This essay offers some critical reflections on the so-called "new anarchism", and poses the question: "What, exactly, is new about the "new anarchism"? With reference to the writings of Peter Kropotkin and other social or class struggle anarchists it concludes: precious little.

Prologue

No doubt you have heard about the coming "new age" and all about "New Labour." No doubt you have also read lots about postmodernism, poststructuralism, post feminism, post Marxism, and post humanism. There are even postanimals around, but they are not to be confused with the real badgers and dormice that inhabit the woods and fields. So you will not be surprised to learn that academic scholars have now discovered what is described as the "new anarchism" along with one of its variants, "post anarchism." (Day 2005, Kinna 2005, Curran 2006).

The suggestion is that anarchism as normally understood has become an "historical baggage" that needs to be rejected, or at least, given a "major overhaul" (Purlds and Bowen 1997 : 3).

The anarchism of an earlier generation of anarchists is thus declared to be "old anarchism" and is perceived to be old-fashioned and out-dated; or as John Moore put it in the pages of the "Green Anarchist" (1998), just plain "obsolete." An historical relic of no relevance at all to contemporary radical activists (Holloway 2002; 21).

Embracing a crude linear, bipolar mode of understanding the history of anarchism - an approach that is facile, undialectical and lacking any sense of history - we are told by the academics that "old anarchism" is now antiquated and "outmoded" (Kinna 2005 21). By "old" anarchism they essentially mean social anarchism or class struggle anarchism (mutualism, libertarian socialism, anarcho-syndicalism, anarchist communism) - which is, unbeknown to these academics, still the most vibrant strand(s) of anarchism around, judging by recent texts. (Sheehan 2003, Franks 2006).

Nevertheless, we are informed that "old" anarchism has been replaced by a new variety of anarchism - the "new anarchism." In fact, there has been a "paradigm shift" (no less!) within anarchism itself (Purkis and Bowen 2004 : 5).

This "new anarchism," as the "new paradigm" appears to be an esoteric pastiche of poetic terrorism (otherwise known as Nietzschean aesthetic nihilism), anarcho-primitivism, the radical individualism (egoism) of Max Stirner, and an appeal to the oracular musings of post structural philosophers such as Jean-Francois Lyotard, Michel Faucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Jean Baudrillard. None of whom, it is worth noting, were anarchists.

We are also joyfully informed that no contemporary radical activist has ever read the works of Bakunin, Kropotkin or Malertesta, as they are deemed to be as old-fashioned as the novels of Charles Dickens (Purkis and Bowen 1997 : 3). This is probably true, for the obvious reason that few people in the new social movements or in the recent anti-globalization protests are in fact Anarchists.
1.1 New Social Movements

Take the new social movements. Anarcho-feminists were in a distinct minority in the second-wave feminist movement. Most feminists were liberals, Marxists or republicans, embracing an identity politics that appealed to State power to enact reforms. There were also few anarchists in the American civil rights movement, though this movement was well represented by black nationalists and radical liberal pacifists.

And the ecology movement as I long ago indicated (1996 : 131) embraces people right across the political spectrum. It includes liberals like Jonathan Porritt (now a staunch advocate of capitalism), members of the Green Party and other worthy liberals, outright authoritarian conservatives such as William Ophuls, Garrett Hardin and Rudolph Bahro, as well as German neo-fascists and the followers of the Nazi sympathizer Martin Heidegger, the darling of some deep ecologiste and postmodernists. Within the ecology movement anarchists are therefore in a distinct minority, even though anarchism is the only political tradition that is fully consonant with an ecological sensibility - as Bookchin (1982) long ago argued. (Morris 1996, Hay 2002 ; 280 - 97).

1.2 Anti-globalization protests

Equally, anarchists form a minority in the anti-globalization protests, although their presence is invariably high-lighted by the media, especially when they destroy property. Most of the radical activists on the anti-globalization protests are reformist liberals who simply seek to humanize capitalism and make it more benign. Some like the late Pierre Bourdieu (1998) and the Brazilian Workers Party (who hosted the first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre) merely want to bolster the economic power of the NationState, and thus curb the worst excesses of global capitalism. Some like Susan George and the French organization "Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions to Aid Citizens" (ATTAC) simply advocate putting a tax on the movement of capital. Others still, like David Held, Arne Naess and George Monbiot - who has taken over Jonathan Porritt's mantle as the media radical on environmental issues - envisage some kind of "global democratic state" - heaven forbid!

