

The Unity of Means and Ends

INTRO:

Nothing is immutable! Anything is possible!

This may be a controversial statement, but I believe that objective truth is a thing that exists. I believe in right & wrong answers, and that there are choices which lead to objectively better outcomes. And that if...IF... we had access to an omniscient all knowing perspective, if we could coalesce everything every Being knows and experiences into some sort of universally accessible eldritch amalgamation, we could use that to measurably plot out the best possible answers to every question. Fortunately, or unfortunately, this is not something we actually have access to (yet). That doesn't make it a lost cause. It does not follow that something which does not exist cannot exist, because nothing exists...until it does. And there are, evidently, ways to get *closer*. We do not need to arrive at perfect in order to strive for better. Therefore, I am wholeheartedly of the opinion that is actually reasonable and salient to pursue truth, and goodness, and and material improvements to experience of being alive -while we're alive- but first we have to believe that it is out there, and accept that it is not something we will ever possess.

Anarchism is not a simple statement of intent, nor an arbitrary desire for liberation, Anarchism is the process! If you say you wanna change the world and you mean it, that's dope, but do it effectively. And honestly, even if you don't wanna change the world - even if all you want is to improve your own quality of life - that's dope too - but do it effectively.

We're gonna start with this quote from one of my favorite dead people, Italian Anarchist Errico Malatesta:

“It is not enough to desire something; if one really wants it adequate means must be used to secure it. And these means are not arbitrary, but instead cannot but be conditioned by the ends we aspire to and by the circumstances in which the struggle takes place, for if we ignore the choice of means we would achieve other ends, possibly diametrically opposed to those we aspire to, and this would be the obvious and inevitable consequence of our choice of means. Whoever sets out on the highroad and takes a wrong turning does not go where he intends to go but where the road leads him.”

– Errico Malatesta

Literally what the fuck does that mean and why has it taken over not just my politics but every aspect of my entire my life? I can't stop it now it runs through my veins but also I do not want to stop and I think you should join me because this shit - this shit's great!

The Unity of Means and Ends is a framework for understanding how to set unachievable, even unimaginable goals and then actively move towards them in a way that genuinely realizes their potential. At least....in theory. And theory is tricky because of the thing I just did:

[Nothing is immutable! Anything is possible!]

I am well aware that I sound like I'm ~37 seconds away from offering you some spicy Kool Aid, but bear with me. Typically right, when people are first exposed to new ideas, radical ideas, liberatory ideas it happens like that - it happens backwards. We start by engaging with the

conclusions: the abolition of all hierarchies, a stateless/classless/moneyless society, abundant egalitarian love. IF there comes a point where these conclusions have neither been dismissed out of hand nor taken for granted, if they spark some curiosity, then and only then, does the opportunity arise to engage with the methodologies, the reasoning, and the theoretical groundwork that these conclusions are drawn from. There needs to be an actualised desire for these Ends, before people can access the proposed Means. Capitalism is so prevalent that people need to be sold on Anarchy before investing in Anarchism. Which is a hard thing to do, because Anarchy is not for sale. You can practice anarchism, but you can't have anarchy. We can march towards Anarchy, but we can't ever live there...because, right now, we live here.

You and I, we've always lived here. No one alive today has had the opportunity to live in a world that isn't riddled with hierarchy: capitalism, colonialism, white supremacy, cisheteropatriarchy, amatonormativity, anthropocentrism. We are several lifetimes away from even glimpsing a community unmarred by hierarchy, from accessing An Anarchy.

Now these systems didn't spontaneously poof into existence, and we didn't put them here. They were built. Over decades, centuries, and millenia by the people who came before us, right? The foundations for these systems were being laid while we were just little specks of space dust, minding our own business. And now we live here. And we have to deal with the impact of the choices made by these people, who went real fast and broke things. Life, liberty & the pursuit of happiness...? It's a wonderful sentiment, just didn't quite materialize did it?

[I'm not even American, Canada's no better.]

