

At long last: a set of serious, sustained engagements with the complex relationships between anarchism and the politics and practice of sexuality. Jamie Heckert and Richard Cleminson have gathered together a collection of passionate, provocative papers that incite the reader to recognize the relevance of anarchist ideas to queer and feminist sexual politics.

Sasha Roseneil, author of *Common Women, Uncommon Practices: the queer feminisms of Greenham*, Professor of Sociology and Social Theory at Birkbeck, University of London

Not so much a book as a nexus, into which flow some bubbling torrents: utopias, poetry and footnotes, post-theory, rationality, sexuality, Palestine, love, sado-masochism, Kropotkin and Nietzsche, lonely women in all-male meetings, riot grrrls, Queer parades, heteronormativity ...and fishbowls. – Something to delight everyone, something to annoy everyone, something to make you think.

Sharif Gemie, former editor of *Anarchist Studies*, Professor in Modern and Contemporary History, University of Glamorgan



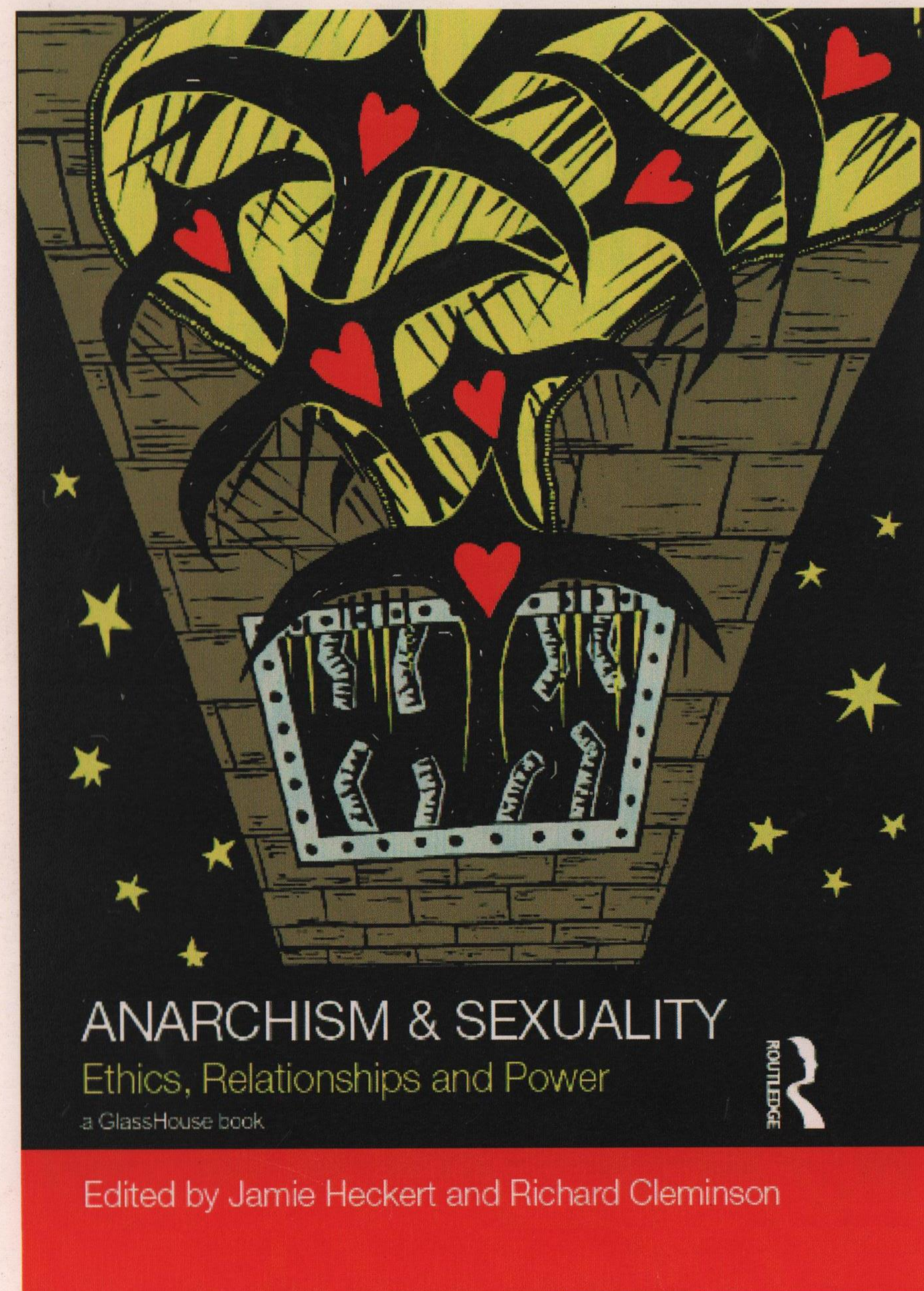
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Jamie Heckert holds a PhD from the University of Edinburgh and is a founding member of the Anarchist Studies Network. His writings on ethics, erotics and ecology appear in a variety of activist and scholarly publications.

Richard Cleminson is Reader in the History of Sexuality at the University of Leeds and Associate Editor of *Anarchist Studies*. His research centres on the history of sexuality in Spain and he has published on anarchism and sexuality, the history of male homosexuality and hermaphroditism.

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preview of contents and introduction

Anarchism & Sexuality

Anarchism & Sexuality aims to bring the rich and diverse traditions of anarchist thought and practice into contact with contemporary questions about the politics and lived experience of sexuality.

Both in style and in content, it is conceived as a book that aims to question, subvert and overflow authoritarian divisions between the personal and political; between sexual desires categorised as heterosexual or homosexual; between seemingly mutually exclusive activism and scholarship; between forms of expression such as poetry and prose; and between disciplinary categories of knowledge.

Anarchism & Sexuality seeks to achieve this by suggesting connections between ethics, relationships and power, three themes that run throughout the book. The key objectives of the volume are: to bring fresh anarchist perspectives to debates around sexuality; to make a queer and feminist intervention within the most recent wave of anarchist scholarship; and to make a queerly anarchist contribution to social justice literature, policy and practice. By mingling prose and poetry, theory and autobiography, it constitutes a gathering place to explore the interplay between sexual and social transformation.