[It is of interest that George Monbiot is always complaining about the "antics" of anarchists on the anti-globalization protests - for the anarchists lack discipline, destroy property and upset the police. Like a worthy liberal Monbiot seeks to uphold the sanctity of private property, and views the police as the benign custodians of "law and order" (see Monbiot 2000)].

To equate the anti-globalization protests with anarchism is therefore quite misleading. Even so, anarchists have made their presence felt - through the Black Bloc and with the politics of detournement - involving guerilla advertising and an emphasis on the aesthetic dimensions of protest. Such forms of protest are hardly novel. At the end of the eighteenth century Thomas Spence called his weekly periodical "Pig's Meat, or Lessons for a Swinish Multitude," precisely to parody Edmund Burkes derogatory opinion of working people. Detournement and symbolic protest did not begin with the Situationists; and even the concept of "multitude" is hardly a new idea (on Spence's agrarian socialism see Morris 1996; 112-122).
This is not to deny, of course, that there have been important anarchist tendencies in both the new social movements and the anti-globalization protests. These have been of particular interest to academic scholars (Day 2005, Curran 2006). One writer indeed suggests that the "soul" of the anti-capitalist movement is anarchist, in its disavowal of political parties, and its commitment to direct action. The movement is thus, he writes, firmly in the spirit of libertarian socialism - that is, the spirit of the "old anarchism" (Sheehan 2003 : 12).

It is also of interest that in the wake of the anti-globalization protests, Purkis and Bowen seem to have revised their opinion about the "old anarchists." For they write that contemporary radical activists are seeking out the writings and quoting from the works of Kropotkin, Proudhon, Bakunin, Goldman and Malatesta - insisting that there are still issues and principles that are worthy of debate, despite a very different context (2004 : 2). True.

2. The New Anarchists

The ideas and practices of contemporary mutualists and class struggle anarchists are, of course, just as "new" as those of primitivists, Stirnerite individualists and the self-proclaimed poetic terrorists. And certainly class-struggle anarchists those who marshal under such banners as Class war, the Solidarity Federation, the Anarchist -Syndicalist Network, and the Anarchist (Communist) Federation - have been just as much involved in radical anti-capitalist protest as have the likes of Hakim Bey, the Autonomist Marxists and the poststructuralists. Protest and radical activism have always been an essential part of class struggle anarchism (see Sheehan 2003, Franks 2006).

But who are these "new anarchists?" Well, according to Ruth Kinna, they essentially muster under six ideological categories, namely: Murray Bookchin's eco-socialism; the anarcho-primitivism of John Zerzan; the acolytes of the radical individualism of Max Stirner; the poetic terrorism (so-called) of Hakim Bey and John Moore, who follow the rantings of the reactionary philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche; the postmodern anarchism derived from Deleuze, Foucault and Lyotard; and finally (believe it or not), the anarcho-capitalism of Murray Rothbard and Ayn Rand.

Although admitting that there has been some antipathy between these various strands of the "New Anarchism" what they have in common, Kinna tells us, is that they have all repudiated the "struggle by workers for economic emancipation" (2005 : 21). That is, they have abandoned libertarian socialism, or "leftism" (socialism), to use the current derogatory label (Black 1997). This is, of course, analogous to the politics of New Labour, as both Nicolas Walter and Graham Purchase suggested in their review of "Twenty-First Century Anarchism" (Purkis and Bowen 1997).

Two points need to be made initially regarding Kinna's depiction of this "new anarchism."

