Simon Springer
For anarcho-geography!
Or, bare-knuckle boxing as the world burns
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can do a great deal in equipping us to douse the flames. Surely such humility—where we recognize the possibilities that rest within each and every one of us, particularly when we voluntarily coordinate our efforts—is a healthier position to embrace than simply shaking your fist in a fit of rage at those who would dare to challenge the orthodoxy enjoyed by a particular ideology on the left. Marxism, no doubt, still has some valuable ideas worth exploring, particularly those of an autonomist persuasion that locate their politics in the insurrectionary promise of the everyday. Yet whereas anarchism is necessarily a politics of immanence (Springer, 2014b), Marxism dwells in transcendence, and owing to the responsibility it claims for itself through its revolutionary imperative, this exact feature of Marxism repeatedly gets it into trouble when put into practice. It leads to delusions of grandeur, intellectual arrogance, ugly vanguardism, and a politics that has repeatedly proven to be extraordinarily deadly. As Scott (2012: x) points out, 'virtually every major successful revolution ended by creating a state more powerful than the one it overthrew, a state that in turn was able to extract more resources from and exercise more control over the very population it was designed to serve'. While the old guard is content to practice the art of self-conciliation by 'barking' at younger scholars (Mann, 2014: 271), ever-committed to an idea that no longer resonates with the lived experience of political association on the left, the future of radical geography meanwhile stares us in the face: it is time for an anarchist (re)turn.

Notes

See below References as footnote to this entry

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Abstract

Responding to the set of dialogues on my original article, 'Why a Radical Geography Must Be Anarchist?', I throw my hat back in the ring and offer a blow-by-blow commentary on the sucker punches and low blows that some Marxists continue to want to throw at anarchism. In particular, I go toe-to-toe with the fallacious idea that Marxism remains the only viable politics on the left and demonstrate why anarchism is not only up to scratch, but in a world that continues to be marked by domination, as far as emancipation is concerned, anarchism is a heavyweight contender. While I pull no punches with the two Marxist pugilists, the remaining commentators are in my corner, and I welcome their thoughtful critiques by taking it on the chin. Yet rather than throw in the towel, I attempt to set the record straight by repositioning anarchism as an ethos that merges rebellion with reciprocity, subversion with self-management, and dissent with direct action, where the potential combinations are infinite. Anarchism is to be thought of, quite simply, as an attitude. When we remember this quality, without attempting to pin anarchism down to a particular set of commitments or distinct group of activities, we begin to recognize that anarchism can both float like a butterfly and sting like a bee. The reason for this multifarious character is because anarchism is not an identity but is instead something you do. Anarchism consequently has knockout potential to unite diverse strategies and tactics under the black flag of this radical political slogan. Insofar as the future of radical geography is concerned, anarchism has got the guts, the spirit, and the heart to go the distance. Let's get ready to rumble!

Marxists have always tried to present … the history of critical ideas as if it were the history

> of Marxist thought; consequently, the crisis of Marxism has been presented as a crisis of radical thought as such.
>
> Marcelo Lopes de Souza (2014: 104)

> [I]t must not be forgotten that men of science, too, are but human, and that most of them.. . are steeped in the prejudices of their class .. . Not out of the universities, therefore, does anarchism come. .. . Anarchism was born among the people; and it will continue to be full of life and creative power only as long as it remains a thing of the people.
>
> Peter Kropotkin (2002 [1903]: 146)

Introduction: Anarchism on the ropes?

When I first read Geoff Mann's reply to my article, I have to admit that I was offended. He takes the gloves off and shows almost no restraint in what is easily the most disturbing encounter of my academic career to date. I've since had more time to reflect on what he has written and my indignation has given way to resignation. The level of vitriol and animosity that Mann exudes does, after all, speak for itself. Under normal circumstances, I would not even bother responding to such an overt display of acrimony, but my original article was intended to spark a dialogue, and having willingly signed up for the task at hand, I'm obliged to say something. Prior to this engagement I had nothing but respect for Mann and looked forward to meeting him in person, as although I've never agreed with his particular take on the world, the passion and urgency in his writing were something that I related to and deeply admired. I had hoped that he would have seen a similar fire within my work, although I fully expected we would not see entirely

ous forms of 'archy' that we have inherited (Springer, 2014e). It is embracing the beautiful destructive creation of anarchism (Bakunin, 2002 [1842]), as opposed to the repulsive creative destruction of capital and the classist perspective that assumes this is the only form of exploitation that matters in our world. Of course, it should be noted 'that anarchists are not the only ones who embrace what we might consider to be anarchist values' (Clough, 2014: 295), but at the same time, we might then ask what exactly makes them 'non-anarchist'? Anarchism is not an identity, it is something you do. To acknowledge this is not to engage in patriarchal subjugation or colonial desire, it is merely to recognize an impulse, a trajectory, or as Kropotkin (2005 [1880]) once called it, a 'spirit of revolt'.

