* our head, it *is* our head. Thus, to reach freedom, to reach evil, one must cut off the head. This latter fact is not recognized by post-left anarchists.

Even those insurrectionary anarchists who get closest to us, still retain the subject. For example, Narcissa Black, KCBG, and Anonymous make a polemic that essentially makes the case for the killing of the cops inside our heads, which is ourselves. But even then, they stop short of us when they say that "[o]nly in corporeal death did he achieve what we are hoping to achieve whilst still breathing, the annihilation of our own roles as police".[56]

But how do these cops get in our heads in the first place? For Bataille, obviously, the cops do not *get* in our heads because they *are* our heads. But for the post-left anarchist, cops get in our heads through multiple ways, but I want to talk specifically about ideology because that is probably what is emphasized the most.

Most may have not noticed this, but Bataille actually has his own theory of ideology and how it is formed and propagated.

"If one now considers social strata, universally divided into upper and lower, it is impossible to deny that aspirations are produced within each class that head in one direction as well as in the other".[57] Bataille notes that "[n]evertheless the upper class make almost *exclusive use of ideas* ... for even when those ideas have a low origin they are no less elaborated *in a high place*".[58] Bataille furthers that "the idea has over man the same degrading power that a harness has over a horse ... [the idea] brutalizes all men and causes them to be docile".[59] Is this not the usual theory of ideology? Firstly, ideology, for Bataille, is those ideas, concepts, symbols, signs, etc. that perpetuate the high-low opposition (with an emphasis on the high) within society. Bataille clearly holds that ideology is bourgeois, and that it can only be articulated in a bourgeois manner. He clearly holds that it makes human beings subservient to those ideas and therefore to the bourgeoisie who have hegemonic control over knowledge production.

---

[56] Narcissa Black, KCBG, and Anonymous, "I Want To Kill Cops Until I'm Dead," The Anarchist Library, December 13, 2017, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/narcissa-black-kcbg-and-annonymous-others-i-want-to-kill-cop`

[57] Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 136.

[58] Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 136.

[59] Ibid., 24–27.

So, now the question is twofold. The first question is "how does Bataille escape ideology?", and the second question is "how does the post-left anarchist escape ideology?".

To first answer the question that is of Bataille's status. Bataille puts forward base materialism as his solution to the issue of ideology. "[B]ase matter functions to destabilize the hierarchical schematism inherent within all idealist value systems".[60] But this begs the question of "does Bataille not idealize that matter which is base?". This was Breton's critique of Bataille but it is nothing more than a strawman. Pierre Lamarche explains that Bataille is not elevating base matter to the idea here, he is not just inverting the current order.[61] Bataille couldn't if he wanted to because "[t]he value of what is elevated cannot be maintained without a constant appropriation of the base".[62] Immediately upon the inversion of the hierarchy, Bataille, according to the logic of the strawman, would side with the new base matter. But Bataille does no such thing. He does not care for these conceptual hierarchies. "[T]he point of Bataille's articulation of base matter is to end this senile fixation on idealist hierarchies".[63] And even if Bataille did hold the position of the low, there would still be no problem because "[r]eveling in the lowly and repugnant is one way of demonstrating, quite simply, that all matter is what it is; all things are what they are. The attempt to idealize and hierarchically order the matter of the universe is a fool's game, and those who play it are bound to suffer Icarus's fate".[64]

But let's look at this in a more Stirnerian way to make the bridge between Bataille and post-left anarchy a little easier. In *The Unique and Its Property*, Max Stirner critiques Feuerbach for not following his logic to the limit. Feuerbach's atheistic and anthropological humanism denied the place of God as alienating Man's essence (and that is Man with a capital M). Feuerbach sees that humans have misrecognized where their essence lies. It does not lie, for Feuerbach, in God. Rather, Feuerbach holds that Man's essence is within himself. Stirner in turn replies with the remark that "*I* am neither God nor *the* human being".[65] Stirner recognizes that the alienation does not end by putting one alienating abstraction (Man) in the *place* of an old alienating abstraction (God). Thus, Stirner puts forward the Unique which has no essence, it only has its unique self. Keep this idea of 'the problem of place' in your head for a moment. Allan Stoekl explains that "Bataille is not simply privileging a new object ...