2.1 Bookchin's Eco-Socialism

The first point is that Murray Bookchin would undoubtedly refute being described as an advocate of the "new anarchism," or what he himself called "lifestyle" anarchism. Although Bookchin,
like Bakunin and Kropotkin before him, certainly did not envisage the "industrial proletariat" as the sole revolutionary agent, he never repudiated class struggle anarchism. In his last years he may indeed have jettisoned the label "anarchist," as in the United States, anarchism had become virtually synonymous with anarcho-primitivism and aesthetic nihilism. And his strident advocacy of Municipal Socialism also found little favour among anarcho-communists and other class struggle anarchists. Nevertheless, Bookchin always acknowledged the need for serious class analysis, and affirmed the crucial importance of working class struggles in achieving any form of social revolution. What he attempted to do with his concept of hierarchy was to broaden existing conceptions of social oppression. Bookchin, therefore, always remained a revolutionary libertarian socialist, and had little but disdain for poetic terrorism, primitivism, technophobia, mysticism and anti-rationalism of the "new" or life-style anarchists. He was equally critical of the relativism, incoherence and nihilism of postmodern philosophers, who, he felt, tended to denigrate reason, the objectivity of truth and the reality of history (Bookchin 1995, 1999).

What is of interest is that Bookchin regarded Kropotkin as perhaps the most far-seeing of all the theorists he encountered in the libertarian tradition. Bookchin also emphasized - unlike the "new anarchists" - the need to respect an earlier generation of anarchists (Bakunin, Kropotkin, Reclus, Malatesta) not only for what they achieved in their own life-time, but also for what they have to offer contemporary radical activists. But he also stressed the need to develop, to build on and go beyond their ideas, rather than arrogantly dismissing them as "obsolete" (Moore) or "irrelevant" to contemporary struggles (Holloway). (Bookchin 1993 : 55-57).

The powers and intrusions of the modern state have undoubtedly increased over the past century, while capitalism has so expanded that it has turned virtually everything into a commodity; nevertheless the practices and theoretical perspectives of the early class struggle anarchists like Bakunin and Kropotkin still have a contemporary relevance. (On the continuing relevance of Bakunin, Kropotkin and Elisée Reclus see, for example, Morris 1993, 2004, McLaughlin 2002, Leier 2006, Clark and Martin 2004).

2.2 Anarcho-capitalism

A second point is that the anarcho-capitalists are not by any stretch of the imagination anarchists - as this term is normally understood. Take Ayn Rand. Her political philosophy Ruth Kinna turns into another "ism," Aynarchism - adding yet another "ism" to the thirty or so that adorn her introductory chapter "What is Anarchism" (enough to bamboozle any "beginner" to the subject!) (2005 : 25). But Rand, an early devotee of Nietzsche, explicitly repudiated anarchism, advocated a minimal but highly repressive state whose sole function was to support capitalist exploitation, and was a fervent promoter of free-market capitalism. She was in fact the intellectual guru of Margaret Thatcher. An egoist in ethical theory, antifeminist and anti-ecology, Ayn Rand saw city skyscrapers as a positive symbol of American capitalism, and of the human conquest of nature. Her vision is thus the exact anti-thesis of John Zerzan's anarcho-primitivism. How on earth scholars like Kinna (2005 : 35) and Simon Tormey (2004 : 119) can consider Ayn Rand as "anarchist" is beyond my comprehension. She was essentially an elitist, liberal republican (on Rand's political philosophy see Morris 1996 : 183 - 192).

3. What's New in the New Anarchism?
What is of interest and significant is that very little of this "new anarchism" is in fact new or original. Let us discuss each strand in turn.

3.1 Anarcho-capitalism

"Aynarchism," for a start, is just a re-affirmation of nineteenth century laissezfaire capitalism. The "egoism" embraced by Ayn Rand is, in fact, the very apotheosis of bourgeois thoughts on the individual, which go back to the classical liberalism of Hobbes and Locke.

3.2 Stirner's Individualism

The radical individualism advocated by the acolytes of Max Stirner is also somewhat antiquated. With Stirner, whose egoism is uncritically embraced by both Hakim Bey (1991 (aka Peter Lamborn Wilson) and John Moore (2004), the self becomes its own "property" and taking on the state form feels free to exploit and dominate others. "L'état, c'est moi," the state, it is me, Hakim Bey proclaims (1991 : 67). This, surely, is not an anarchist sentiment, and is hardly conducive to mutual aid and voluntary co-operation.