Conclusion: Rolling with the punches

I am deeply appreciative of the critical and challenging replies I have received in this forum, as they have encouraged me to think in ways that I hadn't previously considered and expanded the horizons of my personal understanding. As the world burns—and make no mistake, our innocence is on fire—it is critically important for geographers to continue to experiment with praxis, to be genuinely open to new epistemological positions, to embrace different ontological modes, to experiment with alternative methodological approaches, to explore the possibilities of space, and to be humbled by the difficult tasks that stand before us. I have argued that anarchism, meaning the open praxis of mutual aid, horizontalism, direct action, voluntary association, self-management, and prefigurative politics, can potentially lead us out of the inferno by refusing to be confined into any singular way of doing things and by being carried with us as an attitude of rebellion. There is no absoluteness here, as though one should simply assume the vanguardist arrogance of determining 'what is to be done'. Rather, it is a recognition that an anarchist stance

with things via the direct action of prefigurative politics as it always has. If you don't like the word itself, or the idea that a 'shared tool box of strategies and tactics' (Gibson, 2014: 284) can be refracted through a single lens (kaleidoscopic as it is!), then so be it, by all means don't call it 'anarchism'. Feel free to call it whatever you like. The word that I use to describe this is anarchism, but it's not my role to tell everyone that they must employ the same vocabulary, as indeed, such conformity is something I emphatically reject (Springer, in press). Anarchism is to be defined through its making, as it is actually made. Why bother with the word at all then? Well, Peck (2004: 403) referred to the importance of continuing to use the phrase 'neoliberalism' in spite of it being recognized as a hybridized, protean, articulated, processual, variegated, promiscuous, and traveling phenomenon, precisely because it alerted us to a certain genre of politics and therein served as a 'radical political slogan'. Retention is crucial then because it offers a center of gravity around which diverse struggles can orbit, building solidarities and affinities through a mutual recognition for the magnitude and intersectionality of the problems that we face today. The word 'anarchism' offers much the same, not as a fixed identity where boundaries are policed through some codified set of methodologies, but simply as a descriptor for the shared modes of praxis that push back against the dominating structures, exploitative processes, and disciplining precepts that mediate each and every single life on the planet. I'll continue to call this anarchism, only because I've not seen a better variant of what to name the processual unfolding of freedom and the very matrix of life as it is lived. To me anarchism is so much more than just a word. In this light, the purpose of my essay is to insist on breaking the hold of any and all orthodoxy within radical geography, which presently comes in the form of Marxism. This isn't about hegemonizing a new orthodoxy. It is the opening up of vistas to new forms of experimentation. It is undisciplining, undoing, and unlearning the vari-

eye to eye. Nonetheless, I had anticipated that there might be some productive discussions to be had, where in spite of our different approaches, I assumed that a shared aversion for capitalism could potentially lead to some synergies and fruitful engagement. I now recognize how naive I was, and perhaps Mann is right, I should pay closer attention to 'historical materialism', particularly the conditions that led to the divisions between Marxists and anarchists. Once bitten, twice shy. Marv Waterstone's response, while not nearly as vicious as Mann's tirade, is also filled with the standard misrepresentations of anarchism that Marxists have long been touting. Accordingly, I spend some time shedding further light on the supposed clarity that Waterstone brings to the table, illustrating just how mystified Marxists still are with respect to anarchist politics. In contrast to these rather pugnacious replies, the other participants, Anthony Ince, Kathy Gibson, and Nathan Clough, have been far more generous, and I'm genuinely thankful for their fruitful engagements, careful readings, and worthwhile criticisms. I do, nonetheless, want to make some particular clarifications with regard to their critiques as well. I will start by addressing Mann and then Waterstone to get the unpleasantries out of the way before moving on to what I consider to be a much more productive dialogue of sincere collegiality so that we can end on a more positive note.

Hitting below the belt: Who's afraid of anarchism?

Mann's assumption that I would agree with his ageist framing is misguided from the outset and surely speaks to the specter of vanguardism that continues to haunt to soul of many Marxists. Only a position of arrogance could see fit to deride the spirit of childhood, a period in one's life that is literally brimming with political possibilities (Springer, 2014c; Ward, 1978, 1988). Similarly, there is no reason to draw a dichotomy between a 'high school social studies caricature

and the "real thing"' with respect to politics (Mann, 2014: 271), unless of course you think moving up an academic ladder (i.e. a hierarchy) suddenly makes you more capable of political theory and action, where the higher you get the more important your ideas become vis-à-vis the rest of the population (i.e. vanguardism). Assuming that I 'would surely, and justifiably, agree' to such antagonism, where childhood is reduced to an insult, clearly indicates that Mann (2014: 271) is as clueless about anarchism as he is about agonism (Springer, 2011). 'Who's afraid of democracy?' indeed (Mann, 2013). It only gets worse from here, where the basis of Mann's (2014: 271) critique is in the idea that my portrayal of Marxism is so 'deeply flawed and inaccurate' that it should be insulting to 'reasonably intelligent folks'. Yet instead of detailing the specifics of how my reading is flawed and offering some sort of corrective measure to the audience of dimwitted simpletons that I apparently write for, Mann (2014: 272) instead hopes that repetition will make his case for him, where I am said to have 'oversimplified', 'grossly mischaracterized', made 'sweeping claims', and been 'willfully disingenuous' in constructing a 'fabricated monolithic Marxism'.

