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Anarchists, Punks and Vegans - oh my!

ethnography of an anti-capitalist Community of Dissent



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Abstract:

Although ethnographies dealing with anti-capitalist activism, veganism or the punk scene are far from uncommon, until recently the temptation has been to view these groups as separate and distinct, rather than diffuse and overlapping. Using data gathered during interviews and participant observation in some parts of urban New Zealand, this study offers a sketch of the boundaries of the Community embodied by that overlap. Participants' own definitions for key terms such as anarchism, punk and capitalism/consumerism are presented and scrutinised in order to provide a starting point for this analysis. A lineage of thought is juxtaposed with each of these terms, with the intention of contesting some of the popular stereotypes surrounding them. The Community's own sense of difference is then explored through the responses of participants, which are analysed and some commonalities suggested. The most critical of these is the perception amongst participants of a greater engagement with their choices than they generally considered to be the case within the mainstream. Finally, some internal divisions within the Community are noted and a model for the radicalisation and mediation of dissent is suggested to explain this.

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0.0 - Introduction

“Imagine yourself suddenly set down, surrounded by all your gear, alone on a tropical island beach close to a native village, while the launch or dinghy which has brought you sails away out of sight.”

(Malinowski 1922, p 4)

“I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore”

(Fleming 1939)

Ethnography has traditionally been regarded as something which is bounded, not only in space but also in time. Its structure, which is to say the structure of the endeavour, if not its actual outcome, is often decidedly mythic; the anthropologist indirectly evoking The Wizard of Oz, or Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner, in his or her journey to, and return from the unknown.¹ In my case, though, during my interactions with the group that would become the focus of this study there was no obvious boundary to cross. If anything the boundary crossed me. There was no sudden realisation that I “wasn't in Kansas anymore.” Figuratively speaking, Oz knocked on my door. Nor was the long term significance of that knock immediately obvious. The only thing of immediate significance was the person doing the knocking.

Evelyn came to my door in response to a flatmate-wanted advert. An ad for a room she then took, and, while she doesn't mind if she's identified, some of the people I met through her obviously do. So if you are a member of the scene in question and you are reading this, please respect the privacy of the people concerned and refrain from thinking too hard about their respective identities. Your friends will thank you for it.

¹ Christopher Booker would call this an example of the “Voyage and Return” archetype, in which the hero is “suddenly set down” in a place outside the world they know, where the rules they regard as normal may no longer apply. The hero overcomes obstacles in his or her new surroundings before returning to the world, having presumably learnt something from their experience. Booker argues that the popularity this type of story enjoyed in the 18th century owed much to the excitement generated by actual accounts of exploration and discovery from the period (2004, p 87-106). These same early modern travel narratives are often also - perhaps not coincidentally - seen as the beginnings of the ethnographic project itself (Liebersohn 2003, p 100).

I had just taken over tenancy on a house, which, though it did have something of a history of eccentric tenants, was presently the home of an economics grad student and a French biochemistry major. Happy meat eaters one and all. At the time, though, I recall feeling it was important that the culture of the flat, whatever I thought that meant, shouldn't change just because I was now in charge. So when the time came to fill an empty room I worded the advert accordingly -

“Flatmate wanted - huge room, backyard, off street parking. Vegetarians, musos and internationals welcome.”

Why Evelyn wanted to live with us I have no idea, except that I think she had a limited amount of time to find a place and liked the house. I do remember her asking after the then sadly dilapidated vegetable garden, which she has since expanded, taking over large areas of the lawn. The Economist complimented her on a hat she was wearing. She explained the hat was there to hide the mauve dreadlocks under it, which she felt were in a sad state of repair. She had, it emerged, shaved her dreads off when she went to India, to discourage the sexual harassment she had been told she might encounter. She carried the dreads around, however, in a plastic bag in the bottom of her pack and when she left India, she told us, with a bit of grin, she'd simply crocheted them back on.

I also remember her, the Economist and the Biochemist swapping travel stories during the interview “process”. The Economist had done some aid work in Pakistan during the aftermath of the 2005 Kashmir quake, and Evelyn herself had been living India during the same period, volunteering for Shikshantar.² I wonder if this might not have led her to believe he had more in common with her than maybe he did. They certainly had some fairly spectacular disagreements during his time as a flatmate - his confidence in the power of market forces to fix the world's ills, against her absolute conviction that the free market was to blame for most of them.

² "An applied research institute dedicated to catalysing radical systemic transformation of education in order to facilitate Swaraj-development [ie. decentralised self-governance] throughout India" (Shiksantar 2005).

Whatever her reasons for wanting to live here or our reasons for letting her, within a few months our house had become a bit of a drop in centre for the city's punks, vegans and anarchists. 'Drop in' though, should not be taken to imply 'drop out'. The popular image of the unemployed and uncivil 'professional protester' who rails against the tyranny of the state from the safety of the dole queue, is for the most part a misnomer. There are certainly punks or anarchists who have been on the dole for long periods of time and who sometimes aren't conventionally civil, and, while I hesitate to say they are in the minority,³ my own experience has been that, on the whole, the members of this Community⁴ are harder working and more hospitable than many of my more mainstream acquaintances. Since meeting Evelyn I have also encountered parents, students, union workers, care givers, lab technicians, ambulance officers, PhD candidates, workers in social justice, impassioned and disciplined artists of all persuasions, burger flippers, and delivery drivers - all of whom share a certain moral code, a social and environmental conscience, and a willingness to act on that, which I consider to be atypical of society at large.

Some readily identify with one or more of the subcultural labels commonly attributed to similar communities while others are openly hostile to classification, viewing it as socially imposed and inevitably confining. There are also those who have moved away from such a firm sense of identity as they've aged, which I view as a natural process, and while some feel like their connection to the Community has weakened as a result, others now feel more involved than they ever did in their teens and early twenties. Until recently it has been common to view each of these subcultures as discrete, non-overlapping cultural entities. From the very earliest work into these groups,⁵ to more recent efforts (Leblanc 1999; Clarke 2003; Cross 2003; Moore 2007; Taylor 2004 etc) the temptation has been

³ Not only because I don't have the demographics to back that up but also because I'm not entirely sure the idea of a minority within a nonconformist, anarchistic community makes any sense. Either everyone is a minority or no one is.

⁴ The title case is used here deliberately to differentiate the subject Community from a wider social body. My reasons for this will be explained later in the introduction.

⁵ See Hebdige's seminal, if dated, semiotic deconstruction of the punk movement (1991 [1979], p 23-26 & 62-72) for example.

to let media created labels, like punk,⁶ define the limits of one's scholarship. Due to the nature of the endeavour these self-imposed limits are then seen as indicating the boundaries of the group in real terms, boundaries which in my experience are both more diffuse and less absolute than such a direct relationship probably allows.

Exceptions do exist. A O'Connor's article on "Punk Subculture in Mexico and the Anti-globalisation Movement", for example, does make some connections (2001, p 43-53), but for the most part, even when actors or elements shared across subcultures are acknowledged, the larger community implied by this overlap is ignored. It might therefore be more useful to downplay, while still acknowledging, these subcultural labels, and instead to view the politics of individuals as located somewhere along a spectrum of possible alternatives.

One of the most interesting recent developments in subcultural theory is Maffesoli's articulation of the rise urban tribalism, a metaphor which aims "above all to accentuate the untidy aspects of sociality". He goes on to describe this as "a patchwork of small local entities" typified by the punk community (1996 [1988], p 9-10). This approaches the decentralised, interconnected idea of community I intend to employ in this analysis. However, his generalised, theory-building approach is lacking in specific ethnographic data and, while I understand that his application of the tribal metaphor is broad enough that the word's primitivist connotations shouldn't apply, for my purposes it feels a little dangerous. This Community has often been called savage, or feral and for some people - anarcho-primitivists and deep ecologists most notably, this is a comparison which they invite or even celebrate. It is not a comparison which I feel is particularly accurate however, or helpful, and so I contest it's use here.

⁶ Dave March claims that, "the idea of punk rock began with a group of writers at Creem magazine, most prominently me, the late Lester Bangs, and Greg Shaw... Our point of view - which suffused each issue of Creem from roughly 1969-1973 - was belligerent, often less than respectful to rock's major institutions than many thought proper, with the result that all of us - and especially me as the most militant of the bunch - were frequently given fisheye glances and assaulted with the epithet 'You are such a punk.' Culturally perverse from birth, I decided that this insult would be better construed as a compliment" (quoted in Taylor 2004, p 16).

I would instead prefer to approach the subjects of my research as a diffuse community of interacting subcultures and not as a discrete cultural entity in its own right. Attempting to articulate the limits of a non-discrete entity might seem paradoxical - and indeed it is - but as Steven Taylor, who is probably punk's best informer/ethnographer, writes -

Paradox is fundamental to the punk situation. To begin with, punk was an anti-commodity movement that manifested through commodities. Punk reconfigured mass-market products designed to proliferate sameness and made them signify difference.

(2004, p 8)

New norms are certainly emergent within these communities, but this often leads to a further paradox. As the new aesthetic is in turn commodified and co-opted by the mainstream, the Community undergoes a process of redefinition and conscious self-critique, always struggling to maintain authenticity in the face of a culture which is perceived to be deeply inauthentic and indeed hostile (Moore 2004; Taylor 2004, p 8-10). Recognising this inherent play within the system, and the subsequent need for generalisation, seems to me a critical component of any research into dissenting communities.

Speaking generally, then, it ought to be possible to divide subcultures into two groups. Firstly, those which operate largely within the conceptual framework of mainstream culture - fraternal organisations, sports clubs, corporations, kin groups etc. - and secondly, those which, to a greater or lesser degree, construct themselves in opposition to it - criminal organisations, religious extremists and so on. It is this later set of social entities that I would describe as communities of dissent, and while the degree of the dissent, its sophistication, and the importance placed on it, clearly vary, its value as a means of group differentiation is clear.

In the case of the Community being studied here anti-capitalist dissent is explicit, consistent and, although choices are often mediated by the need for some engagement with the mainstream, I would argue it is also the Community's

defining feature. In order to avoid the sort of bounded monolithic uniformity for which I have already argued subcultural labels are problematic. I would therefore prefer to let the phrase ‘community of dissent’, or ‘the Community’ in the definitive, stand as my cover term, and to let my scholarship, and the subjects themselves define the scope of it’s relevance.

0.1 - Methodology

Initially I intended that this ethnography have a much broader scope than perhaps the following pages would indicate. I anticipated that using snowball sampling to recruit further participants, as well as targeting known centres of community activity, would enable me to expand the endeavour beyond my own, pre-existing, contacts within the Community. In part my failure to do this had to do with the resources required to undertake a large-scale ethnography of this kind - money, time and so on - and my lack of these things. Perhaps more importantly, beyond the immediate circle of trust I had already cultivated within the Community, I was an unknown, and, given the effect that recent events⁷ have had on what Community members sometimes refer to as the ‘security culture’, it should probably have come as no surprise that I had difficulty getting widespread access.

Two main research strategies were employed during this research: loosely structured interviews focused around a series of topical areas as well as a limited amount of participant observation. In the planning stages of this process I assumed I would end up with the reverse of this situation, or at least that these strategies would have played a more equal role in the acquisition of data. By attending events that might be regarded as manifestations of this Community, particularly those with a focus either on dissent, or on community organisation,⁸ it was my hope that the borders of this entity might be made clear, or at least clearer.

⁷ Specifically the October 15th Terror Raids (Hager 2007) and the subsequent outing, during my research, of Rob Gilchrist, a veteran activist, as a long time police informant (Hager 2008).

⁸ Protests, community meetings etc.

However opportunities for participant observation, that were both relevant and which fell within the fairly rigid ethical constraints under which I have been operating, have proved few and far between. The issue of ‘security’ was again also a factor for some groups. Consequently the few opportunities I did get to engage deeply in participant observation should be seen as secondary to text gained from interviews.

Interviews were intended to allow participants the ability to report directly on their own perceptions of the Community and what relationship, if any, this had with their own sense of identity. To this end, participants were asked to describe what choices they felt they made that were different from choices that someone from the ‘mainstream’⁹ might make. They were also asked to discuss and comment on a series of topical areas, a list which evolved as the research progressed. The participants were then asked to describe how they acquired the views they had just described, and whether they felt like this was something that happened gradually, or whether there was some key event or realisation which, in their view triggered this. Finally, they were asked to talk about their fears and hopes for the future.

Snowball sampling did play a limited role in expanding the scope of this study, in that about a third of the interview subjects, as well as the bulk of opportunities for participant observation, came to my attention through the recommendations of other participants. As far as I could, I also employed theoretical sampling to reduce gender and other biases in the selection of interview participants. Given my experience, however, that this Community is predominantly made up of educated, white middle class (cf. Cross 2003, p 3-4), 20-somethings - and that it is dominated by women - this caveat has proven fairly academic. Interview participants range in age from 17 to 32, with the average age being about 25. The ratio of male participants to females is roughly 1:2, with the spread in age across either gender comparable to the spread in ages over the whole of the sample. Based on their respective phenotypes and my knowledge of their backgrounds all

⁹ I’d like to recognise that the idea of a cultural “mainstream” is problematic for some Community members, an issue I hope to resolve in the next section.

the participants appeared to be of European decent and most have had some tertiary education. Two-thirds of the participants have travelled extensively, about a quarter having spent some time in the developing world.

It could be argued that I am displaying some form of selection bias here, in that I choose not to interview some individuals who were outside the age range listed above, although I did approach a few people in their early 40's who turned me down. I also never intended to look at the connections between this Community of dissent and dissenting groups from other non-European ethnicities. In part this is because I see certain fundamental differences both, between the older generation of alternative life-stylers and their successors in this Community, and between those successors and, for example the Maori activist community. There are certainly similarities as well, or areas of common interest. In my experience, however, the associations which result from these are typically limited to the pursuit of shared political goals, and seldom spill over into the social contexts beyond these. The participants to this study, on the other-hand, form part of a richly interrelated community, in which dissent is expressed, not just through protest, but also in more purely social ways - from crafting-bees to potlucks.

A possible source of such a bias might be my own preconceptions, which I certainly would not deny having - whether acquired from my own experiences within the Community prior to approaching it as a subject of study, or from the available literature on the topic, or just as side effect of life within the cultural mainstream. In my view, however, it should be the aim of good scholarship to test these assumptions and to discard them when found wanting. To facilitate this, and to allow the reader to draw their own conclusions, I've deliberately allowed interview text to stand apart from my own commentary and analysis. From a critical perspective this might also be interpreted as an attempt at multi-vocality and, while the intention is definitely to reproduce the voices of interview participants as accurately as possible, I have reservations that any edited/non-collaborative text can be seen as truly multi-vocal. In so far as the sections of text

used are selected by me, and are edited, however slightly, for fluency, an editorial voice, is unavoidably present.

It is also my view that traditional single sited ethnography lacks the flexibility needed to deal with an observed tendency within this Community, towards radically decentralised modes of social organisation. Recognising also that multi-sited ethnography places its own emphasis on discrete but connected, physically bounded fields of inquiry (Marcus 1995), I would prefer to think of my own ethnography as siteless, or an "ethnography of human connectedness over space and time", to use Sisson's definition (1999, p 88-95). This ought to allow me the freedom to more fully describe what is essentially a fluid arrangement of separate but intersecting subcultures, while relying on the subjects of the research to define the limits of the enquiry. The best ethnographers of this type of Community have thus far been member turned observer, the classic ethnographic insider, and as such their ethnographies tend to be incident-laced retrospectives of their own involvement with the Community juxtaposed with scholarly insight and critical reflection - Clarke (2003) is again a good example, as is LeBlanc (1999). Despite my two year history with this Community, however, I certainly wouldn't classify myself as an insider.

My own approach therefore probably entails a step away from the traditional ethnographic narrative and towards a writing style in part cribbed from the best ethno-journalistic sources. Agee's thickly descriptive collection of vignettes, describing life in America's Deep South in the 1930s for example (1960 [1941]), or any of Studs Terkel's artfully edited collections of interviews (cf. Terkel 1997 [1974]; Terkel 2005 [1992]), any of which clearly demonstrate journalism's ability to deal with large issues in a piecemeal fashion, without losing sight of the human scale of the subject matter.

0.2 - Ethics

One of the major ethical concerns at the beginning of this process was protecting the privacy of Participants or their associates who may engage, or have engaged, in illegal or quasi-legal activities. However as this was not a major focus of the study, and actual revelations of illegal conduct were both infrequent and for the most part fairly minor in character, this largely became an exercise in planning for the worst while hoping for the best. All interview participants gave explicit written and informed consent to their involvement, while those who took part in participant observation were informed orally of the reason for my presence and a level of group consent/oversight sought from those present. Spokespeople for the group also gave explicit written and informed consent on behalf of the group, and agreed to review any data gathered on the group during the participant observation process, as well as to excise anything they felt was potentially damaging or otherwise considered to be objectionable. Interview participants were also asked to review a transcribed version of their responses and to make any corrections they deemed necessary. While I initially offered participants a choice as to whether they wanted to be identified by a pseudonym, I have since decided that in order to guarantee the anonymity of those who requested it, none of the participants will be identified by their real names.

This research project was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Waikato's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. It was conducted in compliance both with that University's *Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations* (University of Waikato 2008) and with the code of ethics of the Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa/New Zealand (ASAA/NZ 1987).

1.0 - Definitions.

By the time I was 19, punk had occurred. It had a completely different cultural dynamic to it which rejected everything and started again from the year zero.

(Billy Bragg, quoted in Talvi 2001)

"I want freedom, the right to self-expression, everyboy'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 comrades I would live my beautiful ideal.

(Emma Goldman, quoted in Shulman 1991)

Given the history of contention surrounding many of the key terms used in the title of this study, allowing participants to provide their own definitions seems important. Veganism is the easiest of these to define, and the least controversial and so Community attitudes to this will be dealt with in the following chapter. Labels like punk and anarchist, on the other hand, have a history of misrepresentation and their definitions are sites of contestation even for those who ascribe to them (cf. O'Hara 1999, p 11; Graeber 2004, p 332). Apart from their centrality to this thesis, Community views on capitalism also tend to be highly divergent from what I would consider to be a typical mainstream response. The attempt to sketch these key areas of subcultural rupture, and the extent to which they can be said to be values shared by the whole of the Community, will take up the later part of this chapter.

It seems to me that any understanding of this Community is bound to be contingent, not only on the ways that Community members view and describe themselves, but also on the views of those on the outside of the community looking in. A certain amount of perspective is possible by looking at contemporary depictions of punks, anti-capitalists and anarchists in the mainstream media, but, without understanding the history of these movements,

contesting our own preconceptions might prove difficult. From an analytical perspective some understanding of the history which informs this Community might also prove useful. In the manner of Brody's *Maps and Dreams* (1981) I've therefore tried to contextualise the participants own responses to each of these terms by juxtaposing them with a summary of the lineage of thought which informs those responses, as well as our reactions to them. These historical sections are deliberately kept apart from the ethnographic data, and may be read as part of the overall narrative or skipped and read separately from it, or left out entirely if the reader feels that they already have a good grasp on the history of these ideas.

In defining a place for this group to stand from which they might go about moving the world, we must first define what we mean by the world. To stand in opposition to the mainstream implies that both sides of this equation are largely dependent on the other for a definition. To some extent the aim of ethnography is to locate these sites of difference. That this map says as much about me, and the culture of which I am a product, as it says about the Community I am studying, should probably be seen as a given. In order to do this I also have to define a place for myself to stand, even if it is an unsteady and a shifting one. Without a clear understanding of what I think constitutes mainstream culture, or what I think people outside this Community mean when they talk about the mainstream view, or the majority view, it would be hard to address the alternative views expressed by those inside the Community. This step back both from the mainstream and from the Community being studied, into the liminal,- the yet to be defined border country between the Community and the superculture which surrounds it - is therefore where we begin.

1.1 - Mainstreams, Majorities and Metanarratives

J.F Lyotard published *The Post Modern Condition : a Report on Knowledge* (1984 [1979]) in 1979, the same year that Crass, an anarcho-punk band, began to cut and distribute their own albums, (Webb 2007, p 142). At about the same time, but

8,000 miles away from either of them, another punk band, Black Flag, had the same idea, founding the SSD label. Independent labels were nothing new, but the political rhetoric which accompanied them certainly was. What's more, while both of the above examples seem to have occurred in isolation from the other, neither was an isolated incident. From the UK, along with Crass Records also emerged Spiderleg Records, which was a project of the band Flux of Pink Indians; Bluurgh Records, home of the Subhumans; and several others. In the States punk bands like the Dead Kennedys and Minor Threat set up their own labels as well (Gosling 2004, p 169). Punk, a quintessential postmodern project from its inception, had suddenly started to take itself seriously.

In addition 1979 was the year in which the Antinuclear movement was at its most active, certainly in the US, if not elsewhere (Giugni 2004, p 43), while, on the other hand, Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister of Britain, and Ronald Reagan would take office in the US the following year. Both were seen as defenders of prosperity, morality and the national character, and both aggressively pursued free-market reform and an end to the communist menace. Dissent was in the air, however. The battle-lines were drawn. Anarchists were put on trial in London for conspiring with unknown people to bomb unnamed targets for revolutionary reasons (Meltzer 1996, pp 280-281).¹ Not so much a summer of love it seems, more a winter of discontent.²

When Lyotard writes that Baudrillard is "haunted by the paradisaic representation of a lost organic society" (quoted in Taylor & Lambert 2006, p 256), he might just as easily be talking about the conservative impulse of Reagan and Thatcher, or their ilk more generally. Likewise when he describes his politics of desperation as

¹ These charges were later dropped and a series of new charges laid. The prosecutions case was so ridiculous according to Meltzer that the press quickly dubbed it the person's unknown trial. All five of the accused were eventually found not guilty.

² I stumbled on the fact that the winter of 78-79 actually was known as the "winter of discontent" in the UK, after I had already penned this paragraph. It was coined - or perhaps hijacked is a better word - by the media to refer to a series of public sector strikes during that period. These strikes effectively paved the way for the Conservative victory in '79 and Margaret Thatcher's election as PM (BBC 1979). Interestingly Richard the 3rd, or rather a Lawrence Olivier performance as Richard, is also allegedly one of the bases for Johnny Rotten's stage persona (Temple 2005).

one where the participants “will still desire and always be desperate” (ibid), he is echoing a tension between passion and cynicism that I find characteristic of punk and contemporary activism. To quote Crass:

You say they've got it wrong because they don't agree
with you/So when the revolution comes you'll have to run
them through/Yet you say that revolution will bring
freedom for us all/Well freedom just ain't freedom when
your back's against the wall

(Rimbaud et al., 1986)

It seems likely, then, that if Lyotard is the chief cartographer of the post-modern “incredulity towards metanarratives” (1984 [1979], p xxiv), the countercultural urge is the terrain, or at least a part of it. It is, however, also a reaction to that terrain, and is, in my experience, not only expressed as cynicism towards the grand-narratives of emancipation, or the idea that knowledge is “valuable because it is the basis of human freedom” (Malpas 2003, p 26), and speculation, or the idea that “human life...progresses by increasing its knowledge” (ibid), but that it also manifests as scepticism towards the free market metanarratives which Lyotard identifies as having sublimated or replaced these (ibid, p 15-28).

Though Lyotard was certainly critical of the eclecticism of postmodern culture, he also recognised that without the ordering influence of metanarrative, a homogenised or standardised culture is unlikely (cited in Berger 1998, p 91). However even if we take as read his argument that

[t]he grand narrative has lost its credibility,
regardless of what mode of unification it uses,
regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or
a narrative of emancipation,

(Lyotard 1984 [1979], p 37)

it does not follow that we must give up on the idea of the mainstream all together, or of the perception of a mainstream. The idea that the monolithic mainstream is

any more coherent or homogenous than the subcultures which must after all exist within them, is fairly evidently flawed (cf. Muggleton & Weinzierl 2003, p 7).³

Regardless of whether you and I share an understanding of mainstream culture or not though, or whether those views accord with the understanding of a member of this Community, it is safe to assume that all of us have a view on what we mean by mainstream culture, or the majority, and on whether we see ourselves as part of it or not. This is not to say that such an understanding is necessarily something we can articulate, and for those who identify as part of the majority this is often particularly difficult. Unless you perceive that your identity is contested you may have no need to pay it the sort of regular attention such an easy articulation demands. Several authors have, in fact, argued that the question “Who are we really?” is almost exclusively a feature of minority identity (Ardener 1987, p 44; Lie 2004, p 252).