To be clear, I am all for going fast and breaking things - I am anarchist - **and** we clearly need to be practicing discernment when it comes to what we break and whither we sprint. I mean, I can't imagine that anyone *intended* to build this world of manufactured scarcity. Where we have more

than enough resources to meet everyone's needs and then some, but act like we don't in order to line the pockets of a handful of elites, all while hurtling ourselves towards an apocalyptic climate disaster that no one will be safe from. Turns out that you need more than a nice sentiment. You need Vision and Execution. Intention & Impact. Theory & Praxis. Right?

Because theory without effective praxis is a pipedream - a forgotten treasure map sat in the back of a storeroom, collecting dust forever. And praxis without effective theory is a demoralizing exercise in futility - chaotically digging up holes with the unyielding belief that somewhere there'll treasure and whatever it is, if ever it's found, it'll all be worth...this. In either case, the treasure stays buried forever, and we all ~live like this~ until the consequences of our actions wipe us off the face of the earth.

These people that came before us: the capitalists, the colonizers, the patriarchs - they couldn't have known what they were setting in motion, and even if they did, couldn't have cared enough to tap the breaks. They had their own shit going on. But we can. We can do that. We're living in a dystopian hellscape that someone else designed, but we also have access to so much more than they ever could have dreamed of. We stand on the shoulders of giants. Dreamers & revolutionaries & scholars & practitioners who have been working to solve perennial echoes of the same structural issues that plague us today for generations. Not only do we have unprecedented access to their findings, to their lives and perspectives and experiments, we also have unprecedented access to each other. The most beautiful and horrifying thing about the internet we know & love is its capacity for specificity. There is no niche too small, no ideology too fringe, and no distance too great for affinity groups to coagulate and grow! Where you were once a lone weirdo, you now have access to a community of several other weirdos - if you know where to find them.

I'm gonna let you in on a secret; this video is the reason that this channel exists. I have been trying to explain the totality of this Unity of Means & Ends concept to real people in real life and failing at it for a long time, so obviously the answer was to lay out the whole thing in one go in this immortalized video essay format. The other videos currently on this channel are merely bonuses & prerequisites, but some are prerequisites! Especially the one on hierarchy. If you haven't seen it, go watch it and come back!

PART I - THE END(S)

You've probably heard the phrase "impact over intent" before, meaning that regardless of your intention, the impact of your actions are still your responsibility. Which is demonstrably true, right? I may have had zero intention of breaking my glasses when I turned around too quickly and smashed my face into a pole. And yet..my glasses...they were broken. And I needed to do something about that if I ever wanted to see in HD again...which I did.

Does that mean your intentions...don't matter...?? Absolutely not! Your intentions matter so much!

Where you choose to set your focus, the intentions that you define for yourself, inevitably draw you towards vastly different choices - and ultimately, yield different results. Whether those results are the ones you wanted are an entirely different story, but we'll come back to that later.

Before we get into the whys & hows, let's talk a lil bit about where the intuitive resistance to big revolutionary ideas comes from. When confronted with the reality of deeply ingrained systemic problems, why is it that there are these tendencies to either look for ways to downplay the

severity of the problems, or go scorched earth? How is it that either everything is basically fine and the most we need to do is like maybe make a couple tweaks here and there - or everything is terrible and our only shot at redemption is to burn it all down no matter the cost? Why do we have such a hard time allowing ourselves to even just imagine the possibility of an achievable utopia? The answer, I think, is hierarchy induced fear.

There are two wolves.

No but actually, inside every heart there are two wolves fighting. The one that's afraid of change, and the one that's afraid of stasis. The one that craves stability, and the one that craves freedom. The rules of hierarchy dictate that the one you feed most wins, but there is no winning, there is only suppression. In our day-to-day choices we can choose to feed one over the other, strengthen one over the other, but the fighting never ends. And suppressing our needs affects us, because we're human. Who wants to live with a sad, wounded heart wolf? Maybe, idk just a thought, but perhaps if there was enough to go around, if we fed both wolves, then they'd stop ripping each other to shreds over table scraps?