The one seemingly substantive critique that Mann (2014: 272) employs is, in fact, the tried and true excuse that Marxists are a heterogeneous lot and not an 'undifferentiated mob' as I have allegedly argued. Of course, I readily concede that there are multiple forms of Marxism, but I never actually suggested otherwise, hence my indication of support for autonomous Marxist ideas. Yet the reason I'm not writing about the intricacies of contemporary Marxian theory is that it doesn't interest or appeal to me, and more to the point, my article is actually about anarchism. The critique of Marxism that is included in my article is intended as a questioning of the theoretical basis on which contemporary radical geography sits. After 40 years of a tradition wherein Marxist foundations have become so firmly entrenched as

and inevitably fails us. My intention is not 'to reclaim contemporary social movements', nor are my ideas meant as a 'disciplining affect' (Gibson, 2014: 284), as though there is one particular formula that adds up to something that is undeniably called 'anarchism'. I'm hardly a realist, and much like Gibson (Gibson-Graham, 1996), I look to the ways in which discourse constructs, conditions, contours, and contorts our understandings (Springer, 2012b). Accordingly, I use anarchism as a descriptor for the exact sort of 'eclectic mix' that Gibson (2014: 285) desires. To me, anarchism is the 'the heterogeneity of perspectives and methods that flourish under its rubric' (Gibson, 2014: 286), not a tradition in the sense of Marxism, nor is it a project (Springer, 2012a), nor was 'anarchism' born of 19th-century conditions and concerns. The name for a theory called 'anarchism' comes from that context (Springer, 2013a), but the living practice owes its debt to time immemorial (Barclay, 1982). Anarchism is the anti-coercive impulse found within the processual experience of space–time. We don't need to get stuck in the idea that anarchism means a certain set of commitments and a particular group of activities. To me it is an ethos that merges rebellion with reciprocity, subversion with self-management, and dissent with direct action, where the potential combinations are infinite. Anarchism is, quite simply, an attitude. So should those who label their thought 'feminist intersectional analysis' be made to call it anarchism, Clough (2014: 295) asks. My answer is 'absolutely not', even if there is something intrinsically anarchistic about what they do. You can call this 'anarchism', 'critical anti-hegemonic iconoclasm', 'paradigm destabilizing recalcitrant analysis', 'nonconformist insurgent praxis', or 'don't tell me what to do theory' for all I care. The point is, we are talking about a mind-set of breaking archetypes, tearing up blueprints, and scribbling over leitmotifs.

Anarchism doesn't care to have the grand theoretical upper hand that many Marxists seem to so desire. It simply gets on

ate? If we aren't emboldened to think outside the box, don't we resign ourselves to the active promotion of self-caging (Eva, 2012)? Don't we owe ourselves, and particularly our children, who will inherit our creativity or lack thereof, something more hopeful? Doesn't refusing this strategy end up performing the power of state discourse? Gibson (2014: 286) of course does portray a deep sense of creativity and playfulness, suggesting that political agency is being rethought as a complex aggregate, 'whereby the inanimate and non-human are seen as part of agentic assemblages', and here again, this seems to have a decidedly anarchistic character, not least because play can be thought of as an anarchist parable (Ward, 1973). I too am interested in exploring the geographies of mutual aid and cooperation in the hopes of affording greater insight into how neoliberalism is resisted and attenuated through the practice of reciprocity, community affinities, and non-commodified relations. Yet mutual aid isn't just about community reciprocity, and as Kropotkin (2008 [1902]) recognized, it was equally about the symbiotic relations between peoples, plants, and animals, and so it can also be read as the enmeshment of humanity within the web of life, or what Bookchin (1996) referred to as 'dialectical naturalism'. This view stands in contrast to a long history of Western thought that positions humans at the apex of some imagined hierarchy, demonstrating the possibilities of rhizomic politics (Springer, 2014a), and not necessarily with humans at the center, but instead as a more hybridized process (Whatmore, 2002).

In different ways both Clough and Gibson ask 'what's in a name?', pointing to the protean processes through which new worlds come into being. Indeed, it is not just 'insurrection' that does this work as Gibson (2014: 286) writes, which is clearly a slip up, whereby she uses a word to stand in for an idea. Pointing this out is not intended as an underhanded 'gotcha' maneuverer on my part, but rather I think it cuts to the very heart of the issue, which is quite simply that language always