Given this, and despite the reality that individual conceptions of mainstream culture may vary, can we then say that it is this lack of perceived contestation that defines the mainstream? Is the tendency of a dominant identity to be unmarked its most important feature? See for example Du Gay on the category of ‘man’, which he argues -

differentiates the latter from ‘women’ but is also equated with ‘human being’ which is the condition shared by both men and women. ‘Women’ is therefore a mark in contrast to the unmarked term of ‘Man’. Men’s specific gender is thus ignored; men represent the universal and the human against which women are presented as ‘other’.

(1996, p 48)

Of course the mainstream : subculture relationship is not as strictly, or obviously, dialectical as the male : female example. It is difficult, however, to imagine a subculture which is not surrounded by, and to some extent enmeshed in, the parent

³ See also Gramsci: “The people themselves are not a homogeneous cultural collectivity but present numerous and variously combined cultural stratifications which, in their pure form, cannot always be identified within specific historical popular collectivities” (1985, p 189).

culture from which it is rebelling. Without the super-culture a subculture is just a culture after all. Mainstream in this context might be best seen as the default identity for a given population, one which demands little or no thought or justification.

Obviously I recognise that identity is always contingent, and that these categories are subject to flux. People may identify as mainstream in one context, and be opposed to that identity in another (cf. Du Gay 1996, p 47-48), and while this places the whole ethnographic enterprise under tension, in the words of one of the participants to this study, “there needs to be a tension between things to tie them together.”

There are also echoes in this characterisation, of Gramsci’s conception of hegemony and counter-hegemony, that, considering the subject matter, I think are fitting. Dylan Clarke, for example, defines mainstream as:

an imaginary hegemonic centre of corporateised culture...[and he uses it] as it is used by many people in dissident subcultures: to denote hegemonic culture. It is, in this sense, an archetype, rather than something with a precise location and character. It serves to conveniently outline a dominant culture for purposes of cultural critique and identity formation.

(2003, n 2, p 224)

This is certainly the case for some New Social Movement (NSM) theorists, who have appropriated his “counter-hegemonic institution” and use it, not in the sense of an opposition party capable of assuming state power as Gramsci intended, but instead to refer to a collection of diffuse social entities (cf. Boggs 1989, pp 16-17; Laclau & Mouffe 2001, pp 87-88 & 149-180). It is my view though that aspects of this definition work well both coming and going. Not only is this quote from Clarke a useful working definition of the Community’s views on the mainstream, but with certain alterations it may also serve as a suitable working definition for mainstream identity as it relates to itself, as well as to this study more generally. Although Clarke’s emphasis on “corporatised culture” may

indeed reflect Community members' perceptions of the mainstream, it is almost certainly a minority view within the mainstream itself. Recognising you are part of a "corporatised culture" probably implies a level of consciousness which would make an uncritical acceptance of power relations, and therefore mainstream identity itself, rather difficult.

As a place holder then, more than anything else, we'll start by looking on the mainstream as an 'imagined centre of hegemonic culture', with the view that even this remains open to contestation by the Participants.

This would imply a structural relationship something like –

Mainstream	:	Subcultural Group
Hegemony	:	Counter-Hegemony
Power	:	Contestation
Centre	:	Fringe
Unmarked	:	Marked

The degree to which this fits with the reality, of course, or how much that fit depends on context, remains to be seen.

1.2 - Anarchy and Peace⁴

The influence of anarchism on both the punk scene and on contemporary anti-capitalist dissent is often commented on in the literature (cf. O'Hara 1999, 70-101; Eschle 2005, 24-25; Curran 2006). Anarchism is a fairly broad church, however, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, there is a great deal of debate and uncertainty around what is meant by the term. Even those who self identify as anarchists have frequently struggled to agree on a definition, let alone what constitutes acceptable praxis. The term is also often misunderstood by those outside the movement, for whom it still carries connotations of the bombings and assassinations of turn-of-the-century Europe. The term is also compromised by its

⁴ What Steve Ignorant wants instead of revolution according to the lyrics for *Bloody Revolution* (Rimbaud et al. 1986).

history of use⁵, and by its close semantic associations with words like chaos, and confusion. Several of the participants also commented on the term's disputed status:

MICHELLE

Anarchism is I think probably the most misunderstood political ideology, because of the insistent misinterpretation of the word meaning chaos but um, yeah to me [...] in a nut shell? [...] Well, just no rulers, no masters [...]. A way of operating which gives dignity to the freedom of thought and freedom of...Freedom is such a cliché [...] cause capitalist ah, ideologists use the same word as the communists, as the anarchists as everyone. It's like, "oh, it's all about freedom", you know? It's hard to define in a nutshell in that sense but um, yeah I guess autonomy comes into it.

AMBER

I think a lot of stigma has been put onto [...] anarchism as being violent, or negative in some way. [...] If you look at [it] in a sort of more pure sense, it's about personal autonomy and taking influence from [...] people and things and movements that um, don't toe the line or aren't mainstream or are sort of ethically underpinned with something good. I don't know... anarchy... [...] I guess it relates to the whole DIY concept as well... living um, in a way that isn't dependant on something that is exploitative or that could potentially corrupt you. It's living for you and your ideals and the environment and others, and living the way that humans, kind of ideally should.

ANTONY

Anarchism, or anarchy is another word that I think has several definitions, depending on who you're speaking to. For me, anarchism is definitely [...] a word with political connotations. It doesn't mean, bottling people and getting riotous but then I've spoken to my colleagues at work about anarchy and they think that it's the caveman gene. It's antisocial, it's destructive, it's chaotic. So I try and explain to

⁵ This is discussed more fully in the lineage of thought which follows this sections (p 25)

them that anarchy has got that reputation from people who are not anarchists but who are not satisfied, with what society has, and might want to riot about something, but not necessarily thinking that the riot is going to give them the solution they want and that anarchy for me means something totally different. Anarchy for me is about personal liberation and it's about me being able to do something and not having someone a rung up on the ladder saying you can't do that because I'm bigger than you.

The idea that anarchy owes its negative reputation to individuals lashing out in frustration against the violence of the state, is not a new one. As early as 1910 Emma Goldman attempted a spirited refutation, along similar lines to Antony, of the idea that anarchism and violence are synonymous, framing political violence as natural and equating it with “the terrors of the atmosphere, manifested in storm and lightning” (1969, p 79). This, however, neglects the complex relationship many early anarchist theorists had with violence. Kropotkin for example, despite his distrust of violence as a means of initiating change, would occasionally advocate “permanent revolt in speech, writing, by the dagger and the gun, or by dynamite” (quoted in Billington 1998, p 417). More recently the controversial tactics of the so called Black Blocs⁶ have been defended by more moderate activists as having arisen out of a more-or-less natural dissatisfaction with the status quo (cf. Highleyman 2001; Moutoussis in Hudson 2009). So, while it may be accurate to characterise this impulse to extreme action as driven by frustration, I would suggest that blaming society for that frustration serves a social purpose as well. Phrases like, “we deeply disagree with their methods BUT WE UNDERSTAND THEIR ANGER” (Moutoussis in Hudson 2009, caps in original), allow a community to maintain its distance from those tactics, without excluding community members who use them.

Many of the participants also echoed the widely held view of anarchism as idealistic:

⁶ It should be noted that the politically motivated property damage and confrontational attitude of the Black Blocs is in no way comparable to the insurrectionary violence of turn of the century anarchism.

TANYA

I definitely love the ideals in anarchism. It's something which is really really appealing to me [...]. I identify with working as a community, I identify with doing things yourself but [...] I've [always] been governed in my lifetime so I don't know how that would actually work. I really like the idea of anarchism where small groups of people would support each other and small pockets of communities look after each other, but then within those you've still got people who can't look after themselves and need to be looked after and I do believe that [...] we should provide for [those] people [...] There's always going to be those [...] people who get power hungry [So] then how within that community do you deal with that person [...] without overthrowing them cause that's not what it's about? Yeah, I don't actually know. I think maybe more little pockets of governance so to speak, but with the people deciding how they want to do that [...]. I'd also love to have the discussion with an anarchist who is on the dole. That to me has always just blown my mind

HEIDI

I reckon anarchism wouldn't work because I think [...] there are some people who would just let the whole of society down [...] those are the people who if there was no law would go around kill you, [...] steal your stuff and there would be nothing you could do about it. Anarchism to me...anarchism is all fun and games until you have to nominate someone who's going to clean the sewers. [Jesse, my partner though] was like well they'd just pick straws...someone would have to do it [But] what would be the incentive. I think a lot of people would need a stronger incentive that just, y'know, it needs to get done. He was saying, "well yeah once shit starts flooding into their houses they'll respond. That will be enough of an incentive," but I actually don't think so.

The question of who would do the dirty work in an anarchist society is not at all uncommon and is often addressed by anarchist theorists using an approach reasonably similar to the response of Heidi's partner Jesse. Howard Ehrlich, for

example, argues that the distinction between dirty and clean work is a construct of the class system, and that for anarchists “all socially useful work has dignity” (1979, p 8). Others like Bookchin or Kropotkin see the prosperity of the West and imagine a “post-scarcity” utopia where machines perform the tasks which men find unpleasant, or dangerous, and where science provides the necessities of survival to everyone on the planet (Bookchin 2004; Kropotkin 2008a [1892]). As Heidi and Tanya pointed out though, such ideas rely heavily on the notion that oppression is a feature of the system, and ignore the possibility that it may be innate to human beings generally. Although some participants have always stood at a distance from anarchism, while perhaps admiring its ideals as Tanya does, others clearly lost their faith over time. Lori for example introduced herself to me as an anarcho-feminist when we first met, but has since lost her conviction:

LORI

[Anarchist] ideas are based around a non-hierarchical form of governance, which relies incredibly heavily, or totally on self responsibility, and I don't think it works, because I think to have that degree of self responsibility you also have to have a degree of education which we don't really have in this society. Um, although I really [...] love the ideals of anarchy, and there was a book that said... oh what did it say. It had the most fabulous quote about anarchism. Oh [...] it was about anarchism being the most beautiful ideology in the world because anarchists had, according to this author, a complete faith in that all people could be inherently good, and that they could live self responsibly, and it was like having absolute faith in human society.

SAM

Utopian ideals, [...] striving for a better world where we can all get along and not have to fuck each other over. Non hierarchical organising.

GREG

I think [Anarchism] is a very valid form of government it's...[...] well [it] means something so

[...] non-specific, it's a real broad spectrum, that it can be good and bad, but its y'know the absence of sort of hierarchical systems which is I think quite positive because realistically most of the people governing us aren't generally any better than the community as a whole.

The close association, for these three participants, between anarchism and an organisational methodology, even a horizontal one, may seem counterintuitive. Although there is a tradition of individualist anarchism that is less focused on organisation, for many anarchist theorists the question of how an anarchist society might organise itself has been of obvious interest (cf. Kropotkin 1910; Avrich 1990, pp 144-152). The non-hierarchical or horizontal philosophy of organisation which resulted has since transcended the anarchist movement, having been coopted by a large number of dissenting groups who do not otherwise regard themselves as anarchists (Shantz & Morkoc 2008, pp 5-6). Clearly, contesting the arguably natural (Sidanius & Pratto 1993), and certainly dominant tendency of social groups to be self-stratifying is not without its hurdles. Sean relates his own experience of some of these:

SEAN

There are y'know all sorts of flavours of anarchists and anarchist ideals, [but] loosely it means no rulers. Well not even loosely, but sort of grammatically it means no rulers, and I've always sort of articulated that as "it means no rulers, but not no rules" It's about everyone deciding what the rules are together. Increasingly I see anarchism as being idealistic but that that's okay because I want to have an ideal, y'know? [...] It's that I like having a belief that people could work together in a way which is going to be beneficial for everyone, [and] that no one would be taking power over another person, but [...] I don't believe that that's achievable within my lifetime, and I don't believe that that's achievable through a violent revolution or anything like that. So, [...] I think that what is most important for me in regards to anarchism is the embodiment of anarchist principles, where possible... more than an outcome, an anarchist outcome. So, y'know working in ways which are

non hierarchical, consensus based, considerate, sort of inclusive... is more important than maybe having a perfect anarchist outcome, [...] whatever that might be [...]. I mean certainly, say [with my volunteer work] it's totally hierarchical [...]. Trying to do group work with them is so frustrating because they've really got this like "the person who can shout the loudest and talk the most is obviously the person who's the most correct and their word should go". Whereas I'm used to working in a way where we take time and if things take a little bit longer cause [...] we want to make sure that other people [get] to have input [...]. It is even taken to the extreme often in group work with anarchists just to [...] try and define ways for people who don't feel comfortable talking to be [...] included. So, yeah I guess for me I find the most common manifestation of anarchism would be trying to work in anarchist ways within [...] projects that I'm doing or within my life. I don't subscribe to a particular school of anarchism or anything like that, and I do see it more as an ideal that as a sort of [...] dogma.

The effort that some groups go to to achieve the level of participation Sean is describing is interesting in itself. Jonathan Purkis has more fully explored the maintenance strategies such groups employ (2001). During his own experiences with Manchester Earth First!, Purkis observed the high cost to the group of these strategies in time and energy, as well the self-policing required by its more prominent members to avoid positioning themselves in a leadership role. Having attended several meetings myself, where consensus decision making was the governing model, I remain unconvinced that it can reliably deliver the degree of equality it promises, and certainly not without the kind of policing Purkis describes . Though they might disagree privately, without the more-or-less passive recourse of a voting mechanism, those who would not otherwise contribute to a discussion will often agree with what they believe to be the status quo in order to avoid conflict. This manifestation of false consensus reaches its most pronounced expression in a phenomenon called the Abilene paradox, where everyone in a group agrees with a course of action to which privately they are all opposed (Harvey 1974). Consequently there is a danger, as noted by Purkis, that

dominant individuals within the group may use social capital to shape the decision making process, either by securing a role as facilitator or during the discussion itself (2001). In this sense the appearance of consensus, unless carefully policed, operates as a cipher for hierarchy, by placing the use of power in a personally and/or socially acceptable frame. On the other hand Sean's frustration at his co-workers, and the social difficulties his beliefs must create for him suggest that those beliefs form a key part of his identity. His admission to a growing awareness of the idealism of anarchism, and his willingness to pursue those ideals regardless, lends an almost religious flavour to his conviction. Indeed, discussions I have had with other supporters of the consensus process have often been accompanied by the classic dissonance coping strategies of elimination and avoidance (Festinger 1957), giving them an even more pronounced sense of the religious. Given the often commented on parallels between socialism and Christianity though, perhaps this is to be expected (cf. Küenzlen 1987).

While the majority of participants felt some connection to anarchism, there were those for whom it had little or no relevance. Jessica, who interestingly still identifies as a socialist, and Renee, who described some of her beliefs as anarchistic but who otherwise sees herself as apolitical, were, together with Heidi, the only ones not to identify positively with the term. Greg, Sean, Michelle and Sam all strongly identify as anarchists, while Amber and Antony acknowledged the concept's influence. Although both Lori and Tanya expressed scepticism regarding its ultimate practicability, they also pointed out their admiration for its ideals. Jeff has identified himself as an anarchist to me in the past, but also expressed his wariness with that identification because "calling yourself an anarchist puts you in the crazy box." Although some participants equated the concept of anarchism with "personal liberation" the majority presented a more social, community focused definition. The anarchistic sympathies of the Community seem fairly clear, and certainly fit in with already noted scholarly trends. Its importance clearly varies from person to person though, with some participants expressing no identification at all, and so, without further analysis, its

immediate utility as a delineator of group identity within the Community as a whole is probably limited.

Dissent : Les Enragés to the New Left (1793-1956)⁷

The word ‘anarchy’ has had pejorative connotations since entering the language in the early 16th century,⁸ which should come as no surprise. Its descent from Greek, though Latin, the language of state, into English meant that the interests of the state, or those who held power within it, cannot help but have coloured its meaning. It was their word, and their use of it must surely have reflected their own understanding of the world in which they themselves lived. Anarchy in its literal sense means ‘no rulers’ (Harper 2001), and this is the definition which anarchists themselves often seem to prefer⁹. If you were a member of the ruling class in the late Middle Ages however, the very idea that your vassals might be able to rule themselves would have been unthinkable.

In my view it is this elitism, the notion that without the ruling class there would be no order, which informs the common use definition of anarchy to this day. Just as in the case of colonisation - where it might be more useful to ask whether the colonial process itself isn’t to blame for the failure of some postcolonial states - we have also tended to blame the failure of revolutions on human nature, without questioning to what extent ‘human nature’ might be a construction of mainstream culture itself.

While the anarchist label has been retrospectively applied to a number of political cultures or subcultural groups by contemporary scholars (Brown 1997, pp 114-116; Parker et al. 2007, pp 73-74), the first steps towards the word’s repurposing as a reflection of a political philosophy didn’t occur until the French

⁷ This lineage of thought takes the French Revolution as its starting point. While I recognise that there is a rich history of socialistic thought and practise before this date, given that the primary focus of this work is ethnographic and not historical, this overview was always destined to be somewhat constrained.

⁸ Earliest use recorded in 1539 (Harper 2001).

⁹ See Seans definition for example (p 22-23), or Michelle’s (p 18).

Revolution. *Les Enragés*, a radical group within revolutionary France, were put on trial in 1793 for challenging the centralism of the Jacobin leadership. The Jacobins accused the group of advocating anarchism, alleging a complete opposition to any form of central control. It is this trial which, it is claimed, placed the anarchist label in opposition to state-based socialism for the first time, and in so doing makes that distinction available for later theorists. The degree to which *Les Enragés* were recognisably anarchist is debated, but Jean Varlet, one of the accused who managed to escape the guillotine, would later reflect that, “for any reasonable being government and revolution are incompatible” (Bookchin 1998, p 17).

The first person to self identify as an anarchist though was Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, defining it as “the absence of a master, of a sovereign” (1970 [1840], p 277). He would go on to explain that he equated sovereign with proprietor (ibid, p 179) and famously reasoned that all property was theft (ibid, p 11). In next few decades several new theorists emerge. Bakunin, who would come to describe his programme as “Proudhonism...pushed to it’s natural consequences” (quoted in McLaughlin 2002, p 72), was certainly the most famous of these, largely due to his falling out with Marx during the First International (cf. Thomas 1990, pp 249-340). He would offer this critique of Democracy, in which he also outlines his definition of a real anarchist:

In a word, we reject all legislation, all authority, and all privileged, licensed, official, and legal influence, even though arising from universal suffrage, convinced that it can turn only to the advantage of a dominant minority of exploiters against the interest of the immense majority in subjection to them. This is the sense in which we are really Anarchists.

([1882] 1970, p 35)

Proudhon has also been credited as an inspiration for the revolutionary awakening of Peter Kropotkin, the anarchist prince (Alvrich 1990, p 54 & 229). Kropotkin is perhaps the most extreme example of a common pattern in activist circles, having been born to a privilege he would later repudiate (cf Varon 2004, p 12). His

father, Prince Alexei Petrovich, was described by Kropotkin as a typical Russian nobleman of the period, having once accepted an award for gallantry after his “faithful servant” Frol rescued a child from a burning building.¹⁰ Kropotkin brought an understanding of the scientific process to anarchist theory and was as well known for his work in the physical sciences¹¹ as he was for his activism (Avrich 1990, p 53-60). His reputation as a scholar also allowed him the freedom to explain his ideology to more mainstream audiences, authoring this definition of anarchism for the 1910 edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government — harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilised being.

(1910, pp 914-915)

It might seem an odd conceit, allowing one of the foundational theorists of anarchism to write its definition. I think this is what makes the incident so fascinating though, and while the article itself is uncritical in the extreme, in my view Baldwin’s argument that it is one of the better summaries of early anarchist thought in the English language remains equally true today (2005 [1927], p 283).

There can be little doubt that for many anarchists, indeed for revolutionists of all persuasions, the establishment of the Paris commune in March of 1871 was seen as a vindication. Despite its short - two month - existence, and the bloody repression which followed its fall, both Kropotkin and Bakunin would later draw inspiration from it, as would Marx (Avrich 1990, p 229). The Commune’s major

¹⁰ ”’But, father,’ we exclaimed, ‘it was Frol who saved the child!’ ‘What of that?’ replied he, in the most naïve way. ‘Was he not my man? It is all the same’” (Kropotkin 1899, p 10). Compare this quote with Sahlin’s notion of the “heroic I” (1983, p 523).

¹¹ He was offered and turned down the position of Secretary of the Russian Geographical Society in his late 20’s (Kropotkin 1899, p 236).

gift to anarchism and to the theory of revolution more generally, however, is the concept of ‘propaganda by the deed’. As an idea it has its roots in earlier writings by Bakunin¹² and the Italian revolutionary Carlos Pisacane.¹³ However, it is the reflections of French anarchist Paul Brousse, on the public’s reaction to the suppression of the communards, which led to the term’s more widespread acceptance. Writing both in the paper he edited, the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, and in the *Bulletin de la Fédération Jurassienne*,¹⁴ he argued that the intent of theoretical propaganda could always be disguised or misrepresented, and that, in order to engage people successfully, direct action was needed (Laqueur 2002, p 49). This marks the theoretical beginnings of all asymmetric conflict, and of terrorism more specifically - what Baudrillard would call shifting “the struggle into the symbolic sphere” (2003). It also clearly marks the emergence of the popular image of a crazed bomb-throwing anarchist (see Fig. 1 & 2).

It has been argued that, for Brousse and the majority of anarchists, “propaganda by the deed” originally meant demonstrations and uprisings, and not targeted assassinations or bombings, and that only later would these ideas gather support from a hardline minority (Avrich 1990, p 243). However there is a lot of evidence to suggest that no such limitations were placed on the idea at its inception, and that the reservations of some of the more mainstream theorists only emerged *ex tempore*, or that such limitations depended on context. Even anarchism’s arch-moderate Kropotkin was briefly caught up in the hype, celebrating the assassin of Alexander II as “a hero” (quoted in Crenshaw 1995, p 50) and advocating “permanent revolt in speech, writing, by the dagger and the gun, or by dynamite” (quoted in Billington 1998, p 417). Bakunin in his turn collaborated closely with Nihilist theoretician and terrorist, Sergei Nechaev, and possibly even contributed to *Catechism of a Revolutionary*, one of the most brutal advocations

¹² “From this very moment we must spread our principles, not with words but with deeds, for this is the most popular, the most potent, and the most irresistible form of propaganda” (Bakunin 1980, p 195).

¹³ “Ideas spring from deeds and not the other way around... The use of the bayonet in Milan has produced a more effective propaganda than a thousand books” (Pisacane quoted in Graham 2005, p 68).

¹⁴ The official organ of the Jura Federation, and anarchist trade union in Switzerland.

of revolutionary violence and exploitation of that era (Avrich 1990, p 38-41).¹⁵ The 1881 International Social Revolutionary Congress even passed a resolution which instructed its members to undertake to learn chemistry and pyrotechnics so that they might provide their comrades with explosives (Laqueur 2002, p 51).

While the United States had its own tradition of libertarian anarchism, through the New England Labor Reform League of Benjamin Tucker and William Greene¹⁶ (Avrich 1990, pp 138-140), it wasn't until the arrival of Johann Most and his revolutionary journal, *Die Freiheit*, in 1882, that America had its first true insurrectionary anarchist. Most had been active in his native Germany as well as in France and London before settling in America, and his passionate advocacy of propaganda of the deed, or *attentat* as he called it, had a major impact on the development of American anarchism, earning him the nickname Dynamost (McElroy 2003, pp 33-34; Goldman et al. 2008, pp 544-546). In a statement only remarkable in degree, though not, for the time, in its intention, he wrote that "the existing system will be quickest and most radically overthrown by the annihilation of its exponents. Therefore, massacres of the enemies of the people must be set in motion" (quoted in McElroy 2003, p 33).

