

Preface to Turkish Edition of “Post-Anarchism and Psychoanalysis”

Duane Rousselle

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The following is a preliminary draft of the preface to the Turkish edition of my book Post-Anarchism and Psychoanalysis, which will be published in a few months.

This book is the result of spoken improvisations that occurred during a strange period of wandering. I was removed from my position as Professor and Chair of Sociology at a major Russian university due in part to a renewed military conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The consequent wandering extended also to the streets of Tomsk, Sochi, Nur Sultan, Vienna, and Budapest, before arriving for a prolonged residential retreat in Cork, Ireland, under a temporary protection order from the European Union. Next, there was the break-up of a major relationship, one which had secured itself under the banner of “family,” though it may have more appropriately been classified as “traveling family.” A question had finally occurred to me: what has been written of this period? My utterances were later transcribed and edited, but not with any distillation or revelation of its essential discoveries, until now. This new Turkish treat, which you are invited to enjoy, presents itself as a sort of Lacanian *dondurma*. Unlike *The Purloined Letter*, according to which the earlier periods of Lacan’s teaching have popularly been characterized, this *dondurma* retains something of enjoyment. It is why we can claim that this text has been translated into *a language* rather than *the language* of psychoanalysis.

In a manner of speaking, my intention was simply to recognize that psychoanalytic discourse had been made possible for anarchists only after the surprising emergence of “post-anarchism” in the 1980s and 1990s. It was fascinating that so much of post-anarchist scholarship for a period was concerned with outlining a logic which had always been latent in what it was that the Modern Western anarchists were saying for so many decades. This moment was not without its Turkish inflection, since it was along with my companion from Istanbul, namely Sureyya Evren, that a fundamental provocation had been introduced into anarchist theory: a book whose title was *Post-Anarchism: A Reader* (2010, Pluto Press). These effects could not have been foreseen, and yet this, precisely, was also the shock introduced into our field — it was a question of how to relate to this contingent surprise.

In any case, the first discovery that I would like to highlight from my spoken interventions is as follows: a logic of repetition, and its relation to what some modern anarchists have called “insurrection.” It took the contemporary insurrectionary anarchists to engulf themselves in those

satisfactions as if it were the ultimate rebellion against authority. Hence, the affect of joy, that is, enjoyment, had been elevated to a dominant principle, as in Alfredo Bonanno's notion of *Armed Joy*. This had led toward a second discovery, which can be demonstrated: insurrection and revolution operate along two sides of discourse. New pairs had presented themselves, as if they were plotted along a Mobius strip: drive/impulse and desire, repetition and dialectic, insurrection and revolution, and so on. Indeed, the insurrectionary impulse remains implicated in the logic of death drive, within the compulsion to repeat fixations of enjoyment without any requirement whatsoever of discourse or of a social order. The paradox: this is also true of those supposed social bonds that isolate together since their proclivity is *asocial* — they withdraw from discourse, together.

There are social bonds that remain immersed in satisfactions and can do without any prohibition, which is the basis of one's admission into any social order. Their satisfactions are not only permitted, but relayed in such a manner that they are able to endure. Increasingly, the law condescends to them. This, in fact, is what we most often witness among the comrades. This second discovery might therefore be better articulated in the following way: "comrades are capable of enjoyment outside any social order." Yet this, precisely, is what constitutes a much *worse* problem for them than the original order of power: the problem of the master's world was one of exploitation and alienation, but the problem of the comrade's world is one of segregation and paranoia.

In another venue I referred to these comrades as lumpen who proletar-*elate*. I mean to say that they lump-*enjoy*, outside of meaning and discourse. The classical anarchists were therefore correct in their double refusal: unlike the Marxists, they refused to refuse the lumpen as a category of insurrectionary activity and sometimes even made them the center of their conception of a revolutionary worldview. Today, we find these figures, whose lessons I follow, in the melancholics, autists, agoraphobics, anorexics, and so many others. They reveal a complicity with asocial satisfactions characteristic of insurrectionary impulses. Their revolt, their refusal, is fundamental. They also demonstrate that the feudal fixations are not so easily incorporated into any dialectic — they remain with us, and today show themselves again as a major ingredient in contemporary capitalism. Hence, these plat-farms that now govern our feudal markets, whether they are digital media companies or feudal landlords in Pakistan, show us that capitalism does not constitute progress against the feudal fixations.

I flag these two major discoveries as foundational for later developments in my thinking. They have led me to recognize the emergence of a complicity among anarchist and scientific discourses during the modern period. Yet, it is not without recognition of the fact that Paul Feyerabend has shown us that science also has a proclivity to remain 'outside' of discourse. Feyerabend was certainly the truth of his family system, since his parents were Nazi's who valued the prohibitions outlined in the anti-semitic legislation. Why wouldn't Feyerabend stage the ultimate rebellion by inhabiting the outside of that system of prohibitions. His autobiography has shown us that his childhood was animated by the 'satisfactions' of science, a space where the laws of culture eroded. Although the law of gravity apparently establishes a prohibition — giving rise to dreams of flight — it has also led the body, via the spaceship, into outer space.

It was Freud's intuition in *Civilization and Its Discontents*: the gadgets of scientific capitalism would transform man into a God. These scientific atheists that now populate the Western world have nonetheless only succeeded in demonstrating to the world that they are the ones who believe themselves to be Gods. What's more, it has given rise to entire social movements who

are like *Yahweh*: they are not whatever the big Other says they are but are rather ‘whatever it is that they say they are.’ Hence, the clinician cannot respond to the certainty of today’s social movements who proclaim loudly: “I am whatever I say I am!” Freud’s intuition was also revealed in a clear essay on Leonard da Vinci, where he showed the effects of scientific discourse as a question relating to a certain *quanta* of satisfaction. For da Vinci it was always a question of how to manage this satisfaction, which is why, as he sat in front of his canvas for so many hours, he would deprive himself of food and drink.

Islamic civilization presents us with fresh discoveries, ones which have yet to *write*. Already, in the Golden Age, science had been put in its place, since it was authorized by religious scripture. We see this clearly in the work of ibn Khaldun, or even from the beginning with al-Kindi. In this way, science was not permitted to take the upper hand, and yet, we should ask ourselves if it implies the triumph of religious discourse? We must not be afraid to ask the question of the psychoanalytic discourse and its relationship to that which has given room for it. There was no need of any Jacques Lacan for all these centuries to teach us about the complicity of science and religious discourses, the latter offering refuge from the asphyxiation of the former. It is a matter of recognizing that the impossible – the insurrection – is asphyxiating, among other effects, and that it is necessary to defend against it. Science now offers its own defense, which introduces new discontents to civilization.

I am therefore delighted that Furkan Kemer has translated my text into Turkish, since it is in this language that perhaps something entirely different might take hold.

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