the de facto position of radical geography, so much so that we take many of the inherited assumptions at face value, I would suggest it is high time and fair game to point out some of the flawed foundations. Doing so, however, has evidently made Mann furious. 'There is a reason that neither Marx nor any of the excellent writing of social scientists who work closely with Marxism's critical theoretical tradition are cited here'. Mann (2014: 272) pleads, without bothering to consider that perhaps Marxism isn't my primary concern. Throughout his reply, Mann (2014: 273) has an uncanny ability to tell readers what my project 'really' is, indicating that 'We could certainly debate both the originality and the truth of [socialist] ideas, but that is not Springer's task', which is apparently, at least according to my self-appointed voiceover, 'to dismiss the Marxist tradition'. Mann (2014: 273) also has a knack for putting words in my mouth, suggesting that my point is to simply smear Marx, where my explicit suggestion to the contrary can apparently 'only be taken with a whole shaker of salt, for that is precisely his point'. Even more venomous is Mann's (2014: 273) proclamation that 'Springer's assertion is bald: Marxists, including a Marx he does not bother to engage, are self-righteous idiots'. Let me remind readers that these are Mann's words and not my own. They look nothing like what I actually wrote, where in my conclusion I identify Marx's writings on commodity relationships, alienation, and particularly the accumulation of capital as 'brilliant exegeses that inspire a great number of radical geographers, myself included' (Springer 2014f: 264). Yet Mann (2014: 273) doesn't resist the urge to hit below the belt, characterizing the idea of 'self-righteous idiots' as though it is a direct 'assertion', not even an implication, but an assertion that I've somehow made. In a reply piled sky high with distortions, this is perhaps the biggest whopper, but there's more.

Mann (2014: 272) never pauses to consider how anarchism is also thoroughly hybridized, viewing contemporary anar-

chists as people who simply 'trade in the tired pillory of century-old monoliths … hav[ing] clearly not even read Marx, at least in any meaningful sense of the word "read"'. The arrogance of the Marxian 'Great Man' mentality comes clearly into view at this stage, where Mann (2014: 275) presumes that any serious critical theorist should be reading Marx, and indeed, he even suggests that Marxian critique 'is a precondition for critical theory'. Sit down feminists, post-structuralists, indigenous scholars, and especially anarchists; your musings are apparently illegitimate without the grand salvationary theories of Marx to guide you! Yet when I sought to remind readers that anarchism doesn't buy into this triviality, Mann twists things once more. Although my point in demonstrating how Proudhon wrote about many of Marx's ideas first is not to put anyone on a pedestal but 'to offer a more honest appraisal of the intellectual milieu of the time' where an infinite number of ideas were swirling among socialists (Springer, 2014f: 266), Mann (2014: 273) insincerely suggests that I 'Leave aside … the fact that in Proudhon's and Marx's time many people were making similar arguments'. He states with authority that 'only via the thinnest possible reading of Marx could one arrive at Proudhon',[1] but if you read Mann's (2014: 273) reply closely he lets the cat out of the bag when he later reveals, 'I don't know Proudhon's work as well as perhaps I should'. Mann (2014: 275) goes on to refer to my reminder that anarchism was tellingly named after a sentiment rather than a person holding a PhD as 'cheap'. He then promptly proceeds to debase himself with a rancorous display of anti-reflexivity, calling Kropotkin out for his inherited aristocracy, stating that 'PhDs might have their flaws, but I'll take one over a prince any day' (Mann, 2014: 275). Of course, one doesn't actually choose the identity that they are born into, and in stringing

[1] See Rocker's (1925) 'Marx and Anarchism', which details the history of Marx's heavy reliance on Proudhon.

ing anarchist views of the state. Although she correctly recognizes that the parameters of the state's capacity for coercion change across space and time, she doesn't offer the same sort of introspection vis-à-vis the problematics of Foucault's notions of governmentality and biopolitics. I don't disagree with Gibson that we can look to shifting governmentalities to see how modes of conduct break with 'capitalist', 'neoliberal', and even 'human' subjectification, and that these forms are not necessarily anti-state and may align with anarchist principles. Indeed, this is what is so appealing about her work on 'other words' and 'diverse economies' (Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2008), and it is precisely why anarchists have picked up on it (White and Williams, 2012). However, we should also be wary about how Foucault's (2003) notion that the state has transformed itself from being a disciplinary mechanism into a more subtle assemblage of rationalities, strategies, technologies, and techniques, as it betrays a Eurocentric, classist, gendered, and racial bias. While it may be the case that the application of biopolitics among middle-class White males in Western Europe, and its settler societies has taken on a greater logic of care, for most 'others' there remains a decidedly violent character to the logic of the state that we should never underestimate (Mbembe, 2003).

Anarchism's 'attachment to the notion of a coercive state' (Gibson, 2014: 285) remains intact because this is the lived reality for most. For those of us with well-paying jobs and middle-class lives that offer no real threat to the status quo, it is easy to forget just how dominating this edifice actually is for most of the world's population, something my ongoing research in Cambodia continually reminds me of (Springer, 2009, 2010a, 2013c). Moreover, anarchists don't adhere to a 'fantasy of free association absent of imposed authority' (Gibson, 2014: 285) and instead view voluntary association as a possibility to live into. If we strike this sentiment from our political imagination, how does such exclusion limit what we actually attempt to cre-

site.[3] Not content to heed this warning, I asked my physical and human geography counterparts if they were happy with this presentation and the resounding answer I received was 'no'. We put our collective heads together to come up with something more fitting, and the response I received when I presented this to the Head of Department was forbidding. He spoke of tradition and that representing geography as anything less than a hard science in promotional materials would sully the reputation of the department within the university. The point is, there are significant hurdles in bringing a more open epistemological and liberated ontological premise to geography, and while Marxists aren't the worst offenders in closing this off, they occupy a space called 'radical geography', wherein one would expect to find latitude rather than orthodoxy and blatant hostility.