The effect of all this agitation was unprecedented and far-reaching. In the five years following the 1881 assassination of Alexander II there were unsuccessful attempts on four other European Heads of State, and between 1894 and 1904 the French President, the Spanish Prime Minister, the Austrian Empress Elizabeth, King Umberto of Italy, and William McKinley the President of the United States, were all assassinated. In Europe in 1892 alone there were over a thousand bombings reported (Parry 1987, p 10). These events should be seen against a much wider backdrop of social unrest, though, and the cycle of repression and

¹⁵ The degree of his involvement in its composition is hotly debated. Despite a later repudiation of Nechaev's whole "Jesuitical system" (quoted in Avrich 1990, p 40), Bakunin's susceptibility to Nechaev's influence during the period of their association is well known. He certainly knew of the Catchism's existence and his failure to call Nechaev on its contents before their falling out is probably telling.

¹⁶ Greene published on Proudhon as early as 1849, while Tucker, in many ways his successor, was actively involved in libertarian politics from 1872, founding his own journal in 1881. (Avrich 1990, p 140-141).

counter-violence which began with the French Revolution and ending, on the one hand, with the Russian Revolution and on the other with the democratic reform of Western Europe. Thanks to the fear this revolutionary upheaval provoked in the minds of those in power and anarchism's role in formulating the theory of that practice, the word anarchist would soon be interchangeable with terrorist in the popular imagination (Avrich 1986, p 428). It seems fairly evident that this is an association which persists, though in a diminished form, to this day.

The repression which followed these attacks was also predictable, from the *Lois Scélérates*, or villainous laws in France,¹⁷ to the 1903 Immigration Act in the US, which specifically excluded alien anarchists (Goldman et al. 2008, p 545), to the thousands arrested in Russia following the assassination of the Tsar.¹⁸ It is this repression which, despite making it difficult for well known anarchists to operate without being arrested, deported or worse, actually served as the movement's most powerful recruiting tool for a time. Emma Goldman became an anarchist through reading about the Haymarket Tragedy for example, where, in 1886, an escalation of violence provoked an unknown person into throwing a pipe bomb at police during a labour dispute.

The resulting trial is now widely regarded as a prime example of a judicial murder. The Judge showed his intention to prejudice the results from the beginning, refusing to dismiss several jurors who openly admitted their bias,¹⁹ and would later draw heavy criticism from a number of fellow Chicago Justices as well as several prominent lawyers on both sides of the ideological spectrum (Avrich 1986, pp 262-263). According to Avrich it was no accident that the eight

¹⁷ Passed in response to a nail bomb attack on the French Chamber of Deputies in 1893. Among other things these laws curtailed freedom of association and the freedom of the press and "as a result... hundreds of workers, mainly anarchists were sentenced to prison terms and deportation and a great number of radicals were driven into exile" (Goldman et al. 2008, p 418 n 6).

¹⁸ There were 5,851 people convicted of offenses related to the assassination of which 27 were executed and 342 were either exiled to a labour camp or served long periods in prison (Crenshaw 1995, p 84 n 29).

¹⁹ One juror for example stated during selection, "I believe what I have read in the papers - I believe that the parties are guilty. I would try to go by the evidence, but in this case it would be awful hard work for me to do it" (Porter quoted in Avrich 1986, p 265).

who were convicted, represented the “backbone of the local anarchist movement - its most effective organisers, the editors or its journals, its ablest speakers and writers. The police had long been awaiting an opportunity to silence them” (ibid, p 235). Four of the accused went to the gallows on 11th November 1887, the sentences of three others were commuted to life and Louis Lingg, perhaps the most romantic²⁰ and least sane figure of the lot, took his own life by detonating a dynamite cap, held clenched between his teeth, on the morning of the day before he was scheduled to be hanged (ibid, pp 370-400). Plans had been made by Chicago anarchists to avenge the hangings, but, as noted by Dyer Lum, an anarchist theorist and contemporary of the accused, “‘the boys’, in the shadow of death stopped it, they said their death was enough and they died” (ibid, pp 385).

This trial marks a turning point for anarchism in several respects. In the first instance it indicates a trend away from anarcho-communism, which is to say the model of Bakunin or Kropotkin, based on the example of the Paris Commune, and towards anarcho-syndicalism, a model that advocated radical unionism as a means for initiating political change. In the second instance it marked a movement away from the idea of violence as a primary means of effecting public opinion, and towards an understanding within the anarchist community that it is much better to be a martyr than to create one for the opposition. Although at various times both Bakunin²¹ and Kropotkin (cf. Billington 1998, p 417) were critical of propaganda by the deed at its most extreme, they also both believed in the inevitability of violent acts during a period of revolutionary struggle (Avrich 2006, p 27).

I think there is something interesting structural going on here, between acceptable and unacceptable levels of violence or coercion, or perhaps between pragmatism and idealism. Faced with the problems of bringing about an anarchistic

²⁰ See for example Goldman, who wrote, “in our eyes he stood out as the sublime hero among the eight. His unbending spirit, his utter contempt for his accusers and judges, his willpower, which made him rob his enemies of their prey and die by his own hand - everything about that boy of twenty-two lent romance and beauty to his personality. He became the beacon of our lives” (1970, p 42).

²¹ Bakunin once said of assassination that “this natural act will be neither moral or even useful” (quoted in Jensen 2009, p 136).

revolution while staying true to anarchistic principles, neither Bakunin nor Kropotkin had any easy answers. Bakunin, despite his prophetic critique of Marxism, that the Marxist intelligentsia would inevitably “concentrate the reigns of government in a strong hand, because the ‘ignorant people’ require an exceedingly firm guardianship” (quoted in Avrich 2006, p 93), would himself repeatedly restate his own belief that, “our goal is the creation of a powerful but always invisible organisation, which must prepare for the revolution and lead it” (Avrich 1990, p 46). Kropotkin on the other hand, was critical of the compromise to anarchist values that such a conspiratorial approach implied, and instead put his faith in the gradual education of the masses, so that the society which resulted ‘come the revolution’ would be an anarchistic one.²² As noted above, however, his early endorsements of “permanent revolt” almost certainly betray the frustration he felt while waiting for his revolution to arrive. His faith in the ability of a revolutionary mob to overturn the state, without a revolutionary apparatus in place to secure those gains, was also criticised by his contemporaries (cf. Malatesta [1931] 1977).

This is perhaps the central dilemma of revolutionary anarchism: how to institute a change in the social order without employing coercive methods to do so. It is also a frustration that, in my view, is still evident in contemporary anarchistic thought (cf. Bookchin 2004), as well as in this Community more specifically, and is consequently evidenced in several of the interviews²³. Anarcho-syndicalism was initially intended as a response to this, as implied by syndicalist union leader Fernand Pelloutier in 1895, who argued that:

this entry into the trade union of some libertarians made a considerable impact. For one thing, it taught the masses the true meaning of anarchism, a doctrine which, in order to make headway can very

²² See for example his lecture *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideals*, in which he argued that “the great battalions of workers may not even reflect about [the structure of society] but from the moment a minority of thinking men agitate the question and submit it to all there can be no doubt of the result” (2005 [1901], p 127).

²³ See for example Lori’s account of her own disenchantment (Section 2.08), or Seans definition of anarchism (p 22-23).

readily, let us say it again, manage without the individual dynamiter.

(2005 [1895], p 413)

Put simply, then, in the syndicalist model, unions are not only there to better the working conditions of their members, nor are they solely a “means of struggle [or] instruments of social revolution; they are also the very structure around which to build a free society” (Bookchin 1998, p 121). Kropotkin’s “minority of thinking men” is supplanted or co-opted, and henceforth it is the union whose job it becomes to “agitate the question and submit it to all” (2005 [1901], p 127). The state would be destabilised through direct action²⁴ and when it collapsed the union would be the mechanism through which revolutionary change was effected.

It could be argued that this is exactly what happened in Russia following the October Revolution, when the Workers’ Soviets took over the running of much of the country. Kropotkin certainly believed that to be the case when he returned to Russia in 1917. To his dismay however, he arrived just in time to witness the Bolshevik take over of the Russian State²⁵ and while he may have taken some comfort from the successes of the anarchist general, Nestor Makhno, and his attempts to create an anarchist polity in the Ukraine, this admiration was also tempered with concern that the Ukraine too would quickly fall to the Bolsheviks (Avrich, 2006, p 210-212).

The Ukrainian Free Territory would persist for close to four years, and this, along with Catalonia and parts of Andalusia and Aragon during the Spanish Civil War, are, to my knowledge the only conscious enactments of anarchist theory at anything approaching the state level. For this reason they are often cited in defence of these ideals (Wintrop 1983, p 241; Paz 2007, pp 125-126), and in a limited sense rightly so. Although Makhno’s attempts to bring anarchist ideas to

²⁴ A term which came into use around 1912 and was initially used, at least in my view, to distinguish revolutionary strike action, disruptive protest, occupations, boycotts etc. from the now discredited term propaganda of the deed (*Direct Action* 2009).

²⁵ He wrote to Lenin in March of 1920 that Russia was “a Soviet Republic only in name...at present it is not the soviets who rule Russia but party committees,” and predicted that were that to continue, “the very word socialism would become a curse” (quoted in Avrich 1990, p 70).

the cities failed, and his political and economic reforms were therefore largely rural (Kantowicz 1999, pp 173-174), the same cannot be said for the Spanish example. Seventy percent of the Catalan economy and seventy-five percent of small properties in Aragon were converted to worker owned collectives during the conflict. Within hours of the anarchist liberation of Barcelona, the Water, Gas and Power plants were operating under their new management, and just *three days* later local industries began turning out armoured cars. So while anarchist claims that increases in Aragonese wheat production were due to collectivisation are questionable, the common assertion that “revolutionary disorder” was to blame for decreases in industrial output during the period remain equally suspect (Horowitz 2005, p 515; Beevor 2001, pp 110-111).

Both Makhno’s ability to secure and defend the Ukrainian collectivity and early Anarchist victories during the Spanish *Guerra Civil* also proved that an anarchistic militia could hold their own against more traditionally constituted military units. Criticisms levelled at the militia system by the Spanish Republic’s Soviet advisors, that it was responsible for later losses, such as Malaga and for the stalling of the Saragossa front, are often answered by pointing out that all Republican forces were dependent on Soviet military aid, and that for both the anarchist CNT-FAI and the Trotskyite POUM militias this was often deliberately withheld (cf. Orwell 1962, p 68).

In the end the Free Territory was slowly strangled by the Bolsheviks, while the Anarchist cause in Spain was lost, largely due to Soviet engineered infighting and intrigue within the Republican Government. Withrop argues that these examples demonstrate the viability of a stateless society, but that while the problems posed by such an arrangement are mostly practical, the most pressing of these is the Anarchist relationship with outside groups who do not share their beliefs. It is certainly telling that opposition from the outside, which in these examples equated to opposition from all sides, is what eventually caused their failure (1983, p 241). Indeed it seems obvious to me that the chief difficulty for any dissenting group is

the tension between it and the mainstream culture that surrounds it, and the Community which is the subject of this work is no exception.

The Spanish Civil War was in many ways the last hurrah for what I would call the pioneering era of anarchist theory. World War One, whose proximate cause was an act of terrorism that was,²⁶ and still is,²⁷ often incorrectly attributed to anarchists, signified the rise of a new and more intense nationalism (Chaliand and Brin 2007, 177). With occasional exceptions,²⁸ the era of the bomb throwing anarchist ended around the turn of the century. The public, however, still associated anarchism with the excesses of that era, and given the contributing role which acts of terror played in the lead up to WWI, and the destruction which followed, this largely erroneous view was destined to get worse before it got better.

The *Ancien Régimes* anarchists had helped to destabilise in central and eastern Europe were gone, leaving behind themselves coup-prone Republics and an increasingly nervous middle-class. As the Great Depression set in, the world looked to the Soviet Union - for money and as a vindication on the left, and with trepidation everywhere else. An Iron Curtain would soon fall, not just across Europe, but in people's minds, in which there was no middle ground between communism and capitalism, and no alternatives. A totalising discourse emerged, within which anarchism would be written off as little more than a destructive and naive failure. Indeed it may be tempting to agree with this assessment. However

²⁶ The day after the Archduke was killed, the New York Times featured an interview by prominent anarchist Alexander Berkman under the headline "Calls it Anarchist Plot" (1914, p 3). However, a close reading of the text would seem to indicate Berkman is actually urging an open mind.

²⁷ This quote from the Atlantic for example: "The menace posed by European anarchists in the nineteenth century...one of [whom] assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife" (Fallows 2006).

²⁸ The two which come to mind are the Angry Brigade attacks in the UK during the 70's (Meltzer 1996, pp 232-245) and the attempted bombing of the NZ Police Computer in Whanganui in November of 1982, in which New Zealand's first and only suicide bomber Neil Roberts detonated an explosive device outside the entrance to the Police Station, doing very little damage to the building but killing himself instantly (Bain 1995, p 11). The recent emergence of the Informal Anarchist Federation in Italy - their advocacy of a new militancy and attempts at terrorist action, though roundly renounced by the rest of Italian anarchist community (cf. Emilia 2004) - is clearly another example (Federazione Anarchica Informale 2007, pp 5-9).

the important role that anarchism played in the democratisation of Europe, the rise of humanism and in the key victories of the Union movement – the eight hour work day and so on – would certainly tend to suggest otherwise.

The response of the anarchist movement to its history of violence, has always been to point out that violence against the state should always be seen as a reply to, or a reflection of, the much greater violence of the state against its people.²⁹ Without condoning acts of violence this a point of view with which I have some sympathy. That deaths from acts of state-terrorism far outweigh those perpetrated by non-state actors would seem to be so self-evident it should not even need debating (cf. Heitmeyer & Hagan 2003, p 32).

It is also important to recognise that the dominant image of the anarchist terrorist actually only reflects the actions of a determined minority within the movement, and that even this is largely restricted to a very narrow historical window. With the previously noted exceptions, contemporary media allegations of anarchist violence, at events such as the Battle for Seattle for example,³⁰ often boil down solely to property damage, and almost never take into account the role that law enforcement plays in such an escalation (Weissman 2003, p 209).

From an ethnographic perspective, the historical tensions within the anarchist movement - between theory and praxis, or revolutionary method and the revolutionary goal, and between anarchism and the mainstream – are extremely interesting. The relevance to this Community of these ideas, and the degree to which those within the Community who identify as Anarchist are a part of the lineage outlined above is something I intend to return to later.

²⁹ Compare for instance Max Stirner's comment that "the State's behaviour is violence. and it calls its violence 'law'; that of the individual, 'crime'" (1995 [1884], p 176), with this statement by contemporary anarchist theorist Howard Zinn on the hypocrisy of nation states, "which came into being through violence, which maintain themselves in power through violence, and which use violence constantly to keep down rebellion and to bully other nations" (1997, p 652).

³⁰ For an example of the way in which media over-represented the violence during these protests, see MacFarlane & Hay's survey of one newspaper's framing of events (2003).

1.3 - The wrong side of Capitalism³¹

Both the punk ethic, and anarchism are an acknowledged influence on contemporary anti-capitalist dissent. Although the “movement of movements” (Klein 2002, p 458) often erroneously referred to as the anti-globalisation movement,³² typifies this dissent in the public imagination, in my view it is just the visible tip of a larger structure, the bulk of which persists largely unnoticed beneath the social surface. To determine their attitudes towards “the system”, and perhaps go some way to mapping this hidden dissent, participants were asked to discuss what capitalism and/or consumerism meant to them. This led several of them to describe one or both as exploitative:

ANTONY

Capitalism means... strictly I think for me it means putting money before people's interests. That could be animal's interests but usually animals don't run businesses. They might be the product of a business in which case the person who runs that business is the capitalist. I don't think you are automatically a capitalist just because you happen to acquire capital from a business you run, because if you are ethically minded you don't consider yourself to be any more important than people who work in that business [...]. You are a capitalist if you own a company and you don't care about the people who are actually making you that money.

TANYA

In my mind [...] we are all living under a system of capitalism [...] and it is something that produces, as it exports it exploits. So it seems so massive and wondrous [...] because it's producing so much, but then as it goes it's actually wreaking destruction [...]. It's funny how some people view capitalism. Like someone said to me the other day that their parents were capitalists and I was like "oh how are your parents capitalists?" "Oh well [...] they work

³¹ The title of a painting by Angela Brennan. Canvas reads, “Every morning I wake up on the wrong side of Capitalism” (2004).

³² Hardt & Negri suggest it is more appropriately referred to it as the “alternative globalisation movement” (2001).

and make all this money" and I'm like, in my mind that's not a capitalist. [...] They just have jobs and happen to make a lot of money. I don't have a problem with someone actually working hard and being really damn good at something, and making money out of it. I do have a problem with someone then exploiting others below them at the price of a profit [...]. I guess for me consumerism is about making those good choices, like, I'm not completely opposed to buying things [...]. I do kind of like a bit of stuff, but it's just about making good choices within that [...]. Being an ethical consumer

GREG

I think capitalism [...] gets a bit of a harsh word sometime. Y'know capitalism is kind of just about running a country economically and I think, thinking economically is really important [...] I mean what we call liberal capitalism these days isn't really the same sort of thing that I want it to be so, I don't know. I don't have a lot of patience for modern day capitalism but [...] I do think that this utopian world they're all striving for is probably going to end up being some sort of capitalist society [...]. Consumerism is about consuming more each fucking financial year than the year previous and, y'know, *[laughs]* its just so incredibly unsustainable I don't know why we still actually support it, but it's still [...] the model for any sort of industry, any sort of commercial venture [...]. Which is bizarre y'know? It's not about sustaining your profit margin it's about growing it and [it] kind of gets to the point where you just actually have to cut corners or fuck someone over. Y'know? [...] Raise the price, lower your wages.

Despite the disagreement over its source, exploitation would appear to be a common criticism of corporate ethics from members of this Community. The breadth of its application is interesting, however, from addressing the employment and environmental exploitation that Tanya mentioned, to the exploitation of animals which Antony makes passing reference to. While for Antony, the blame for this exploitation would appear to rest primarily with capitalist individuals "putting money before people's interests", for Tanya and Greg there is a clear

tendency to generalise that blame as systemic. By reifying capitalism as a monolithic “it” under which “we are all living” Tanya places herself inside, but also opposed to the problem. Greg’s uncertainty around “why we still actually support” consumerism also places him in a similar frame, while his reference to “this utopian world they’re all striving for” also speaks to his sense of distance from the Community’s more militant members. So while the primarily external construction of a capitalist other provides Antony with a target for his dissent, for Greg and Tanya this is almost exclusively an internal conflict, in which their engagement with the market is mediated by their ethics.

For some this concern also seemed to have a large social component:

RENEE

Capitalism is... well it’s the current political system and the reason [...] I don’t like it [...] is that [...] it breaks down community [...] and it causes people to think first about themselves [...]. I mean it’s natural for everyone to think about themselves first but [...] it encourages that whole “I’ll look after myself and fuck everyone else” and that’s how we got ourselves in this mess that we’re in. [Consumerism] has a real negative connotation for me [...] it’s become a real disgusting dirty word [...]. I mean, it’s not something I would want to associate myself with but at the end of the day we all consume.

SEAN

Consumerism is so sort of, pretty much the bottom line at the moment and I believe that in some ways that’s even, really driving things like y’know the single parent family because then both parents own a washing machine, and not just the break down of the nuclear family but the break down of the extended family and [...] the breakdown of every family unit into the individual. So it’s sort of like the peak of individualism, I mean it really goes hand in hand. Y’know something that I’ve thought about with consumerism and especially [...] exploiting the human psyche is that they are actively doing that, [...]. Its not a coincidence. They have psychologists who are trained in finding

the human weaknesses and then utilising those, and what we need is kind of like psychological self-defence. Because [...] it's not enough to become aware [...] There are billboards everywhere you go. There are adverts on the newspaper, on the radio and the TV and magazines and all of these are trying to exploit these little weaknesses and make you buy their shit [...]. I was talking with someone once about the television. It's like you put this thing into your room, it makes you feel bad about yourself, it makes you buy things you don't need. Like, why would you want this thing in your house. You get slightly entertained, but the downsides are [...] so much further reaching. I mean it's perfect from a producer's point of view.

MICHELLE

[Consumerism] works appealing to the lowest aspects of human nature you know, which is that greediness or insatiable hunger, which I think also comes from a society which isn't nourishing us in, [...] in a complete way, as human beings in all of the ways that we need nourishment. Which have to do with community, with ideas, with um, dignity, and with creativity and all those things... so that [...] we're constantly trying to fill that gap [...] The idea of creation of wealth I think is a bit perverse in that sense because [...] I think [...] the same universal laws of nature apply to economics, like they do to energy. Energy is never created or destroyed it's only transformed. The same with matter, it's never created or destroyed it's only transformed. So, there's no such thing as creating wealth. It's usurpation of wealth and at every point along the way it's [...] been taken from somewhere and it's been transformed into something else or transmuted into somewhere else and I love that whole concept. Petroleum you know, that access that we've had to cheap energy, but there's a price. You know [...] nothing is ever [free]. It's always in balance somehow.

The idea that consumerism not only benefits from the increasing individualisation of society, but actually encourages it, might seem conspiratorial. There is however a long established body of critical support for these ideas (cf. Elliott &

Lemert 2006). Whether these claims are plausible or not, though, what does seem clear is that there is a structural relationship at work here, with the Community, or “the extended family” on one side and capitalist over-consumption and the individual on the other. The conservatism evoked, particularly by Sean’s comments on the nuclear family, is not as out of place as at first it might appear. Even some anarchist theorists are critical of this tendency within contemporary anti-capitalist dissent. Murray Bookchin, for example, argues strongly against what he sees as an excessively romantic focus on the “alleged break of humanity’s ‘sacred’ or ‘ecstatic’ unity with ‘Nature’ and at the ‘disenchantment of the world’ by science, materialism, and ‘logocentricity’” (1995, p 34). Given the very real environmental costs of over-consumption though, this nostalgic desire for a more ‘natural’ world is understandable, and is also well in keeping with a long a tradition of resistance to capitalism (Jones 2006).

By framing consumerism as something which must be actively resisted, Sean makes his own position within this dialectic fairly clear. However for most of the other participants the division is not so explicit:

JESSICA

No matter [...] what a lot of people think about how wonderful [Capitalism] is, I just see it as the rich get richer. Corporations take over the world and control your life and exploit [...] the earth and the poor people and just kind of use everything to make money. Everything is a commodity. Nothing is valued for what it is because [in] capitalism [...] everything is about money [...] It’s a big free-for-all, and who cares about protecting anybody else [...] I just see it as really evil [...] Consumerism is basically the problem with the world today [*laughs*]. Yeah everything just conditions us to be consumerist. [...] We’re just taught to use things and to buy new things and when they break to throw them out, and to get a really well paid job so that you can buy a big house. Not so that you can give more money to poor Africans [...] The whole meaning of life is money and buying things and then throwing them away and then shoving them in the ground. What’s going to happen in the future?

No one cares they just want what they want right now.

SAM

[Capitalism is] exploitative economic relations [..] A minority owning most of the resources in a place and using that quote quote *[sic]* ownership to really have power over everyone else [...]. Too much buying shit *[laughs]*. That's what I think of when people talk about consumerism [...]. People whose whole lifestyle is based around consuming shit. Its like their hobby -people who don't have things to do so they go shopping [...] Its sort of how our whole culture is becoming oriented I think [...] So product orientated.

Jessica's construction of capitalism as having control over her life also reflects the degree to which she feels embedded within the mainstream, but also seems to indicate a personal relationship with it - one which I would argue is also characterised by contention. Sam's belief that the wealthy exert power over everyone else, is also self inclusive, though markedly less personal. These distinctions, while not huge, suggests that the relationship of at least some Community members with the mainstream is not simply oppositional. Indeed a number of writers have commented on the fluid and contingent nature of dissent as an aspect of identity (cf. Steinmetz 1994, p 179; Lichbach & De Vries 2007). As we shall see, several of the participants were more explicit about the changing nature of their dissent, with some describing this as a gradual process of accommodation with the mainstream.

Nevertheless, whether consumerism is seen as a 'natural' element of society, which is then exploited by capitalism, or visa versa, all the participants characterised some aspect of the dominant economic model as exploitative. In my view this perceived exploitation encourages the search for an alternative. Many of the participants obviously found this alternative in anarchism or in anarchistic ideas, even if - as seems to have been the case with Lori - this identification was only transitory. Even Jessica, who had no identification with anarchism, described herself as a Socialist.