This book will be of use to those interested in anarchist movements, cultural studies, critical legal theory, gender studies, and queer and sexuality studies.

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Social Justice

Series editors: Kate Bedford and Davina Cooper
University of Kent at Canterbury, UK

Social Justice is a new, theoretically engaged, interdisciplinary series exploring the changing values, politics and institutional forms through which claims for equality, democracy and liberation are expressed, manifested and fought over in the contemporary world. The series addresses a range of contexts from transnational political fora, to nation-state and regional controversies, to small-scale social experiments. At its heart is a concern, and inter-disciplinary engagement, with the present and future politics of power, as constituted through territory, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, economics, ecology and culture. Forgoing struggle, imagined alternatives and the embedding of new norms, *Social Justice* critically explores how change is wrought through law, governance and institutionalism, everyday social and bodily practices, dissident knowledges, and movements for citizenship, belonging and reinvented community.

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Anarchism & Sexuality

Ethics, Relationships and Power

Edited by
Jamie Heckert and Richard Cleminson

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
a GlassHouse book

This book is dedicated, with loving memories,
to Sam 'Tumbleweed' Roberts
7 January 1986 – 6 May 2007

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Ethics, relationships and power

An introduction

Jamie Heckert and Richard Cleminson

All of us have to learn how to invent our lives, make them up, imagine them. We need to be taught these skills; we need guides to show us how. If we don't, our lives get made up for us by other people.

—Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Wave in the Mind*

Like masturbation, anarchism is something we have been brought up to fear, irrationally and unquestioningly, because not to fear it might lead us to probe it, learn it and like it.

—Cathy Levine, *The Tyranny of Tyranny*

Introduction

With this book, we bring the rich and diverse traditions of anarchist thought and practice into contact with contemporary questions about the politics and lived experiences of sexuality. We've attempted to craft a queer book, both in style and in content: a book that aims to question, subvert and overflow authoritarian divisions between the personal and political, between desires categorised as heterosexual or homosexual, between activism and scholarship, between poetry and prose, and between disciplinary categories of knowledge. In doing so, we attempt to enact what Judy Greenway has called a 'methodological anarchism that relinquishes control, challenges boundaries and hierarchies, and provides a space for new ideas to emerge' (Greenway 2008: 324). Bringing this book into the world, we have a number of intentions: first, to make fresh anarchist perspectives available to contemporary debates around sexuality; second, to make a queer and feminist intervention within the most recent waves of anarchist scholarship; and, third, to make a queerly anarchist contribution to social justice literature, policy and practice. But before that, before this book has even been published, we have already been transformed through the process of engaging with each other and each of the contributors and their contributions. Lest we slip into a fetishisation of the future, of ends disconnected from means, of products separated from production, we note

that the long slow birth of this book is already making interventions and contributions. The book is not unusual in that respect; all processes, all relationships, have multiple effects. What is unusual, in the goal-oriented 'phallicised whiteness' of capitalism (Winnubst 2006: 6), is to appreciate processes and relationships for themselves. This appreciation is one of many inheritances from anarchist, feminist and indigenous traditions for which we are deeply grateful.

The book's methodology, running through each piece in this collection, concentrates on raising historical, present and practical questions concerning sex and sexuality, love, desire and intimacy, with a specific focus on a triad of interconnected fields: ethics, relationships and power. By means of its consciously interdisciplinary approach, this book attempts to bring contemporary and historical anarchist interpretations into the pressing spheres of current social, political, ethical and legal debate. In doing so, *Anarchism & Sexuality* bridges a supposed gap between theory and activism, between ideas and 'real life struggle'. By drawing inspiration from the rise of the global movement of movements, and the corresponding waves of anarchist activism and scholarship, this book provides much-needed sources of inspiration for putting anarchistic ethics into practice, focusing on issues such as race, class and gender equality, sexual liberation and sexual violence, the experience of one's own body and the interface between these matters and social mores, psychological patterns, laws and other aspects of 'societies of control' (Deleuze 1992).

Before articulating these messages and their relevance to living our lives, first of all we want to say a few words about how anarchism may be understood. For some, anarchism is very easily defined: either it is a symbol and incarnation of chaos or it is an outmoded revolutionary political ideology originating in social movements of nineteenth-century Europe. Despite its evident trajectory, anarchism is dismissed as an ideology that failed historically to create and sustain a revolutionary society, an ideology and practice that is locked into an essentialist concept of human nature as primarily generous and good, and that is bound by prioritising class struggle and workplace issues over and above transforming other social relationships. Thus, anarchism is all too often viewed as having little to offer contemporary questions and strategies for undermining seemingly entrenched hierarchies and violent exploitative social relationships. In this second reading, anarchism is more or less confined to the writings of 'anarchist luminaries' such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin and Piotr Kropotkin, experiencing an upsurge in the late nineteenth century and petering out, save in some isolated spots in the periphery of Europe and Latin America, by the end of World War Two. For others, however, anarchism did not die with the Spanish Civil War. Anarchism has since developed through ongoing practical experiments in non-hierarchical organisation and has broadened and deepened its theoretical foundations to offer a striking relevance nowadays. However, while anarchism remains opposed to capitalism and to the state (whether the state-centred politics of liberal

democracy or the centralised vertical structures of authoritarian socialism), its relevance to sexuality is perhaps not all that apparent. This definition of anarchism certainly doesn't *sound* sexy (except, perhaps, to those of us with a fetish for revolutionary theory).

Rather than seeing anarchism as an ideology, anarchist historian Rudolf Rocker suggests that it should be understood as a 'definite trend in the historic development of mankind [sic]' to strive for freedom (cited in Chomsky 2005: 118). Commenting on this, Noam Chomsky argues that there is no need to pin down anarchism as a singular object because

there will be no doctrine of social change fixed for the present and future, nor even, necessarily, a specific and unchanging concept of the goals towards which social change should tend. Surely our understanding of the nature of man [sic] or of the range of viable social forms is so rudimentary that any far-reaching doctrine must be treated with great skepticism, just as skepticism is in order when we hear that 'human nature' or 'the demands of efficiency' or 'the complexity of modern life' requires this or that form of oppression and autocratic rule.