Gibson offers a generous and challenging reply that demonstrates how her own thinking resonates very strongly with anarchist politics, offering that she wants to think along with me about strategies for insurrection. I'm genuinely thrilled to have her companionship in this shared endeavor. Nonetheless, I do want to clarify that my essay was not intended as 'subdisciplinary policing' (Gibson, 2014: 283), and quite to the contrary, it was intended as an exercise in antipolicing and antidisciplining, where my tongue was planted firmly in my cheek when I chose my title.[4] This wasn't about positioning a 'truly radical' geography (Gibson, 2014: 284); rather I sought to provoke by asking, 'how could a "radical" geography truly be radical' when it ignored the foundations laid by anarchists like Kropotkin and Reclus (Springer, 2014f: 250). It was precisely the hollow presumptions that bothered me. Where I diverge from Gibson is with respect to her critical questions concern-

[3] Several years later this (mis)representation remains. See http://www.geography.otago.ac.nz/ (accessed 28 May 2014).

[4] To avoid confusion, the subtitle of this essay is also meant to be facetious and an affirmation of the mirth that Gibson encourages.

me up as a witless fool for my reading of Marx, Mann has absolutely no shame for his ignorance of Kropotkin's actual life and the politics that he held. Kropotkin disavowed his princely title at the age of 12, was disinherited by his father when he resigned his commission in the army at age 25 after reading the works of Proudhon, and then spent the rest of his life repudiating all forms of archy, including monarchy (McKay, 2014; Morris, 2003). Apparently classist ideas run so deep among some Marxists that the accident of birth will be forever held against certain members of the population, regardless of the class treason they might actively engage over the course of their lives. Never mind that a close reading of Marx's adversaries within their historical context is surely as important as reading Marx and his legions of followers, but this too is dismissed as 'simultaneously superficial and hollow' (Mann, 2014: 272). Mann simply assumes the authority of what a 'proper' reading might entail, intimating that there is a structure to be conformed to, which will inevitably lead to the same conclusion. What was that about heterogeneous Marxisms again?

In contrast to the rigidity of Mann's (2014: 274) interpretation of anarchism, there is no overarching 'normative vision', as it is, by definition, an anti-normative framework. Nor are there 'universalizing claims .. . about human nature' in my work (Mann, 2014: 274), nor that of many contemporary anarchists, sometimes called 'postanarchists', which is meant to signify anarchism's melding with poststructuralism (May, 1994; Newman, 2010). Although a form of universalism was present in the works of Reclus and Kropotkin, far from being a 'standard conservative move' to naturalism, as Mann (2014: 274) scornfully accuses, this was an attempt to reconnect German idealist philosophy (Hegel, Schelling) with romantic literature (Wordsworth, Emerson, Thoreau). The universalism of'classical' anarchists had a very different character than the way the word is interpreted and understood today, where

Reclus, for example, advanced the idea that 'humanity is nature becoming self-conscious' (quoted in Clark and Martin, 2013: vii), wherein reality was reinterpreted as facets of a universal spirit. The point was not to assert a particular view of humanity in the form of a single identity category, as is the Eurocentric Marxian view of the industrial worker, but rather to shed light on the integrality of geographical, ecological, political, geological, economic, social, and cultural spheres. It was to be interdisciplinary at a time when the academy was intent on creating knowledge silos. Oblivious to this history, Mann seeks to mislead readers by carefully selecting my words when I state that mutual aid is 'deeply woven into the fabric of humanity', while failing to include the next part of this sentence where I suggest that this 'demands a historical treatment that goes beyond simplistic tropes' (Springer, 2014f: 253). In other words, anarchism is, as was the contention of Reclus, about 'small, loving and intelligent associations' (Clark and Martin, 2013: 70), which looks at the contextual specificity of actually existing relations of reciprocity. This is hardly the transhistorical view that Mann (2014: 274) falsely suggests that anarchism represents when he asks, 'what reason do we have for believing that communities will produce locally-specific egalitarianisms, and not fractured, violent, isolationisms?' The answer, given anarchism's anti-normative frame, is 'none', which is why anarchism is about possibilities to live into, not 'stages of history' that attempt to cajole others into a supposedly predetermined model.

The anarchist embrace of prefigurative politics and its critique of Marxian political deferral are not spared from Mann's (2014: 274) misguided wrath, where the former is dismissed as 'quasi-theological faith' and the latter is said to have 'been much better thought through' by critical Marxists. Remember, this is the same author who sets out to challenge me on my 'uncritical celebration' of anarchism (Mann, 2014: 271). Mann (2014: 274) goes on to disingenuously suggest that

flection. Unfortunately, as Waterstone and particularly Mann are so willing to demonstrate, there remains a strong desire among some Marxists to demand that all legitimate struggle on the left is somehow exclusively or rightfully the domain of Marxism. Ince (2014: 280) continues by asking 'whether geographers have been particularly guilty' of 'the systematic appropriation, defamement, and misrepresentation of anarchist ideas'. As should be clear, Waterstone's response certainly reveals shades of this, but Mann's response in particular demonstrates such culpability with startling transparency. Behind the scenes, I also asked the handling editor to exclude one of the referees from writing a response, precisely because the review was so mean-spirited. My point though is not to try to reclaim anything as necessarily anarchist per se but to advocate for openness by showing the milieu of intellectual ideas that went into the origins of socialist thought and hence radical geography.

