

I'm reading Murray Bookchin's "Post Scarcity Anarchism." 6 minute left in this chapter. I'm reading it on Kindle. I left my hard copy in Abu Dhabi.

"Liberatory approach to praxis?" "!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

LOL (that's me reading Scot's projected screen) Now back to Murray.

"But, spontaneity is no more than an organizational "technique" than direct action is merely an organizational tactic. Belief in spontaneous action is part of a still larger belief—that belief in spontaneous development."

(me) Fuck, when the screen is black like this, I can't find the cursor to judge how many returns I have to make. First inklings of the void. Second inkling in the void bag on the risers.(me

Scrolling people. Ask me if you want me to scroll backward. I'm the one at the corner typing. I'm not wearing a hat.

Back to Murray Bookchin again.

"Spontaneity, far from inviting chaos, involves releasing the inner forces of a development to find their AUTHENTIC ORDER AND STABILITY."

I capitalized these four words above because I've been trained – maybe too damn well to believe that anything is ever "authentic" and so here I really suspect the brilliant white male lefty who wrote this remarkable book that poses the social principle of anarchism as that which will "shape utopia." How can we not

forget the way the José Muñoz performatively gave us back the concept of utopia but only as both a vector of hope that is always beyond the horizon? And yet, there is this inkling we can get when we encounter a concrete utopia – it's not a universal or an all encompassing solution – we leave those texts to the white lefty men or the religious fundamentalists (see Scot on my left to work through the connection between apocalyptic thinking and utopia – but here, where something is being developed, albeit with a series of restraints, can we assemble and sense ourselves beyond the polarizing conflicts that mire us in despondency?

Shit. Too much text. And writing means I'm not watching, smelling. Paying attention.

A brief interval here. Back soon.

But of course I read Scot's comment about comfort in tribes. And I have much to say about that. So does Murray Bookchin. Pardon me while I do a search for that on my kindle.

So tribes. Bookchin says, "the difference between socialists and anarchists reveals itself not only in conflicting theories but also in conflicting types of organization and praxis." HERE WE SCROLL BACK TO MY QUESTION BEFORE Y'ALL CAME IN SO I'M GOING TO SCROLL NOW

The praxis you are engaged in right now organizes you.

Do you feel liberated?

Socialists organize themselves into hierarchial bodies. By contrast, anarchists base their organizational structure on the "affinity group."

Are we an affinity group?

Are you here for your “tribe”?

Can we regroup into a large movement? What are the relationships between these movements that transfix us and political or social movements? Can we extract a new form of social organization from these engagements with objects, with our partial, obstructed and distracted viewings? Or maybe we just decide to fuck it all, watch as one, stop reading .

Scot asks “can we feel our way through the world?” I want to pose the opposite question which is when do we stop feeling too much and get to choose how to negotiate so many feelings. One feel at a time.

I’m super excited that there is a baby in the room.

Yes. A baby and one that isn’t the center of attention. Already making this a super queer space.

I think it’s apparatuses? I’ll spellcheck.

The dark. Is this (I was going to go with space but I like the mistake so I’ll go with pace)

Is this pace claustrophobic? Because the space feels pretty good. But the pace – how can we continue with this tension and repetition? I mean, we have been tightening our sphincters, mouths, thighs, knees feet toes to hold in these bloody messes forever. That pace is an endless meditation that never allows release. Is there an aesthetic form that tells us this and and and something else? Making a body of with an escape valve that

also emits steam that vanquishes those little and large experiences of diminishment of debility of crackle and splinter?

I have to stop writing for a bit. Relax into this with you. Maybe move my hands in similar ways. Maybe that will cause me to think differently.

Scot? Are you there?

I wore a shirt I thought was too low cut. But I did it because this was a safer space than the country I spend most of my work life in. Maybe the concept of safer has some traction?

Yeah. Even Bob Dylan said that everyone is broken. But it gets coopted, no? Like I read on Facebook about everyone's brokenness and I just think that they're talking about their humanity and the self revelation of "brokenness" in public discourse becomes a privileged discourse.

Make them whole. That's funny. It's funny, isn't it?

I mean, I met Julie because, well when, our mutual friend was dying. We came of age when we had the rhetoric of saving ourselves, but the ones who lived? Well, we didn't get to choose who gets saved. And Scot (why not two tt's?) this is getting a little close to very non-secular thinking. I mean, can't we jettison the idea of "saving" anything? Wouldn't that work better for a ecocritical, anthropocentric worlding?

Ah! Art can do that. It is thrilling when it directs you to look here rather than there, look wider, look deeper, take it in through your nose, feel this, move away. Aesthetics, surfaces, organization of your experience of the world?

ART!

Well, some would argue typeface is really design. Some. Now there is a way to avoid putting a doer to the deed.

I feel like this is the avant-garde version of two morning show hosts. I've got to look at what is going on around me. I don't multi-task well.

I mean we're talking about autism and look at Xandra (I may not be spelling that right).

I want my screen to go black for a while. I'm doing it. I feel like I'm distracting.

Scot. I think of typeface as interface.