By the way, fun fact about the original version of the two wolves thing, [it's racist as shit](#). All people inherently have good and evil battling inside of them and which one wins is dependent on individual willpower and moral fortitude? If that sounds closer to right wing moralism than indigenous wisdom of untraceable origins, that's because it is. The story (parable really) began circulating in 1978 in a book published by Evangelical Christian Minister Billy Graham, and it reflected hegemonic ideology while disguising it as counter-culture so it spread like wildfire. Colonialism strikes again.

We cling to hierarchy because it feels safe and familiar, we already know how this works, we know what we're "supposed" to do, and when our needs aren't met - we know who to blame.

Change isn't scary because of some innate personal failing, or an irrational sense of anxiety or complacency. Change is usually scariest when we are legitimately underprepared or ill-equipped for that change to occur. Revolutionary, emancipatory, liberatory ideas feel like a gamble - a rigged competition where winner takes all...because of hierarchy.

[Money is not the root of all evil, hierarchy is the root of all evil!]

And it has such a deleterious effect on our capacity, and our well being because it becomes like this one-two punch. First there's the fear & grief that comes from realizing that things could be different, and then there's the shame that comes from knowing that when you realized things could be different, you felt fear & grief. Obviously the morally correct and righteous reaction would have been to immediately abandon your existing sense of identity, your cherished relationships & all of your mundane worldly comforts in order to take up the mantle in service of the greater good, and you didn't do that and don't want to do that.

[Shame!]

“There is a certain bleakness in finding hope where one expected certainty.”

– Ursula K. Le Guin

This internalized shame is what propels us into that paradigm of externalized shame, and anger, and denial. If we cannot hold space for our own complexity, if we cannot process even the existence of these intrapersonal dialectics then we also cannot hold that space for the complexity of others, and instead default back to this sort of knee-jerk reaction. This binary understanding of right & wrong accompanied by a *need* to be on the correct side of that

equation, the safe side of that equation, the top of the hierarchy (or at the very least, not the bottom).

Listen. I've been making jokes about being politically unhinged for a while now, especially when hanging out with friends of the non-anarchist persuasion, but I just wanna take a second to point out real quick that the bar is in hell. This silly little nonsense fantasy is like...the starting line. All of these bizarro-land buck wild ideas are fundamentally about people consistently having all of their needs met, and this is the thing that we've been told is unreasonable, childish, naive.

What an interesting impulse we've developed, to pre-emptively deny ourselves that which may be withheld or invalidated by others. It's almost like a mechanism for coping, a reaction to a horrific situation with no end in sight combined with an instinctual drive to persist and survive...

Trauma. It's trauma.

We've seen this over and over again, mediocrity benefits from exploitation and abuse. Content Warning for how graphic I'm about to get, but I really want to hammer this point home. Skip ahead if you don't wanna hear it.

If you look around and everywhere you turn you see people eating piss and shit and vomit, and you look at your loved ones and they're eating piss and shit and vomit, and all your life you've been fed piss and shit and vomit...not only does a moldy sandwich start to look pretty okay, not only will you defend your access to a stale bag of chips with your life, but you also start to resent having the need to eat. Forget what some loser talking about delicious gourmet food has to say, you're wishing hunger wasn't even a part of being alive.

My love, your needs were never the problem.

That we lack an apparatus for our needs to not only be met but overflow into each other is the problem, and it will never be solved by trying to stamp those needs out. It is solved by continually working to meet more & more of those needs.

That's the hard part, the bit that stings the most, that not enough people talk about. It's not just working towards a dream that we know is out of reach, but also that it's such a tiny dream. It's not grandiose at all, having our needs met is the bare minimum, it's raising the bar from hell to the floor. Who knows what's up there, what we might be capable of dreaming up once we breach the surface? This is not an easy thing to sit with. It's not easy to hold space for the grief and the fear, to honor what's come to pass and mourn what could have been. We deserve the garden of Eden, but our land is barren. It's looking a little rough. Terraforming is a massive project but it is so so worthwhile, and not just for future generations. We can plant the trees, tend to them together, celebrate their growth, and rest in their shade even if we will have returned to space dust by the time they bear fruit. Liberatory joy isn't a delusion or a tagline, it's a necessity.

“Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you.”

– Friedrich Nietzsche

There's no way Nietzsche ever could have predicted the internet and yet he perfectly articulated the processes of becoming both red-pilled & black-pilled.

[We stand on the shoulders of giants]

These processes occur on every end of the political spectrum by the way, we just use different names for 'em.

It requires, I think, a certain skill set to be able to gaze into the abyss, and then walk away with a roadmap, using that bleak reality as a canvas. But we must! Learning to do that is the only way to let it fuel us, to propel ourselves into something new, to refuse the demands that we remain firmly bolted down.

The first step is acknowledging that reality, and the second step is identifying what those needs are. In order to find ways to start filling the gaps, we need to know where they are - what's missing & why. This is tricky, because hierarchy induced trauma creates a tendency to confuse Means for Ends. We mutilate our desires to fit within the methods that are most easily accessible to us rather than transform our methods to accommodate the fullness of our desire.

For example, if you're hungry, you might confuse an underlying outcome [I want to feel full] with the means [I want a stale bag of chips].

The chips are an assumed means to reach the desired ends. That doesn't mean the assumed means wouldn't work. There's a good chance that eating a stale bag of chips would in fact sate your hunger. The issue is that if we assume it's The Answer™ and pour all of our resources into obtaining a stale bag of chips without further examination, we miss out on all the other options for sating hunger - some of which are objectively better. Meals that are more filling, nutritionally balanced, and better tasting. Ones that make it so that you aren't feeling quite so unsatisfied quite so often to begin with.

So! If we're going on a treasure hunt, we gotta start by locating X on the map. Keep in mind, the way that maps work is that your path to X is going to be wholly dependent on your current location and the terrain ahead. We're not designing the path just yet, we're setting a destination. First the Ends, then the Means.

WHAT do you want...what do you WANT?

Whatever it is, let yourself want it, without judgment. You wanna be Godruler of the universe? Grand. You want a job promotion? Cool beans. You'd like a harem of anime girls? Okay. Now take your desire, and peel away as much of the built-in Means as possible to reveal the Ends to which you aspire.

Why do you wanna be GodRuler, what are you hoping to accomplish with that, what needs are you trying to fill? Is it a sense of purpose & belonging, the respect of your peers, the inhibited ability to enact change? Do you need all that power because you don't trust that other people have the capacity or desire to adequately meet your needs or their own? Do you want to be a benevolent dictator because you crave being effortlessly loved & accepted for performing a role that's within your capacity, or a feared dictator because you don't want the things and people you treasure to be taken away from you?

Do you want a job promotion, or do you want people to recognize you as worthy and acknowledge your efforts? Do you want a job promotion or do you want more money? Do you want more money or do you need more of the things that money can buy?

Is the harem of anime girls about wanting to be loved & desired unconditionally just for being you, or is it about the social capital that comes from bagging a harem of anime girls, or both?

Notice that even the stripped down versions I'm offering are still Ends painted with Means, they could be stripped down even further. When we strip away **all** assumed means, the essence of all underlying needs & desires are basically universal. Freedom, Safety, Expression, Connection. We all wanna belong, we all wanna be worthy, we all wanna have fun, we all wanna be happy.

Once you've figured out what's missing, mark X on your map. How we achieve those things, the means, the methods, and material circumstances required are going to be unique based on our circumstances but if we confuse those means for ends we will inevitably veer off track. You may have noticed that folks who try to make themselves whole by hoarding wealth never feel like they have enough, or that landing a dream job can feel less like crossing the finish line and more like being shackled to a shiny new treadmill. If you want the right answers, you gotta ask the right questions.

Sorry about the lighting changes. I forgot that the sun goes down at 4pm now, and uh, that's where we're at- made a mess.