Ince suggests that contemporary geography is relatively open to radical ideas and prejudice against anarchism within the discipline is therefore not of the same magnitude as is currently being felt in other fields. While I concede that this is probably true, I also want to point out that there is a geography to geography that Ince hasn't fully considered. While it seems that radical ideas are well received within geography in the United Kingdom, having worked in Canada, Singapore, and New Zealand, I have experienced firsthand some profound differences in terms of how anarchism is responded to and understood among other geographers. Beyond the question of anarchism, within New Zealand there is a geography to the openness of geography as well. While Waikato has a strong feminist spirit, thanks to the amazingly progressive work of Longhurst (2004) and Johnston (2005), when I was at Otago, I was warned by a well-meaning colleague to 'tread lightly' after I inquired as to why geography was being (mis)represented as an 'environmental science' on the main page of their Web

mances of alterity, and DIY protests of the few will provide examples that are available for widespread emulation and thereby overcome the very real problems posed by 'fear of freedom' and the depredations of primitive accumulation of the many'. His cardinal mistake is to assume that the former are resources only available to and practiced by the few. Waterstone would do well to engage with Scott's (1976, 1990, 1998, 2009) extensive body of work, as over the last four decades he has demonstrated with exceptional clarity just how widely anarchism's insurrectionary and prefigurative politics are being practiced in the context of Southeast Asia, where accumulative practices and state violence are rife.

In my corner: The spirit of revolt

The three remaining contributors to this dialogue each offer points of similarity between my work and their own thinking, which is heartening to see. I have tremendous admiration for the scholarship of Ince, Clough, and Gibson, where the former two have been great collaborators in the past, and the latter has offered significant inspiration in the development of my own thought. It is, accordingly, a wonderful opportunity to be able to hear their candid critiques and to be able to offer some clarification. At the heart of Ince's evaluation is the idea the Marxism and anarchism might be more productively brought into conversation, so that a greater political affinity on the left might come to the fore. He suggests that the question 'may be less about "ownership" of ideas and more about amassing the structures, attitudes, strategies and tactics that are conducive to building a world free of exploitation and domination' (Ince, 2014: 277). Of course, Ince is absolutely correct and I'm entirely on the same page in my desire to see such a position advanced. My original article was intended to do just that, where I had hoped that some well-intentioned critique of Marxism might give pause and lead to greater collective re-

anarchism 'is opposed to critical reflection in the interests of an unmediated insurrectionism, a here-and-now-let's-do-something attitude', which conveniently ignores the fact that anarchists recognize the 'withering of the state', the 'stages of history', and the 'waiting for the revolution' arguments as chimera. Hence, anarchists express what I refer to as 'a deeper appreciation for space-time as a constantly folding, unfolding and refolding story, where direct action, radical democracy, and mutual aid allow us to instantaneously reconfigure its parameters' (Springer, 2014f: 263). The convergence of theory and practice is not opposed to critical reflection nor is it anti-theory; it is the self-conscious transformative awakening to one's own purpose and meaning. Rather than stagnate in the mire of political paralysis, endlessly contemplate the chasm between 'is' and 'ought', and continue the tendency of distrust of'the people', as is the position of those elitist vanguards who believe that they have a 'disproportionate influence on what "left" can mean' (Mann, 2013: 45), anarchists are thinking and doing for themselves. Prefiguration has ideas for goals and a better future in mind, in other words there is a theory, but it attempts to realize these ideas by giving them actual form through practice here and now in the present moment as praxis.

Mann (2014: 274) attempts to appear reasonable when he states that in contrast to my reading of Marxism, I 'do justice to the literature and to [the] history' of anarchism, which is after all the focus of my original paper. Yet this apparent complement in an otherwise scathing reply is quickly followed up with another insult, where he tells us that 'Anarchism is currently enjoying something of a revival, so much so that in some hands, it risks becoming a brand' (Mann, 2014: 274), effectively insinuating that I'm merely an opportunist guilty of capitalizing on a political praxis whose market value is increasing. Mann (2014: 275) continues his incorrigible attack by suggesting that anarchism is not even worthy of its own name,