Dissent : New Left to the Black Bloc (1956-)

The effect of Krushchev's 1956 denouncement of Stalin, on what is sometimes questionably framed as the 'Old Left', was devastating. European communist parties began to lose members in their thousands and this disenchantment led many to seek their own alternatives. Some sought to repatriate Marx's dialectic approach to history within a new frame, like Sartre, who was widely criticised for his attempts to unify Leninist positivism with the existential tradition of Hegel and Husserl (Renton 2004, pp 29-30). Others turned to revolutionary Maoism, Trotskyism, or to anarchism. Much of the New Left, though, adopted a pick-and-mix approach, selecting the elements they liked from the available spectrum of socialist thought and leaving the rest, or simply tried to invent a new tradition as separate as possible from a history which they now saw as hopelessly compromised (Varon 2004, p 22).

Early manifestations of this included the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the UK, which was founded in 1957, and the emergence of the New Left Review in 1960, which like Sartre, would attempt a humanist rehabilitation of Marx (Renton 2004, p 30). In France the New Left coalesced around the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria. Unlike the conflict in Vietnam, which for France was over by 1954, the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF) was, if not actually in support a French presence in Algeria, at least not actively opposed to it (House & McMaster 2006, pp 205-210).

For White America, which had been both the literal and the figurative evocation of Capitalist purism since the Second World War, this era was initially marked by a retreat from ideology (Bell 2000 [1960], p .406). Beginning with the inward looking attempts of the Beatniks, who were "trying to get the exact style of [themselves]" (McClure 1994, p 37), the sixties counterculture in the States was, at its conception, a journey of individual liberation, whose results spilled over from the personal into the social. The liberation of the personal was the first step in a revolution which sought the "total liberation" of society (Fischer 2006, p 299).

Early hippies, like Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters or Leary's International Federation for Internal Freedom, were more interested in a hallucinogen fuelled metaphysical return "to man's sense of nearness to himself and others" (Leary quoted in Lytle 2006, p 196), than they were in political or social change. In contrast to events in the later half of the decade, the Pranksters regarded politics as a joke, or the set up to one - turning up at the Republican National Convention in 1964 dressed in American flags and body paint and bearing placards which read "a vote for Goldwater is a vote for fun" (Lytle 2006, p 195).

If the war in Algeria was the political awakening of the French youth movement, though, the civil rights struggle was America's. The white middle class kids who joined the Freedom Rides or SNCC³³ voter registration drives returned with different eyes. Exposed to the structural divisions in America's deep south, between white:black and rich:poor, and the naked violence employed to protect that when threatened, some began to question their own positions of privilege (Varon 2004, p 18-19). Initially more rooted in the previous decade, and the long tradition of Christian and socialist opposition to racial discrimination, the new generation of activists began to view the established organs and methods of liberal activism as a "piecemeal" response or as having "no theory of society adequate to [their] moral aims" (Mills quoted in Miller 1995, p 169).

These interacting currents within the American New Left; with personal and social liberation on the one hand, and the pragmatic revolutionism of groups like Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) on the other; are in my view still active within contemporary cultures of dissent (cf. Bookchin 1995). Indeed, there is a long tradition of antinomian sentiment and practise within dissenting movements, from the religious dissenters of the reformation, to the libertines of the French Revolution, to early anarcho-socialist dissent against "conventional morality, or rather [against] the hypocrisy that fills its place" (Kropotkin 2008a [1892], p 82).

³³ Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Anarchists were, if not actually the ones who coined the phrase “free love”,³⁴ certainly responsible for its recapitulation as rationalist moral critique (D’Emilio & Freedman 1997, p 161).

The American New Left, faced with race riots in Watts, the Kent State shootings and the continuing escalation of the Vietnam War, splintered into a large number of more or less radical, co-dependent organisations (Gottlieb et al. 2005, p 36), with the Revolutionary Maoism of the Black Panthers, or the Weather Underground³⁵ standing in sharp contrast to the carnival anarchism of the Diggers or Hoffman and the Yippies. Other more explicitly anarchist groups included Against the Wall Motherfuckers, an anarchist direct action group who preferred to think of themselves as a “street gang with analysis” (Jones 2004, p 182). The Motherfuckers were largely responsible for bringing the then obscure anarchist theory of affinity groups into American radical discourse, a theory which plays a critical role in many contemporary protest movements (Kauffman 2002, p 40; Motherfuckers 1998).

Despite the apparent distance between them however, the thing which united all these groups was an absolute faith in the coming revolution. In the words of Naomi Jaffe, a member of the Weather-people who was underground for 8 years, from 1970-78,

If you look back at it, and see a bunch of crazy young people running around trying to tell people that the revolution is coming, it seems totally insane, and in some ways it was totally insane, but it fit into a period of revolution in the whole world.

(in Green and Siegal 2004)

³⁴ Members of the Oneida Community claimed to have coined the term, writing that “this terrible combination of two very good ideas-freedom and love-was first used by the writers of the Oneida Community about eighteen years ago, and probably originated with them. It was however soon taken up by a very different class of speculators scattered about the country, and has come to be the name of a form of socialism with which we have but little affinity” (Oneida Community 1867).

³⁵ A terroristic group which developed out of the implosion of the SDS National Convention in 1969 (Green and Siegal 2004).

Where the Weather Underground eventually advocated the formation of “a revolutionary communist party to lead the struggle, give coherence to the movement and direction to the fight, seize power and build the new society” (1974, p 4) the Diggers and Yippies favoured more gentle, humorous and anarchistic methods. Hoffman in particular preached a kind of achieved anarchism, claiming during his 1968 trial for conspiracy to cross state lines with the intent to carry on a riot, that he lived in a new nation,

a nation of alienated young people. We carry it around with us as a state of mind in the same way as the Sioux Indians carried the Sioux nation around with them. It is a nation dedicated to co-operation versus competition, to the idea that people should have better means of exchange than property or money, that there should be some other basis for human interaction.

(quoted in Shultz 2001, p 318)

Which isn't to say that the Yippies were explicitly opposed to the violence of the Weather Underground, or that the Weather Underground were initially against the mediagenic antics of the Yippies. Both certainly had their critics, but when Bernardine Dorhn claims in *Weatherman Communiqué No. 1* that “all Freaks are Revolutionaries and all Revolutionaries are Freaks” (quoted in Green and Siegal 2004) or Hoffman writes, “all of us have an obligation to support the underground. They are the vanguard of our revolution and in a sense this book is dedicated to their courage” (1971), they are articulating their sense of a shared identity, if not a shared ideology. It is this implicit solidarity with other dissenters which in my view carries over into this Community and contemporary cultures of dissent more generally.

Inspired by these events, but without the polarising distraction of a war³⁶, the European radical left mobilised around more general issues. Whereas the apparent tendency within the American movement was to dismiss the working

³⁶ Vietnam did play a part, but in place of the sense of ownership or complicity which many American radicals evinced - the so called ‘white-skin privilege’ rhetoric of the Weather Underground for example (1974, p 9) - then as today, most European reaction to the war was at least as anti-American and anti-Americanisation as it was antiwar (Cohn-Bendit et al. 2000, p 31).

class as “hopelessly reactionary” (Jacobs 1997, p 39) and with some reason (Pountain & Roberts 2000, p 87), European radical youth were much more successful in involving labour in their struggle. The events of May ‘68 in France are one of the most striking examples of this, and from the perspective of western radicalism since that time, also one of the more influential.

May ‘68 began with a series of student strikes, occupations and boycotts, which, after some initial successes, would become increasingly militant as opposition from the state, from the French far-right, and from the established organs of the left, grew in intensity. Radical students, beginning with a small group at Nanterres, then spreading swiftly throughout France, set out to challenge the dated moralism of the University establishment, to protest overcrowded conditions and to expose what they saw as University complicity in the repressive machinery of the state. Initially this dissatisfaction surfaced in a number of pamphlets, that coupled radical politics with radical, Foucault-influenced, [post]structural analysis. The material raised questions about the social purpose of the social sciences,³⁷ whilst urging psychology and sociology students to boycott their exams. Eventually though, having already shut down Nanterre and faced with the prospect of a clash between the far-right group *L’Occident*, and students occupying the courtyard of the Sorbonne, the Rector called in the Police.

Running battles resulted, and the disorder spread. Students in other cities joined the revolt, until, on May 10th, the police attempted decisive action to shut the protest down. Five hundred riot police marched on the symbolic heart of the demonstrations, Nanterre, with orders to clear the barricades around Paris’ Latin Quarter at all costs. The subsequent violence brought public opinion down firmly on the side of the students and the first wildcat general strike in history followed, bringing France to a standstill. De Gaulle fled Paris for an air-base in Germany and for the few hours he was gone it seemed like it was revolution. The workers would eventually be seduced back to work, though, by an increase in the minimum wage and improved conditions, following which the student movement

³⁷ Especially in light of rising unemployment (Reynolds 2008).

was forcibly demobilised by a mixture of new legislation and police action (Hargrove 1968, p 10; Reynolds 2008; Quattrocchi 1998; Cohn-Bendit 2000 [1968], p 58-73).

The notable thing about May '68, especially with regard to this Community and contemporary cultures of dissent more generally, is its decentralism. In no sense was May '68 the result of a movement. To borrow a phrase from later NSM theorists, it was, if anything, a "movement of movements" (Klein 2002, p 458). Indeed, while NSMs might more accurately be characterised as an emergent phenomenon, rather than one with a distinctive point of origin (cf. Stienmetz 1994, p 179), it remains difficult to dismiss the impact of May '68 on later radical thought, both as object lesson and theoretical inspiration (West 2004; Appleton 1999). Contrary to the example provided by the American radical left³⁸ the events of May '68 were initiated by small, non-discrete, ideologically diverse groups, connected by informal networks of communication, whose actions were more-or-less explicitly opposed by the established organs of dissent.³⁹ The identification, by the popular media of anarchists like Daniel Cohn-Bendit, or the so called pro-situationist faction as the leaders of the demonstration, belies the self-conscious lack of direction which these individuals espoused (Reynolds 2008). In reality socialists of all persuasions were active participants, and though some sources contend that the majority of demonstrators were not at all politically motivated (cf. Reynolds 2008), my experience would tend to indicate that this is often a far more blurry line than such an exclusive and dualistic view probably allows.

Though it has its origins in the *operaismo*, or workerist, critique of organised unionism, which had been around since the early 1960s, the Italian movement of autonomism certainly owed some of its immediate success on the climate of

³⁸ This relied on national coordinating bodies, such as the SDS and SNCC, and consequently lost its effectiveness when those organisations atomised (Rossinow 2003, p 243).

³⁹ Both the *Parti Communiste Français*, and the major unions which it controlled, were explicit in their condemnation of the radicals, only attempting to co-opt events to their own ends once it became clear they couldn't prevent them from escalating further (Reynolds 2008).

revolution of which May '68 was a part.⁴⁰ Like the situationists, the autonomists attempted to rehabilitate Marx instead of abandoning him altogether, and looked to the Council Communism of the Young Hegelians for their method. By questioning the traditional Marxist emphasis on engagement with the state, trade unions and political parties, and focusing instead on action initiated by the working class themselves, the autonomists, would also prefigure the modern importance of more decentralised or horizontal modes of group organisation (Parker et al. 2007, p 20).

Far from restricting their definition of working class to waged labour, as Marx does (1999 [1867], p 108-114), the autonomists also argued that the “fact of being within capital and sustaining capital is what defines the proletariat as a class” (Hardt and Negri 2001, p 53). This rehabilitation back into the dialectic of history of service workers, students, the unemployed and homemakers⁴¹ clearly echoes earlier anarchist critiques of Marxism,⁴² while also prefiguring the prominence of what Offe calls “decommodified” groups in the composition of NSMs (1999 [1985], p 347). The only thing of any real significance separating the council communism of the Situationists, or Autonomists, from earlier anarchist thought, is the former’s continued reliance on Marx’s dialectic approach, in contrast to the scientism of Kropotkin⁴³ or the romanticism of Bakunin.

The trend evident here, of a blurring in the line between anarchism and communism, is mirrored by a generally recognised softening of the old polarities of Marxism and capitalism during 1970s, and the consequent emergence of New

⁴⁰ It is for instance interesting that '68 also came to signify the decline of the factory or “mass” worker and the emergence of the “socialised worker” for Autonomist theorist Antonio Negri, in his attempts to reconcile Marx with the rise of the service sector (2009, p 16).

⁴¹ Groups more or less excluded from traditional Marxist class analysis (Wetherford 1997, p 196)

⁴² See for example Bakunin, who explained “by the flower of the proletariat, I mean above all that great mass, those millions of non-civilised, disinherited, wretched and illiterate... By flower of the proletariat, I mean precisely that eternal “meat” for governments, that great rabble of the people ordinarily designated by Mssr Marx and Engels by the phrase at once picturesque and contemptuous, of ‘lumpenproletariat’” (quoted in Horowitz 2005, p 38).

⁴³ Kropotkin had this to say on dialectical reasoning, “Such a method we do not recognise, neither would the modern natural sciences have anything to do with it... The discoveries of the nineteenth century... were made, not by the dialectic method, but by the natural-scientific method, the method of induction and deduction” (2008b [1908], p 56).

Social Movements proper. The balkanisation of the New Left during the late 60's, and the liberation of social critique from a Marxist emphasis on class, led to a new proliferation in the foci of dissent. Radical new critiques of race, gender and sexuality; a new focus on issues of social justice; the antinuclear movement; and alternative lifestyles were among the results. The new movements would tend to focus on what the situationists referred to as "the long revolution", which is to say the slow transformation of society through personal engagement.⁴⁴ Most are also informal, anti-hierarchical and less aligned to specific meta-narratives of social progress or to formal political systems (West 2004, p 266; Steinmetz 1994, p 178-179)).

To what degree any of this is new is of course a matter of debate (cf. Calhoun 1993), especially considering the lineage of thought outlined above. Anarchists theorists like Tolstoy were advocating social change through personal engagement in the early 1900s, while Emma Goldman is at least as well known for her radical critique of gender relations and subsequent advocacy of birth control, as she is for her anarchism (cf. Kroløkke & Sørensen 2005 p 7). Some theorists argue that, due to these parallels, the "new" in New Social Movements should be seen as term of periodisation, between dominant modes of dissent, and not an indicator of historical novelty (cf. Steinmetz 1994, p 179). While the term definitely has utility in this sense however, in my view the shift towards NSM reflects a re-broadening of the apparatus of dissent, and part of a continuity of anti-hierarchical thought, which was only interrupted by the Cold War.

The contemporary anti-capitalist movement, or the "anti-globalisation movement", as the media frame it, is clearly a part of this continuity, emerging as it did out of a diverse collection of interests, from environmental groups, who were concerned about a WTO ruling against prohibiting trade on environmental grounds; to anti-sweatshop activism, which itself has deep roots in radical

⁴⁴ Situationist Raoul Vaneigem for instance, argued that, "The long revolution is creating small federated microsocieties, true guerrilla cells practising and fighting for this self-management... That's why the Situationists don't confront the world with: 'Here's your ideal organisation, on your knees!' They simply show by fighting for themselves" (1967).

unionism;⁴⁵ to the anti-GE lobby (Griffiths and Schiavone 2007, p 20-21). This “movement of movements” came to the world’s attention during the WTO Ministerial Conference of 1999 in Seattle, due largely to the activities of a small minority of protesters - the so called Black Bloc. The Black Bloc, or more correctly those who employ Black Bloc tactics, are, like many people associated with this movement, largely anarchist in orientation. However within contemporary cultures of dissent, just as within the history of socialism, there exists a range of understanding of what constitutes acceptable militant praxis, ranging from anarcho-pacifism and passive resistance to the politically motivated property damage and sabotage of the Black Blocs or the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), Earth First etc (de Armond 2001; Cross 2003). The fact that such militancy also implies a fringe relationship with a much wider social body, containing not only the full spectrum of militancy but also a variety of levels of political commitment, often remains unexamined.

It is sometimes argued that what is presented as anarchism by contemporary cultures of dissent has little or no relationship to classical anarchism, as it represents less a commitment to a particular vision of the future, and more a resurgence of a set of ideals (Epstein cited in Cross 2003, p 5). This is also a criticism which has been levelled from within the anarchist movement itself, most notably by Murray Bookchin (1995) against what he calls “lifestyle anarchists”. In his view, technology, or perhaps progress, has replaced capitalism as the font of oppression in the minds of his “lifestylists”, whereas, true to his past as a Marxist, Bookchin himself sees technology in the opposite role - the role of an emancipator. There is clearly something in both critiques. Bookchin’s deconstruction of anarcho-primitivism in particular is devastating, if tending occasionally to stridency. However, his claim that contemporary anarchists put the personal before the social, is not only largely mistaken in my view, but also neglects to take into account that such communities of dissent exist within a

⁴⁵ Lucy Parsons, the widow of one of the Haymarket martyrs and labour activist, clearly referred to this in her speech to the founding conference of the IWW. Women, she argued, “are the slaves of slaves. We are exploited more ruthlessly than men. Whenever wages are to be reduced the capitalist class use women to reduce them” (1905). For the impact of unions on the contemporary anti-sweatshop movement see Van Dyke et al. (2007).

mainstream culture obsessed with individualism, and that, while much of what they do is a reaction against this, to expect them not to be influenced by it in some way verges on the ridiculous. Whether this lack of a particular vision of the future reflects a disconnection between such communities and the lineage of thought that preceded them, however, is debatable.

Everybody except for Jessica reported that they were at least partially influenced by anarchist ideas,⁴⁶ and for most of those with a strong identification with anarchism that self-ascription is well considered and certainly fits with in the tradition of thought outlined above. I would argue that beginning with these more politicised individuals, but also with anarchist zines as well as punk music and iconography, there is a diffusion of anarchistic ideas within the Community, resulting in a spectrum of understanding and practice. It is, for example, convenient, though unlikely, to imagine historical anarchism as a monolith within which everyone is in agreement on the theories, methods and goals of the movement. I'm not sure this ever was the case, and it certainly is not the case in the Community being studied here.

1.4 - Punk is Dead, Long live Punk⁴⁷

As already noted punk is also commonly linked with anti-capitalist activism and ideals (cf. Dunn 2008; O'Conner 2004) and, with its explicit hostility towards socially imposed labels, its definition is at least as contested as anarchism's is (O'Hara 1999, p 11). The punk movement's contemporary affinity with anarchist ideals (Clarke 2003, p 233), and its influence on the revival of anarchism in the late 1970s are both hard to deny (Gordon 2007, p 44). There are, however, those within the Community who doubt its continued relevance, or for whom it is of no personal importance.

⁴⁶ Even if, like Heidi it was just by association (see p 20).

⁴⁷ A slogan in use since the late 1970's (Clarke 2003, p 223).

AMBER

I think punk is a part of history, and certain groups that I'm sure you've been studying will have developed from punk as an idea [...] and sort of, y'know, you associate it with music as well because [...] music is really influential as far as getting people to think outside the square goes [...]. I'm just not sure that punk is really as ideal as it used to be, like [...] I think that people who are into punk music, and punk this and punk that, there's very few of them that actually live it.

ANTONY

Punk is a word that I think is quite humorous. It's definitely one of those big labels that could have many definitions. I don't think I'm involved in the punk scene, although a lot of my friends who share common ideals might say that they were in the punk scene.

SEAN

I wasn't at all supported by that sort of scene or that music, and I guess that, y'know, I've never really had a strong connection to that scene, other than that [...] some of my friends have been involved in that scene or on the fringes of it [...]. I've had as many problems from that scene as I've had support from it, so its never been something that I've personally identified with [...]. I do acknowledge that [...] there's been a lot of punk music with socially positive messages [...] and that the DIY ethic sort of came through in a tangible way even if people missed the message, but, yeah its never been something which was y'know particularly big for me.

Despite their personal distance from the punk scene, Antony and Sean's attribution of punk identity to their friends is telling. The co-option, by punk culture, of the concept of DIY in the late 70's and its subsequent emergence as a key facet of contemporary cultures of dissent is well documented (Hottzman et al. 2007). While the DIY ethic's importance to this Community will be discussed more fully in a later section, Sean's recognition of punk's roll in popularising this ethic, again given his sense of distance from the scene, is a fairly clear

demonstration of its centrality to the Community. Amber's construction, on the other hand, of punk as "a part of history" reflects a debate which has been a feature of the discourse almost since punk's inception. Indeed punk itself seems to have been initially conceived as a way of reclaiming the rebellious potential of rock and roll, which early punks saw as having been compromised by its success and subsequent commodification (Frith and Goodwin 1990, p 97). Since the earliest analyses of punk style, though, theorists have been arguing that it too would soon be swallowed by the mainstream. After all, the death of punk had already been pronounced enough times by the late 1970s to turn it into the cliché reflected in the title of this chapter (Clarke 2003, p 223). Nor has this pressure eased. The commodification of punk is still enough of a concern to have featured in several of the participant's responses:

RENEE

I don't really identify with that so much now...and, like I didn't always used to either. Cause for me [...] and for other people [it's] so much about music. So much so that all of the ethics around punk, which I really identify with, go out the window. So yes punk, don't like the music, like the way they think.

MICHELLE

I guess punk is, [...] quite a vocal and outspoken rejection of conformity, y'know? Conforming to the social norms? In its essence it should be... and of course it's hard to start talking about it because it's been so expropriated by the same consumer society to become a way of conforming, through making it a [...] fashion statement just like any other [...]. But in the original sense...

TANYA

When I was younger it was about one thing but as I've got older I think [...] punk is essentially [...] music, [but its also] a way of life and a way of looking at things [...] A way of I guess rebelling against things [...] It's a really important part of my life and I hate it when [...] it's referred to as a fashion. Like I know that people wear certain types

of clothes and stuff but I [still] think punks important

LORI

For me this means a subculture of people which listen to that genre of music and also um, follow a certain ideology. In terms of their lifestyle [...] a punk would describe it as non-conformist, but I think we've got to the point where the punk scene in itself is incredibly conformist because there is a uniform and if you don't wear the uniform a lot of punks won't see you as being punk.

The punk focus on nonconformity, which Tanya, Lori, Michelle, and Renee all criticised as empty or unrealised, is clearly open to that critique. The ability of the mainstream to incorporate and neutralise social deviance through commodification has been a common feature of the scholarship on punk since the very earliest analyses (Hebdige 1991 [1979], p 96). It seems to me, though, that all four participants arrived at this position through an involvement in the punk scene, and that the values of punk actually encourage such a critique. Lyrics like “I’ve said it now/go figure it out/being a poseur punk/is not what it’s all about” (MDC 2004), or “he said he used his welfare checks/to buy his boots and plaids/in reality it was all paid for/by his mommy and his dad!” (Anti-Flag 1999) serve as parables, inoculating younger punks against the inherent hypocrisy of commercialised rebellion. It is this tendency towards cultural self-critique which gives punk the ability to constantly reinvent itself (Moore 2004; Taylor 2004 p 8-10). Given that this struggle is never ending though, it should be no surprise when former punk insiders criticise the scene for failing to deliver on its promise.

For the participants with a strong identification with the term though, punk was characterised as a desire for freedom or by its rejection of authority:

SAM

When I hear punk I think of a bit of an antiauthoritarian attitude, and just general non conformity [...] More of an idea of wanting to create your own culture and I suppose in defiance of social norms which seem quite obstructive

GREG

Isn't punk a bitch in prison [*laughs*]. Um...Punk Rock is y'know...its a form of music that I think is just about absolute anti-authoritarianism which is not necessarily about speaking out about the government or your parents or policemen or anything...its y'know speaking out against any of society's rules and y'know making decisions for yourself. It's why like, I don't think punk inherently is necessarily a good thing either. Like there are a lot of Nazi punk bands that I think [...] have a legitimate reason to use the name cause they are going against what society tells them they should do [...]. But I think y'know it's genuinely a positive thing because I've got this, y'know, little, waning faith in humanity that when people are given the chance to decide things for themselves they will do the right thing.

JEFF

Its like a different sort of culture in a way [...] A desire to live and expressing some sort of vision of freedom. Be it artistic or philosophic or something else.