[60] Pierre Lamarche, "The Use Value of G. A. M. V. Bataille," in Reading Bataille Now, ed. Shannon Winnubst (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 54–72, 56.

[61] Pierre Lamarche, "The Use Value of G. A. M. V. Bataille," in Reading Bataille Now, ed. Shannon Winnubst (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 54–72, 56.

[62] Pierre Lamarche, "The Use Value of G. A. M. V. Bataille," in Reading Bataille Now, ed. Shannon Winnubst (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 54–72, 56.

[63] Pierre Lamarche, "The Use Value of G. A. M. V. Bataille," in Reading Bataille Now, ed. Shannon Winnubst (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 54–72, 56.

[64] Pierre Lamarche, "The Use Value of G. A. M. V. Bataille," in Reading Bataille Now, ed. Shannon Winnubst (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 54–72, 56.

[65] Max Stirner, *The Unique and Its Property*, trans. Wolfi Landstreicher (Baltimore, MD: Underworld Amusements, 2017), 52.

over the old one".[66] Filth is not replacing God! Looking at the allegory of the high-low opposition, we can further see why Bataille does not privilege the high over the low. The allegory, in its hierarchical structure with God as the high and filth as the low, is stable and its meaning is guaranteed.[67] Bataille sees that because of the fact that the base matter necessarily destabilizes the allegory, there is a moment where the allegory is open and Bataille goes for the head and cuts it off. To quote Allan Stoekl once more, "what Bataille works out is a kind of headless allegory, in which the process of signification and reference associated with allegory continues, but leads to the terminal subversion of the pseudostable references that had made allegory and its hierarchies seem possible. The fall of one system is not stabilized, is not replaced with the elevation of another; the fall in Bataille's allegory is a kind of incessant or repetitious process. Thus filth does not 'replace' God; there is no new system of values, no new hierarchy".[68] But this may not makes sense to some. So, to make it as clear as possible, let us turn to Bataille's essay *Base Materialism and Gnosticism*. In light of the contents of this essay, we realize that Bataille doesn't create a new hierarchy. Bataille does not turn the idea into matter. Bataille's base materialism is "a materialism *not* imply an ontology, not implying that matter is the thing-in-itself".[69] For Bataille, "[b]ase matter is external and foreign to ideal human aspirations, and it refuses to allow itself to be reduced to great ontological machines resulting from these aspirations".[70]

Now to the question of how post-left anarchists deal with the issue of ideology.

There is always this idealist residue in post-left anarchist "description". I put the word description in quotes because most of these claimed to be "descriptions" contain elements of normativity at the very least, and the most, these descriptions are really just prescriptions.

There seems to be a sort of notion within post-left anarchist literature, theory, etc. that freedom is an ideal, or that there is an ideal which we spring forward towards in insurrectionary glory. This latter sentence's rhetoric is what I'm talking about. This idea of specifically soaring past all limits instead of going through shit and mud to transgress them is why I pin some post-left anarchists as idealists who fall into the trap of bourgeois ideology. It must be noted that anarchists like Landstreicher, the Italian anarchists, Stirnerites, etc. do not have this issue, but as we know, they have their own issues.

---

[66] Georges Bataille and Allan Stoekl, "Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939," in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p. ix-xxv, xiii.

[67] Georges Bataille and Allan Stoekl, "Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939," in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p. ix-xxv, xiii.

[68] Ibid., xiv.

[69] Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 49.

[70] Ibid., 51.

Now, how does thinking work for Bataille? Does mere thought reproduce and perpetuate the restricted economy? Is Battaille's sovereignty (which is NOTHING) the only solution to the problems of the political? Some such as Hollier would say so. Is *pensée* ('thinking' in French) not opposed to *dépense*?

Interlude: The Revolutionary Potentiality of Children

Bataille sees that children don't completely fall into the world of project and that they are, to a degree, undomesticated. For example, children are still affected by myths. And this isn't just for younger children, this applies to my sixteen year old self too. For example, we still have a "third eye" in that we see things that are not there. When it is late at night and I think I see something in the darkness, my mind immediately surrenders itself in a horrified trembling. My mind obliterates itself and mythos takes the place of logos. I see monsters, I may even hear them.