People have a weirdly easy time opening up to me. And I mean people who are close to me yeah, but also like acquaintances and perfect strangers. This has been the case for as long as I can remember, since long before I figured out how to hold space without judgment. If you sat down next to me at a bus stop and told me your life story I **was** judging you while plotting my escape.

Here's my...hm. Okay. There are exceptions, but for the most part I have a hard time with eye contact and I've gotten pretty good at giving off this like "yeah don't touch me" vibe, y'know? Like, let's keep a respectful distance. And lately, I've been wondering if maybe something about

that feels like privacy, even if I'm clearly paying attention and asking very intrusive questions? I dunno.

But as I've grown more vocal about anarchism and being an anarchist, some of the deep dark secrets people will divulge to me now...unprompted in the sacred confessional of a house party patio or sat on my couch high on something in the liminal space between 2 and 5 in the morning I've started to hear things like:

"I love my partner, & my family so much but sometimes I wish they'd just leave me alone for like a couple of hours. Just like a few days, like a little vacation y'know?"

Or

"Yeah I just....I don't want to work. At all."

Like that, in that tone. Self-deprecating and almost mocking, like they're half-expecting me to laugh at them or make jokes, commensurate about being too lazy or stupid or selfish.

Oh? You're telling me that you'd prefer to pursue your passions freely, without the threat of looming financial ruin? You'd like time to rest and play without feeling fearful, guilty, or overwhelmed by the lost opportunity cost? You want to do things for and with your community and then have the tangible fruits of your labour materially impact your life, rather than perform some menial task in a production line where someone who doesn't know you exist gets paid for your labour, and someone else who doesn't know you exists receives tangible fruits of said labour? You want to be in loving connection with those you care about, while maintaining a sense of autonomy & individual personhood? Tell me more.

UNHINGE yourself from reality - and take no prisoners. There can be no compromise here. We cannot dismantle oppressive systems, whilst operating from the position that they are too well established, too ingrained in the human experience, to do anything about. We can marvel in their destruction, even if we will not live to see their complete annihilation.

Fuck reality! All my homies hate reality!

PART II - THE MEANS

...back to reality.

Time isn't linear, but we experience it as linear. When order did I record these segments in? It's a mystery! But you're probably watching this after a bad eminem reference and before a quote from Heraclitus. At least the first time you watch this video, you're more likely to skip around if you came back.

“No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man.”

– Heraclitus.

There it is. There are a lot of quotes in this video but it's 90 minutes long and other people are really good at having already written wonderfully coherent analogies so cut me some slack.

Stillness is a lie, winning is a lie, time is always moving forward and life changes with it!

No matter how much you may love a movie, you only get to experience it for the first time once. Even if you went back and reproduced every single variable of your watching experience - same place, same outfit, same snacks, same company - you won't ever get to experience that first time again. People care a lot about first times, and some of that is patriarchal hangover, but not all of it. Firsts are formative, they form the scaffolding that everything afterwards has to build on and contend with. This is why people have such a visceral reaction to spoilers, once you've encountered that plot twist you there is no undo button. From then onwards, it will forever be a different experience. And if you hit rewind expecting to relive an experience, you will be disappointed. Now if you watch a movie you love, and then you choose to watch it again knowing it'll be a different experience this time, you'll find new things to appreciate. You get to zero in on small aesthetic details that you missed, the foreshadowing hits differently, and don't even get me started on introducing things you love to people you like and getting to watch them experience it for their first time. Or hitting up a movie you watched like a decade ago, after you've forgotten most of the details, and getting hit with that delicious nostalgia. It's good shit.

Neither time nor people are stagnant, the ever-changing sum of our experiences is permanently transformative. So trying to capture a moment in a bottle, to live in rather than remember, is only ever **at best** a waste of energy...and at worst a one-way ticket to the abyss. This is what hierarchy is & does; it is the attempt to have dominion over the flow of time. To position the pieces just so, and then glue them down. It is objectification in the truest sense of the word, the distilling of dynamic subjects into objects, as though they are vessels that exist to perform whichever functions have been projected onto them, forever.