In shifting from an opposition to conformity to an opposition to authority, these participants have transcended the aesthetic limits placed around punk by Hebdige (1991 [1979]), and moved into the realm of ideology. Borrowing Chaney's concept of lifestyle as "a style...a way of using certain goods, places and times that is characteristic of a group but is not the totality of their social experience" (1996, p 5), Andy Bennett suggests that "rather than setting out to prove one's punkness through the more dramatic forms of cultural practice associated with younger punks, older punks appear to have reached a stage where punk is viewed as a 'lifestyle'" (2006, p 226). According to Bennett, these older punks no longer need to display their identity openly, because they have in effect internalised it, framing it now as primarily an ideological commitment (*ibid.*, p 233).

I would argue that those participants cited above, who have some history of involvement with the punk movement, namely Jeff, Greg, Sam, Tanya, Michelle

and Lori, all fall into Bennet's lifestylers category. The influence of punk on Tanya, Jeff, Greg and Sam seems clear, and will be covered in more detail in the final chapter. Whether Michelle and Lori came to this framing of their identity through the punk movement though, or their experience of activism, remains an open question. Heidi, who is the youngest of the participants, wasn't asked this question, but did express an identification with punk during a later section of the interview.

Dissent : May 68 to Political Punk (1968-)

Punk too emerged out of a convergence of anarchistic ideas. While most commentators dismiss early punk references to anarchism, such as Johnny Rotten's prophecy of "anarchy in the UK, coming sometime maybe" (Sex Pistols 1977), as largely superficial, the influence of situationism, particularly on Malcolm McLaren, the Pistols manager, and Jamie Reid, their Graphic Designer, is often overlooked. McLaren and Reid helped the publication of *Leaving the 20th Century*, the first English language anthology of situationist writing, and McLaren would later urge aspiring punk musicians to read the book, claiming that,

"the good thing about [situationism] was all those slogans you can take up without feeling part of a movement... The ability to announce yourself. That's the greatest thing... There is a certain aggression and arrogance there that's exciting"

(quoted in Marcus 1990, p 30)

Which, though it fits in completely with McLaren's tendency towards empty valorisation, also misses the point somewhat (Marcus 1990, p 30). In any event, by attributing the Pistols' "various controversies to his employment of [situationist] theories" (Nehring 2006, p 521) he created a political cachet for them, to which they themselves were otherwise indifferent, but which would significantly influence the next wave of punk.

Reid, for his part, with his collage style and anti-art sensibilities certainly seems to have drawn inspiration from the art of the situationists, with several of the collages he would later use for the Sex Pistols having previously appeared in pro-situ publications. While Johnny Rotten denies there is any connection between punk and situationalism, and consistently plays down McLaren's impact (Lydon 1995), the continuing influence of Reid on the punk aesthetic is not so easy to dismiss. Much of the design ethic of the contemporary zine movement for example, is almost directly attributable to him (Black 2000; Rogers 2006, pp 35-45).

Though fanzines had been an important vehicle for promoting underground culture since the early 1930s, the first wave of punk in Britain (1975-1979) represented a watershed for the medium. The production values on punk fanzines were kept deliberately low, and fanzine producers quickly adapted Reid's visual style into an "unruly cut-n-paste [aesthetic] with barely legible type and uneven re-production... falling somewhere between a personal letter and a magazine" (Duncombe quoted in Triggs 2006, p 70). The early zines, as they became known, were hand assembled and often only consisted of two or three sheets of A4, photocopied on one side then folded and stapled in the centre. This rough, collaged approach, persists, with very few variations in the zine movement to this day.

As early as 1976, Malcolm McLaren was claiming that "Anarchy in the UK" is a statement of self-rule, of ultimate independence, of do-it-yourself, ultimately" (quoted in Simonelli 2002, p 126). While it's not clear what it was McLaren wanted people to do for themselves, zine writers had a few ideas. One British zine writer famously published instructions on how to play three chords - A, E and G - followed by the command, "Go form a band!" (quoted in Triggs 2006, p 70). Perhaps inspired by this explosion in do-it-yourself print media, as well as their own experiences promoting and organising live performance outside of the formal control of the recording industry (Hottzman et al. 2007, p 47-48),

many punk rock musicians began to look for other ways to assert that independence.

Some bands found that expression in DIY and, towards the end of the 1970s, this led to the emergence of a more politically engaged form of punk, on both sides of the Atlantic. The sloganeering lyrics, the collaged visual style and “torn safety pin, dips all over the gaff, tramp thing” (Rotten in Temple 2005) of the Sex Pistols emerged as the anarchist politics and anti-consumerist DIY attitude of bands like Crass, Minor Threat, Black Flag, etc. For these bands, and their fans, DIY would come to mean more than independently created print media, or music: it would become a lifestyle and a comprehensive alternative means of cultural production. Zines played their role in spreading the DIY message, with writers producing how to guides on everything from protest to inflatable animals and screen printing.⁴⁸ For at least one punk this led to a “realisation that people like us all over the world were creating their own culture. A democratic culture was ours for the taking, but as a true democracy implies, we had to participate” (quoted in Hottzman et al. 2007, p 48).

In America the DIY revolution was predominantly focused around the emerging hardcore punk scene, which began with a handful of bands in Washington, DC and Los Angeles in the late 1970s and spread outwards from there. Hardcore music is characterised by its heavier, faster sound, with songs seldom more than 2 or 3 minutes in length. So called slam-dancing, a type of dance which often has the appearance of rhythmic brawling (see Fig. 6), provided a ritualised outlet for the sense of frustration and alienation which drew many hardcore fans to the music in the first place (Rachman 2007).

In the UK, anarcho-punk bands like Crass and Flux of Pink Indians also championed a DIY ethic. Unlike hardcore, which was defined less by its ideology than by its innovations on the punk sound, anarcho-punk differentiated itself from what had gone before by taking punks early oppositional posturing,

⁴⁸ For an excellent example, both of this, and of the zine aesthetic see Appendix A.

and literalising it. Crass for example famously faked a taped conversation between Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in which Reagan appeared to be saying that Europe would be used as a target for nuclear weapons in any conflict between the United States and the USSR.⁴⁹ This tape was released to the media, and, though many reporters quickly realised it was a fake, for at least a year it was widely believed it was the KGB who were responsible for faking it (Rimbaud 1998, p 250-255). Crass, in particular, also took an explicit visual stand against the commodification of punks nonconformist ethic. By dressing in black, military-style attire, whether onstage or off, the band members enforced their own anonymity, engaging in a playful refusal of individual stardom (ibid, p 102) The transition from an aesthetic to an ideological sense of difference, which I've already noted some participants experienced, was clearly prefigured, on a macro level, by Crass's deliberate contestation of the punk focus on nonconformity.

Anarcho-punk bands were not the only ones to draw an ideological message from the first wave of punk. Some hardcore bands also espoused anarchist ideals, and while they were in the minority, most punk bands, then and now, are at least nominally antiauthoritarian. Those bands, on both sides of the Atlantic, which did self-identify as anarchists clearly contributed to the revival of anarchism in the late 1970s (Gordon 2007, p 44). Political punk continues to play an inspirational role within contemporary anti-capitalist dissent (cf. Dunn 2008; O'Conner 2004), and, for many of the participants, an exposure to this music reportedly played some role in their own politicisation. The DIY ethic too, has quickly come to play a central role in contemporary resistance to capitalism (cf. Starr & Russo 2005, p 119) and its importance to that dissent is borne out by the fact that even Sean, for whom punk itself has no relevance, identified DIY as personally significant.

⁴⁹ Reagan is heard to say, 'if there is a conflict we shall fire missiles at our allies to see to it that the Soviet Union stays within its borders.' (Crass 1983).

1.5 - Things held in Common

Anarchism and punk clearly overlap, and, perhaps because of the variation in their relevance for the participants, it is this common ground between these ideas which I find most interesting. Both historically, and in the participants responses, punk is characterised as antiauthoritarian. However, although some bands have taken a more politicised stance, punk has never presented anything approaching a unified ideology of dissent. Indeed as Greg pointed out, such variation is a predictable consequence of the punk hostility to authority. In many cases this nonconformism is, as Hebdige characterises it, only “‘noise’, disturbance, entropy” (1991 [1979], p 121), an empty rebellion which is primarily expressed aesthetically. Nevertheless for many of the participants punk does have an ideological significance, which is, if not actually anarchist, at least anarchistic in character. Indeed, it seems to me there is an obvious sympathy between these two ideas. Their shared oppositional character makes such an interdependence extremely likely.

In this sense, both punk and anarchism, not only serve as alternatives to a system which all the participants viewed as deeply flawed and exploitative, but also as an oppositional framework within which to justify that dissent. Whether this translates into a shared sense of difference across all the participants, regardless of their individual feelings about anarchism or punk, is something I hope to establish in the following chapter.



Fig. 1. *Bolschewismus bringt Krieg* (Schnakenberg 1914). Text reads “Bolshivism brings war, unemployment and famine”.

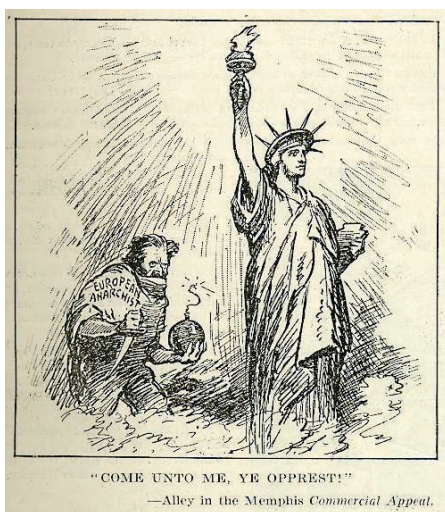


Fig. 2. *Come unto Me, Ye Oppressed* (Alley 1919). Note similarity to the ‘bolshevik’ depicted in Fig. 1.



Fig. 3. *Anti-G8 Demonstrations* (Leroyer 2001). A familiar contemporary depictions of anarchists.



Fig. 4 & 5. *Punks* (Anon 2006) and *Bacio Punk* (Roberto 2008). The classic punk style is still alive.



Fig. 6. 1981 photo from the pit at the outdoor punkrock festival (Harlow 1981). An early example of Hardcore Dancing.



Fig. 7. *Gaga Matinee* (Galipeau 2009). A more contemporary punk aesthetic.

2.0 - Identity and Contestation

Mention “The Counterculture” to most people and the first image they’ll conjure is the hippy movement of the 60’s. Mention punk and they go straight to an image not far removed from the safety pins, studs, mohawks and liberty spikes of the “spirit of 77” (see Fig. 4 & 5; LeBlanc 1999, p 60). Mention anarchism and most people still think of the bearded bomb throwing foreigner, an image largely unchanged since it’s first appearance in political cartoons during the later years of the 19th century (see Fig. 1 & 2). While it appears that a new view of anarchism may be emergent, based around its associations with punk and the contemporary anti-capitalist movement, (see Fig. 3; Welsh 2007; Owens & Palmer 2003), in my view the classical stereotype of anarchism still appears as part of that trope, even if only as substrate

My first encounter with this Community in any substantial way was a vegan potluck hosted by my flatmates. Having heard people talk about the local vegan scene’s ties to hardcore punk¹ and having some preconceptions about what that might look like, I suppose I expected a mix of tough looking tattooed guys and girls, in three quarter shorts, band shirts, and canvas skate shoes. I’ll also admit to some apprehension about being the only meat-eater in amongst them. I constructed them as a discrete and bounded collectivity, with a uniform attitude and mode of dress. Which is not to say people like that don’t exist, or that they weren’t represented within this Community to a limited extent. In fact I have been privy to several conversations where the hardcore scene has been talked about in exactly those terms, as having a uniform and being about attitude and not about politics.

¹ Hardcore punk was originally conceived as a reaction against the commercialisation and perceived excesses of the first wave of punk rock. It emerged on the West Coast of the US in the late 1970s. Bobby Steele of early hardcore band the Misfits explains that “We started calling it hardcore, okay, like, you know, as far as being like hardcore porn. It means it’s like, it’s right down to the core. It’s the real deal” (in Rachman 2007).

People began to arrive though, and my expectations were quickly confounded. Part of the reason for this is generational, with younger members of the Community for the most part favouring a blend between punk and 50's or early 60's mod and rocker fashion: distressed tight fitting jeans, denim skirts over leggings, or the occasional moddish dress; second hand leather or denim jackets/checked shirts over retro print or stripy tees; lots of black; piercings and tattoos; big belt buckles; Doc Martins, or the ubiquitous canvas Vans for the feet; DIY asymmetric hairdos, dreads; straight fringes or tinted bobs for the girls, and 50's utilitarianism the boys. Though they tended to be much more heavily tattooed or pierced, older members of the Community also seemed both more subdued stylistically and less uniform. First wave punks still rocking the spirit of '77, or staunch former hardcore kids not withstanding, the aesthetic of those approaching their 30's appeared to blur punk with its working class roots, becoming almost indistinguishable from them. Minus the occasional political patch, band T-shirt, or pair of animal print leggings, few of those who attended would have looked out of place at your average suburban barbecue.² That said none of the above trends is restricted to this Community or necessarily describes it. As we shall see, the resistance to commodification, or to labels of any kind, within this Community breeds exceptions. There are also those for whom punk has no relevance and who are more clearly influenced by the late 60's homespun, hempen aesthetic of the hippies: loose fitting second hand clothing, and flowing skirts; natural fibres and retro prints. Which is not to say the two are mutually exclusive. They blur at the edges with some communities members clearly straddling the boundary.

This lack of clear aesthetic markers, makes boundary setting difficult, both from an ethnographic perspective, and within the subculture itself. I'm not

² For a more contemporary picture of the punk aesthetic see Fig. 6.

sure that this is that surprising, however. Reifying an aesthetic difference as representative of a social division, I think nearly always results in an idealised, subjective and discrete picture of community, which, although conceptually tidy, fails to match the social reality. Indeed this is a criticism which is often levelled at some of the early work into subcultures, Hebdidge's semiotic deconstruction of the first wave of punk most notably (Stahl 2003, pp 27-40). The contestation within this Community around the commodification of identity also means that such aesthetics are necessarily fluid and unreliable. One way into this problem might be to ask Community members to locate the division between themselves and the mainstream, what labels they use to refer to that division, if indeed do they label it, and to describe how, in their view this sense of separateness developed. This is where I will focus the next section of my analysis.

2.01 - JEFF

[It's] an attitude or a philosophy or a way of living. There are obviously people who advertise their beliefs more openly. Like there are people within the scene or the community... or what ever you like to call it who [do].

I think there is different degrees of participation. Thats a hard question to answer, cause I would participate more than some people, but less than some people [...] like theres things like not having a television...um...not participating in that sort of thing.

I think to an extent my beliefs have always been-non "mainstream." Like I remember learning about things and thinking, "that's not the way that I think things should be" ...feeling uncomfortable with beliefs and things that I'd been taught as a kid. I remember thinking about things quite early on and sort of discussing them with people and coming to a realisation that the way I think things should be, is not the way that everyone thinks things should be. Of course you get more and more aware as you get older to the depth at which you are embedded within the culture. And people say things that make

you question certain parts of your practice or beliefs and you examine them and change over a period of time to...I dunno... better fit in with the way I think things should be.

I identify quite strongly with the punk subcultural label, just because it's all encompassing... and encompasses a very wide range of belief and practice... with in an alternative setting [...]. My idea of Christianity would be far different from the Christian thought of say Peter Dunne. We would disagree entirely on a whole lot of things [...] My own interpretation of things has led me to believe that Christianity is not necessarily or should never have been made to be a religion of exploitation and destruction which it has become.

Interestingly, Jeff self identified as punk even though he was generally resistant to defining that term, or otherwise articulating his beliefs³, or his sense of difference in any firm way. Jeff was one of the first people I interviewed and because of this I was still refining the list of questions and coming to terms with the method. I could have probed more specifically, and with later interviews I did do that. Having known Jeff for a while, however, I think this resistance to being boxed stems from a desire not to be taken as an authority or used as the basis of a broad case. Within the punk scene at least this unwillingness to speak for the scene is not at all unusual (Bayard in O'Hara 1999, p 11). He is also one of the two Christians Community members I interviewed. It is interesting that religiosity is so well represented here, as an explicitly religious, as opposed to spiritual, voice is almost completely absent from contemporary anti-capitalist dissent (Lechner 2005, p 115-116).

2.02 - HEIDI

I'm not scared to think. I sort of find it a lot at school...when I was still at school. It wasn't very cool to have an opinion [...] and it's [...] definitely not the norm... I think... to be interested in whats going on around you or to like watch the news or read the newspaper or that kind of thing. I don't think there is a big awareness in my age group

³ See his definition of punk (p 56).

about that kind of stuff. [...] I like to look a little bit different from other people. So I've probably got a different taste to the mainstream.

In some ways-I think that people who are a little bit y'know...who are different [...] I think that usually it's accompanied by [...] a little bit more social awareness, and perhaps more political awareness but that's not something you can guarantee. I sometimes think of it like a little flag. Y'know, you do dress a little bit differently, you've got the piercings, maybe you've got the tattoos [...] Those are like little flags I reckon so that other people can sort of recognise it. I think it does set you apart. But yeah I wouldn't know if I'd want to separate myself. I wouldn't want like segregation from society. I don't think it's that, but just a little bit? Yeah

I've found it just a couple of times walking home by myself, you get cat calls from people out of cars. I've had "Emo!" quite a lot-and I've had "Give me your boots you bogan" [*laughs*] Y'know just little things like that but mostly I've found what people do notice or talk to me about will be my piercing. I find I get it so much with my septum, "Oh my goodness did that hurt?" "Why did you do that?" ... and like...I was just like "Oh, yes it hurt, and as to why I did it," I was just like, "I think it looks cool" and people are usually, quite [...] taken aback by that. They're just like, "oh, okay."

[...] I remember when I was like 12 and saw this bunch of just...like scummy arse punks [...] with their hair all up and studs everywhere, and I was like "Oh mum that looks so cool" so I brought myself a studded bracelet [*laughs*]. Man I thought I was really rebellious. I thought I was the coolest kid at school because I had red bits in my hair and I had a spikey bracelet and listened to like System of a Down and Korn [...]

I thought the all important thing was to be really different from everybody else... because to be honest I didn't like kids at school. They were so stupid [...] not because they couldn't do maths or something, but [...] because they didn't want to talk about anything except for clothes and Dolly

magazine and those kind of things [...]. Y'know? There's a set of stuff that's cool to talk about and it's definitely not cool to talk about anything else so I was pretty keen to put myself in the not cool group [...]. Its just like "I'm a bit different so fuck all those guys I'm going to do my own thing"

It was definitely about rebellion [and] from then on I sort of started meeting new people in my life who also had [...] that same sort of attitude[...] They didn't really fit in with the rest of society just because they talked about things that weren't... y'know...normal? [...] There was some talk about political stuff but a lot of it was sort of talking about attitudes towards society in general.

I think that I'm just starting to develop a lot of [...] political ideas and stuff, cause I'm not a hundred percent sure where I stand y'know? At the moment I'm thinking about a lot of different things and making up my mind towards them but in a lot of ways I don't feel about anything strongly enough to change my lifestyle[...] With Jesse, my partner...I do have like some clashes with him because his politics are way more radical than...than mine. Like he's sort of on that whole, [sarcastic] "cops equals authority, shoot cops sort of level", which I don't agree with y'know? So I'll have my robust discussions with him um but I mean...I usually like to think that I can get on with like anyone no matter what their politics are.

I'd probably call myself...I dunno-I think it's tough... I think for some of the way I like to live and that kind of ...cause I'm kind of laid-back [and] I love doing things myself. I make my own clothes and stuff and I've sort of got that "ahh fuck it "Double Brown punks⁴ attitude. I think from attitude I'm a little bit punk but at the same time I'm [not sure].

⁴ I am not certain what qualifies a "Double Brown punk", but I suspect that, for Heidi, this brand of beer connotes the same tough, hard drinking unruliness which its appearance, in the film adaption of Duff's *Once Were Warriors*, plainly typifies (Tamahori 1995). Since Double Brown isn't a fashionable brand and is also one of the few beers which still comes in swapa crates - something with obvious environmental as well as financial benefits - it probably also appeals to punk environmentalism, pragmatism and non-conformism.

Heidi is the youngest person I interviewed by several years, and of all the interviewees she most neatly embodies Hebdige's idea of subcultures as sites of contestation between youth and the mainstream, a conflict which he almost exclusively confines to the realm of the visual and symbolic (1991 [1979]). She readily identifies visual difference as a "flag" which people use to indicate a separation from the mainstream, and, like many of the other interviewees, she describes feeling that sense of difference from a young age. Her consciousness of her own ideological development as a process though, I think not only contradicts the superficiality of Hebdige's analysis, but also implies a tension motivating that process, between the deeper ideology of some her peers, and the mainstream culture that surrounds them. Her experience interests me as an example of this politicisation, which I hesitate to call typical, but which I think is echoed in a limited sense in some of the other interviews. Heidi herself was at great pains to emphasise the normality of her own experience.

2.03 - RENEE

I think that the main difference is that I just make more choices [...] no that's a bad way to put it... like I am more conscious of the choices I am making. Rather than...y'know, everyone makes choices but some people are less aware of the impact of their choices therefore they seem to make less, do you know what I mean? Because I think I'm aware of the impact of humans on their environment, and their communities, and animals, and other people in the parts of the world that we don't even see, I make a lot of choices about my lifestyle

[Now, if] I can't afford to support a product [...] like it's too expensive to buy New Zealand made [...] and I can't get it second hand... then I will go and buy it from a store. If I really need it y'know, and how do you determine what you really need and what you want [...] it's so difficult [...]. I guess that I do as much as can within my means [and] try and live as much as I can according to the way I would like the world to be. I won't support products that [...] exploit people or animals or the earth, if I can afford it [...]. I do analyse almost everything

that I do [and] it's not hard anymore because I've been living like this for years, so most of the things that I just think of as normal, were once a big deal, y'know? [...]

I've become a lot less radical and I try and make small and lasting changes-in my life [...] If I'm going to try and avoid something I don't do it in a way that's going to be too hard for me because I know that from experience that that's just not sustainable...y'know? If you deprive yourself of something or you feel that way then you're going to end up [unhappy].

I guess some people are really obvious about [their politics] y'know and I'll find that younger people will be like that. Like you'll see them wearing patches or tee shirts with slogans on them [...] saying don't do this or I am this and I guess that's easy to tell, but then there's people that aren't like that... and [...] I dunno, I don't like that whole us and them feeling. I mean I know it is sort of like that, in that people look at me, maybe within the mainstream and think that I'm really different and there was a time when I used to think that I was really different from them as well.

I started feeling different from my peers and y'know becoming vegetarian and reading about McDonalds and how bad they were...that sort of stuff started when I would have been fourteen or fifteen [...] I guess gradually those things had more and more influence on me. [...] I guess seventeen was the highlight [...] I'd left school, I was on the dole, I used to hitch up to go to protests and y'know dyed my hair funny colours and shit...y'know that was the highlight and then it kind of melted down.

[At the time] I was like no I'm completely original, [it's] not just teenage rebellion [...] but yeah looking back on it it was about defining myself as different from the older people in my life... my parents, the way society was. I didn't like the whole go to school, go to uni, get a job, get a house. All that stuff [...] didn't seem like it was for me so I guess I looked for an alternative... and that alternative was being vegan and adopting

anarchistic principles, and being into punk [...] and all that stuff-

[Back then] I felt different therefore I made myself even more different and [...] I high-lighted the differences between me and the rest of the population, by the way I dressed and the way I looked, y'know, and the way I acted. All that sort of stuff. I wanted to feel different, it was an identity thing for me, but now I'm much more interested in finding a common ground rather than an us and them kind of feeling [...] I felt like, when you're with your friends you feel like "yep" but when you're on your own [...] you feel like an alien all the time.

[In the end I] distanced myself from the rest of the activist community for a variety of reasons and started to have relationships with people who weren't in that community [and] that made me want to identify less with them [...] I started to dress differently, y'know, got a job...that sort of thing, and so it was gradual [...].