Scot. Maybe light is interface too. Like typeface. I mean serif, non-serif. Aesthetics yes. But the way the text burrows into your eyes.

Okay. Maybe it's time to retire Adam Smith. There is a lot that Brecht would have to say about "invisible hand" – how the mechanisms have to be exposed, and that is really an aesthetic argument. Because if you have a historical materialist analysis, the "forces" of capital are not metaphoric or something that seems like a deterministic end. I know you think that technology, like capital, is beyond any of our control but – well I don't know that you think that really – but isn't it our job to think about how everything combines to create that force, like the light here, the heat in the room, the singularity of each body, present, the scent – all of our energetic presence? Why do we already know what we are meant to do – how we are supposed to act in relation to this proposal?

I wonder about our role here – and the kind of expectations I put on myself as the mode of engagement. I mean, I usually watch and think. And I want to do that. But I can't connect to the icloud and I also want to talk to you Scot. Is this a chat room?

I am emoticon challenged. I also write out very long texts and don't really understand acronyms. I google them when others send them to me.

Ah! I just think about Walmart when I see those smiley emoticons. In Walmart I think it means a pricedrop.

LeRoi Jones, who later became Amiri Baraka wrote:

Let my poems be a graph
of me. (And they keep
to the line, where the flesh
drops off.

If the writing is fleshless, and lasting, then I am solidly with
performance.

Enfleshed. I look at these fleshly bodies that are making
utterance with breath, with sinew and muscle. Which feel
the heat of the light.

What if I could re-write Baraka or what if we A.U.L.E. are
doing so right now?

Let A.U.L.E performances be a map (not a graph. Too
Agnes Martin.)
of us. (and they expand the line, undo or blur it where
flesh is most enlivened)

Baraka writes:

You will go blank at the middle. A
Dead man.

But die soon, Love. If
what you have for yourself, does not
stretch to your body's end.

(Where, without

preface,
music trails, or your fingers
slip from my arm.

---“Balboa the Entertainer

What if this is where this performance in particular picks up? At the trail of music, and and and or where your fingers slip from my arm?

I want to say something about location too.
I wrote this in a text to Julie earlier this morning right before she picked me up from spin class.

Pay attention to where the idea of this city – this specific city – comes in.

Adrienne Rich discussing Baraka (without excusing his homophobia or misogyny....because she is willing to acknowledge and look to a place that goes beyond the stultifying contradictions that make so many of us dismiss real insight:

“A political art, let it be tenderness,

low strings the fingers touch, or the

width of autumn climbing wider

avenues, among the virtue and
dignity of knowing what city you're in,
what clothes – even what buttons to wear. I address/ the
society the image of common utopia.

I think she meant what Munoz meant when he quoted
Bloch talking about “concrete utopia.”

I'm having a hard time with the chants right now. F

I don't think this work could have happened anywhere else
but here. San Francisco. I maligned the city this morning,
writing on Instagram that it was the city of Blue Bottle and
Walgreens, of Audis and Uber. This place has a soul. Yes, I
said it, a soul. Next door is Project Artaud. Joe Goode is
legendary. Concrete utopias happen in concrete spaces.
Maybe that is why I had such a hard time hearing the
“Silence Equals Death” chants here. ACT UP was so
divisive here that it had to split into two chapters. Certain
spaces are the right and fertile grounds for modes of
perception, of organization. Localities. Where I live, the
promise of a concrete utopia, I believe, lies in the idea of
translocalities because I live – well I exist – in a society that
is emblematic or the image of late stage capitalism.
Relentless, environmentally unsustainable. Hot and cold.

Hot – in the desert. Cold – we are refrigerated via petroleum dollars.

But this locality? It seems almost organic in comparison. Where some proposition like this – meaning this combination of enmeshment and the inanimate of our objects that are not directed toward capital consumption - might take root.

All text disappears in Microsoft word.

Scot. I don't think we're post anything. I mean, #me too? I think we're in those structures and we've just added hashtags and multiple mediations from which profit can be extracted. Extractivism. Not Extra activism.

Yes. Of course. Like the craziest fusion food trend. Liberalism and capital. Can't have one without the other.

I'm interested in your parents now, Scot. Ah sorry. I'm interested in your parents' histories. Now meaning, I hadn't been thinking about them when we started this performance.

And here capitalism is weirdly creative. I mean, how else would there be a mass manufacturing of bobble heads?

I feel like there were ways in which, before the US version of Puritanism, there was more latitude for "illegitimacy." But with the concept of separation of church and state and the discourse of abolishing classes, we organized social mores which were even more draconian. Is there anything to commend in the "American Experiment?"

What did come true?

My parents. My father and mother married late. I was born when my mother was forty one years old and the story my relative told is that she pressured my father to marry her after they had dated for almost a decade. My father didn't graduate high school and he got patronage jobs after he fought in WWII in the Pacific. All I ever heard about that time is how he and his brother Abe sold cigarettes to make some extra money and then he returned and lived in my great aunt Eva's trailer park in Gloucester Massachusetts. My mother wanted a middle class life – I don't think my father was all that keen on it.