Hierarchy is the fairytale of endless economic growth, of wars fought and won and finished, of permanence, of a pre-designed universally applicable step-by-step guide to succeeding in life,

of an unchanging, unconditional and eternal love, of a binary existence. Hierarchy is the fantasy that safety can be cultivated through control.

The hierarchical systems that dictate our lives aren't going to spontaneously disappear, no matter how badly we may want them to. We need to set our sights on something better and then actively make choices that bring us materially closer to those ideals.

Ongoing exposure and participation is transformative, prefigurative even. The ideas, beliefs, and values, and behaviours that are modelled for us and available to us are the ones that inform our understanding of the world. People are always talking about 'human nature' this 'human nature' that, like it's some kind of great revelation.

Obviously people have an easier time operating within the systems that surround them, obviously people are affected by their upbringings, obviously people reproduce and build upon the only ideas and foundational material they've been given access to. *Especially* when alternative ideas are intentionally & systemically suppressed by people who believe that they stand to benefit from the status quo.

“To look at people in capitalist society and conclude that human nature is egoism, is like looking at people in a factory where pollution is destroying their lungs and saying that it is human nature to cough”

– Andrew Collier, *Marx: A Beginner's Guide*

If we're serious about wanting things to be different, we need the capacity to imagine things which are different. One of my favourite things is when I spend hours upon hours meticulously explaining the ins-and-outs of a hierarchical system - how it came to be, why it works, the

undesirable impacts of said system, potential areas of intervention for dismantling said system.

And then someone comes along, very helpfully, and is just like

“No but, you don’t understand, that’s how the system works. All the things you’re complaining about are inherent to the system functioning. Without those things the system wouldn’t even be a thing anymore.”

My sibling in christ, between the two of us I am not the one experiencing a confusion right now.

I understand that landlords, parents, & girlboss CEOs are just out here, tryna survive, tryna self-actualize, tryna fill the gaping void left behind when we replaced community with currency. I get that people shop fast fashion because self-expression & desirability & respectability are required for both connection & currency, and that if **your** labour is being exploited, then there isn’t enough leftover time & energy to make your own clothing and there isn’t enough money to pay someone the fair value of their labour. I know that it’s inherently exhausting & demoralizing to be fighting an uphill battle every moment of every day while yielding the heavy-ass blunt-ass weapons you’ve been handed. I understand the cyclical nature of exploitation these systems require to function.

My critique is not of individuals doing their best to live well within the systems that they have access to, it is of the systems that prevent us from accessing truly liberatory alternatives.

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Free will is fake!

There are many ways to conceptualize freedom, and the one that resonates most with me is unsurprisingly, a dialectic. Two seemingly oppositional forces that when in communication with

one another, have the potential to synthesize truth. Freedom (to act, to change, to be) occurs when there is an alignment between Internal & External power.

Internal power referring to the variables that are cultivated within oneself - knowledge, skill, desire. These variables which are incorporeal, the manifestation of idealism.

So follows, external power refers to the variables which are cultivated outside of the self - circumstance, opportunity, resources, community. Variables which are tangible; the manifestation of materialism.

These are, of course, moving parts that necessarily inform one another. The dichotomy between materialism & idealism is a false one. Our material conditions influence which knowledge, skills, & desires we have the capacity to access, which influences the material conditions we have the capacity to construct, which influences our internal power, which influences our external power, and so on ad infinitum. That's what Power is: the actualized capacity derived from the relationship of those two forces. In other words, people only have access to what they have access to.

People are like spreadsheets! Genetic variables & life experiences can be thought of as a dataset of variables which act as inputs. When applied contextually, in reference to the totality of their trajectory through space-time, these inputs produce specific outcomes. The spreadsheet that we have the most access to is our own, although even then, only partially. So attempting to apply formulas we've discerned for ourselves, the process of if-this-then-that to other people will always yield inaccurate results, yeah? Just because I like biscuits doesn't mean you like biscuits, and just because I wanted biscuits yesterday with tea doesn't mean that I'll want them tomorrow with tuna. Still with me?