Jacques Camatte, a theorist who definitely had a pronounced influence of post-left anarchy, agrees with Bataille here. In *Against Domestication*, Camatte holds that young people, which is probably a better term than children as it includes young adults, "are able to rebel against domestication".[71] Now, we agree here. Young people have a higher potential to be able to throw off domesticating structures than older people are. But Camatte's description here is problematic. I say this because Camatte analogizes domestication with death. Camatte says that "[y]oung people still have the strength to refuse this death ... [young people] demand to live".[72] Now, what does Camatte mean when he speaks of 'this death'? What types of death are there?

Camatte describes capitalist society as "death organized with all the appearances of life".[73] Now this obviously goes against the Bataillean view of capitalist society as life organized with all the appearances of "death" (expenditure). But let's make sure that we are not just misinterpreting Camatte here. Camatte furthers his point when he says that "it is not a question of death as the extinction of life, but *death-in-life*, death with all the substance and power of life" [emphasis mine].[74] So, there is no misinterpretation present. Camatte is contrary to us here because, for Bataille, it is life that is in death, it is a question of *life-in-death* for Bataille. Camatte clearly falls into the trap of perpetuating the domesticating structure that is the subject here. This

[71] Jacques Camatte, "Against Domestication," The Anarchist Library, 1973, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/jacques-camatte-against-domestication`.

[72] Jacques Camatte, "Against Domestication," The Anarchist Library, 1973, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/jacques-camatte-against-domestication`.

[73] Jacques Camatte, "Against Domestication," The Anarchist Library, 1973, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/jacques-camatte-against-domestication`.

[74] Jacques Camatte, "Against Domestication," The Anarchist Library, 1973, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/jacques-camatte-against-domestication`.

is the mark of failure for someone who is "against domestication". Camatte is thus stuck within restricted economy.

Before we move on, it is interesting to note the fact that Camatte describes the subject (specifically the human subject) "no more than a ritual of capital".[75] Here Camatte makes another mistake in that capitalism cannot for a moment bear sacrifice within it. Sacrifice is that which causes society to implode bringing it together in a moment of communal unity, of communal fusion, and then subsequent explosion of this aforementioned community; penetration (fusion) and ejaculation (explosion), all things follow the laws of general economy.

Interlude: The Anarcho-Primitivists and Anti-Civilization Anarchists

The critique of civilization is so great in post-left anarchy that some, due to their larger numbers, have even begun to distinguish themselves as a new category: anti-civilization anarchists. This not to forget the "long" line of anarcho-primitivist thought that predated Bob Black's work *The Abolition of Work*. The question of this section is how uncivilized are these post-left anarchists really? And how does Bataille critique civilization?

Firstly, what is civilization? Landstreicher defines it quite clearly as "the systematic and institutionalized domestication of the vast majority of people in a society by the few who are served by the network of domination".[76] This begs the question "what is domestication?". Though one may not call them a post-left anarchist, no anarchist outside the academy has done more to analyze domestication than Baedan. What Baedan notes is that "domestication is nearly tautological with civilization".[77] But Baedan also notes that "[c]ontemporary anti-civilization writers" have defined domestication "as the process that civilization uses to indoctrinate and control life according to its logic".[78] Civilization's "mechanisms of subordination" include many things but what we need to focus on is two things: 1. The notion that to escape the self is to escape domestication which both Baedan and Bataille hold to be true and 2. The failure of post-left anarchists to undomesticate their thought.

Baedan rightly recognizes that "[e]cstasy, from *ekstasis*, is to be outside one's self. To flee from domestication is also to flee from the selves ... to which we've been con-

[75] Jacques Camatte, "Against Domestication," The Anarchist Library, 1973, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/jacques-camatte-against-domestication.

[76] Wolfi Landstreicher, "The Network of Domination," The Anarchist Library, 2005, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/wolfi-landstreicher-the-network-of-domination.

[77] Baedan, "Against the Gendered Nightmare," The Anarchist Library, 2014, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/baedan-against-the-gendered-nightmare.