Stirner was, of course, a left-Hegelian (not a poet!) and was critiqued by Kropotkin at the end of the nineteenth century (Baldwin 1927 : 161-172).

Although acknowledging Stirner's historical importance, Kropotkin considered his amoral egoism limited and stultifying, in that Stirner repudiated neither property nor the state in his sanctification of the unique "ego." As Stirner puts it:

"I do not want the liberty of men, nor their equality; I want only my power over them. I want to make them my property, material for my enjoyment." (1973 : 318). Humans are thus not to be respected as persons, but seen only as an "object" for the ego's enjoyment (op int 311).

Interestingly, the anarchist critique of Stirner's egoism is completely ignored by his recent admiring devotees - Hakim Bey, in fact, tries to convince us that Stirner was not an "individualist" but embraced a joyous "conviviality" (1991 : 6771). Stirner certainly acknowledged an "association" of egoists, but as John P. Clark argued long ago, Stirner has little understanding of such values as community, solidarity, co-operation and mutual aid because he has such an abstract conception of the human individual (1976 : 97).

Both Stirner's and Ayn Rand's egoism is merely an expression of bourgeois possessive individualism. To use a common expression: it is all "old hat." Although of course the "new" Stirnerite individualists like to appropriate the term "anarchy" for themselves, contrasting it with "old" fashioned class struggle anarchism or "leftism" (Black 1997, Moore 2004; for a useful, succinct critique of Stirner's individualism see Bookchin 1999 : 125-26).

It is then quite ironic, if not perverse, to see academics like Saul Newman (2002) interpreting Stirner as an anti-essentialist thinker, when in fact Stirner was an essentialist par excellence, and was lampooned and critiqued as such by Marx and Engels long ago (1846/1965). Stirner's concept of the human individual as possessive, power-seeking, exploitative, amoral, competitive
and atomistic is thoroughly abstract and Hobbesian (bourgeois), as Kropotkin indicated in critiquing Stirner's essentialism. Kropotkin, of course, like every other social anarchist, recognized that all humans have unique personalities; but articulating a social, nonessentialist conception of the human subject (unlike Stirner) Kropotkin stressed that the freedom, integrity and the self-development of the individual could only be achieved in a free society - what Kropotkin termed free communism.

3.3 Poetic Terrorism

The kind of radical "aestheticism" and "cultural elitism" that stems from Friedrich Nietzsche is also hardly "new," for it was fashionable among the avant-garde at the end of the nineteenth century. Now resurrected and labelled "poetic terrorism," "attentat art" (art as protest), "ontological anarchy" or "radical aristocratism" (take your pick!) it is again well represented by the "life-style" anarchism of Hakim Bey (1991) and John Moore (2004 C). Indeed, Hakim Bey's writings represent an incoherent esoteric pastiche of the following: anarcho-primitivism (while completely oblivious to the mutual aid and communist ethos of tribal hunter-gatherers); the asocial egoism of Max Stirner; the "psychic nomadism" of the poststructuralists Deleuze and Guattari (while completely ignoring their radical materialism); the aesthetic elitism and "poetic terrorism" of Nietzsche; new-age spiritualism, including the joyful embrace of Islamic mysticism; chaos theory (misunderstood!); along with Proudhonian federalism, cyberspace, the use of Black Magic as a revolutionary tactic (while denying the possibility of social revolution!); and - watch out! - "the psychic Palaeolithic based on High-tech" (1991 : 44).

In contrast to philosophers like Hegel and Whitehead, Hakim Bey makes a fetish of incoherence (as does Moore) and expresses his thoughts in the most pretentious, scholastic gobbledygook, designed by both to impress and intimidate the ordinary reader (Moore tends to follow in his wake). No wonder Murray Bookchin and John Zerzan both dismiss Hakim Bey's mystical blather as elitist, petty bourgeois and basically reformist.