If we time traveled to the past and somehow swapped your soul with someone else's at birth - nothing that followed would change. Upon returning to the present, you would simply be that person. It wouldn't be a bodyswap where you retained parts of your personality while living through different experiences, you wouldn't be an approximation or a copycat, you would embody their very essence. Every thought they had, every emotion, every dream. You'd have made all of the same choices, exhibit all of the same mannerisms, believe all of the same things - and they would be you. We're here because we're here. If you lived the same day over and over with your memory wiped at the end of each cycle, every moment would be identical no matter how many times the cycle repeated. With no change in variables, I will always have wanted biscuits with tea yesterday.

Sometimes people find this concept to be kind of depressing, or defeatist, but I think it's really the opposite. If we understand people to be the sum of their experiences, then we know that by understanding those experiences, we can find methods of effective intervention. Change becomes an achievable possibility. There are patterns amongst humans, certain combinations of traits & experiences that are more or less likely to yield particular outcomes. And yet simultaneously, the holistic sum of those traits & experiences is completely unique to each individual. The only way to even have a shot at predicting an accurate output is to seek out those patterns by communicating with others', and especially by seeking to understand folks with different traits & experiences than our own.

And I mean, look, if you believe in free will that is totally your prerogative and I'm not here to tell you you're wrong - but it is an evidently ineffective framework to operate with. As far as I'm concerned, the value in this blend of determinism & positionality isn't gleaned from its status as universal truth, but from its utility. Even if we don't agree that people are wholly constructed by their circumstances, if you think that that on some level people just **are** the way that they are -

that they **can** be evil, shitty, cruel, selfish, lazy, incompetent, manipulative or ignorant due to some inherent quality branded on their soul that no circumstance could alter, or that they simply choose to be that way because it grants them some kind of perceived advantage - then it still follows that the best way to *address* this reality is to adapt and accommodate. We'd still have to shift the way we organize our lives and our communities in such a way that prevents anyone from acquiring a privileged position or status within it that might allow them to coerce and exploit others. Because if: some people just are awful, ruling others is a possibility, and anti-social behaviour grants an advantage, then it will always be folks with antisocial tendencies who rule. Right?

Or not! Feel free to "boot-strap" and "personal responsibility" yourselves into oblivion, I guess. I'm not a cop, I'm a fuckin' nerd on Youtube. Jesus Christ.

Nonetheless, I believe that If we collectively woke up tomorrow and suddenly all of the hierarchical structures we live within were gone? No longer being enforced by the state or whatever, we would, collectively, *immediately* recreate them. Even if the slate was somehow wiped clean. All bank accounts set to zero, laws and policies were changed to enshrine equal rights, everyone was literally transformed into identical grey blobs. We, the people mysteriously isekaid to this brave new world, would not be blank canvases. We would bring along the hierarchy that's been baked into us over the course of our fucking lifetimes. We might create completely different hierarchies, but hierarchies they would be. And that makes perfect sense, because that is *the* skillset that we've inherited and *the* trauma that we've spent our lives developing coping mechanisms for. Thanks to colonialism, everything else pretty much has been or is on its way to becoming wiped out. To actually have any hope of cultivating a new, different system, we'd literally have to snipe everyone alive and then ourselves.

Unless! There was some way to enact change transformatively, restoratively. A way to become people with the skillsets, desires, and resources to organise ourselves differently. A way to build the new within the shell of the old. Or as historical anarchists put it, to build “the embryo of the human society of the future”.

Good news - there are ways to do that! The bad news - it's difficult and unintuitive.

It is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism, and easier to imagine the end of capitalism than what comes after.

But we, unironically, need to be able to do just that. We need to have some idea of where we're headed and what's going to replace the systems that we're so hellbent on dismantling. And people understand that, intrinsically. Which is, I think, where a lot of the skepticism around Anarchism comes from and even around certain emancipatory ideas within anarchist spaces.