[78] Baedan, "Against the Gendered Nightmare," The Anarchist Library, 2014, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/baedan-against-the-gendered-nightmare.

strained".[79] I want to note here that Baedan's critique of civilization is much like Bataille's. Baedan argues that civilization requires the repression of these ecstatic revolts. Civilization "reinscribes the body and *spirit* of the resisters into their domestic selves" for Baedan.[80] This sounds similar to what I wrote about in my essay *The Maintenance of Capitalism and the Erasure of the Erotic* (see above), but the fundamental issue with Baedan's description is the idea of the spirit. This is where civilized logic takes hold. Similar to what Michael Richardson said in *Georges Bataille: Essential Writings*, Bataille sees that this idea of the mind/body problem (spirit/matter) problem to not be a problem at all because "any separation made between mind and body is based upon a false dichotomy".[81] For Bataille, civilization tries to turn matter (our "animal" bodies) into spirit (our sense perception), but this cannot be done, "matter cannot be transformed into spirit".[82] For Baedan, the spiritual can also be domesticated, but in reality it is the "spiritual" that domesticates.

This attempt to escape domestication while still hanging onto that which domesticates is the failure of these anarchists. For these anarchists, there is this idealization of "the primitive", there is this "real" nature of human beings, etc. It is because of this that they don't necessarily get beyond Bataille who idealizes nothing. Now, it is to be noted that post-left anarchists like Wolfi Landstreicher do not fall into this trap. Landstreicher agrees with our critique in his essay *Barbaric Thoughts: On a Revolutionary Critique of Civilization*. But as we know Bataille goes farther than Landstreicher for the reasons we have already gone over.

The closest that any anti-civilization and anarcho-primitivist gets to us is Kevin Tucker, specifically in their essay *Egocide*, which to my knowledge is one of the only essays which seeks to critique egoism in the post-left anarchist sense. But they too fall into the trap which we have just lined out. Tucker says, "[t]he primal war is a spiritual war".[83] Immediately Tucker falls for the trick of the bourgeois class which is the ideology that the high is over the low. If you read the essay you will understand why I say they are so close to us, but it is this bourgeois logic which prevents him from going forward into the transgression of civilization.

Some others who are close to us are found in the journal *Feral: a journal towards wildness*. Kortright and Evarts explain that "[w]ildness is the playful insurrection of our deepest and most instinctual desires. These desires can only be defined and fulfilled

---

[79] Baedan, "Against the Gendered Nightmare," The Anarchist Library, 2014, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/baedan-against-the-gendered-nightmare`.

[80] Baedan, "Against the Gendered Nightmare," The Anarchist Library, 2014, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/baedan-against-the-gendered-nightmare`.

[81] Georges Bataille and Michael Richardson, "Georges Bataille: Essential Writings," in *Georges Bataille: Essential Writings*, ed. Michael Richardson (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc, 1998), p. 12.

[82] Georges Bataille and Michael Richardson, "Georges Bataille: Essential Writings," in *Georges Bataille: Essential Writings*, ed. Michael Richardson (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc, 1998), p. 12.

[83] Kevin Tucker, "Egocide," The Anarchist Library, 2005, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/kevin-tuc`

by us as individuals or small clusters of individuals. It is raw unmediated emotion. *It is living every moment on the brink of the unknown*, like the butterflies you get in your stomach when you are interacting with a person you are attracted to" [emphasis mine].[84] It is unfortunate that they retain the subject but it seems that even their alternative to civilization called 'wildness' is still quite civilized.

Georges Bataille, on the other hand, escapes all of these issues as well as civilization. Bataille, like Tucker, understands that "[w]hat we are undertaking is a war".[85]

"It is time to abandon the world of the civilized and its light. It is too late to want to be reasonable and educated ... it is necessary to become completely different, or to cease being".[86]