Hakim Bey's concept of the "temporary autonomous zone" is likewise, hardly original, though it has provoked a bucket load of scholarly debate. Over the past century anarchists, as well as ordinary people, have been involved in autonomous activities: some fleeting, some enduring. They have thus created trade unions, affinity groups, communes, co-operatives, voluntary associations, and anarchist organizations, all of which have been independent of both the state and the capitalist economy. Some are work-place organizations; some community based. They have thus long ago been engaged in the creation of autonomous "zones" of social activity. As well, of course, as being involved in temporary events - sabotage, strikes, protests and demonstrations. In fact, for generations of class struggle anarchists "spontaneity" has always implied not just transitory events but rather the creation of non-hierarchical forms of organization that are truly organic, self-created and voluntary - as Bookchin expressed it long ago in his pamphlet: "spontaneity and organization" (1972/1980 : 251-74). Thus there is precious little that is new or original in Hakim Bey's conception of a "temporary autonomous zone." It is what Colin Ward (1973) - also long ago - called "anarchy in action."

What is, however, new about Bey's concept is that it is purely fleeting and ephemeral, and is combined with the notion of a "nomadic individual," the archetype lone-ranger, who leaves to
other mortals the care and upbringing of children, and the production of food and the other necessities of human life, all of which require some form of organization. Ignoring forms of social oppression and widespread inequalities, indeed abandoning any form of resistance to social oppression, Bey's liberal politics confronts neither capitalism or state power, but happily and joyfully co-exists with them. All the while, indulging in disinterested aesthetic contemplation, blissful and ludic, along with occult practices and Islamic mysticism. All of which are thoroughly reactionary, and can hardly be described as either anarchism or anarchy. In fact, Hakim Bey's eclectic postmodern pastiche sits rather well with New Age Spiritualism and consumer capitalism. The choice that Bey (1994) offers us, that between Immediatism and Capitalism is, of course, thoroughly facile. (For useful critiques of Hakim Bey's liberal politics see Bookchin 1995 B : 20-26, Zerzan 2002 : 144-46, Franks 2006 : 266-67).

Contrary to what Giorel Curran (2006) suggests, the concept of TAZ "Temporary Autonomous Zone" has very little connection with the "carnivals of rebellion" or the "festivals of resistance" that have been part and parcel of such movements as Reclaim the Streets, the anti-roads movement and the anti-globalization protests. Indeed street carnivals and festivals have always been an integral part of class struggle, anarchism and revolutionary socialist movements ever since the French revolution.

Recent attempts by academic scholars to interpret Nietzsche as an "anarchist" (no less!) (Moore 2004 B, Sheehan 2003 : 72) seem to me quite fallacious.

Although there is undoubtedly a libertarian aspect to Nietzsche's philosophy - for example, his solitary form of individualism with its aesthetic appeal to selfmaking; the radical critique implied in his "revaluation of all values"; his strident attack on the state in "Thus Spake Zarathustra"; and his impassioned celebration of the life-instincts and personal freedom and power. This is why Nietzsche had such an appeal to Emma Goldman and Guy Aldred.

But all this is more than off-set by Nietzsche's thoroughly reactionary mindset. This is illustrated by his elitist politics, his celebration of authority and tradition, his misogyny, his admiration of the Indian caste-system and dictators like Julius Caesar and Napoleon, and his complete lack of any progressive vision apart from the notion of an isolated, asocial nomad, the "overman" who will be the legislator of humankind. Reciprocity, mutual aid and equal rights for all were "poisonous" doctrines according to Nietzsche, for what he valued was a "good and healidy aristocracy" (his words). Nietzsche was, indeed, in many respects, as Richard Wolin argues, (2004 : 52-63) a proto-fascist (see my critical review Morris 2007). It is worth noting that although Kropotkin admired Nietzsche's poetic writings, and thought he was unequalled in his critique of Christianity, and was "great" as a theorist of "revolt," he nevertheless felt that Nietzsche always remained a "slave to bourgeois prejudices." For Nietzsche had little understanding of either socialism or anarchism, and his philosophy was not so much a repudiation or "refusal" of "modernity" as its apotheosis (Kropotkin 1970 : 305).