(Chomsky 2005: 119)

As a trend striving for freedom, for liberation, the significance of anarchism for an examination and living out of sexuality might become more obvious. However, many have understandably become critical of notions of sexual liberation after poststructuralist critiques of 'liberation' and in a time where freedom has individualistic connotations. What might sexual anarchy mean, if not the total lack of order and morality that some might imagine? What characterises this anarchist trend besides dismantling authority?

In order to answer these questions, we believe that it can be helpful to think of this 'trend in history' called anarchism as a kind of ethics of relationships, as advocating and practising very different relations of power than those involved in the state, capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy (Heckert 2010a, 2010b). Three 'guiding principles' drive the endeavour in this book to bring anarchist ethics to (sexual) relationships. First, anarchism is not viewed as a 'one-size-fits-all' solution to social problems, but rather as a commitment to diversity as an ethical stance in itself, in sharp contrast to the standardisation and regulation of state and bureaucratic rationales. The contributions in this volume reflect this diversity because situations are different, because life itself is diverse; there are, nevertheless, some commonly shared ethics: agreements to respect a diversity of tactics, support for cultural and ecological diversity in the face of neoliberal imperialism, and resistance to any orthodoxy. Second, anarchism has a radical commitment to equality; anarchy means no one gets to claim the unquestionable status of being on top (*an* = no; *archy* = top, from the Greek *anarkhos*).¹ Instead, relationships are always open to renegotiation. Unlike an individualistic notion of freedom, where one person is to be 'free'

(that is, *privileged*) at the expense of others, anarchism's idea of freedom is relational: one person's freedom is inseparable from another's freedom. Thus, anarchist organisation practises horizontality, or perhaps a fluidity of power where no one is in any position of leadership for an extended period and where leadership involves following rather than commanding. Likewise, a radical commitment to equality involves an ongoing process of empowerment so that everyone is better able to contribute to change. This ethic of freedom, in resistance to everyday forms of governmentality and normalisation, subtle or more overt, is addressed in different ways and draws on different analytical tools in each of the essays and short pieces contained in these pages. Third, anarchism, as a daily practice, engages in an ethic of care rather than an ethic of control (including control disguised as care). This book explores how love and solidarity can be articulated in the sphere of sexuality and beyond within societies that may seem ever more disconnected, atomised and authoritarian. Thus, rather than supporting charity, anarchism favours solidarity where all practices of freedom are recognised as interconnected.

Finally, anarchist ethics place emphasis on listening to others rather than speaking for them or on their behalf. In addressing the sensitive issues of intimacy, love and desire, the essays and poems in this book both argue for and demonstrate this ethic of listening as an alternative to statist patterns of representation and discipline. In the Zapatistas' *Other Campaign*, this inspired approach is demonstrated through a focus on listening to the struggles of others and supporting their capacity for autonomy rather than electoral campaigns to become their representatives (Marcos and the Zapatistas 2006). In anarchy-feminism and radical psychologies, learning to listen to oneself, to acknowledge one's own emotions and desires, is crucial to unlearning patriarchal hierarchies of the rational over the emotional, of mind over body. For, as Saul Newman put it, 'if the problem of voluntary servitude – so often neglected in radical political theory – is to be countered, the revolution against power and authority must involve a micro-political revolution which takes place at the level of the subject's desire' (Newman 2010: 6). In listening to our own bodies, our own desires, as well as to others (human and non-human), perhaps we can all come to imagine our own lives.

Part of imagining our own lives – and practising them, too – for many of us is related to how we live our sexuality. For some, this is a fundamental part of their life experience; for others, it is one of a wide range of activities to which limited time is devoted. But today, as some commentators have noted (e.g. Weeks 1985), sexuality has accrued the status of being somehow special, different from other social relationships. Of course, what goes on in sexual relationships is in numerous ways different from what takes place in the relationship amongst workers in the workplace or the interactions between citizens and authorities. But many of the same hierarchies, obligations and behavioural patterns coincide in different relationships, whether we label them intimate, economic or political. The special status of sexuality stems, in part, from a

patriarchal separation of the personal from the political, the private from the public. Supposedly natural constructions of masculinity and femininity, double standards across these divisions, whereby it is socially sanctioned that men have many partners and women should be 'chaste', are themselves naturalised. Sexuality has become the truth of the self in a way that other aspects of 'private' life have not; such an incitement to 'be sexual' and to consume the wares of sexuality fits with present exhortations to construct our own lifestyles and identities through avid and repetitive consumption. In other words, who you have sex with (or want to have sex with) is assumed to be a fixed characteristic, an answer to the question of what sort of person you are or an essential part of personhood by which you are valued or denied value; sexual performance also becomes an integral and necessary part of the self. Similar assumptions are rarely made about expressions of desire for golfing, swimming or walking on the beach. The result is that sexuality has become emphasised as a special location for liberation, *the* place where desires can be met.

Making sex special like this causes all sorts of problems, as some branches of feminism and later poststructuralism have argued. For starters, profit-oriented media sell this notion of individualistic sexual liberation, saying not only that people can have the great sex lives they want, but that they *should* have them. How is this supposed to happen? Most people spend all day at rigidly differentiated and hierarchised workplaces, are told to suppress their feelings in order to obey the rules, and find it difficult to come home and become capable of expressing their feelings and desires and listening to those of another. And if (or when) people fail to express their feelings and desires, they are told it is their own fault. However, those faults can be fixed, those problems can be solved by spending money on individual solutions: 'beauty' products and cosmetic surgery, self-help books and psychological magazines that disinter one's 'true' desires and self.

As the realm of sex and relationships becomes ever more privatised, the subject of surveillance and the plaything of psychological expertise, the collective and race/gender/class-inflected elements of sexuality fall from view. Faced with the commodification of sexuality, its privatisation and mediation by capitalism as part of what Foucault termed 'governmentality' – basically the setting into motion of refined techniques that ensure one's inner self and actions are governed (and governed by oneself) to a degree that one is unaware of or assumes as natural – what can anarchism offer?