The Question of Organization and Alternatives: Base Realities

Bataille certainly agrees with many post-left anarchist critiques of leftist political organization. For example, the Marxist-Leninist idea of a vanguard party is monocephalic. It homogenizes the masses just as capitalism does. The post-left anarchist's claim that the left is nothing more than the left-wing of capitalism is given backing, and we largely affirm this. In the 1930s, Bataille was identified as a ultra-leftist, but in the light of this term's current usage, I want to put forward the notion that Bataille, as we have seen so far, having perfectly critiqued and escaped the problems of the left thus far, is not a ultra-leftist. Now, this is not to say that he was a post-left anarchist either. For, if the thinkers we have been critiquing form the basis of post-left anarchy, then I think it would be wrong to label him as such. But, how does post-left anarchy, as well as Bataille, deal with the problem of organization that the present-day left has given no answer to other than perpetuating capitalism? This is the first question of this section. The second question is the question of roles, specialization, etc. within modes of political organization between radicals, intellectuals, party members, etc. and the masses. How do post-left anarchists answer this question? And how does Bataille answer this question? The third question of this section is a question of representation with these organizations. How does post-left anarchy solve for the issue of representation within the left? How does Bataille solve it as well? And for the fourth question of this essay: how does Bataille deal with the post-left anarchist's critique of the academy and intellectuals?

[84] Chris Kortright and Craig Evarts, "Feral: a Journal towards Wildness," The Anarchist Library, 1999, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/various-authors-feral-a-journal-towards-wildness#toc5.

[85] Georges Bataille, "The Sacred Conspiracy," The Anarchist Library, 1936, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/georges-bataille-the-sacred-conspiracy.

[86] Georges Bataille, "The Sacred Conspiracy," The Anarchist Library, 1936, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/georges-bataille-the-sacred-conspiracy.

To answer the first question, we must first look at the post-left anarchist's desired mode of future political organization. Not very surprisingly, I would say that this is the most underdeveloped area of post-left anarchy.

Let's start with the Italian anarchists for a moment, because I think this will highlight what I'm talking about. Enzo Martucci says, "Anarchy is not a *social form*, but a method of individuation. *No society* will concede to me more than a limited freedom and a well-being that it grants each of its members ... *nothing is forbidden and all is permitted* ... *anarchy*, which is the natural liberty of the individual freed from the odious toke of spiritual and material rulers, *is not the construction of a new and suffocating society. It is a decisive fight against all societies.* [*Anarchy*] *is the eternal struggle of a small minority of aristocratic outsiders against all societies which follow one another on the stage of history*" [emphasis mine].[87] Recently, in 2018, Flower Bomb said something quite similar to Martucci. They said, "Freedom isn't a *pre-configured future utopia*; it is a lived experience by those who have the courage to reclaim their lives as their own here and now".[88] So far, we can see that the desired form of political/social organization of post-left anarchists is no society. In fact, it isn't just the *passive* remark "oh I don't think that we will organize structures again," it is the *active* remark "we *will not* organize structures again, and will fight against all structures that try to arise". Like Aragorn Moser said, "[anarchy] isn't concerned with a social revolution that adds a new chapter to an old history *but the ending of history altogether*" [emphasis mine].[89] Thus, post-left anarchy is the desired negation of domestication and the desired affirmation of an unbridled freedom.

But necessarily, there is social organization within post-left anarchy because of the fact that the individual subject is not contested. All of this "liberation," all of this negation of every social form, is done for individuals, and is therefore done for society due to the established fact that the individual perpetuates social organization due to the fact that it is socio-ontological composition (organization) *par excellence*. Wolfi Landstreicher confirms our latter suspicions when he says, "Some anarchists ... desire certainties, clear visions and answers. They come up with plans, schemes, programs and blueprints of the new society ... Does one replace the hated chains which held one captive? Does one rebuild the burnt-down prison from which one has escaped? ... [Some anarchists] would have us forge the new chains and the new prisons now in order to avoid the encounter with the unknown ... *Institutions do not prevent domination; indomitable individuals do*" [emphasis mine].[90] So, it is clear that post-left

[87] Enzo Martucci, "On Renzo Novatore," The Anarchist Library, 1924, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/enzo-martucci-on-renzo-novatore`.

[88] Flower Bomb, "Decomposing the Masses: Towards Armed Individuality," The Anarchist Library, 2018, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/flower-bomb-decomposing-the-masses-towards-armed-indivi`

[89] Aragorn!, "Anarchy and Nihilism: Consequences," The Anarchist Library, accessed June 12, 2021, `http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/aragorn-anarchy-and-nihilism-consequences`.

[90] Wolfi Landstreicher, "Willful Disobedience Volume 2, Number 9," The Anarchist Library, 2001, `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/various-authors-willful-disobedience-volume-2-number-9`.

anarchy's rejection of organization in favor of the unique individual does not solve for organization because the individual is an institution, is a composition, is organization.