calling it 'incapable of a critical theory of history —as distinct from a history of theory', which either proves that he has not been paying attention or confirms that he's not willing to. With such ex cathedra judgment in hand, Mann (2014: 275) points to Karatani (2005) to sanitize the record of Marxism, suggesting that Marx was not a state socialist and was apparently 'as anti-state as you can get'. Yes, you read that right; apparently, Marx was more antistate than Bakunin, his key anarchist rival during the First International, and the precise individual who called him out on his statism (Bakunin, 1953 [1873], 2002 [1872]). So much for the 'critically informed, historically sensitive, and knowledgeable engagement' that Mann (2014: 271) apparently holds dear. In spite of taking issue with my suggestion that there is significant correspondence between contemporary autonomist and anarchist ideas insofar as autonomists are abandoning key precepts of their Marxian roots and adopting anarchistic outlooks, in the end, by way of Karatani, we are ridiculously told that, 'Marx was an anarchist, and Marxism is really a critical anarchist … theory of the capital-state-nation trinity' (Mann, 2014: 275). Mann (2014: 275) has absolutely no shame for the absurdity of his claims, and we are laughably asked to take him at his word when he suggests that, 'we need to take anarchism more seriously', by which, as we now realize, he actually means Marxism. Mann of course does nothing of the sort in his incredibly hostile reply, and in the grand tradition of claiming all socialist thought as Marxist through his appropriation of anarchism, unfortunately the real caricature here is the one that Mann has made out of himself.

A ringside seat: Debunking Marxist myths

Despite indicating that he wants to 'get things clear', unfortunately Waterstone's (2014: 288) response merely serves to muddy the waters once more. He begins his critique by attempting to discredit anarchism, taking issue with my

the context of ongoing land conflict in contemporary Cambodia (Springer, 2010a, 2013b, 2013c). Anarchists have had much to say about property beginning with Proudhon (2008 [1840]), yet prefiguration isn't concerned with a question of 'ownership' to the means of production and can instead be thought of as a spatial art of trespass. Prefiguration is about the 'weapons of the weak' (Scott, 1985), wherein the reclamation and occupation of space through direct action forms a 'temporary autonomous zone' (Bey, 1991). In short, property, a capitalist relation of exploitation, is reimagined through prefigurative politics as a logic of possession,rooted in actual use. Thus, the Marxist theory of historical materialism is replaced by the anarchist praxis of direct action. Committed to a stagist view of history, and hence the idea of revolution, Waterstone fails to understand prefigurative politics and the possibilities that insurrection opens up. The result is that his assessment of my article is both misguided and insulting, 'Perform life as though the state (and capitalism) do not exist, Springer suggests, and they become irrelevant to the point of disappearance. This is, at once, elitist, utopian and myopic' (Waterstone, 2014: 291). It also has absolutely no relation whatsoever to what I have actually argued. Indeed, in a recent review of James C Scott's (2012) *Two Cheers for Anarchism*, I challenge him on the notion that all anarchists can hope for is to 'tame' the state, arguing that

> While we go about the business of prefiguration—that is, effecting social relationships and organizing principles in the present that attempt to reflect the future society being sought—it remains necessary to refuse the state at every possible turn, lest we chain ourselves to a mindless scenario of lather, rinse, and repeat (Springer 2014d: 4).

Yet Waterstone (2014: 292) contends that it is insufficient to 'presume that the insurgencies, prefigurative politics, perfor-

it a very different meaning than was intended. Yet even if it meant what Waterstone implies, this doesn't negate or implicate anarchism precisely because anarchists are not Bakuninists. Unlike the notion of a 'Great Man' that is inseparable from Marxism, hence its name, anarchists do not place other anarchists on a pedestal, recognizing the frailty and folly of being human, where each of us is prone to mistakes, often failing to live up to our ideals. Anarchists are not bound to dogma, we pick and choose the useful parts of social theory, rejecting that which is useless and doesn't make sense. So whether or not Bakunin said something problematic with respect to vanguardism or despotism is entirely irrelevant. Yet if we are to 'get things clear' as Waterstone (2014: 288) asserts, we might look to Morris (1993: 144, 149) who argues that such conclusions about Bakunin are 'an incredible distortion of the substance of what Bakunin was trying to convey in his letters', where only a scholar 'blinded by extreme antipathy towards Bakunin or anarchism, could interpret these words as indicating that Bakunin conception of a secret society implied a revolutionary dictatorship in the Jacobin sense'.[2] In his conclusion, Waterstone even seemingly admits that he confuses 'zeal' for 'vanguardism', when he really should know better considering that he is, after all, a Marxist.

Waterstone's response retreads the well-worn Marxist highway, paved by historical materialism, wherein the entire social question apparently boils down to control over the means of production. And so I'm charged with being 'elitist' and 'oblivious to the long history of ongoing processes of primitive accumulation' as supposedly only a tiny minority of the world's population has access to DIY alternatives (Waterstone, 2014: 291), never mind the fact that I've written extensively on accumulation by dispossession from an anarchist perspective in

[2] For an extended discussion of how Marxists quote Bakunin out of context to smear his ideas and anarchism more generally, see Anarcho (2006).