3.4 Primitivism
Turning now to anarcho-primitivism this too is hardly "new." Primitivism is, of course, as old as the hills, and goes back to the beginnings of agrarian civilization. It is particularly associated with the Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the concept of the "noble savage" (John Zerzan 1988, 1994) and other anarcho-primitivists simply embrace this ancient idea, weld it to contemporary anarchism, and declare, in Utopian fashion, that the "future" is primitive. This entails, one supposes, some kind of return to a tribal hunter-gathering existence?

John Zerzan presents an apocalyptic, even perhaps, a gnostic vision. Our hunter-gatherer past is thus described by Zerzan as an idyllic era of virtue and authentic living. The last eight thousand years or so of human history after the rise of agriculture (the fall) is seen as a period of tyranny and hierarchical control, a mechanized routine devoid of any spontaneity, and involving the anaesthetisation of the senses. All those products of the human creative imagination - farming, art, philosophy, technology, science, writing, urban living, symbolic culture - are viewed negatively and denigrated by Zerzan in a monolithic fashion.

The future, we are told, is "primitive." How this is to be achieved in a world that presently sustains around six billion people (for evidence suggests that the hunter-gatherer life-style is only able to support one or two people per sq. mile) or whether the "future primitive" actually entails a return to hunter-gatherer subsistence Zerzan does not tell us. Whether such images of green primitivism are symptomatic of the estrangement of affluent urban dwellers and intellectuals from the natural (and human) world, as both Roy Ellen (1986) and Murray Bookchin (1995: 120-146) suggests, I will leave others to judge.

But what is important about Zerzan's work is the affirmation that hunter-gatherers were, in many respects, "stone age anarchists." As Zerzan puts it; life in "primitive" society was largely one of leisure, gender equality, intimacy with the natural world and sensual wisdom. All this, of course, was emphasized by Peter Kropotkin long ago. Kropotkin stressed the close intimacy that existed between humans and animals in tribal society, that tribal people had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the natural world, and put a marked emphasis on sharing, generosity and mutual aid, which co-existed with an equal emphasis on individual autonomy and independence. But, unlike Zerzan, Kropotkin was not blind to the limitations of tribal life, the oppressive nature of certain traditions and the hierarchical aspects of tribal life (Kropotkin 1902: 74-101, Morris 2004: 173-190).

When John Moore embraced primitivism as a source of inspiration for contemporary anarchism he was not, then, suggesting anything new or original. Kropotkin had suggested this a century earlier. Indeed, having undertaken ethnographic studies among hunter-gatherers living in the Ghat Mountains of South India, more than two decades before John Moore penned his "primitivist primer" and having experienced the reality of hunter-gatherer social existence, I personally never contemplated any more than did Kropotkin, becoming a permanent forager. Thus we need to draw inspiration and lessons from the cultural past of tribal peoples, as Kropotkin suggested, without romanticizing them, or trying to emulate the social life of the hunter-gatherers. (Morris 1982, 1986, 2005: 4-6; for critiques of Zerzan's primitivism see Bookchin 1995: 39-49, Shephard 2003, Albert 2006: 178-84)
It is of interest that Giorel Curran (2006 : 42) outlines some of the criticism of Zerzan's eco-primitivism - as being misanthropic, as fanciful and hopelessly romantic, and as dismissive of the human potential for creativity and innovation, without ever indicating the source of such criticisms or whether in fact she agrees with them.

3.5 Postmodern Anarchism

Let me finally turn to so-called postmodern anarchism, otherwise known as poststructuralist anarchism, or simply post anarchism.

In the last decades of the twentieth century the academy was suddenly besieged by the rhetoric of the so-called "postmodernists," who, following in the footsteps of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Wittgenstein (all political reactionaries), have had a baneful influence on the social sciences. Now, somewhat belatedly, it seems that anarchists have also become infatuated with postmodernism - at a time when most social scientists are leaping off this particular band-wagon, and writing books like "After Postmodernism" (Lopez and Potter 2001).