Anarchism and sexuality in history and in the present

Opposition to the acceptability of coercive social relationships, domination and rigid hierarchies and the advocacy of the construction of living alternatives is not something new to anarchist thought. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the activist and theorist Piotr Kropotkin argued that anarchistic expressions of mutual aid, cooperation and opposition to hierarchical power

could be traced back to at least mediaeval European society and that these characteristics continued to prevail in his day. More recently, Colin Ward argued against a simple collapsing of the past and the present by writing that 'an anarchist society, a society which organises itself without authority, is always in existence, like a seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its wastes' (Ward 1982: 14). The very fabric of social life, with its constantly evolving networks of alternatives to hierarchies and its ability to create new forms of social organisation in which control is articulated horizontally, continues to inform day-to-day existence in a way that is easy to overlook, underestimate or forget.

In a fast-changing world we should not forget the historical legacy of past movements which, working with conditions that were in many ways different from those pertaining today, created stories that have a great deal to offer. By looking to the past, we can see how the anarchist critique of the relations of dominance that rely on strictly differentiated gender roles and the organisation of sexuality in accordance with religious or state prerogatives has enjoyed a solid presence in anarchist thought and practice from the late nineteenth century onwards. Examples include early attempts to organise women in revolutionary trade unions in France (Maitron 1983), efforts to promote women's reproductive and sexual freedom as articulated by Emma Goldman (Goldman 1969; Haaland 1993) and others (Passet 2003) in the United States and by small groups of anarchists in Spain, where contraception was demanded and supplied (Nash 1984, 1995). Sexual freedom was, in turn, closely linked to discussions around gender, marriage, the family and free love taking place around the world (Bowen Raddeker 2001; Cohn, 2010; Greenway 2009). Anarchists responded to a diversity of social ills by reconfiguring ways of relating and being in a capitalist world, forging new attitudes towards the body such as nudism (Cleminson 2004), interconnecting the social, political and the literary, as suggested by Oscar Wilde, Edward Carpenter and Daniel Guérin, and making links between sexual freedom and libertarian socialism, as evidenced in anarchist involvement in the early homosexual rights campaigns from the 1920s onwards (Kissack 2008; Lucien 2006). Female anarchists' critiques of male domination within the early twentieth-century Spanish anarchist movement provided a reflexive critique not only of the inequalities of the broader society but of the prejudices and failings still alive in the anarchist movement itself (Ackelsberg 2000, 2005; Espigado Tocino 2002; Nash 1975). More recent historic contributions range from involvement in feminist politics (Brown 1996; Dark Star Collective 2002) and gay liberation (Mecca 2009; Ording 2009) through to Alex Comfort's anarchist-inspired *The Joy of Sex*.

Anarchist histories are a rich resource for engaging with the question of how we live our lives. As Utah Phillips put it, 'the past didn't go anywhere' (in Phillips and DiFranco 1997). At the same time, part of the attraction and enduring relevance of anarchism is precisely its organic ability to adapt and evolve, incorporating new strategies and new fields of action. Such a

revitalised anarchism has benefited from the emergence of two recent transformations of the geo-political landscape. Both have roots in anarchistic practice (as well as in anti-state Marxism, radical feminism and movements protagonised by indigenous demands for autonomy and control of land) and have rekindled interest in anarchism as a set of theoretical and practical resources to move towards a freer society. These two new currents are, first, poststructuralist thought and, second, the rise of global anti-capitalist movements.

Inspired at least in part by their participation in the anti-state, anti-capitalist uprisings of May 1968, the writing of figures such as Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari are becoming read as critical contributions to Western anarchist traditions (ASN 2010a; Rousselle and Evren 2011). While these readings are controversial, both because they have, at times, run the risk of setting up a straw figure of a simplistic 'classical anarchism' to be knocked down by a new and improved postanarchism (Cohn 2002; Cohn and Wilbur 2011) and because of the highly theoretical nature of these writings, controversy has been part of the energetic renewal brought about through anarchist engagement with post-structuralist theories. From our perspectives, this wave of radical French theory complements rather than replaces lesser known anarchist theorists who have also had sophisticated and nuanced thoughts on the nature of power, subjectivity and revolution. Nonetheless, this minor revolution in anarchism is powerful, particularly because it is echoed and amplified through similar revolutions taking place in feminist, postcolonial and queer theories.

These theoretical developments have also been of particular value in inspiring and explaining the rise of directly democratic, horizontal networks of protest, community building and resistance to hierarchy variously referred to as the global justice movement, the movement of movements and the alterglobalisation movement. Inspired by a long history of direct action, including the Zapatista struggle for indigenous autonomy and the queer tactics of ACT-UP (Shepard 2002), the mass protests against the World Trade Organisation in Seattle in 1999 were the first globally visible manifestation of this movement; suddenly both scholars and popular commentators were asking how such a huge and powerful protest movement could be organised without a clearly defined leadership. While the existence of these movements cannot be conflated directly with anarchist thought and practice in any simple way, they do seek to construct organisations and activities outside of the formal parameters offered by neo-colonial, Western or liberal notions of democracy. In doing so, these movements are learning to undermine the forms of gendered, racialised and sexualised violence intertwined with individualistic, hierarchical structures of democracy (e.g. Chen *et al.* 2011; Smith 2005) and to create, instead, autonomous spaces.

The critique offered by anarchism of party politics, of the inherent power relationship entailed by the representation of one group's supposed interests by another, unaccountable group, of the desire to homogenise rather than diversify – except within the context of pay-as-you-go fixed sexual and consumer identities – has garnered an analysis of sexuality and gender politics that has much in

common with a third strand of contemporary theory and activism: queer. While anarchism traditionally has challenged borders based on nationality and hierarchies of class, the emerging queer theory of the early 1990s critiqued apparently stable orders of gendered and sexualised identity and strict borders of the body, sex and sexuality. Queer theory, radically reappraising the fixity of these discourses, has interrogated, in its feminist aspects, seemingly natural differences and hierarchies around sex. The practice of constant revision of the 'given', of comfortable notions of sex and body, and their political inheritance articulated by queer theory and activism, has much in common with anarchism, with its critique of borders, hierarchies and naturalised differences. Further, if queer theory has developed out of the anti-statist thought of figures such as Michel Foucault, Giles Deleuze and the anti-identarianism of Judith Butler, and also out of the direct action politics of ACT-UP and other radical queer groups, and feminist critiques of gendered, racialised and classed hierarchies, then anarchist readings of, and contributions to, queer theory are clearly invaluable. In particular, the transnational (or anti-national) and anti-racist aspects of anarchism may help us address the pressing challenges of 'homonationalism' (Puar 2006) and 'silences in queerness/raciality' (Kuntsman and Miyake 2008) in these times of racialised war and the (white) resentment which fuels both war and other forms of disconnection and violence (see, e.g., APOC 2010; Lamble 2008; Veneuse 2009).