I did have friends that were y'know more punk, or more activist, or more this than me. I never really felt like I had bought it hook line and sinker-like I have always felt like a bit of an observer in that way [...] but hey y'know other people would have looked at me and said [...] "you're a punk" or y'know, "you're...you're an activist, you're, you're, you're a pain in the arse. Get a job." But yeah I guess I always felt [...] like I wasn't quite there or [that] there was always conflict in there about that whole radical thing

Renee was at one time very active in animal rights, but as she explains, she has become progressively less radical as she has got older. In part I think the reason for this is revealed in her current, self ascribed pursuit of a lifestyle that is personally sustainable, with the implication that perhaps this has not always been the case. I think getting older is a fairly common source of anxiety, and that market mediation of the qualifiers for concepts like security or stability clearly require some form of engagement in the mainstream. While the goals of Community members might be less materially focused than those of a more

average consumer, their position within the market economy means they must engage with it on some level. As Renee implied, getting a job often requires Community members to moderate the ways in which they express their identity. Social pressure, in the form of a desire not to “feel like an alien all the time” is, I believe, also a common reason some Community members may be driven to seek an accommodation with the mainstream.

2.04 - TANYA

[...] Say something has like mass waste involved in it [...] like a present...like say especially for my son [...] that kind of crap. I don't buy him crap from the Warehouse that's heavily packaged that's made in China. I don't, and even though he kind of hassles for it, I'm more likely to say, “wait till we go to an opp shop and then you can have a second-hand toy from there.” [...] I guess that's being environmentally aware and not wanting to be exploitive.

I'm doing a social work degree and I'm really astounded at the views that these people have [...]. I kind of just assume that people who are in social work would have views on social justice and equality and being really non-discriminatory, but they're not and I'm actually quite horrified when, y'know, we're talking about something [...] and [...] they don't see something from my point of view [...]. I just naturally assume that people who are drawn to social work are interested in justice [...]. Also things like when we are going out for lunch or something like that. People will go to Burger King and I'm like "I'm not going to come then"...and they're like "come on you don't have to eat anything" and I'm like "I actually don't want to go in there." I'd be embarrassed to be seen in there. So I'll go somewhere else and its funny how they won't give up that and come with me. So I'll usually go to like Healthy Vege down the road and they will go to that BK on the corner. Just little things like that- everyday things like that.

When I was younger I actually didn't give a shit about anything [...] I like gave a shit about getting drunk, smoking weed and taking drugs and having

fun pretty much. Although it was destructive and it actually wasn't very fun, but [...] I didn't care. Like I remember we had a friend who was interested in feminism and I was just like what are you going on about? Like I was like "whatever!" ...and then talking about animal rights. I'd just laugh. I was like "care!" But as I got older I actually do really care and I can't understand people who don't care anymore.

I guess [Lisa] was the first vegan I met and so got involved with her and met other people through her [...] When did I meet her? I must have been... maybe I was twenty? Yeah so maybe only then ... and I didn't really [...] start examining myself and where I fit in the world until probably 2005 when I started doing a social work certificate [...]. That really opened up a lot of other things for me and [...] also a lot of things that we're taught I realised I didn't really agree with.

I identify as a feminist [...] that's probably the only thing I would actually label myself with... and a mother. [When I was young though] punk definitely. Wasn't so much what you'd call political as such. [Well] I guess it was, but it wasn't [the] more political hard out stuff [...] It was just fun. It was [...] more like a fuck you. I think the punk music answers...answered a lot of stuff for me [...] It's not just mindless [...] Music almost gives you that place, where you actually fit [...] and to me that was a really big factor

Tanya's statement that music gives her a sense of place seems telling, as my experience would tend to suggest that, although, music may not define or limit this community, it does serve as an expression of it for some members. The idea that music serves as a metaphor for territory for some [sub]cultural groups has at least some currency in the literature (Frith 1996; Connell & Gibson 2002), and consequently her use of this term might be seen as slightly suspicious. I'm not convinced it's important whether she arrived at this analogy on her own, or via some contact with the social theory of music - which, given her training in social work is not at all unlikely. The importance of punk in her early life is still clearly

stated. So, while she makes no explicit connection between this and the formation of her political, or ethical identity, from what I know of her friendship with Lisa it seems likely that, in bringing her into contact with more politicised individuals, the punk scene had at least a peripheral influence on this process. Given that most of the other participants locate the formation of their ethics sometime before their mid-teens, Tanya's own politicisation, after she had already left home, would also tend to suggest the influence of her peers. Her identification as a feminist is notable if only because a willingness to be identified as one is relatively rare and is also considered dependent on exposure to other feminists or to feminist viewpoints (cf. Reid & Purcell 2004). My own experience suggests that, within this Community, it's much more common for women to openly identify as feminists, and that even among its men feminism is commonly seen in a less jaded light than is generally the case within the mainstream.

2.05 - JESSICA

Mainly the consumer choices. Buying ethical products and I guess choices of what you do with your time. Instead of spending it on yourself all the time think about other people and causes. Like food choices [...] you think about where the food has come from and if any animals or people have suffered because of it. Choices in the clothes that you buy and what they are made of... trying to buy, I guess, fair trade stuff as well. So, just thinking about the life of that product and whether it comes from a positive place or a negative place

I see myself as caring about the earth and animals and people and I guess I think that a lot of people around me just care about themselves and what they want and don't really think too deeply about anything else [...]. I was raised as a Christian, so I was taught to love people and to think about people and my parents were... like hippies [...]. I lived in a commune for a while, so I was definitely taught about the earth and animals and things like that, but it was mainly about people. Like my parents were really just into teaching us about helping poor people in Africa and we always had sponsor kids and stuff like that [...]. But mainly it became sort of a lifestyle more than a belief when I came to

university and...I was studying accounting because everyone had told me at school that I was good at it, and I should be an accountant [...]. I could earn lots of money and have a big house and be really happy...and so I was doing that and I took one philosophy paper as an option. It was social and moral philosophy [and] it was about ethics and looking at the world and asking whether things were ethical or not [...]. That one paper just changed my way of thinking so much. Even though I was kind of raised like that it wasn't like the core of who I was. [So] then I stopped doing accounting and did a whole philosophy degree in ethics. So yeah [...] it just made me think about everything that I do, and believe and question everything and question my existence or why I do anything, why I buy anything, why I say anything. So mainly it was studying philosophy that has done this to me, and also political science.

I guess to me Christianity [...] doesn't mean church or what the church has [...] done, which is a lot of bad things. As well as good things. It just means to me the person of Jesus and who he was and following him... and he was just a person who loved people and stood up for what was right and [for] justice [...] In his day he was really controversial and going against the system, which is not the way that the church, or Christianity, is perceived at the moment as far as I know... but that's just the way I live. Like, everything that I do comes out of love, and love for the earth that God's created and the animals he's created and the people he's created [...]. So anything that I do comes out of that framework [...]. But to me it's also a lot more of a spirituality than it is about a religion, cause religion kind of suggests rules and [...] doctrines and stuff to follow... but [...] that's not what it means to me really

Jessica is a clear example of another common pattern within this community, the second or third generation dissenter. Several of the people interviewed here have parents who were involved, either with issues of social justice, environmental activism, alternative health, within intentional communities and so on. It is through the latter that Jessica's parents had their involvement, and in fact her

grandparents still live in one. Though recent studies caution that political socialisation is likely due to a variety of influences (cf. McDevitt & Kiouisis 2007), the earliest studies of student activism, in the mid 1960s, attested to a strong correlation between this and parental political orientation (cf. Westby & Braungart 1966). While contemporary politics, especially in New Zealand, is significantly less dualistic than these early studies allow, it seems self-evident that growing up in a radical household must have at least some impact on this development. Very little work has been done on the impact, or influence of these countercultural dynasties on contemporary communities of dissent, and unfortunately estimating their importance is beyond the limits of this study.

Her claims to spiritualism are also interesting. Of course this drift towards a more personal religiosity is not limited to this community, although some scholars have suggested it is typified by it (Shields 2006, pp 60-62).

2.06 - SAM

The way I dress is different from a lot of people and that's intentional. I think that represents something about feeling ok about being different. I choose not to buy meat, cause I'm a vegetarian and that's intentional. I don't feel it's ok to eat animals. There are certain shops I wouldn't purchase from because I don't like the way they do business or the size of their business. Do you want me to go into detail? Um... I suppose it's more of a case that it would be a less preferable choice to shop at a certain shop. Certainly the big fast food chains like McDonalds, Burger King. things like that because I think they are quite heavily involved in deforestation in certain parts of the world [...] I guess cruelty to animals. I have a lot of trouble buying clothes [...] especially if I want to buy brand new clothes because I'm quite opposed to sweat shop labour and it's pretty much impossible to find new shoes or clothes or anything without buying expensive ones off the web from somewhere offshore.

I suppose being an anarchist is quite [significant] because I don't buy into nationalistic kind of thinking. Um, what else... being anti-capitalist [...] I suppose I don't really consider myself very

religious and New Zealand...some people talk about it as a Christian society. Yeah, I suppose I'm quite critical of that and um... yeah I'm not really a nine to five worker in any sense [*laughs*]. I suppose in some ways I consider myself a punk... and an anarchist.

I think my first involvement in political thinking would have been around animal liberation issues and that would have been round about 1997 when I went vegetarian in high school and then... I suppose that was sort of from being involved in the hardcore scene. I came across all these kids who were vegan and what not and thought "oh wonder why this is" and started reading more and then I think that sort of led on to further political ideas.

Sam clearly sees a more direct connection between punk and her own politicisation. Interestingly though, it is the people within the scene, not it's material manifestations - ie. music or zines - that she identifies as the key initiator of this process. One of the ways music might provide the "sense of place" Tanya attributes to punk is as an evocation of shared values, shared taste and shared experience. The place Tanya is talking about is therefore more of an "imagined community" (Anderson 1991) than a geographic location. This not only allows her to internalise her sense of belonging but also potentially to expand it to punks she doesn't already know (Vogrinc in Regev 1997, p 138; Connell & Gibson 2002). The focus on autonomy and nonconformity ascribed to punk by most of the participants⁵, promotes a generalised questioning of mainstream values, and an openness to new ideas. In the context of a punk show these factors might combine to bring individuals into contact with more militant punks, while providing the sense of a shared identity necessary for an exchange of ideas.

2.07 - GREG

I think the key thing is like, I try to avoid just buying anything. Because I mean I realise that the majority of what I buy has fucked someone over somewhere [...]. I sort of try and get things with [a] function more than just pretty little baubles that

⁵ See Section 1.4.

satisfy my need to y'know, have new shit. There's basic things like veganism and y'know...riding a bike instead of driving a car and just...all those little bits and pieces that [...] other people just feel as if they just couldn't live without when really it's [...] a real simple matter to [...] distance yourself from too many destructive behaviours.

Y'know, eating meat at the moment is just really unhealthy for the world... like, I was on a plane the other day and just looking down at the farms and [...] seeing these big criss-crossed areas of farmland [...]. One-tenth of that has got all the cows in it [...]. If that was all grain or beans or something it would bloody all be being used wouldn't it? And I'm not [...] calling for the absolute eradication of meat industries but I mean the way it's designed at the moment we over-produce so much just for these [...] few top tier nations, so that we can have bacon and eggs for breakfast and then go to McDonald's for lunch, and then have a roast dinner at night, y'know? Whereas the human body really only is designed to eat meat a couple of times a week anyway. Its sort of absolute excess. I want to just cut out any of that shit from my own purchases at least.

I think when I was sort of 16 or 17 [...] I got into it through punk. I felt like I was a bit of a loser. I'd been trying to be cool for all these high school years and I'd sort of finally realised that it wasn't really going to happen and I didn't really want it anyway [...]. It was this real sort of awakening that I could make my own decisions. [It] was very silly sort of um, political awareness and stuff that I was first into but it was a start. Then in seventh form I did a philosophy paper, just y'know for free while at high school, and [...] there was part of it that was just about, literally, critical thinking. [So,] that would have very much developed my ability to make decisions... to make slightly smarter ones... I don't know when I started thinking the way I do now though it's been more of a gradual process.

I'm happy to be called a punk...that's the main one. I don't mind anarchist or commie or radical [...] I mean most of [the negative responses are] just sort

of the inane “fag” out the car window kind of shit... but um yeah I think a lot of the people who [...] might actually go “oh look at what that guys wearing, y’know a leather jacket, he must be a punk and stuff,” they sort of automatically assume you have sort of sets of political ideals as well...which is kind of interesting...those are usually quite clued up people...like it’s...yeah people do always judge people on their appearance but...

Greg is one of a number of participants who explicitly credit their education as an important factor in the formation of their ethics. McDevitt & Kiouisis argue that the role of education in the formation of radical ethics is often overlooked, and that political socialisation is probably more usefully modelled as a product of the intersections between the discussion of social issues in school, a supportive peer group and support from one’s parents (2007, p 1218). While their model is focused primarily on school leavers, the ethics of participants, like Tanya and Jessica, who credit their political socialisation to an engagement with tertiary education, almost certainly also resulted from a similar interdependence of factors.

While his diet might seem extreme to some people, Greg’s articulation of the reasoning behind his veganism actually puts him on the more moderate end of the that spectrum of belief. Though there is widespread support for the vegan ethic in the community, there has been a move away from it in recent years⁶. Several of the participants, who are former vegans, also commented on continuing social pressure to return to the diet. Sam for example commented that, “they can be a bit self-righteous and be a bit like ‘Oh we’re all better than you guys. You should go vegan to so you’re as cool as us,’” while Lori reported that more than half of the reason she went vegan in the first place “was peer pressure from other vegans due to my social circle at the time.” Antony on the other hand sees veganism as a critical facet of his identity, drawing connections to almost every aspect of his life,

⁶ Only Sean, Antony and Greg still identify as Vegan, but almost everyone else is either supportive of the vegan ethic, or a former vegan, or more commonly both. Michelle for example claims that she “is always kind of an aspiring vegan, even if I’m not actually,” while Amber sees herself as “working towards being vegan.”

arguing that “you're not an environmentalist if you consume animal products when you don't need to.” For him veganism means, “not ingesting animal products but it also means not purchasing anything or condoning anything in general which would hurt an animal.”

2.08 - LORI

I think some of the choices that I would make would be um, for example the degree to which I care or have cared about recycling. Like washing plastic bags and saving buried pegs and um fixing everything that I can. Even when it's cheaper to buy it [or] to replace it.

[My parents' politics] had an enormous impact on my life [...]. I've been lucky enough to grow up with the education, which has taught me about having respect for the environment and basically the state of devastation in which the planet is in and [...] I've been brought up to know [...] that every individual has the power to make a difference and that even if it's a really small thing then collectively it builds up to something much stronger.

I think when I was younger I felt desperate for change, like for social change to happen. Yeah, like I felt like the world is totally fucked and we have to change things right now. Y'know, like, if we don't start changing things right now I'm going to bawl my eyes out and I'm going to riot and I'm going to do everything within my power to do this. Back then I felt like [most people in society] were apathetic and they just didn't give a shit and now that I'm older I realise that it wasn't because they didn't care [but that] it was due to other reasons, like they didn't have access to the same education that I had access to and [...] maybe they didn't have as much money as me y'know? It's like if you can't feed your kids you don't really give a fuck about washing plastic bags.

I came to it living in Wellington [...] I think I'd seen lots of pamphlets about anti-genetic engineering at my parents house, and then I saw the same pamphlets in Wellington. Except in Wellington it was like, oh y'know, meet at the Civic Square on Sunday, and [...] I was like, “wow this is really

screwed up and I'd like to meet other people that also think this is really screwed up" [...]. It was just before the Labour government lifted the moratorium on genetic engineering, and so I started getting involved in the anti-GE movement in Wellington and started going to protests and met a lot of activists through those months and just got really, really politicised through the conversations that I had with [them].

In the past, I've definitely felt like an activist and a punk [but that started to change when] I was protesting at the G8 summit in Gleneagles um, in Britain, and I just remember being in a riot basically [...] A riot against the police, um, who were protecting the summit, with thousands and thousands of other people that had travelled for hours on buses to get there that day [...] tearing down this huge wire fence and just throwing it over at the cops and then the cops all came through. This sea of police with batons [...] and we were waiting for the tear gas to come out [...]. I didn't get badly batoned like [they] didn't get my head or anything, but like my legs were just covered in bruises from being batoned by the cops, and I just felt like everyone had turned up on that day and that we'd lost [...] But the fight itself [...] was almost just like a dramatization of what we were feeling at that time anyway. Everyone knew that we weren't going to get through. Everyone knew what the end result was going to be, which was people getting batoned by the police, but we were all just going to do it anyway. It just all started feeling really hollow and useless and I just remember bawling my eyes out all the way back on the bus [...], thinking, [...] "this isn't getting us anywhere." Y'know we got like a 30 second slot on the news, and then three days later the London bombs went off, and as soon as that happened no one mentioned anything about the G8 summit until the next year. I just felt really, really disillusioned after that protest.

Lori's account of the G8 protests at Gleneagles in 2005, while certainly interesting as a first person history, is most valuable for its insight into her own motivations for attending, which she also applies to the rest of the demonstrators by extension.

Her framing of the clash between protesters and police as a “dramatisation” of feelings of futility I find very plausible. Like most asymmetric conflict, the strategic goals of a direct action are often not obviously tied to its tactical aims but instead attempt what the situationists called “the long revolution” - a slow change in society furthered by personal example or by the active subversion of the spectacle (Vaneigem 1967). Several of the other participants also echoed this expectation of activism as something whose effects aren’t typically felt in the short term. Sam, for example, sees this frustration as a “a hindrance to getting involved because they pour their hearts into it and see fuck all changing.” Michelle on the other hand, combats her own frustration by focusing “on the importance of the way that you do something not whether or not it lasts forever, or it’s permanent, or it’s um, successful in the long run [...]. The zen have [...] a saying, y’know, that peace is every step.”

Lori’s negation of the proximate aim of the G8 protests, as having been widely understood as unrealistic, as well as her equation of mainstream media attention with strategic success, both indicate a battle fought primarily within the realm of symbols. This fraught relationship between contemporary communities of dissent and the spectacle, in which predominantly negative attention from the mainstream media generates interest, which is then captured and subverted by DIY online media, has been persuasively documented in a number of recent studies (cf. Owens & Palmer 2003; Pickerill 2003, pp 1-4). As implied by Lori though, without mainstream media attention to legitimate and publicise them, such actions can easily pass unnoticed. Alternative media requires the attention of mainstream media in order to transcend its own self referential tendencies. This does not, in my view, make it any less valuable to its core audience, because they are also its key journalistic focus, but, without external interest, it does severely limit the effective capture of the medium. Presuming we can take at face value her assertion that “everyone knew what the end result was going to be”, the fact that people were prepared to suffer violence for such intangible ends is also interesting. Her construction of the demonstration’s violent conclusion as performative suggests to me that Juris’s ideas on conflict as an enactment of

radical identity clearly have some relevance here (2005). However, in siting the beginning of her own disillusionment to the period following such an enactment Lori also suggests that it's functionality as a constructor for group identity is fleeting at best.

2.09 - MICHELLE

Well, a conscious rejection of the first option which is put underneath my nose [...]. Y'know, what I might read in the latest EziBuy, or the latest coupon special? Trying to look beyond that and be resourceful within myself to find the best solution to the things I need within my life and not what's just um...what's recommended by mainstream society

I like the use of [...]...well usually second hand things or of recycling where possible, making the most of resources without um, consuming unnecessarily. Understanding where the things that I use in my daily life and the decisions that, y'know, I make... what the not so obvious effects of them are [...]. I try to think a bit beyond the surface about the effects of my actions and the bigger picture or the longer term [and] that filters through to everything from my physical image y'know, to my choices in music, my choices in art, my choices in food. All of those things, essentially I think that's the root of what makes me different.

As I was [...] growing up, [...] in the [...] the never ending [...] search for who you are, I've toyed with labels, and tried them on for size and always felt eventually that I'm not confinable to any subculture .

My parents weren't really political activists, but they were quite spiritual and I [...] grew up in an environment that was quite encouraging [...] doing my own investigation about, about spirituality and ethics and ways of being and y'know thinking for myself in those terms. I started learning about Buddhism and things [...] and some [...] other kinds of hippy philosophies [...] about y'know peace and love and oneness and all that kind of stuff. Which, y'know, created a feeling of [...] not being able to just, um isolate myself in my mind from, from the suffering of others.

When I was like sixteen I became the local representative for SAFE, the animal rights group. [SAFE] would come down and [...] help me out with materials and resources and some logistical stuff [and] I organised a bunch of protests against live sheep exports and against marine land and factory farming and things like that. [After that] I went up to Auckland and volunteered at the SAFE office [...] and I started to meet these other animal rights activists so I was like, "oh cool I'm an animal rights activist too" and they were like, "oh but you're working for SAFE" [...] They were my first [...] disillusioning um, exposure to disunity. Y'know just the insidiousness of disunity, because then I started to meet Animal Action activists who were absolutely scathing about SAFE saying that they were just a bunch of reformist, conformist, compromising corporate blah blah blah... y'know,, and wouldn't even give the time of day to SAFE [...] and then I was talking to my friends in SAFE being like "oh I met these other activists who are doing this. They're organising this action and this sounds really cool," and they're like "Oh yes, but be careful those are the really dangerous and violent and um, irresponsible activists," y'know? So there was that contention.

Michelle had recently returned from an extended OE. She is connected to several of the other participants through activism in Wellington. The contention she describes within the animal rights movement is certainly not limited to it. It has parallels in the criticism levelled at Greenpeace, both from more mainstream groups, such as the World Wildlife Fund, and more radical groups, such as Earth First and the Sea Shepherds (Shaiko 1993, pp 89-90). Contention around community or ideological boundaries is also an often reported feature of punk and anarchist discourse (cf. Duncombe 1997, p 61; Bookchin 1995). As all of these communities or organisations are defined, at least to some extent, by their particular foci or methodologies of dissent, a certain amount of debate or uncertainty surrounding the politics of boundary setting is unsurprising. However, by framing herself in the middle of one such debate Michelle also illustrates the permeability of these boundaries. Her concern over "the

insidiousness of disunity” while valid, ignores her own ability to move between those groups. This, in combination with my own experience suggests to me that although there are those who do treat these boundaries as real and attempt to police them accordingly, for most people group identity is more inclusive, personal and probably contingent, than such a firm delineation allows.

2.10 - SEAN

I believe that probably that the choices that I make are a little more well considered, in that maybe I'd have a broader scope when I'm looking at making decisions than um, people who are in what you've called the mainstream, and I suspect that's actually something which has come prior to me being involved in activism and potentially something which led to activism [...]. So when I make purchases I think about where they're coming from and who that's effecting and the environmental impact or when I make decisions about things I'm going to do with my day I think about the impact that's going to have on the people directly involved in my life and I guess I also think [...] in a way which extends into society [...] are the things which I do or say going to reinforce stereotypes that I don't agree with or believe in [...]. Yeah, so I believe that maybe that the specific choices are not what would differentiate myself and maybe other people I see as being in my community, but more the action of thinking more widely.

I guess that the longer that I'm involved in, I don't know what you call it, social justice work, the less I see those boundaries as being fixed, and the more that I see that when I was younger I took those boundaries from visual clues, from cultural clues and now I realise that actually I might have a lot more in common with [...] Christian social workers, [...] and maybe less in common with someone who happens to wear patches which happen to espouse similar ideas I have and are otherwise quite selfish and, y'know, self involved [...]. A lot of those people were trying to find somewhere to belong and were just adopting those physical clues without actually being dedicated to [...] wider social justice. So I suppose that I'm at a space now where I don't

really feel like there's a clear um, dividing factor, maybe aside from the willingness to be identified as a person involved in social justice work [...]. So that's where the difference lies between, say myself and [...] other people at my work place who [...] are doing similar stuff but don't see that as being a fundamental part of their identity.

I went through a period where I quite happily called myself an anarchist. I guess the same with veganism. Y'know, calling myself a vegan? But I um, as much as anything else that was striving to make those things visible. Y'know rather than ever really feeling boxed by that, or wanting to be boxed by that. It's sort of, it's an easy one word way of encapsulating y'know, a good chunk of my [...] viewpoints, to someone without having to go through a whole list of y'know, "oh well I, y'know, eat a little bit of honey sometimes [but] please don't put any eggs in the cake or cow milk." [...] I believe in consensus decision making processes and that no one has the right to power over another person. I just say "oh y'know I'm an anarchist." But yeah I definitely have never wanted to be bound by a label of any sort.