Now, before we look at Bataille, let us look at what I'm sure many of you have been thinking about: the union of egoists.

In *The Unique and Its Property*, Max Stirner actually does something which post-left anarchy has desperately needed to do: present alternatives. Now, alternatives don't need to be planned or (rationally) modeled, as we will see when we get to Bataille). All an alternative needs to be is an alternative. The alternative Max Stirner puts forward is commonly called 'the union of egoists' or 'the association of egoists' (I prefer the latter because the signifer union is also a referent to a more leftist, structured, and cohesive mode of organization that is the union). Stirner says, "Therefore, the two of us, the state and I, are enemies. For me, the egoist, the welfare of this 'human society' is not in my heart. I sacrifice nothing to it, I only use it; but to be able to use it completely, I transform it instead into my property and my creation; in other words, I destroy it and in its place form the *association of egoists*".[91] Stirner furthers by asking, "[Can the state and the church, c]an they be called a union of egoists?".[92] For Stirner, one must voluntarily and volitionally associate with someone for it to be an association. An association is transitory, due to the fact that it is immediately at the point an egoist loses interest in the association that the association dissolves. Thus, it is not binding, it cannot therefore be predicated on fixed ideas, on specters, on abstractions. My issue with the association of egoists is not the common strawman which argues it is itself an abstraction as it is not. Rather my issue with the association of egoists, is that it is *of egoists*. It still doesn't solve the problems of the subject laid out above. And yes, I know that this is getting repetitive, as I am repeating how post-left anarchy is connected to the subject and Bataille is not, but bear with me.

Now, onto Bataille.

In Bataille, there are many "alternatives" which I will group all under the term 'base realities'. There is the ideal potlatch which is one with no return. Vitanza speaks of the Sun as the Bataillean alternative to the capitalist Earth. Others have spoken of Bataille as a theorist of degrowth. There are those who see him as a revolutionary, or a pessimistic insurrectionary who uses anguish as a blade to cut the chains of which are subjectivity and all its idealist corollaries. Some see him as one who poses class struggle as the primary mode of resistance. You may be confused as to why I'm speaking of things such as class struggle or revolution, because those are conventionally means to and end. But in Bataille, they are ends in themselves. Thus, Bataille doesn't put forward any theory of organization. Composition is allergic to Bataille and the disease he puts forward in his works. Bataille presents one "alternative": atheological negation. Whether this atheological negation be found in expenditure, sovereignty, etc. does not

[91] Max Stirner, *The Unique and Its Property*, trans. Wolfi Landstreicher (Baltimore, MD: Underworld Amusements, 2017), 192.

[92] Ibid., 223.

matter. There is no question of organization for Bataille. There is only the uncontrollable, delirious, spasmatic convulsion toward decomposition (de-organization). Thus, we do not have to answer the next two questions in relation to Bataille. No matter how post-left anarchists answer the next two questions, they will still be stuck within the suffocating prison of composition. There may not be political representation in some of the post-left anarchist's alternative modes of organization, but the problem that is (phenomenological) representation still remains.

To answer the fourth question, Bataille is in no way an academic. You may argue that he uses jargon. But he does no such thing. Instead, he disrupts the meaning of common philosophical jargon. Is poetry not the holocaust of words?

As for alternatives, as long as the alternatives of the post-left anarchists have subjects and/or idealism (they almost all do!) then they fall to the same critique.

Interlude: A Response to Alejandro de Acosta's Critique of Sacrifice

Alejandro de Acosta says,

[Mauss and Hurbert] describe religious rituals in which the credulous one eats: 'By eating the sacred thing, in which the god is thought to be immanent, the sacrificer absorbs him. He is possessed by him...' The sacrificial logic is a logic of absorption: and in absorption possession. Absorption would then be the psychological or physiological prerequisite for identifying yourself with an alien Cause. It/should not surprise us, then, that *The Ego and its Own* is peppered with constant references to eating: eating things, eating other people, eating gods too. Stirner's rejection of the Cause is a rejection of the practice of sacrifice, and of every politics and morality based on a sacrificial logic.[93]

The issue with this critique is the fact that sacrifice doesn't sacrifice sacred things, it creates them. God is annihilated in sacrifice, not absorbed. The subject absorbs nothing either. The subject is annihilated in sacrifice because death overwhelms it.