contention that it has nothing to do with contemporary oxymoronic ideas like 'anarcho-capitalism'. As a Marxist, Waterstone (2014: 288) writes from a position that simply assumes Marx, which leads him to make erroneous statements like 'capitalism is, by its nature, anarchic (in the precise meaning of that term, i.e. without a head)'. Such an alignment of anarchism with capitalism is, in a long history of such distortions, yet another attempt by Marxists to position their favored approach as the only legitimate politics of the left. Capitalism is quite clearly a form of archy, which denotes a system of rule, not anarchy, which is obviously against systems of rule. Capitalism is a version of rule where profit triumphs above all, a condition that is actually inseparable from the state (Kropotkin, 1995 [1908]), and we've repeatedly seen how neoliberals merely delude themselves in the idea that capital can ever be unfettered from state power (Peck, 2010; Springer, 2010b). Waterstone (2014: 289) makes the charge against anarchism, but doesn't want to sustain his argument, suggesting that he is content to let 'history argue' who first or better articulated the key elements of capitalist exploitation. Yet he can't help himself and attempts to get in the final word by citing Marx on the apparently 'manifold misunderstandings of capital/capit- alism exhibited by Proudhon' (Waterstone, 2014: 292). To be fair, Waterstone should have then also cited System of Economic Contradictions, or The Philosophy of Poverty (Proudhon, 1847) to enable readers to see the intellectually dishonesty of Marx's claims vis-a'-vis what Proudhon actually wrote. He might have also cited Considerant's (2006 [1843]) Principles of Socialism: Manifesto of 19th Century Democracy, which preceded the publication of Marx and Engels' (2002 [1848]) Communist Manifesto by 5 years and anticipated much of their argument.

Waterstone's (2014: 290) next major volley is the accusation that there is sense of vanguardism embodied in the title of my original essay, which he 'would like to think, but fear[s] is not,

deliberately ironic'. I can assure you, this is intended as ironic. My title was chosen to mock Folke's (1972) 'Why a Radical Geography Must Be Marxist' and particularly the arrogance of this suggestion. While I thought such irony was obvious, perhaps I should have been cleaner on this. Yet Waterstone (2014: 290) is not satisfied, asserting that, 'Springer clearly knows what is good for geography, and sees it as his mission to educate the rest of us'. In some ways Waterstone is correct, as the contemporary orientation of academia positions it as a priori a form of vanguardism, something that anarchism actually attempts to undo by breaking down the ivory tower and operating as a praxis that sees theory and practice united as a coconstitutive process. At the same time, it also seems clear that Waterstone is grasping at straws here. Is any suggestion of alternatives or change to be confused as 'vanguardism'? Clearly, I'm attempting to initiate a dialogue in human geography, but how else does social change begin other than from such conversation? If this were really 'vanguardism', I would be attempting to exercise my own will over a populace that I believe is less enlightened than myself. I know only what is good for my version ofgeography, and insofar as I'm keen to interrupt epistemological, ontological, and methodological orthodoxies, I seek to push back against those who want to suggest that what I do is not 'legitimate geographical research' because it breaks with the Marxist approach ofhistorical materialism. My mission is only to call for the necessary space wherein we can collectively decide for ourselves what is possible within geography, rather than being bound to particular methodologies and parochial ideas. Thus, in addition to political anarchism, I also advocate for epistemological and ontological anarchism (Bey, 1991; Feyerabend, 2010). A close read of Waterstone's response ultimately reveals that he speaks out of both sides of his mouth with regard to my supposed vanguardism. At the same time as accusing me of 'knowing what is good for geography', Waterstone (2014: 291) criticizes that my article 'offers no alternative

formulation for how such change might be initiated, except by the implication that prefigurative, insurrectionary politics and activities will provide appropriate exemplars that will spread by diffusion'. The reason for this is ofcourse because my work is anti-vanguardist, which is a political imagination that Waterstone, like many Marxists, just can't seem to come to grips with. To make up for such shortcomings, Waterstone (2014: 290) reinvokes the dead letter idea of 'the party', citing Marx's belief that the development of class consciousness is to 'be aided by an enlightened cadre of thinkers, i.e. the communist party'. Certainly the Khmer Rouge, Mao, and the Bolsheviks took this idea to heart and therein resides the fatal flaw.

Lenin (1902: 17) argued that only revolutionary socialist intellectuals could bring class consciousness to the workers, as 'the history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness'. Contrast this with Bakunin, who like all anarchists, stressed the importance of self-liberation and self-education, well aware of how vanguardism always creates a party dictatorship, precisely because it assumes an inferiority and lack of agency. The moment we resign ourselves to the idea that some are better positioned to emancipate us, rather than each of us liberating ourselves, is the moment we turn our backs on the light of liberty and enter once more into the suffocating blackness of domination. Unlike Marx and Lenin, Bakunin was aware that socialist ideas come from lived experience, where unlike 'the party', the aim of anarchist organizations is to encourage mutual aid and direct action. Yet Bakunin is not spared from Waterstone's scythe. Pointing to a letter that Bakunin's wrote to Nechayev, Waterstone attempts to once and for all prove anarchism's ostensible embrace of vanguardism. To begin with, readers should be made aware that the purpose of that letter was actually meant to rebuke Nechayev's catechism for vanguardism (Bekken, n.d.), and thus Bakunin's expression of 'collective dictatorship' is taken out of context, which gives