Postmodernism is a diffuse, rather inchoate cultural movement or ideology that is difficult to define as it includes scholars with radically different approaches to social life. But as an intellectual ethos associated with such scholars as Baudrillard, Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault, Rorty, Laclau and Butler, it has been characterized by the following tenets, all presented in the most oracular fashion.

Firstly, as (supposedly!) we have no knowledge of the world except through "descriptions" (to use Rorty’s term) the "real" is conceived as an "effect" of discourses. Anti-realism is thus in vogue, and we are informed that there is no "objective reality." As the anthropologist Mary Douglas put it: "all reality is social reality" (1975 : 5). Or as Derrida put it "there is nothing outside the text" (1976 : 158). (He was later to plead that he had been misunderstood (so meaning is not, as he always claimed, indeterminate!), and that he did not doubt the reality of the material world, but only wished to advance a "textualist" approach (Rotzer 1995 : 45).

Postmodernism therefore tends to propound a neo-idealist metaphysic, and thus to repudiate REALISM - the notion that the natural world has an objective reality and existence independent of human consciousness.

Secondly, as our perceptions and experiences of the world are always to some degree socially mediated - acknowledged by generations of social scientists ever since Marx's reflections on Feuerbach's materialism - postmodernists take this insight to extreme and come to espouse an epistemological (and moral) relativism. Truth is either repudiated entirely (Tyler 1986), or seen simply as an "effect" of local cultural discourses (Rorty 1979, Flax 1990), or something that will be "disclosed" by elite scholars (Heidegger 1994). Truth as correspondence is thus repudiated, and as knowledge is always historically and socially situated, there can be, it is argued, no universal truths or values. Trudi, we are told, is always subjective, indeterminate, relative and contingent. Both objective knowledge and empirical science are thus repudiated, along with universal values.
Thirdly, critiquing the transcendental ego of Cartesian rationalism (and phenomenology) together with the abstract individual of bourgeois ideology - which had, of course, been critiqued, indeed lampooned, by Marx, Bakunin and Kropotkin in the nineteenth century! - postmodernists again go to extreme and announce the "dissolution" of human subjectivity, the self being declared a "fiction." Human agency is thus repudiated, or the subject is viewed simply as an "effect" of "ideology" or "power" or "discourses."

Fourthly, there is a rejection of "metanarratives" (Lyotard 1984) (Marxism, Buddhism, human rights discourses, evolutionary biology, palaeontology, universal history) and a strident celebration expressed of the "postmodern condition." The so-called postmodern condition - with its alienation, cultural pastiche, fragmentation, decentred subjectivity, nihilism - describes however, not so much a new paradigm or epoch, but rather the cultural effects of global capitalism.

Finally, there has been a tendency among post-modern mies - following Heidegger - express themselves in the most obscure and impenetrable jargon, under the misguided impression that obscurity connotes profundity, and that a neo-Baroque prose style is the hallmark of radical politics It isn't! (Morris 1997, 2006 : 8-10, Hay 2002 : 321-22).

All this has led the acolytes of postmodernism to proclaim, with some stridency, the "dissolution" or "erasure" or the "end" of such concepts as truth, reason, history, class, nature, the self, science and philosophy - along with the Enlightenment "project" itself. Yet in their rejection of history and class, in reducing social reality to discourses, in their epistemic and moral relativism, in their dissolution of human subjectivity, and in their seeming obsession with the media, high-tech cyberspace and consumer capitalism, many have remarked that there seems to be an "unholy alliance" between postmodernism and the capitalist triumphalism of the neo-liberals (Wood and Foster 1997).

Postmodernism has, of course, been subjected to a barrage of criticism from numerous scholars, which makes one wonder why it is still held in such esteem by some academic anarchists. (For critiques, see, for example, Gellner 1992, Bunge 1996, Callinicos 1997, Detmer 2003, and from an anarchist perspective Bookchin 1995: 172-204, Zerzan 1994 : 101-34).