There is no Cause to be found within sacrifice. Sacrifice is the annihilation of all Causes. Bataille doesn't even have his own Cause, whereas Stirner does.

The way Stirner uses the word 'sacred' is far from Bataille's usage. In fact, this is an idealistic movement within Stirner's work. Stirner is dematerializing the sacred, and putting the phenomenological subject in its place. Is this not the same issue which Land identifies within Derrida, Hegel, Husserl, etc.?

[93] Alejandro de Acosta, "How the Stirner Eats Gods," The Anarchist Library, 2009, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/alejandro-de-acosta-how-the-stirner-eats-gods.

On Morality

I will look at Bataille's opinions on morality further in a future essay (hopefully), but essentially, the issue of teleology pervades normative ethics for Bataille.

As for the post-left anarchists, we see in some of them the most normative impulse one could imagine. DO THEY NOT WANT FREEDOM FROM ALL INSTITUTIONS OTHER THAN THEMSELVES? It honestly depends on who you are reading, and a general amount of normativity is not present in every post-left anarchist text. I will not try to make a generalization which has almost no basis.

Interlude: The Anarcho-Nihilists and Aragorn Moser

Firstly, I want to dedicate this section to Aragorn Moser. He was such an influential figure in the anarchist community, as well as a personal influence in that his podcasts influenced me, I'm sure they influenced many others too. His influence also lies in Little Black Cart, which without, the circulation of post-left anarchist ideas in the form of physical books, pamphlets, etc. would be severely limited. May he rest in peace.

Now, to anarcho-nihilism. Moser lines out eleven propositions that have to do with anarcho-nihilism. I will summarize them now.

1. No project can help liberate us.
2. Singular approaches such as the single approach of revolution or insurrection, etc. are a pipe dream that is like monotheism in its single approach.
3. A failed revolution is better than nothing and may give us moments worth living for.
4. Consquentialist approaches that care not for how many they kill to reach their utopia are abhorrent.
5. The Catechism is the project of anarcho-nihilism.
6. People are broken in today's society.
7. Revolution is always a failure.
8. Life is an impasse.
9. Past solutions won't work in the present.
10. The effort of liberation is without hope.

11. "The suicide bomber is the muse of our time".[94]

The fundamental issue with anarcho-nihilism is this. In advocating non-action, anarcho-nihilism fails to do anything while doing something. It escapes no problems. The occasional active nihilist that says "fuck it" and blows up a bank is nothing but a recupreable heterogeneity that reinforces our homogeneous society of capitalist production and productive consumption. In this way, anarcho-nihilists only make things worse, making hope truly void from our minds.

A Farewell to Post-Left Anarchy — In Place of a Conclusion

Some may argue that Bataille had abandoned any form of anarchy by the mid 1940s because of the fact he says, "Anarchy bothers me, particularly the vulgar doctrines apologizing for common criminals".[95] Does the smell of a corpse not bother us too? Is its violence not threatening to ourselves, reminding us of our own finitude, of our own decomposition? Ultimately, Bataille searches for evil. He says, "I feel opposed, I oppose myself to all forms of constraint: nevertheless, I make nothing less than *evil* the object of an extreme moral search".[96] In this way, Bataille is not rejecting anarchism. Instead, he is rejecting politics.

Bataille sees that Nietzsche "had no political position: he refused, when asked, to choose one party or another; irritated to be identified with either the right or the left. He was horrified by the idea of subordinating his thought to a cause".[97] Bataille follows Nietzsche in rejecting the political altogether. But still, we mustn't forget Nietzsche's words found in the *Memorandum*. Proposition 142 of the *Memorandum* illuminates Nietzsche and Bataille's position:

"Develop all of our faculties — that means: develop anarchy! Perish!".[98]

Bibliography

[94] Aragorn!, "Anarchy and Nihilism: Consequences," The Anarchist Library, accessed June 12, 2021, `http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/aragorn-anarchy-and-nihilism-consequences`.

[95] Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, trans. Stuart Kendall (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2015), 8.

[96] Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, trans. Stuart Kendall (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2015), 8.

[97] Ibid., 6.