But he married her and they had me soon after and moved to Peabody Massachusetts where they bought a ranch house on a thirty year mortgage in 1960 for \$38,000. I was born in 1961 – my father, who worked patronage jobs in Boston “inspecting” city demolition sites died in 1970. My mother worked selling “fine jewelry” in a discount department store. She only paid off that mortgage in 1982 – and I only got out of Peabody I’m convinced because she was awful to me and I didn’t feel like everyone else who had two parents. Maybe that was good. It didn’t feel like that at the time. I went to an Ivy League school on scholarship. I think that was only possible because I was white.

Those suburbs. Difference was the way out. No one could ever acknowledge that my mother was abusive or that I could have been grieving that my father died. Death was not something anyone wanted to contend with in that locality. I know so little about my parents or about my grandparents. So many of my friends have such rich understanding of their heritage. I have little to none. I now see that as a product of the will to assimilate. I think that is why I hated college so much too. Because I didn’t have a critique of assimilation until much later.

There is this idea of the “oppression Olympics.” Stories of who had it harder, who had what privileges. And that’s all true. But as you wrote far earlier, we are all broken. It’s so hard to take in other experiences of that when you feel

your own so acutely. But you can't take in any of it unless you feel your own. Conundrum. Did I spell that right? Really. I cannot spell.

There is a place where all the lefty Jews send their kids to learn ethics. Camp Kinderland. Of course it's where the red diaper babies all go every summer. There in Kinderland there are no winners or losers. There is competition. But it always ends in what they call a "Kinderland tie." There are kids that have come from that environment and they have done wonderful work in social justice. But I suspect it's more from a supportive and loving experience all around than just being inculcated into some abstract principles of resistance to the demands of capitalism.

I am worried about my inattention to the performance.

Going black screen for a bit.

What I do remember by doing this is the beautiful absorption of performing. Time is reconfigured. And I feel much more alive.

If I break it down though, the blackness of the space is so much of how I absorb the energy of the room. The value of blackness here is where it can sustain and provide a platform for illumination.

I love the two bodies in front of me, blocking my view, breaking apart. I could watch that again and again. But now the ballons do that. I wonder who breathed into them. Or maybe they were just blown up by a tank of helium, right? Like you get in Party City?

Are we in Party City?

I value forgetting. I do. Nietzsche got that right. Otherwise we couldn't go on.

Judith Butler got denounced and screamed at in Brazil this week by the religious right. Last week she was here, talking about dancing on the street.

I also value remembering. But not the repetition of the same. That's where art has to come in too, right? Because the form of remembering has to provoke something, it has to find something that doesn't agree with the political purpose that many of historical narratives serve.

Scot, I'm a little over the stranger fetish. How can we be something other than strangers to one another, even if we've never met? And how do we come back to the pleasure of dancing, even in private? Alone?

Yes. The cages, the frames that imprison our flesh certainly but which dehumanize and already stigmatize.

I listen to singing that is caught in the throat. Tension extends so easily. Like endless buffering. Sorry to make tech analogies. I seem trapped by them.

I think of Julie as mapping out an entire environment so that everyone is aware of their terms of engagement. But she also creates environments where you might risk something different happening to you. Like we met at the bedside of a dying friend. But a connection was planted, and then it was just potential. Later, much later, we reconnected when I participated in her performance at Participant . The ties are not weak; they are capacious and can be pick up after a long long period of time. They're there when you're ready. But what happened then, it

feeds what is happening now. It's all here. Clit Club. ACT UP. Dance. Performance art when we had to assert our specific bodies. Friendly ghosts. But now what's added is The void. I don't think we felt the void then. Too young. We were too young. Loss is different than the void.

Scot! So funny you asked me for a spell check. I love that you even would think to do that.

That activism was indeed an opiate. It did mitigate a lot of pain. I can't imagine surviving that overwhelming experience of death without it. But I don't look at that as a negative.

I try to give over some of the responsibility of not losing the world that I loved to my students who never even experienced much of what I feel is lost. And you know, I think that works. I mean, some feel guilty when they think they've let me down. And I just don't let them wallow in that or use it as an excuse. Because they haven't yet lived their moment – or haven't really begun to contend with this. If we could organize ourselves in the face of that epidemic with the uneven resources we had and as both marginalized and privileged, then its repeatable no? Not in the same way – but isn't our job to say that concrete utopias can still be constructed?

Scot. We learn our liberatory praxes at great great cost. I could listen to your story for many more hours than this

performance allows. Maybe Julie arranges a space of performance to approach the ways in which radical empathy is an act. An act with consequences.

Is my text turning yellow, a little like yours? I hope so. I hope there is some bit of blur between us.

Maybe it's okay that I didn't see everything that happened this afternoon. Maybe I felt it.

This feels like a good use of my time.

That "seeing" when you write "we see ourselves" is a critical step, no? It can't happen under total oppression. And the breakthrough of stories one can shape through what is passed down in culture is a critical step. I read your analysis and I think about how I really lack the story of my own family, of my own history and that means that I have to find value elsewhere. It makes it hard as we age to tell our own story, the one we have experienced as adults. Thanks, Scot.