Based on an analysis of the ways in which power constructs discourses on sexuality and the possibility of their material expression, queer theory and anarchist thought provide a resetting of the equation of knowledge/power that aims to use reverse discourses and interstitial practices as possibilities to open up modes of life not based on hierarchical values. They are opportunities to develop, as Foucault suggested, 'non-fascist' ways of life (Foucault 2004), to develop a *chresis* or ethical practice of living whereby our lives are given meaning through the advocacy of democratic socialist principles lived in today's world. This is an active undertaking and, although we are constantly forced to choose, what we choose remains to some degree open. As two authors taking up Foucault's suggestion forcefully argue:

Whether we like it or not, we are obliged to choose, and every time we choose we give our lives meaning, since it depends on us to create the conditions whereby democratic socialism can be born with strength and vitality. Otherwise, we contribute with our passivity, with our submissive acceptance, or with means more direct, to the triumph of the fundamentalism of the market which will lead humanity once more to the frontiers of barbarism.

(Álvarez-Uriá and Varela 1999: 25; our translation)

Such an invitation to live a non-fascist way of life does not mean that sexuality becomes once more the 'secret' to be explored, the physical need to be

experienced or the core feature of a liberated self, but a mobile surface from which to play with established identities, the limits of the body and the constraints of exclusionary identities such as 'gay', 'bi' and 'hetero'. It is, succinctly, a matter of 'which ways of understanding ourselves make it possible to act with some chance of bringing about positive changes' (Greenway 1997: 180). The radical decentring of the way in which people can live their lives recognises that freedom cannot come through sex alone; rather it entails a critique that runs through all social relationships and attempts to reconstruct them in non-hierarchical terms.

Sexual anarchy?

Given the commonalities among certain historical and current strands of anarchism, and between anarchism, feminism and queer activism, it would appear that the time is ripe for an engaging intersection between these movements. It might be surprising, therefore, that there have been remarkably few publications that have paid attention to the overlaps and differences in these movements, outside a number of historical studies on anarchism and its links to women's movements or sex-reform programmes and scattered essays through movement literature.² While queer and feminist writing often has a strong critique of hierarchy and the state, if not an outright anti-state stance, anarchist sources have rarely been included (e.g. Alexander 2005; Anzaldúa 1987; Brown 1995; Butler and Spivak 2007; Cooper 1994; Mohanty 2003; Seidman 1997; Winnubst 2006; for recent and notable exceptions, see Fahs 2010; Jeppesen 2010; Kissack 2008; Portwood-Stacer 2010; Roseneil 2000; Rowbotham 2008; Shannon and Willis 2010; Shepard 2010; Wilkinson 2009; Windpassinger 2010; and, to a lesser extent, Monro 2005). Of course, inspiration for a libertarian politics can easily be found outside anarchist traditions. In other cases, anarchist sources may be difficult to acknowledge in academic writing (see hooks 1994 for a discussion of the politics of citation). For example, during a lecture in London, Judith Butler acknowledged the inspiration she took from anarchist and syndicalist movements and her desire for their growth, referring, with a mischievous grin, to her appreciation of anarchism as 'a confession' (Butler 2007). Similarly, a number of recent books on contemporary anarchism which we find deeply inspiring in other ways contain little or no reference to topics of sexuality (Amster *et al.* 2009; Franks 2006; Gordon 2008; Kinna 2005). Perhaps these silences are due, in part, to the intense emotional responses that sex and anarchy can trigger, sometimes with violent consequences. What makes the intersections of anarchism and sexuality potentially *exciting* also makes them *dangerous*. Challenging established identities, questioning notions of family and society and even the very idea of what constitutes 'sex' (as both an activity and with respect to what are considered to be biological truths of male and female) can dramatically undercut the foundations of established ways of relating to ourselves, each other and the world. Some

will experience this as profoundly liberating, others as deeply disturbing. Most of us will perhaps have a powerful mixture of feelings.

It is in facing the challenges of engaging with the emotionally charged topic of anarchism and sexuality that we find an understanding of anarchism as an ethics of relationships most inspiring. How might those of us advocating sexual anarchy empathise with the anger and fear of others (as well as with our own)? Can anarchist(ic) practices of restorative justice (e.g. Amster 2004; Gaarder 2009; Sullivan and Tifft 2001; Tifft and Sullivan 1980) and violence prevention (e.g. Tifft 1993) respond to understandable desires for order and security in societies where (sexual) violence is all too common? Can an ethic of care in practices of mutual aid create unexpected solidarities? Might even sexual and religious minorities form coalitions based on their shared experiences of state violence (Butler 2004, 2008; INCITE! 2006)? How can difficult questions about power and sexuality in everyday life be opened up for discussion in ways that nurture freedom, equality and community? How might a focus on sexuality, passion and desire help us rethink our way around 'other' issues such as economics (Bedford and Jakobsen 2009; Perelman 2000), ecology (Heller 1999; Mortimer-Sandilands 2005) and power (Foucault 1990; Lorde 1993)? In what ways might sexual anarchy be practised? In other words, how might freedom be queered (Winnubst 2006)?