I was questioning the stupid things that my peers were doing [...] even when I was at primary school. When I was a teenager y'know I got involved in sort of environmental stuff and y'know, had a critical consciousness from quite a young age. But I didn't really put it into any sort of use until my late teens and [...] even then that was sort of unsupported by my peer group. If I'd had a more supportive peer group earlier then I might have, I might have been more active. Probably the biggest change for me was when I turned vegan and I left Auckland and [...] rode around the country on my bike [...] There'd been stuff that I'd been involved with leading up to that point but [...] that was basically [the] point where I said, [...] "I see the fight for social justice as being something which is of immense importance to me and I want to give it a priority", and [...] that was [the] point where, I guess it started to become a solid part of identity rather than just being [...] something which [...] I supported.

As you can see, while most participants showed no strong preference when it came to subcultural labels, some expressed an explicit dislike while others talked about them as devices of convenience as Sean does. The fact that Sean feels he needs to frame his own use of these terms as coincidental to identity, rather than as a condition of it, is in itself interesting. I would argue that he is distancing himself from these terms for two separate but related reasons. While the definitional looseness of anarchism encourages debate, the strictness of the vegan ethic similarly encourages censure. Honey, for example, which he admits to eating, is not strictly speaking vegan, though many self-identified vegans do eat it (Cherry 2006, p 156). Because of this, then, and the representative role in which he is cast by the interview process itself, some distance may be seen as required - whether to avoid criticism from subcultural purists, or out of a desire not to be perceived as an authority in the first place. Secondly, the resulting play within these terms also means that their definitions tend to be personal and contingent. Without some qualification though, the term obviously either reverts to the received mainstream definition or to the operative definition within which I, as the interviewer, choose to frame it. It may therefore be to avoid this external imposition of identity that Sean provides his caveat.

2.11 - AMBER

We're connected to other people around the world and I think it's important to be conscious of the things that we have [and] what they've sort of gone through to get to us [...]. It's a matter of actually sticking to that [though], and it's hard, because I mean I'm not trying to say everything I buy is completely ethical cause it's not, but I try to make an effort to do that. Like um, second hand clothes shopping or going for second hand things as opposed to generating more new things. But also, when it comes to food, being conscious of where that food comes from, and the kind of way that people have gone through to create that food. But then [...] being [...] financially restricted [limits] how much you can do in the consumption sense. The reality is that's the society that we live in. We're in consumer society, and we need to um, be aware of the fact and not try and completely remove

ourselves from consumerism but teach people that might not make the right consumer choices [how] to.

I've had a pretty different upbringing to most people [...]. When I was twelve I moved to Fiji and I travelled [...] around the world with my folks up until I started university. So I've seen different places and different types of societies and [...] so looking at the extreme difference between somewhere like Singapore where it's like mass consumption, mass control, to somewhere like Fiji where there is a huge division in wealth and there's a lot of poverty, in the main city anyway [...]. So, y'know I think I've definitely been benefited in that way to be able to really put in to perspective world kind of issues, and why we do need to challenge the authorities that are making wrong decisions. But I guess, y'know, my parents have always been really up on education which is huge. I mean if people want to make the right decisions, or be individuals [...] you need to be educated in some way, and that doesn't necessarily need to be formal education.

Um, but as far as actually becoming involved with groups of people and doing specific things [here] at university [...] ach this university just irritates the crap out of me because there's just so many people that actually don't think about bigger issues and it's kind of sad, cause that's not how I thought university would be. But then I [...] saw this poster up on one of the notice-boards saying how [someone] wanted to start up an activist group on the university and these were all the issues that she was interested in, contact her, and it was me and this other chick that contacted her and then we decided to um, get a group going and get people involved with um, doing stuff and it's just...I mean it started out really simple stuff. Like one of our first projects was trying to get people to take their own cups along to um, cafes rather than use the disposable ones because [at] the main cafes at the university you could only get disposable cups [...] What we were trying to do was get people to think about reducing the amount that they consume [...]. But we just didn't really do so well with that project, because we had people walking past us, just either

completely ignoring us or saying “oh, wow that’s a really good idea”, and then going and buying a coffee with a disposable cup, and it’s just [...] so frustrating.

I hate labels. I really hate them eh, like I think it’s funny that people would look at me and think that I was a hippy or a punk or a bogan, depending on what I was wearing that day. Like I’m just me, and I take influences from different groups and different ideas [...] I think if you were to class me as anything it would be as my own individual thing. I’m not down with labels, but I mean I don’t have anything against people [...] that choose to label themselves as punk or hippy or, or, um, y’know whatever. It’s just not personally for me.

The lack of any immediate sense of payoff from activism and the subsequent danger of burnout seems to be a common source of concern within activist circles (cf. Einwohner 2002; Shields n.d.; Cronburg 2006). Building on Lori’s account of her own disillusionment however, it is worth pointing out that Amber, who is at the very beginning of her activist career, presents frustration as a key part of her very first experience of direct action. I would argue that Juris’s ideas on the performative role that violent direct action plays in the formation of radical identity is needlessly restrictive (2005). Indeed Amber seems to suggest that she came to university looking for a radical identity, and if this is the case then perhaps the solidarity she claims to have experienced through the performance of that identity outweighs the resulting frustration. It may be that its values as an enactment of Community values is enough to keep some activists engaged, at least initially.

2.12 - ANTONY

The important factor in any decision for me is the boundary between my right to make a decision and the environment around me, including all the people I interact with, and their right to not have me cross the line into something that would inhibit them. So if you imagine that everyone has a bubble around them and they can do what ever they want within that bubble, and as soon as two people’s bubbles come into interaction you have to make sure that

where those bubbles interact, both parties respect each other and go no further than the boundary at which the other person would have their rights reduced.

I always felt like I was a minority for whatever decision I made, even if it was a decision everyone else made, because I would take longer in making that decision cause I would make sure it was actually what I wanted to do. Not doing things that you don't need to do, or that you wouldn't want to do if you didn't have some kind consumerist incentive. Not having a TV, cause if I don't have a TV then I end up getting more done. Trying to re-use stuff and trying to buy as little as possible .

It's definitely something that has developed gradually, because over time I link up ideas and I see the connections between different things that I'm interested in and seeing how they fit in to how I feel about the world in general. So, for example, when I was young I spent a lot outdoors and I really appreciated that I could swim in the creek at the end of the garden, and so that's something that I would want to maintain, and also I [realised] that if you hit a dog with a stick it runs away, so I don't need to hit it with a stick and I also don't need to eat a cow. So those two things were things I was aware of growing up and then seeing the link between.

My parents weren't actually too into animal rights. They were into organic growing quite passionately and when they lived in the UK, before we moved here, they were allotment gardeners and they were pretty much self sustainable but they weren't vegan. They were sporadically vegetarian, chopping back and forth, and when they'd spent a little bit of time in New Zealand, um, met some people who were passionate about organic growing and also vegan [...]. So they made the decision to go vegan when I was about three and it wasn't forced on me, I ate what ever I wanted, but [...] I slowly found that I wasn't interested in doing things that my parents didn't do.

So those two things, health and environmentalism, were key to them but animal rights is something I don't think that they'd been presented with so

much. It was just a basic understanding that if you don't need to kill something, don't do it. But it wasn't something they got involved in, and especially went nowhere near direct action [...]. Direct action animal rights was something that I developed through my own education and through meeting other people who... I mean as soon as you're a minority you meet up with other people in that minority, [and] you share [...] ideas and you think, "so we've got this one thing which is tying us together, let's learn about each other's other opinions. Let's see if we are interested in those as well."

Antony is one of the more militant people I interviewed, and interestingly is the only one who reported feeling like he was in a minority. Most people seemed to place at least as much emphasis on their sense of connection to the mainstream, as they did their sense of separation from it. It seems obvious to me that the sense of "us" versus "them", which Renee says she consciously pursued as a younger activist, fits perfectly with Anthony's sense of himself as a member of a minority, and that the process of constructing a radical identity actually requires the sense of distance and privilege which such constructed divisions provide. Social Identity Theory argues that strong identification with a group or movement tends to lead to a stronger sense of division between the group and the mainstream, while also promoting a stereotypical view of those outside the group (Kelly 1993, p 60). I can certainly attest to a sense of separateness from some of the more militant Community members at least initially - a division which was made clear to me by repeated faux casual interrogations about my diet or consumption habits. Caroline Kelly has gone on to assert that these perceived divisions play a crucial role in facilitating participation in direct action (1993).

2.13 - Sketching an Overlap

The theme which links all of these interviews seems to be that decisions, particularly consumer decisions, are perceived by the participants as having been undertaken more consciously than is seen to be the case within the mainstream.

Some participants, most notably Renee, recognised the value judgement implicit in this assessment and tried to rephrase their answer neutrally, but in my view, in all cases - with the possible exception of Heidi - the division is still evident. It may be argued that this is an artefact of specifically asking the participants to frame their sense of difference in terms of their life choices. In my view however there is enough specificity in most of the responses to contradict this assessment. Only Heidi and Sam saw aesthetic markers as significant, while Renee suggested that younger people were more prone to advertising their identity in an overt and visual way, by “wearing patches or tee shirts with slogans on them [...] saying don’t do this or I am this.”

Participants also generally manifested a tension I would characterise as typical of this Community, with a belief in the long term efficacy of activism and their own lifestyle choices on the one hand, and a contrary cynicism about the future on the other. Sean clarified this as having “a lot of hope, but little expectation.” Jeff on the other hand also saw activism as generally positive, but explained that, “I don’t feel like there is much hope. I mean I do my best to ensure there is a future that is sustainable and, um, worthwhile, but I don’t think hope comes into it.” Tanya echoed this assessment, saying “I can’t see things getting better [...]. Like people are really aware now of climate change, people are aware of exploitation [...], but it’s like no one actually seems to be taking any actual steps and the people who are the mass exploiters [...] don’t actually give a shit as far as I can see.” She went on to outline her hope that “capitalism will crash [and] we’ll have to go back to the basics,” while Lori wished that “some really lovely plague wipes out about three-fourths of the population globally [...], and that those left behind create a better education system and a new society.”

The only other commonality to come out during the interview process was a commitment to DIY. The DIY ethic was seen as relevant by everyone except Amber who was, surprisingly, unaware of the term’s political meaning. Sam called it, “one of the most important kind of ideas to come out of punk communities, [...] just in terms of personal empowerment,” and while DIY has a

much deeper provenance than he attributes to it, its distinctive meaning within this Community certainly owes a great deal to punk (Hottzman et al. 2007; Triggs 2006). Sean commented on this difference in meaning, describing how,

when I mention DIY people say, ‘What you mean building a house or, building a shed or something?’
DIY definitely extends further than just home renovations it means things like being independent in what you do.

For Lori, on the other hand, it means, “avoiding going to the Warehouse to buy anything and everything. Trying to make things [...] or fix things instead of replacing them,” while for Michelle DIY is,

a matter of not waiting around for someone else to provide you with what you need, but figuring it out how to get it yourself, or how to create it yourself... um... and that I think [...] is really important in resistance, especially in resistance to capitalist consumer society.

I would characterise these responses as typical, not just in this Community, but in contemporary communities of dissent more generally. I know people for whom DIY entails growing their own food, baking their own bread, creating their own media, making their own clothes, jewellery and even shoes. Its affinity with anti-capitalist dissent is obvious, and its colonisation of contemporary of cultures of dissent by way of the punk movement is well documented. What is less evident is the emancipatory power of this idea (cf. Hottzman et al. 2007). While growing your own vegetables might not make economic sense, in that it costs you more in labour to grow them than it would to buy them from the supermarket, eating food you yourself have grown is personally liberating. I even met a girl who tried to make DIY hair dye with tamarillo juice, and ended up having to shave off her dreadlocks because they were full of fruit pulp. The point though, is not that she failed, but that knowing she might fail she did it anyway for the joy of having tried.

3.0 - A Hairstyle's not a Lifestyle¹

As I've already mentioned, Bennett's theory of lifestyle punks (2006) seems to have a greater relevance than to this Community than perhaps his article allows. After all Murray Bookchin notably criticised the contemporary anarchist movement for what he also calls its lifestylism (1995). Bennett's model is taken a step further by Linda Andes, who proposes a stage model for the punk scene whereby members are imagined as beginning with a predisposition to involvement, some sense of difference, which then leads them to engagement with the punk scene as a form of rebellion (1998). This first stage of involvement equates roughly to Hebdige's idea of subcultural style as "style in revolt" (1991 [1979], pp 106-112). As already noted, however, the conscious engagement of at least one participant - namely Heidi - in her own, ongoing, politicisation contradicts Hebdige's limited appraisal of such rebellion as mere "noise" (1991 [1979], p 133). Renee also specifically references her involvement as having come about through rebellion, while several of the others - namely Heidi, Jeff, Greg, Sean, and Antony - recall some sense of difference as a motivating factor.

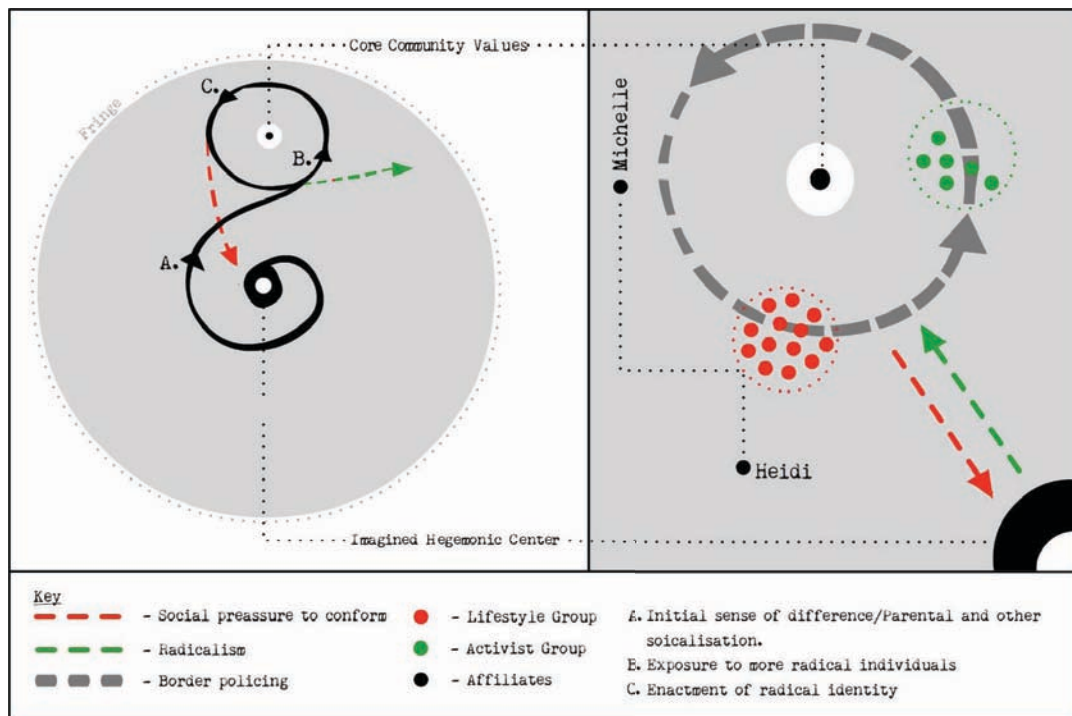
The second stage according to Andes is "affiliation", in which people see themselves as part of the punk scene and are recognised by other insiders as such. In this stage punk is seen as more of a lifestyle, with its own code of ethics and more ritualised forms of rebellion. The third and final stage in Andes' model, is one of "transcendence", in which, she argues, punk is defined primarily through its values and ideology, and the material and stylistic aspects of the culture are seen as considerably less important. She goes on to assert that for those who have transcended, self-identification as a punk depends on context and may be rare. Rather than looking to the other members of the scene in constructing an identity, identity is seen as more self constructed, and individual (1998, p 217).

The first two stages of this model are usefully compared with Doug McAdam's model of recruitment to high risk forms of activism, in which he proposes that

¹ A lyric from the Dead Kennedys song *Chickenshit Confirmit* (2001 [1986]).

family and other forms of socialisation predispose individuals to low risk dissent, and that contact with other activists enables that involvement. This brings the emerging activist into contact with more militant activists, deepening their ideological socialisation and making participation in more radical forms of dissent likely. This in turn leads to the construction of a radical identity, leading to further participation, which reinforces that identity and so on (1986). As already noted, the parents of many of the participants have their own histories of dissent. In addition nearly all those with either a strong history of activism, or a growing interest in it, would provide clear corroboration for the reinforcing role that an association with other activists provides. Lori's recollection that she "started going to protests and met a lot of activists [...] and just got really, really politicised through the conversations that I had with [them]" is easily comparably with Antony's statement that, "as soon as you're a minority you meet up with other people in that minority, [and] you share [...] ideas". Several of those with a less defined history of activism also credit an exposure to other dissenters as a factor in their politicisation. Tanya, for example, credits the beginning of her dissent to a friend's veganism, while Heidi recounts her own ongoing politicisation as having begun with a sense of difference, leading her to an association with a group of people who reinforced that sense of difference. Sam and Greg on the other hand pointed to the punk scene as the genesis of their radicalisation.

I would argue that both the McAdam model, and the Andes model could easily be applied in a broad sense to any of the participants, and that a more general model might therefore be inferred from this - one which accounts more fully for the wider Community of dissent that this study was intended to address (see Fig. 8). To imagine the radicalisation of identity as a tightening spiral of enactment and reinforcement, however, from which the only exit is "transcendence" is potentially deceptive. The religious overtones of transcendence imply that more overt forms of dissent are in some way false, and that reengagement with the mainstream is not just desirable but also possibly revelatory. Given the utopian ideals of many of the participants, whether they believe that these ideals are

Fig. 8. A model of Radicalisation and Accomodation, and a tentative structure for this Community

achievable or not, it is perhaps more representative to imagine those Community members who have returned to a greater engagement with the mainstream, as having lapsed from, or fallen short of those ideals. This is borne out by the participants' own reconstructions of this process as one of compromise or negotiation. Jeff, for example, relates that "of course you get more and more aware as you get older, to the depth at which you are embedded within the culture," while Renee explained that her choices are now mediated by her own desire for a lifestyle she can sustain. Both Lori and Sean also described a softening in their sense of difference. It was clear to me, however, during Sean's interview at least, this inability to draw a firm line around the Community can also be a source of anxiety for its more active members.

If the ideal is to negate or escape the mainstream, then perhaps we can suppose a model of this Community where interacting clusters of activity, or "sympathy groups" (Buys and Larson 1979),² exist at varying distances from this imagined

² I decided against using the term "affinity groups" here. Despite its centrality to the literature on the contemporary anti-capitalist movement (cf. Kauffman 2002), none of the participants used it to describe their own social groupings. My sense of the term is that it is now almost exclusively used during protests or direct actions to refer to small, temporary groupings of activists who are united by a specific purpose. I have opted instead for similar, though more general term, drawn from behavioural psychology.

centre of hegemonic culture. An initial sense of difference created by parental and other socialisation leads to efforts to reify this separation (A in Fig. 8). This early dissent might manifest primarily as the kind of cultural noise Hebdige argues is representative of youth subculture generally (1991 [1979]), and perhaps this was the case for those participants, like Sam or Greg, who identified punk as a major influence. In my view, however, a certain percentage are then politicised by their involvement with more radical individuals on the fringes of the punk scene, who frame their own dissent as ideological (B in Fig. 8). There are also those, like Michelle, Antony, Amber, Sean or Jessica, for whom punk had no early or continuing importance. For them the path to radicalisation came through their connection to the activist community itself (B in Fig. 8). The performance of dissent, whether this takes the form of direct action or less explicit forms of resistance like dumpstering, serves as an enactment of a radical identity and leads to a positive feedback loop. Dissent brings an individual into contact with more radical individuals (C in Fig. 8) who provide opportunities for further dissent and so on.

From this stage further radicalisation might occur, either through contact with more militant individuals within the community or through participation with increasingly high-risk forms of dissent. This increase in activity, in turn, may throw the individual into contact with another sympathy group even closer to the social fringe and/or lead them to attempt to radicalise the group with which they are already in contact. Concern for a perceived lack of ideological consistency within this Community, demonstrated by participants like Sean and Antony, as well as a consciousness on the part of Lori, Renee and Sam, of having felt pressure to conform with certain ideological standards, and particularly veganism³, seem a clear indication that this type of policing activity does occur.

As already noted several of the older participants described a deepening awareness of the inevitability of some accommodation with society. So, while social pressure from more militant members works to reify the “us and them”

³ See Lori and Sams comments on this (p 82-83).

feeling reported by Renee (p 71-72), perhaps leading to higher-risk forms of activism, a countervailing societal pressure is also evident - the pressure to conform. This pressure on the Community, and the general trend away from veganism in particular, led Anthony to argue that, “if you make a good decision, or if you think about the decision you're making, you don't need to keep changing your mind about that.” It also seems clear that the boundary policing I mentioned above is, at least partially a reaction to that same pressure.

With the exception of Heidi and Michelle,⁴ I would classify the participants in this study as having been drawn from two interconnected sympathy groups. The first of these is the more established of the two, and includes Jeff, Renee, Tanya, Sam, Greg, Lori and Sean. The general trend within this group is towards some accommodation with society, and although Renee articulates this as a gradually transition, while Lori locates her disenchantment much more specifically (Section 2.08), I suspect that for both of them this process is more negotiated and ongoing than strictly bounded or socially prescribed. In my view the historical tension between pragmatism and idealism is also a factor, and while shared frustration might act to reinforce a radical identity for some individuals, its ability to erode that identity outside of specific social contexts also seems clear.

As we have seen all the participants framed themselves as having a more conscious engagement with the consequences of their actions than is perceived to be the case within the mainstream. The distinction is that for this first group, that engagement is more noticeably inflected by the drive for a lifestyle which is personally sustainable. This might mean a shift from focusing on the big and impersonal, to, as Renee put it, “trying to make small and lasting changes” in their own lives. For some group members, such as Tanya and Sean, it might also include pursuing their ideals within the system, by seeking careers in health, social justice, or the union movement. For the members of this group dissent is

⁴ Heidi's most obvious connection to the Community is through her boyfriend, but she is also good friends with at least two of the other participants in the first of the two groups outlined below. Michelle also came to my attention through her friendship with several members of the same group. Despite these associations though, in my my opinion neither is tied closely enough to either group to be seen as active members.

clearly a lifestyle, by Bookchin's definition certainly (1995), but also by Chaney's (1996).

The second sympathy group is newer and smaller, and includes Amber, Antony and Jessica. Its primary focus, during my involvement, was activism. The most common manifestation of this was regular meetings, which, though they were often chaotic and accomplished very little in the way of planning, also served a social function. These have recently been replaced by efforts to revive the regular vegan potlucks which were a feature of this Community when I first encountered it. Veganism had gradually become a lot less visible as many of the Community's key organisers either moved out of town, or drifted into lifestylism, and with this the potlucks became much less common. By framing his use of labels like veganism as a way "to make those things visible" Sean points at a much deeper significance for these terms.⁵ Given Mary Douglas' now widely accepted contention that food taboos function as important cultural boundary markers (2002 [1966], pp 115-130), I would suggest that veganism often serves as a cypher for a wide range of associated beliefs and practises, and that its importance for Community members like Antony has as much to do with communal cohesion as it does with ideology. Certainly as lifestylism became more prevalent in the first group, and the vegan ethic became less social necessity and more individual choice, there was also a marked decline in the cohesion of the group. The revived potlucks were a clear attempt to address this decline, but the fact that, even within the activist group, committed vegans are in the minority leads me to wonder how successful this will be in the long run. Nevertheless, even in their activism this group seemed primarily concerned with the politics of food.