Poststructuralism is sometimes described as the philosophy of postmodernism. Yet what is of interest is that the radical scholars that have most appeal to the post anarchists - Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Gualtar - all expressed an opposition to postmodernism, or at least distanced themselves from it. Yet it also has to be recognized that few of the political ideas expressed by the poststructuralist philosophers are in fact new or original. For what they have done is simply to appropriate many of the basic ideas and principles of (social) anarchism, and wrapped them up in the most scholastic jargon - with little or no acknowledgement. These ideas, please note, include the following:

opposition to the state and all forms of power and oppression; recognition that the power of the modern state intrudes into all aspects of social life; a fervent anti-capitalism; a rejection of the vanguard party, representation and the notion that the transformation to socialism can be achieved through state-power; a rejection of an "essentialist" (i.e. Cartesian/abstract) conception
of human nature; and finally, the importance of creating alternative social forms of organization, non-hierarchic and independent of both the state and capitalism.

Kropotkin (and other social and class struggle anarchists over the past century) had, of course, expressed these ideas long ago - more concretely, and much more lucidly. Unlike most poststructuralists, from Bourdieu to Baudrillard and Derrida, Kropotkidn (and Elisee Reclus) also expressed an ecological sensibility.

Here is a typical extract from Deleuze, discussing French capitalism:

"Against this global policy of power, we initiate localized counter responses, skirmishes, active and occasionally preventative defences. We have no need to totalize that which is invariably totalized on the side of power; if we were to move in this direction, it would mean restoring the representative forms of centralism and a hierarchical structure" (Foucault 1977 : 212).

Deleuze seems singularly unaware that this strategy had been advocated by Kropotldn and the anarchist tradition for more than a hundred years.

All this is well illustrated in Dave Morland's (2004) suggestions about the poststructuralist anarchism supposedly being expressed in recent new social movements. He writes that such anarchism repudiates representational politics, advocates "autonomous capacity building" (what Kropotkin and early anarchists described simply as direct action!), is suspicious of vanguardism and revolutionary elites, and shuns the quest for political power. This is not some "new mode" of anarchism, and there is nothing "poststructuralist" about it: it simply reflects what social anarchists have been advocating and practising for the last hundred years. Social or class struggle anarchists have in fact always been a constituent part of all protest movements since the second world war, whether against fascism, nuclear power, the Vietnam war, the poll tax or more recently, global capitalism. Class struggle anarchists have always been around, and were in evidence long before the anti-globalization protests, when they received especial media attention as a "travelling circus" (Goaman 2004).

Likewise Saul Newman's definition of "postanarchism" simply regurgitates what anarchists like Kropotldn long ago emphasized: the repudiation of relations of domination; an ethic of mutual aid; the intrinsic relationship between equality and liberty; a commitment to respect "difference" (diversity) and individual autonomy within a collectivity; and an emphasis on community which is not equated with a "herd" mentality. But at least Newman, unlike his mentors, acknowledges his sources, namely the writings of Bakunin and Kropotkin! (2004 : 123, see Morris 2004). Postanarchism is simply an exercise of putting old wine into new wine bottles! Richard Day (2005 : 123) even describes Kropotkin as the "first post anarchist." Kropotkin wasn't "post" anything; he was an anarchist. He was part of an ongoing revolutionary movement and political tradition: namely, libertarian socialism (or anarchism). Day's "politics of affinity" and his advocacy of "structural renewal" simply exemplify the politics of "old" anarchism - the anarchism of Kropotkin and a host of social or class struggle anarchists from Goldman, Rocker and Landauer in the past to Bookchin and the Anarchist Federation in the present. Thus there is very little that is new or original in the so-called "post anarchism."
4. Conclusion

We can but conclude that there is nothing particularly "new" about the "new anarchism" and the anarchistic tendencies that are being expressed in the new social movements or in the anti-globalization protests is not some "new mode" of anarchism or some "new paradigm" but the kind of social or class struggle anarchism that had its origins long ago in working class struggles for libertarian socialism. This form of anarchism, as earlier indicated, is still the most vibrant form of anarchism around (see Sheehan 2003, Franks 2006).

Sidebar

For what they have done is simply to appropriate many of the basic ideas and principles of (social) anarchism, and wrapped them up in the most scholastic jargon - with little or no acknowledgement

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