Out of our desire to create space to open up some of these questions about the intersections between anarchism and sexuality, we organised a conference in Leeds, England, in November 2006. Most of the contributions to this volume derive from this event, having been presented there or having been penned as reflections on the conference at a later date.³ The rhizomic nature of the conference – with its introduction, multiple sessions, discussion circles, social events, Quaker-style closing plenary, trips to the Common Place social centre and delicious experiences of sharing food – is reflected in this rhizome of a book; the pieces it contains connect with each other in innumerable ways, all exploring ethics, relationships and power. Within the loose structure we created at the Leeds conference, we witnessed participants putting into practice anarchism as an ethics of relationship. Part of this involved an open-mindedness to recasting and even demolishing the supposed divide between academia and activism. Beset with prejudices or at least *partis pris* on both sides (some time after the Leeds event we witnessed at a similar conference the admission of one activist who had begun writing his PhD that now he was in academia, activism was ruled out), after some initial scepticism lodged between the 'usual passive absorption typical of academic conferences' and 'at worst an encounter with the kinds of social policing so common in queer spaces' (Chapter 11, p. 224), one conference participant, Kristina N. Weaver, who reflects on her experience in this book, was captivated by 'the truths expressed, the stories witnessed, the theories spun' (p. 224). Drawing on a variety of participation techniques, such as small group discussions including 'the fish bowl' technique, for Weaver now 'a treasured tool in my kit of anarchist praxis' (p. 226), paper sessions blended

academic presentations with anarchist commitments to listening, difference and equality. Kristina was referring to the 'Queer autonomous zones' session, in which Serena Bassi, Mike Upton and Gavin Brown presented papers. Gavin also reflects on that session in his contribution (Chapter 10), acknowledging the fear of presenting a theoretical account of activist events to an audience including activists. He then goes on to refer to the discussion that followed the papers, in the form of the fish bowl, as 'by far the most engaged and inclusive discussion I have experienced at an academic conference in the last decade' (p. 200). We share this appreciation of the Leeds conference and its form less to boost our own egos (always a risk) and more to invite further experimentation, gentleness and playfulness in the organisation of conferences and other shared spaces.

This book, too, is a shared space. We've attempted to be gentle and playful in its organisation. Offering a shift in register between the more or less traditional scholarly prose of chapters, a scattering of poems dance between chapters. An anonymous haiku poses a startling question about identity (p. 23). Eco-feminist erotics in the poetry of Helen Moore invite us to reconsider our relationships with food and nature, bodies and pleasures (p. 67–8, 182–3). J. Fergus Evans' poetic manifesto playfully and seriously questions gay identity and the connections between sex and revolution (p. 181–2). And Tom Leonard offers a powerful reminder that the violence of war is the rule, rather than the exception, in a male-dominated society (p. 101–2).

Also addressing these themes, the first substantive chapter of the book (Chapter 2) returns to anarchism's historical past in order to reassess the prison writings of Russian-American anarchist Alexander Berkman, the companion of the better known anarchist firebrand Emma Goldman. Jenny Alexander highlights not only how Goldman has eclipsed activist and scholarly attention on Berkman (except for the reasons he was sent to prison in the first place, as a result of an assassination attempt on factory owner Frick) but also how the issues that Goldman campaigned on – female emancipation, birth control and the equality of the sexes – have also obscured Berkman's radical appraisal of same-sex desire as depicted in his *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* (1912). Using the history of 'first wave' anarchism as a resource to comment on past debates on homosexuality and current assessments of masculinity, desire and queer sexuality, Alexander disinters the significance of Berkman's prison experience, placing it in the context of the time and bringing to light not just the gripping narrative provided in Berkman's *Memoirs*. Alexander also shows, through a careful analysis of the text, how Berkman came to the realisation that society's prejudices against male–male love were unjust and also how his own preconceptions on the matter were dissolved as he experienced such love as part of prison life. Berkman is as taken aback about this as his contemporary readers would have been. The 'openly tender' relationship that emerges between Berkman and a fellow inmate he calls 'kiddie' (the prison slang 'kid' meaning 'catamite') reveals how love can flower even in the

harshest of environments. The fact that no sex acts are depicted in the *Memoirs*, that no clear 'gay' identity is formed in his writing, has contributed to the neglect of Berkman's work in anarchist and queer circles. But, from a queer perspective, as part of a continuum of desire, neither fixed nor necessarily completely free-ranging, Berkman's words are inspiring for their potentiality for change and for moving beyond divides between hetero- and homosexual desire and identity. In an age which has been qualified as one of 'liquid love' by Zygmunt Bauman, we need to reconsider how desires, intimacies and sex might relate to one another without imposing a hierarchy of values that forces subjects to assume these as fixed or as more or less consequential. Berkman, nearly one hundred years ago, provides us with some routes towards such a reconsideration.

A reconsideration or re-evaluation of what intimacy could mean within the context of necessary solidarities, especially within current feminist and queer struggles such as wages for housework, is presented by Stephen Shukaitis (in Chapter 3) as a reconfiguration of how effectiveness in struggle should not take place at the expense of 'affect', or a feeling of commonality and affection towards participants in any particular movement. It is not, Stephen argues, a question of how effective – that is, how efficient, organised or streamlined – any action or movement should be, but rather how 'affective' it can be in terms of generating resistance to relations of power and building new types of relationship between those who resist. But the author's critique goes further: affectiveness is a crucial element in these struggles, not least in order to make the struggle more effective, but as a means of reconfiguring social relationships in the here and now. This characteristic of anarchism, present in historical movements too in the form of anarchist affinity groups, aims to provide a critique of the social and political relationship as instrumentalist, impersonal and utilitarian. As Shukaitis states: 'Affective resistance starts from the realization that one can ultimately never separate questions of the *effectiveness* of political organizing from concerns about its *affectiveness*' (p. 46). In order to explore this in more detail, Shukaitis takes the example of the anti-capitalist women's organisation *Precarias a la Deriva* as an example of how precariousness and subordination in the socio-economic field *and* within movements for change can be partially arrested by attending to the affectiveness of the participants in the struggle. Thus, a focus by social movements on the traditional subject, the male industrial worker, on the traditional workplace and on traditional issues, is displaced by multiple socio-economic identities that arise from a convergence of social, political and sexual resistances that affectiveness is crucial to. Such a realisation gave rise in the *Precarias*' thought to the concept of 'bio-syndicalism', a strategy that posits a 'caring strike' that would pay attention to the specific realities and subject positions in which people find themselves in terms of the labour they provide, and which would allow for caring for different workers' needs according to their own gendered and sexualised positions.