[98] Friedrich Nietzsche, *La Volonté de Puissance, II,* bk. 4, §378; *XI*, pt. 2, §304, 1880–1881, quoted in Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, trans. Stuart Kendall (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2015), 215.

Acosta, Alejandro de. "How the Stirner Eats Gods." The Anarchist Library, 2009. https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/alejandro-de-acosta-how-the-stirner-eats-
Aragorn!, "Anarchy and Nihilism: Consequences." The Anarchist Library. Accessed June 12, 2021. http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/aragorn-anarchy-and-nihilism-c
Baedan. "Against the Gendered Nightmare." The Anarchist Library, 2014. https://theanarchistlib
Bataille, Georges. *On Nietzsche*. Translated by Stuart Kendall. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2015.
— — — . "The Sacred Conspiracy." The Anarchist Library, 1936. https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/georges-bataille-the-sacred-conspiracy.
— — — . *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*. Edited by Allan Stoekl. Translated by Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie Jr.. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.
Black, Bob. *Instead of Work*. Berkeley, CA: Aragorn Moser, 2015.
Black, Narcissa, KCBG, and Anonymous. "I Want To Kill Cops Until I'm Dead." The Anarchist Library, December 13, 2017. https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/narcissa-
Bomb, Flower. "Decomposing the Masses: Towards Armed Individuality." The Anarchist Library, 2018. https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/flower-bomb-decomposing-t
Camatte, Jacques. "Against Domestication." The Anarchist Library, 1973. https://theanarchistlib
Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1978.
Faun, Feral. *Feral Revolution: essays and polemics of Feral Faun*. Oakland, CA: LBC Books, 2013.
Gemerchak, Christopher M. *The Sunday of the Negative: Reading Bataille Reading Hegel*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003.
Kortright, Chris, and Craig Evarts. "Feral: a Journal towards Wildness." The Anarchist Library, 1999. https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/various-authors-feral-a-journ
Martucci, Enzo. "On Renzo Novatore." The Anarchist Library, 1924. https://theanarchistlibrary
Matrix, Dot. *Anarchy 101*. Berkeley, CA: Aragorn Moser, 2012.
McQuinn, Jason, and Max Stirner. "Clarifying the Unique and Its Self-Creation." Introduction. In *Stirner's Critics*, translated by Wolfi Landstreicher, 5–45. Oakland, CA: LBC Books, 2012.
Lamarche, Pierre. "The Use Value of G. A. M. V. Bataille." Essay. In *Reading Bataille Now*, edited by Shannon Winnubst, 54–72. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007.
Landstreicher, Wolfi. "Feral Revolution." The Anarchist Library. Accessed June 12, 2021. https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/feral-faun-essays.
— — — . "The Network of Domination." The Anarchist Library, 2005. https://theanarchistlibrar
— — — . "Willful Disobedience Volume 2, Number 9." The Anarchist Library, 2001. https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/various-authors-willful-disobedience-volu
Landstreicher, Wolfi, and Max Stirner. "Introduction". Introduction. In *The Unique and Its Property*, edited by Wolfi Landstreicher, 7–21. Baltimore, MD: Underworld Amusements, 2017.

Richardson, Michael, and Georges Bataille. "Materiality." Foreword. In *Georges Bataille: Essential Writings*, edited by Michael Richardson, 12. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc, 1998.

Sasso, Robert. "Georges Bataille and the Challenge to Think." Essay. In *On Bataille: Critical Essays*, edited by Leslie Anne Boldt-Irons, 41–49. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995.

Stirner, Max. *The Unique and Its Property*. Translated by Wolfi Landstreicher. Baltimore, MD: Underworld Amusements, 2017.

— — — . *Stirner's Critics*. Translated by Wolfi Landstreicher. Oakland, CA: LBC Books, 2012.

Stoekl, Allan, and Georges Bataille. "Introduction." Introduction. In *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ix-xxv. Edited by Allan Stoekl. Translated by Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. eslie Jr.. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.

Tucker, Kevin. "Egocide." The Anarchist Library, 2005. `https://theanarchistlibrary.org/librar`

Evan Jack
A Farewell to Post-Left Anarchy
7 October 2021

Retrieved on 6 January 2024 from evanjackdebate.medium.com.
Written 06/27/2021–09/03/2021.