The first action I attended by the activist group was a free Vegan food-stall organised in support of World anti-McDonald's Day. The day before the action we gathered at the home of Sarah, one of the key organisers in the group. Sarah

⁵ This is also echoed by Greg's admission that, "essentially I use it as a buzz word to be able to, y'know, make sure people don't buy me animal products."

and Peter, seemingly a more seasoned activist, had been dumpstering⁶ the night before, and had returned with a large haul which they intended to use to make food for the stall. This was the first time I had met Peter, and he wasted no time testing me on my jacket, which he thought was leather. I hurriedly explained that it was actually vinyl, but still felt like I'd been caught out doing something I shouldn't. While we waited for the others to arrive, Peter and Sarah went through the food to try and plan what to make. Peter quickly noted the presence of eggs in Sarah's pantry, which she was compelled to explain were used in baking she did for a social-group she belongs to. She also pointed out that neither of her flatmates were vegan, which led Peter to ask whether she had made any attempt to explain its benefits to them, and to suggest that she show them the film *Earthlings*, a notoriously graphic animal rights documentary (Monson 2003). He then asked me whether I had seen the film, and offered to lend it to me when I admitted I hadn't. The life change power of this film is commonly asserted by those within vegan and animals rights movement (cf. Iacobbo & Masson 2006, p 64), but I found the scenes of animal cruelty and the film's one-sided presentation more alienating than life-changing.

Having been to a couple of protest working bees in the past, organised by more established groups, I found the activist groups' ad hoc organisation and lack of technical knowledge surprising. Though the key organisers would occasionally defer to more experienced activists like Peter, the militancy of some members meant that there was a growing distance between this group and many of the key members of the established group. This effectively limited the activist group's access to the technical knowledge and equipment of the lifestylers, which I think would otherwise have been freely offered. Instead of using screen printing to re-brand the second hand tee shirts they intended to sell at the stall, for example, as had been the case with a Waitangi Day working bee I'd attended, the activist group used crude stencils and spray paint. The clothes were randomly culled from the wardrobe of Andrea, another of the key organisers, rather than carefully

⁶ Dumpstering, or 'dumpster diving' is the process of searching through dumpsters for useful items, in this case food from supermarket dumpsters. I'm constantly surprised by what my dumpster diving freinds manage to find.

selected from an op-shop, and many were already patterned. As a result the aesthetic was too collaged and distressed to appeal to anyone who wasn't already a committed member of the Community. Since about a third of the stall's patrons were vegans or former vegans however, this self referential tendency within the group makes a kind of sense. The stall's ostensible purpose may have been to promote the vegan lifestyle, but it clearly also served a social purpose. Such activism not only serves a performative function, reinforcing an activist identity, but is also a very visible expression of the wider community, and a restatement of community values.

Despite the tension, which the boundary setting efforts of some of the more militant activists creates for the lifestylers, there is also a contrary impulse to show support for their activities, and to participate in them to a limited extent. Several of those who attended the McVegan stall for example, were non-vegan lifestylers who had come to show their support. It is this ideological solidarity, which in my view has given birth to the "totally global and [...] completely decentralised" Community of Dissent which Michelle identifies. While the shared perception of a more conscious engagement with the choices they make is what defines this Community, it also leads to uncertainty, due the lack of clear visual or cultural divisions between its members and the mainstream. Sean commented on this tension, as "something that's [...] born out of having a community [...] based around activism rather than around ideals". I tend to think that this is an oversimplification, however. While dissent of any kind clearly serves as an enactment of this shared ideology, in my experience an individual's social credentials, who they can call on to support their claim to Community membership, is far more important. So for example, Michelle's ability to "show up at the door of a squat, being like 'Hi I don't actually know any of you but I've just come from the other place and they told me that there's [...] a social centre here'", has more to do with who she knows, than with her history of activism.

As already mentioned this lack of clear boundaries is a source of tension for some Community members, and leads to the sort of moral policing mentioned above.

These attempts at boundary setting, while they may cause tension of their own, serve to remind the community of its core values. In the same way that the shame a Catholic birth-control user might experience at confession reinforces his or her identity as Catholic, the moral policing of this Community serves to remind its members of their own commitment to dissent. So, while castigating a former vegan for his or her consumption of meat is unlikely to result in a return to veganism, the resulting anxiety may strengthen their ability to resist further compromise. Those who undertake to police these boundaries, however, are inevitably situating themselves between the Community and the mainstream, and hence they are relegated to the fringes of both.

3.1 - Conclusions

In hindsight this was always destined to be a difficult Community to pin down, and my own approach to ethnography may have contributed to that frustration. Apart from the already noted difficulties with ethics and access, my desire to allow the participants' words to stand on their own, predictably, but rather perversely, put me in the position of deciding what, out of nearly 130 pages of interview transcript, would be included. I have therefore tried to strike a balance between making an ethnographic case and allowing this Community to define both itself and the key terms which I consider to be most contested.

Despite this contestation, and despite the variety of their experience, the participants are a Community. They may not be able to articulate its limits, and indeed for some of them this is a source of anxiety, but they share a common sense of difference which they can articulate. In framing themselves as more ethically engaged than a member of the mainstream, the participants situate that boundary fairly specifically, and, whether through activism, anti-consumer activity such as DIY or even just through its rhetoric, the Community is reified by its dissent.

These boundaries are obviously diffuse, however, and largely internal. If the structure I proposed in Section 1.1 can be said to be relevant at all, it is as an

abstraction of a far more complex social reality. Many participants, for example, frame their contestation of mainstream values as contingent, and therefore presumably dependent on context. For some, their relationship with the mainstream is definitely oppositional, while for others this situation is not so cut and dried. Some identify strongly with labels like vegan, anarchist, punk or activist while for others these identifications are less explicit. Several participants described themselves as less radical than they once were, or as having become disenchanted with radicalism, while others saw themselves as still actively developing a political understanding of the world. Participants also saw the process of politicisation as having resulted from a variety of factors. Some credited parental socialisation; or formal education; the influence of their peers; involvement in the punk scene or activist community; or some combination of these factors for their dissent.

To account for the variety of experience reported by the participants I have suggested a model of radicalisation and accommodation (Fig. 8), in which parental and other socialisation contributes to an initial sense of difference. This sense of difference is then reified by a positive feedback loop, where the performance of dissent leads to greater radical cachet, which then provides opportunities for further dissent. As Community members become more aware of the compromise to their ethics, which life within the mainstream requires, many react by trying to seek an accommodation with society. For this group, dissent ceases to be the totality of their social experience, becoming more of a lifestyle. On the other-hand some react against this pressure, seeking out increasingly high risk forms of activism in order to maintain their radical identity. This fundamental division within the Community leads to tension, with the boundary policing of it's more radical members serving as both a reminder of core values and a source of frustration for the lifestylers. In turn this process lends the whole structure a contingent fluidity, which also adds to the uncertainty around boundary setting.

Whether their dissent is a lifestyle though, a personal and internal mediation between their ethics and the social pressure to conform, or whether that pressure is seen as coincidental to the wider battle for social change, the critique provided by Community members through that dissent is equally compelling. I cannot agree with Bookchin's assessment that lifestyle dissent is characterised by "a naive one-to-one relationship between mind and reality" (1995, p 49). Compared to the achieved revolutionism which characterises the period of Bookchin's own radicalisation, the 1960s, most Community members see significant change as a distant and sometimes unreachable goal. The failure of the 1960s to deliver on this declaration "of a permanent state of happiness" (Rohan 1988, p 72), has evolved into a pragmatic and sometimes cynical view of change. Despite this though, Community members remain engaged through their dissent, whether that manifests as activism or through more personal tactics of resistance such as veganism or DIY anti-consumerist practises. Activism, Vegan potlucks and DIY serve as material and cultural manifestations of dissent, as enactments of radical identity, and as a reminder of Community values. DIY, in particular, not only serves as the Community's primary mode of cultural production, but also articulates a pragmatic solution for the problem of how to resist capitalism from within - offering autonomy and satisfaction as by-products.

This Community therefore provides not only a vocal alternative to mainstream values, based on an evolving body of practises and beliefs with deep historical roots, but also a cultural space within which to express that dissent. Martin Luther King once wrote that "Human salvation lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted," (1963, p 24), which, if true, means that our image of the drop-kick, drop out, punk rock rebel without a clue deserves to be radically reexamined.

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Appendix A - DIY How to Guide

CrimethInc (n.d). *DIY "How to" Guide*. Zinelibrary. Retrieved from <http://zinelibrary.info/files/diyguide1.pdf>.

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The title page, contents and first few sections of this zine are reproduced over the following pages, under the samizdat permission included on the contents page. For those readers interested in how to make inflatable animals, or operate a pirate radio station, a complete version is available for download from the above URL.

**fuck specialists
and fuck paying for shit,
do it yrself...**



"HOW TO" GUIDE

**silkscreening, pirate radio, gardening,
putting out records, wheat pasting,
herbal remedies, scamming the post office
how to give directions to touring bands
for stupid motherfuckers, patch making,
scamming photocopies, guitar intonation
making zines, booking tours, recepies,
making blow-up creatures.**

we need to build a community in which we can share resources and rely on each other. this includes sharing information and learning how to be autonomous as a community. that is the purpose of this zine. there is no scarcity of individuals (or teams) that can do totally amazing things. fuck specialists and professionals---we ~~don't~~ don't need them...

FUCKEN URBAN PIRATES...

please help spread this information by scanning copies of this zine.

for more copies of this write to us: (also, another place to contact us) write to:

CrimethInc.
2695 rangewood dr.
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or CrimethInc.com

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201 n cedar st
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(please help with postage)

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Silkscreening.....4 - STEF
Blow-up CREATURES...9 - Kate & MARK
COPY SCAMS.....12 - DANG
How To Give Directions...14 - CAMILLE
Herbal Remedies....16 - WILLGOTA
DIY TOURING.....21 - BRIAN
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PUTTING out Records.....44 - BRIAN
POST OFFICE SCAMS.....45 - BRIAN
FREE Food & cooking.....46 - CAMILLE
Background Artwork ON pgs 40+42 by K3the Kellwitz. BACK cover by NATHAN HOBBS. LAYOUT by STEF.

THIS PROJECT IS DEDICATED TO JACOB 5-1; THANK FOR CONSTANTLY AIDING US WITH OUR URBAN PIRACY.

LET'S PUT THE HEAT ON... ARSON.

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF WHEATPASTING

Wheatpasting posters around town is a great tactic to get radical messages beyond the "radical ghetto" (of your friends) and get them where they need to go: before the public. Once a flyer has been wheatpasted to a light pole or utility box, it will stay up until someone scrapes it off. Stapling posters is much more temporary, and impossible in most modern downtown areas where wood telephone poles have all been removed.

The first and most important part of wheatpasting is to make a great flyer: lots of radical stuff, good strong images, LARGE size type to grab people's attention, humor. If possible, give interested people a way to contact "the movement."

You can either make your own paste or buy wallpaper paste at the hardware store. To make your own, pour one cup of ~~corn~~ flour ~~store~~ into 1 1/2 cups of water. Stir to remove all lumps, heat to boil until it thickens and add more water until it turns into a thick, clear goop. Cook on low heat for at least half an hour, being careful not to burn it. It expands a lot; experiment. Some wheatpasters prefer store bought because it is more consistent.

Out on the street, use a wide paintbrush to spread the paste on the target surface, and for best results on the back of the poster. Some people put paste over the top of the poster too, while others think this looks messy and doesn't help. Pay attention to getting the corners of the poster down--if they're not tight they'll make it easy to tear down.

One expert favors using a bike with a huge front basket to hold the bucket of paste. Another suggests using an empty dishwashing soap bottle to squeeze the wheatpaste directly onto the brush. Having two people (one to handle paste, another to handle the posters) helps avoid getting paste on the posters, which can cause them to stick hopelessly together. Plus it's fun and someone can watch for the cops. Or, carry a rag to wipe your hands. Gloves are usually more trouble than they're worth. Postering on a bike can make escape a lot easier down alleys and one way streets.

Wheatpasting is the ultimate do-it-yourself radical propaganda weapon. Have fun!



How to Silkscreen

WITH PHOTO EMULSION

MY FRIEND NATE TAUGHT ME HOW TO SILKSCREEN. SINCE THEN, SEVERAL FRIENDS HAVE ASKED ME TO PASS ON THIS INFORMATION TO THEM, SO I DECIDED TO MAKE A LITTLE "HOW-TO" GUIDE. IDIOT-PROOF DIRECTIONS... HERE GOES

You will Need:

- SOME SORT OF FRAME
- SILKSCREEN MESH
- STAPLE GUN AND STAPLES
- PHOTO EMULSION KIT (ONES WITH PHOTO EMULSION AND SENSITIZER)
- TABLESPOON
- BOWL
- CANDLE OR COLORED LIGHT (SOMETHING DIM-RED, BLUE, GREEN)
- SQUEEGEE
- A DARK ROOM
- FAN
- ACCESS TO PHOTOCOPY PLACE
- CLEAR TAPE
- SHOWER
- INK:
- FOR MATERIAL: ACRYLIC TEXTILE INK OR OIL-BASED TEXTILE INK AND PAINT THINNER (OR TURPENTINE OR GASOLINE)
- OTHER TYPES OF INK/PAINT
- NOCK FOR POSTERS AND OTHER STUFF... NATE HAS SUCCESSFULLY PRINTED SHIRTS WITH HOUSEPAINT
- 200 WATT BULB AND LAMP.

Preparing An Image...

CHOOSE A HIGH-CONTRAST BLACK AND WHITE IMAGE (OR ONE THAT CAN BE MADE TO BE THAT WAY - YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PRINT IT ANY COLOR YOU WANT). GREYS WILL NOT WORK, ALTHOUGH YOU CAN MAKE AREAS THAT APPEAR GREY WITH DOTS. THIS NEXT PART MIGHT BE CONFUSING, BUT I'LL EXPLAIN IT THE BEST I CAN...



YOU MIGHT HAVE TO MAKE A NEGATIVE OF THE IMAGE (SOME SELF-SERVE PHOTOCOPIERS HAVE THIS FUNCTION... IF NOT, ASK THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE COUNTER AT A PHOTOCOPY SHOP TO DO IT).

BASICALLY, WHATEVER IS BLACK ON YR IMAGE, WILL BE THE PARTS THAT GET PRINTED.

YOU NEED TO CONSIDER WHAT COLOR INK YOU WILL USE ON WHAT COLOR FABRIC (OR PAPER) BEFORE DETERMINING HOW THE IMAGE SHOULD BE.



IF YOU MADE A SCREEN OF THIS IMAGE AS IS, THE "E" AND THE CIRCLE WOULD PRINT.



IF YOU REVERSED THE IMAGE, THE AREA AROUND THEM WOULD PRINT AND THE "E" AND THE CIRCLE WOULD BE CREATED BY NEGATIVE SPACE (UNPRINTED FABRIC).

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO GET THIS SHIT RIGHT, ESPECIALLY WHEN DEALING WITH PICTURES. JUST REMEMBER --- WHATEVER IS BLACK WILL BE INK. I WILL GIVE ANOTHER EXAMPLE:



SAY THIS IS THE IMAGE YOU START WITH. THE BACKGROUND IS BLACK AND THE FLAMES ARE WHITE. BUT YOU WANT TO PRINT THE FLAMES WITH RED INK ON BLACK FABRIC.

YOU WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A NEGATIVE OF THE IMAGE SO THAT THE FLAMES ARE BLACK. THE BLACK WILL EVENTUALLY BE THE OPEN PARTS OF THE SCREEN THAT YOU CAN PUSH RED INK THROUGH.



NEXT, MAKE A TRANSPARENCY OF THE IMAGE (YOU MIGHT HAVE TO USE THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE COUNTER AGAIN). MAKE SURE THE BLACK PARTS ARE DARK, FOR LARGER DESIGNS, YOU MAY NEED TO TAPE TWO TRANSPARENCIES TOGETHER... DO THIS CAREFULLY.

How to Silkscreen

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- SQUEEGEE
- A DARK ROOM
- FAN
- ACCESS TO PHOTO COPY PLACE
- CLOTH TAPE

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YOU WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A NEGATIVE OF THE IMAGE SO THAT THE FLAMES ARE BLACK. THE BLACK WILL EVENTUALLY BE THE OPEN PARTS OF THE SCREEN THAT YOU CAN PUSH RED INK THROUGH.

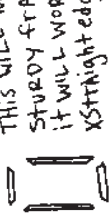


NEXT, MAKE A TRANSPARENCY OF THE IMAGE (YOU MIGHT HAVE TO USE THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE COUNTER AGAIN). MAKE SURE THE BLACK PARTS ARE DARK, FOR LARGER DESIGNS, YOU MAY NEED TO TAPE TWO TRANSPARENCIES TOGETHER... DO THIS CAREFULLY.

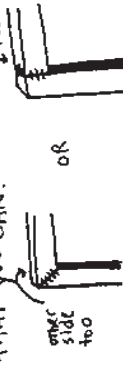
MAKING A SCREEN

THIS IS A JOB FOR TWO DIRTY KIDS. ACQUIRE A FRAME- YOU COULD BUY ONE ALREADY MADE, BUT COME ON, YR NOT A DUMB-ASS. REUSE OLD FRAMES FROM VGLY ART WORK (CUT THE CANVAS OFF) LAYING AROUND OR PURCHASED FOR CHEAP AT A THRIFT STORE, OR DUMPSTER. SOME WOOD THAT YOU CAN CUT TO SIZE. YOU CAN ALSO GET WOOD FOR PRETTY CHEAP AT A HARDWARE STORE OR LUMBER YARD AND HAVE THEM CUT IT FOR YOU. IF YOU CAN, CUT (OR HAVE THEM CUT) THE ENDS AT 45° ANGLES LIKE SO:

THIS WILL MAKE A SUPER- STURDY FRAME, ALTHOUGH IT WILL WORK WITH X-STRAIGHT EDGES TOO.

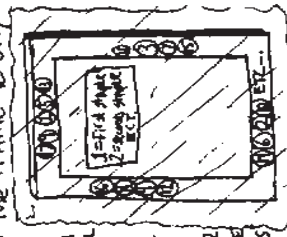


STAPLE THE FRAME TOGETHER ON EVERY SIDE THAT YOU CAN:

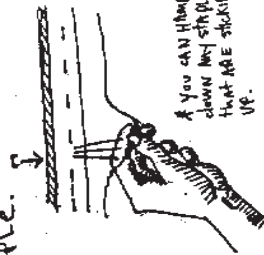


TRY TO DO THIS ON THE FLOOR OR ANOTHER LEVEL SURFACE- YOU WILL NEED THE FRAME TO LAY TOTALLY FLAT.

STRETCH THE SCREEN MESH OVER THE FRAME. YOU WILL NEED TWO OR SO INCHES EXTRA ON EVERY EDGE TO WORK WITH, SO KEEP THAT IN MIND WHILE CUTTING. HAVE ONE KID STRETCH AND ONE KID STAPLE. I HAVE FOUND THE BEST WAY TO STAPLE IS LIKE THIS →



... YOU GET THE PICTURE. THIS ALLOWS THE SCREEN TO STRETCH PRETTY EVENLY. PUT IN ONE STAPLE ABOUT EVERY INCH AND A HALF THE FIRST TIME AROUND. LEAVE THE CORNERS FOR LAST. YR GONNA HAVE TO STRETCH IT TIGHT (YR FINGERS SHOULD START TO HURT FROM STRETCHING SO HARD). ONCE YOU'VE STAPLED AROUND THE FRAME ONCE, GO AROUND A SECOND TIME. THIS TIME STRETCH THE SCREEN TIGHT BETWEEN EVERY TWO STAPLES WITH YR THUMB, POINTER, AND "FUCK-YOU" FINGERS AND ADD ANOTHER STAPLE.



A YOU CAN PULL DOWN ANY STAPLES THAT ARE STICKING UP.

LAST, STRETCH AND STAPLE THE CORNERS. IT FEELS THE SCREEN. IT SHOULD FEEL TIGHT WITH NO BUMPS. WHEREVER THERE ARE BUMPS, REPEAT THE STRETCHING AND STAPLING. WHEN THE SCREEN IS TOTALLY STRETCHED, YOU CAN TRIM THE EXTRA MESH AROUND THE EDGES, BUT LEAVE AT LEAST 1/4" FROM THE STAPLES SO THE SCREEN WON'T TEAR.

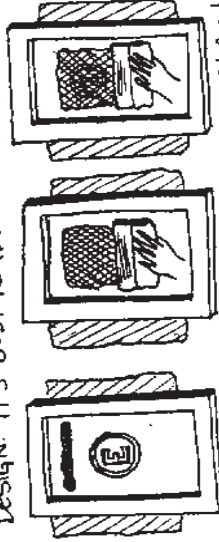
APPLYING PHOTO-EMULSION

MAKE A DARKROOM. IT NEEDS TO BE PRETTY DARK, BUT A CRACK OF LIGHT HERE AND THERE IS ALRIGHT. BRING THE FAN, TABLESPOON, PHOTO-EMULSION KIT, CANDLE (OR COLORED LIGHT), STRETCHED SCREEN, SQUEEGEE AND BOWL INTO THE ROOM AND CLOSE THE DOOR. LIGHT THE CANDLE

PRINTING...YAY!

[WHenever you print, you should do 2 or 3 preliminary prints on scrap fabric - or paper - not only to look for flaws (which can usually be fixed with tape on the top of the screen), but also to work the ink through the screen.]

Lay the screen top side down on the fabric. Take a spoon and put a generous amount of ink along the top of the design. It's best to have 2 kids for this



step too... one to hold the screen and one to squeegee. Take the squeegee and gently cover the design with a thick layer of ink (you should not be able to see the design through the ink). Next apply a good amount of pressure as you squeegee over it again. This time you are pushing the ink through the screen. Swipe over the design between 2 and 5 times total with good pressure. You can go in different directions too. Every design is different - you will have to experiment to find the amount of times to squeegee over it. To remove

glass over the transparency instead of using tape. Bring the screen out of the darkroom and place it under the light. You will need to expose it for about 35 minutes (although if your image has many tiny details you should expose it for a bit less, as light can seep under and expose small lines in your design). Basically, what will happen is the light will "cook" the exposed emulsion onto the screen and you will be able to wash off the parts that were hidden from the light. After 35 minutes turn the light off. Try to prevent the bottom of the screen from being exposed to direct light. Bring the screen into the bathroom and turn the shower on **COLD** (yes, cold water. It sucks and it makes your hands ache, but warm water will fuck up the emulsion). Remove the transparency and run the screen under the shower. The water by itself should take off most of the unwanted emulsion. The rest you will have to gently rub off with your fingers. Do this on both sides. Hold the screen up to the light and check if the emulsion has been totally removed in the areas that were blocked. If there is any remaining, repeat. Dry the screen with the fan again. You should let it completely dry - about an hour or so.

DRYING

Let acrylic ink on textiles or paper dry on it's own. It could take between 15 minutes and 2 hours depending on the ink and what you printed on. You can speed this process up with a hair-dryer if you want.

Oil ink will take weeks to dry on it's own, so place yr patches or shirts in the oven (Don't use oil inks on paper - it's not absorbent enough). After much experimenting, I have found that 5 to 10 minutes at 250 - 300°F works well. You can put the shirts (or patches) on a cookie sheet, tin foil, or straight on the oven racks. Make sure nothing is hanging onto the burner. My dad has this theory that if yr supposed to bake something for 20 minutes at 200°, you can instead bake it for 10 minutes at 400°. This theory was proven wrong when I set two catharsis hoodies on fire. It doesn't work. Check on yr shirts often until you determine how many minutes it takes to dry them.

HEAT-SETTING

You need to heat set printed fabric so that the ink doesn't come off in the wash. Throw them in the dryer on high for about 45 minutes.

The screen, hold the fabric down with one hand and gently lift the screen with the other.

You will be able to determine if you are using too much or too little ink by looking at the prints. This all takes practice - Don't worry, you'll be a pro in no time. If the prints start to become distorted, you will need to wipe off the top of the screen with a rag (if yr using oil-based ink, use a bit of turpentine or thinner to do this). Also, after a lot of prints (say 30 or so) the ink may start to harden, so you might want to take a break to wash and dry the screen.

CLEAN-UP

Clean off acrylic ink in the cold shower. It is important that you clean the screen and tools immediately when using acrylic because it dries fast.

Clean up oil ink with paint thinner or turpentine (or gasoline) and a bunch of rags. You can take yr time with oil ink, as it will take a week or two to dry on it's own.

You can figure this out on your own. If you need more info about the process or how to acquire certain supplies, feel free to contact me. streakunt@hotmail.com
Happy printing! Fucker D.ry!!!

Two color designs require 2 screens (3 color 3 screens, etc). It is the same process but you will have to carefully line up the second print. You can get things and make a press so that you can know exactly where the screen will fall.

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