Tracing other currents of autonomous feminism, Lena Eckert (in Chapter 4), by means of a focus on the 'micro-political' psychological level, the level of subjectivity and the symbolic, articulates an analysis of how power becomes entrenched in every microcosm of daily life, including our notions of sex, the body and sexuality. She argues, by assessing the usability of Lacan's work on the symbolism of the phallus, Foucault's understanding of the 'technologies' of the self and postanarchism's anti-foundational critique, that since symbolic or psychological 'powers' are diffuse and operate everywhere, they require a form of resistance that is equally 'everywhere'. Eckert thus calls into question the symbolic function of the phallus and its role in the theorisation of subjectivity and the conceptualisation of gender, the body and sex/ual difference, and posits, following the work of Beatriz Preciado, Judith Butler and Donna Haraway, an eroticisation of the body in all its parts, a decentring of the symbolism of the phallus, and a reconsideration of the hierarchies of pleasure. By drawing further on some of Max Stirner's, Saul Newman's and Gilles Deleuze's work, the anarchistic project with respect to sexuality and desire would be one of 'the constant process of becoming *not* oneself' (p. 73) as a way of radically revising what is understood as sexuality, notions of male and female and hetero/homosexuality. Such fluidity chimes with postanarchist understandings of a lack of fixed identities, and queer studies' opposition to fixed sexual desires and normativities.

Questions of gender, sexuality and power are further explored in an interview with Judith Butler (Chapter 5). Here she contrasts a Western gay libertarianism with various forms of queer anarchism. Whereas the former is recruited by and affiliated with the state in order to secure positions of privilege without regard to racialised state violence, the latter seek to undermine all hierarchies. She also plays with binaries and resists the temptation to draw a clear line between being inside or outside the state, for or against the law. Rather, she points to the fragility of any given legal code or regime and its possible subversion or even dissolution in favour of popular sovereignty. Linking Benjamin and Althusser with Anarchists Against the Wall, and the Zapatista encuentros (global gatherings of activists against neoliberalism) with everyday questions of dignity and survival, this interview demonstrates the possibility and value of queering the border between activist and scholar. Alongside the other contributions in this volume it might also, we hope, stimulate a greater engagement between contemporary feminist theory and (post)anarchism.

Highlighting the arbitrary nature of given regimes of race, gender, sexuality and law, and their impacts on human beings and other lifeforms constitutes a major element of political science fiction and fantasy literature. Ursula Le Guin, for one, performs a radical revisioning of what many a reader may have originally found static or unquestionable. By means of her poetry and prose she moves us to places that can be both inspiring and uncomfortable. Laurence Davis (in Chapter 6) demonstrates how Le Guin can help us imagine our lives and make them up as a defence against authoritarian constraints and in order

to avoid 'our lives get[ting] made up for us by other people' (Le Guin 2004: 208). Davis explores how love and revolution are intertwined and connected in Le Guin's almost entirely neglected science fiction 'story suite' *Four Ways to Forgiveness* (1995), and argues, following Bookchin and others, that if anarchism is worth anything it implies a revolution of and in everyday life. In contrast to many traditional Marxist or socialist movements, part of this revolution for anarchism has to do with the way love and sexual relationships are lived out on a day-to-day basis. Over four interconnected stories, this book explores betrayal, forgiveness, political form, social revolution and love. Love and sexuality – of whatever stripe – are represented in Le Guin's work not as an 'add-on' or something tangential to her novelistic work but as something integral, urgent and fundamental. Le Guin explores how jealousy, deceit, rigidly bound notions of the natural and gender expectations can be transformed by an uncompromising commitment to the interplay and mutual determinacy between the form of revolutionary expression or action and romantic love. Power is seen as something not to be seized by a violent revolutionary movement, but dissolved, nullified, as Davis notes, as part of 'a patient, constructive, organic and open-ended form of revolutionary practice ultimately rooted in a transformation of the individual spirit' (p. 114).

Lewis Call's chapter (Chapter 7) continues the theme of reading science fiction, this time by African-American authors Octavia Butler and Samuel Delaney, to explore topics both uncomfortable and inspirational in order to imagine our lives differently. Unlike Le Guin, neither Butler nor Delaney has associated themselves with anarchism. Nonetheless, their efforts to subvert hierarchies of race, class, gender, sexuality and even genre show a clear affinity with her work and other anarchist intersectional analyses of power. Like *Four Ways to Forgiveness*, slavery is a central theme in Octavia Butler's *Patternist* and Samuel Delany's *Neveryon* books. However, in Lewis' reading, the tales of Butler and Delaney are not describing a dissolution of power but rather a playing with power. They contrast consensual, desired and erotic forms of playing with power (i.e. BDSM) with the unethical, non-erotic, non-consensual, undesired and unplayful practices of power that characterise both slavery as historic institution and its descendant – the modern political economy of state capitalism. Bringing together Foucauldian theory with contemporary writing on sadomasochism to read the shifting play of power in these novels, Lewis refers to this particular strategy for healing the psychic wounds of slavery as an example of what he calls 'postanarchist kink' (p. 132). Like Lena's, Lewis' postanarchist approach is less interested in the immediate abolition of dominant relations and discourses and more interested in their ongoing *subversion*. And, like Jenny Alexander's discussion of sexual borderlands and Gavin Brown's linking of queer with a permaculturist's appreciation of ecological edges, Lewis' chapter emphasises the value of working from the margins. He is also careful to recognise that the marginal position of erotic sadomasochism, as a line of flight, does not necessarily lead to freedom. It, too, can be caught

in another 'structure of desire': that of liberal individualism and a minority identity politics dependent on the very power structures it claims to reject. Neither is his analysis limited to the sexual play of power. In our efforts to enact anarchist forms of a potentially hierarchical relationship, that of author and editor, we, too, have found ourselves playing with power.

Both anarchism and queer studies have paid attention to questions of youth and to troubling the relationship between sexuality and youth. Anarchism, historically, has viewed young people not only as a logical and fertile constituency for its ideas of emancipation (see, for example, Kropotkin's 'An Appeal to the Young', in Baldwin 1970: 260–82, originally published in 1880; or Paul Goodman's 1956 classic *Growing up Absurd*), but has also placed great store on attempting to revolutionise youth sexuality by means of a struggle for access to accurate 'scientific' sexual knowledge, as a site where relations between men and women can be transformed and for ready usage of simple materials such as birth control devices. However, anarchism historically has tended to reify categories of maleness and femaleness and has rarely considered homosexuality as a legitimate form of expression alongside heterosexuality. Intertwining these concerns with the power of storytelling demonstrated by Laurence Davis and Lewis Call, Jamie Heckert (Chapter 8) explores questions of educating youth about sex and sexuality while engaging with feminist theory and (post)anarchism. Telling his own 'sexual stories', relating domestic violence and growing up 'different' in an apparently sexually monochrome world, Jamie opens up a path for listening to himself and others as part of the realisation of erotic and anarchic desires. Intensely personal and deeply political, the form of storytelling developed here queers scholarship. Interweaving snippets of autobiography with poetry and political theory, his chapter engages with very practical questions about teaching sex education, doing scholarship and being a political activist while at the same time exploring questions of identity, temporality, embodiment, ethics and emotion. More importantly, it is written from the heart. Working from the insight that hierarchy depends on (a fantasy of) separation, Jamie highlights the centrality of connection, of love, for anarchism, for sex education with young people and for all other relationships. This, he notes, need not be postponed until after the revolution. Love occurs only in the present; the experience of presence is part of the always becoming-revolution.

While the other contributors have based most of their accounts on the capitalist West and long-industrialised countries, part of the remit of the Leeds conference was to explore anarchist discourse and practice in other regions, not least the former 'communist' bloc. Cut off from their own anarchist histories of the early twentieth century, current Eastern European anarchist movements have had to engage in a process of historical and self-discovery to recuperate and (re)construct their organisations along new lines. The Czech anarchist movement re-emerged in the 1980s under the banner of several organisations, some national, some local. Marta Kolářová (in Chapter 9) analyses the reception of debates on sexuality in the Czech anarchist movement

and finds not only that the subject area has been under-theorised but that it has generally been neglected. In contrast to some other movements traced in these pages, not least sections of the early twentieth-century North American movement discussed by Jenny Alexander, and some of the newer anarchisms outlined in Stevphen Shukaitis' chapter, the Czech movement appears to have favoured concentration on economic issues and industrial organisation and has only very recently broached issues such as feminism and gay rights. Despite this concentration, Marta identifies numerous strands within the anarchist movement, particularly anarcho-feminist currents, that have taken on board the interconnections between economic, social and sexual exploitation and oppression. While such dimensions have not necessarily come smoothly to other parts of the movement, a discourse and practice responding to what we might call intersectionality has slowly made headway in the Czech movement. Such a convergence has, in part, been due to external factors rather than the ideological realisation that sexuality is an issue that deserves attention. As a result of increased fascist activity, anarchists have been the target of violence. In addition, anarcho-feminists and LGBTQs have suffered violence, individually or during Queer Parades, at the hands of fascists. Such violence has resulted in an increasing cooperation between anarchists and queers, with anarchists on one occasion acting as security (in the absence of the state police) on a gay parade. While this has been largely one-way, according to Kolářová, it can but strengthen the anarchist movement in the Czech Republic and it presages an ongoing engagement with intersectional approaches that can enrich anarchism and the social movements it comes into contact with.

Returning to Anglophone contexts, Gavin Brown's contribution (Chapter 10) links a series of case studies in queer autonomous geography to the theme of amateurism and DIY politics. The anarchist tradition has long acknowledged the entwining of knowledge/power attributed to Foucault. Thus, the questioning of authority claims is not limited to the 'political' but includes all forms of expertise. Bakunin wrote:

In the matter of boots I refer to the authority of the bootmakers; concerning houses, canals or railroads I consult that of the architect or engineer. For such or such special knowledge I apply to such or such a savant. But I allow neither the bootmaker nor the architect nor the savant to impose his [sic] authority upon me. I accept them freely and with all the respect merited by their intelligence, their character, their knowledge, reserving always my incontestable right of criticism and censure.

(Bakunin, cited in Kinna 2005: 70)

And Bakunin himself is treated similarly. As Juliet Paredes of Mujeres Creando, a Bolivian anarcho-feminist group, said, 'I've said it and I'll say it again that we're not anarchists by Bakunin or the CNT [Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labour)], but rather by our grandmothers, and

that's a beautiful school of anarchism' (Paredes 2002: 112). Likewise, several of the examples Gavin draws upon might also be considered beautiful schools of anarchism with no links to Bakunin or the expertise of 'activists', whereas others take only what they need from contemporary anarchism's 'hybrid genealogy' (Gordon 2005: 9). From Queer Pagan Camp to a cruisy urban public toilet to nightclubs and Queeruptions, Brown takes us on a whirlwind tour of experiments in autonomous social relations. In doing so, he not only highlights possible queer futures but also the other-than-state, other-than-capitalist spaces which always exist outside official discourses of reality and the possible. He also reminds us that drawing a border between autonomous and non-autonomous spaces is always a fiction. Hierarchies are never spaces of perfect control; autonomous or anarchist spaces are always works in progress, continually learning to let go of hierarchy, continually learning to relate to each other as equals. More important than any anarcho-perfection are the complex, messy and often joyful experiences of learning through doing, directly, together. For Gavin Brown, '[q]ueer is an ethical process' (p. 203) and one which creates very different possibilities to the binaries and hierarchies of official intimacies, genders, sexualities and political economies. It is also one which may undermine the stories of 'not good enough' that one of our (Jamie's) pieces (Chapter 8) reminds us are all too common in academic, activist and other spaces. Finally, the chapter highlights the power of ritual in knitting together community. Whether explicitly labelled as such, by the queer pagans, or as implicitly shared understanding, ritual can offer a particular focus for experiencing together the joys and pains of being alive.

The book concludes with Kristina N. Weaver (Chapter 11) sharing her experiences of an experimental 'structure of desire' utilised in the conference. Like Gavin, she reminds us that this conference, too, was a queer autonomous space and one with wide-reaching consequences for her. While telling her own story, Kristina draws our attention to the reality that every event we organise, every relationship we have, creates ripples of fresh possibilities.

Notes

- 1 For a more detailed analysis of the etymology and actual uses of the word '*anarkhia*' in ancient Greece, see Gordon 2006. Here he suggests that Antigone, 'That long-standing inspiration to feminists' is also 'the first-ever anarchist' (Gordon 2006: 88).
- 2 For an extensive bibliography, see ASN 2010b.
- 3 Lewis Call was invited to contribute his chapter at a later date. One of us (Jamie) contributed a chapter following an anarchist sex education workshop during the conference. Likewise, the poems and the interview with Judith Butler were later additions.

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