The opposite of disempowered isn't powerful, it's empowered. In order to empower people, to enact change, we need to start by understanding the factors that are currently contributing to their disempowerment. In my experience, hearing the phrase “that sounds good in theory, but doesn't work in practice” in reference to liberatory ideas is a dead giveaway that someone hasn't meaningfully engaged the theory, really at all. They've engaged the conclusions. And that's not like, an individual issue to be resolved. The fact that this theory is so inaccessible to so many people is a systemic problem, or more accurately, a symptom of a system working exactly as it's meant to. You don't need to pour a ton of time and energy and resources into understanding the practical application of hierarchy, because we are drenched in it.

You can take Econ 101 and immediately internalize the application of supply & demand, that markets determine value, because that's how the world currently works. You've seen it in action since you were a child, you've heard about it since you were in middle school, the introductory theory doesn't need to spin you in a 180 or even expand your periphery. It doesn't need to make any connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, it just highlights & reinforces what's already in front of you. And that's fine. We do need to understand what's in front of us, know thy enemy and all that. But it's so much easier because you get to just go with the flow. It is what we've been prefigured for.

You don't need to understand anything about the inner mechanisms of a camera to know that when you push the button a photo is taken, until it doesn't. Until something breaks, or your photos are somehow disappointing to you. Likewise, you don't need to take one single gender studies class in order to engage with society in a way that reinforces cisheteropatriarchy, or white supremacy, or ableism, or adultism, or monogamy - it's modelled for you everywhere. We only come to interrogate these systems when faced with tension, either first hand via marginalization or second hand via exposure & education. In other words, we realize these molds are not designed to encapsulate nor enhance the vastness of the human experience by trying & failing to conform, and/or by internalizing the experiences of those who do not conform and now operate outside of the arbitrary guidelines enforced by these systems. We only start to ask questions when confronted with evidence that these molds aren't set in stone, they're lines of chalk on the ground that have the potential to be redrawn or washed away as we see fit.

But if not this, then what, right? Surely, we can't just break down the world order and call it a day! What about undesirable labour, what about bad actors, what about limited resources, what about experts, what about homes, what about food, what about scalability, what about climate, what about criminals? Very good.

These are good questions, important questions. I think the answers I have to offer are going to be initially unsatisfactory to you, but stay the course. You can ask these questions to 10 different anarchists and get at least 10 different answers. There might be some common themes among them around mutual aid, consensus, abolitionism, and so on but when it comes to nailing down day-to-day specifics it gets very very slippery. And when you're accustomed to hierarchy this seems like inconsistency & incoherency, but there are two fundamental flaws to that line of thinking.

First, is that perfectionism is a curse that prevents action. This all-or-nothing standard of certainty demands perfect solutions to problems which have never been solved. The systems we currently operate under are buckling under the weight of these very crises - none of the valid concerns regarding potentially harmful effects of a new system have been fixed by any existing social structures and are in fact literally being exacerbated right now.

And second, we can't know. If we can understand that our lived experiences transform us, then it follows that they have transformed us. There is no hitting the undo button, we can't Ctrl + Z ourselves out of this one. There is only understanding, accommodating, and adapting. We can't know how these things would work within a society designed to cultivate anarchy, because we live within a society designed to cultivate hierarchy. We have hierarchical brain rot!

We can make guesses, sure, but the value in these thought experiments isn't in the solutions we come up with ourselves. Those solutions are inevitably lacking. We can't actually project ourselves into the future, because our experience of time is linear. If anarchy can exist, then the people who have the power to cultivate anarchy will come long after we are gone, and they will come with answers we could never have conceived of. Which isn't to throw our hands up and

paint a scenario where there's nothing to do but wait for them. If we faff about going "ah well, the next generations will solve it", then they won't have the chance to.

It's on us to forge the tools they need and reshape the world in their favour. We are simultaneously developers and beta-testers. We are quality assurance and software engineers. We are the features and the bugs.

And as the conscience, determination, and capacity of men continuously develop and find means of expression in the gradual modification of the new environment and in the realisation of the desires in proportion to their being formed and becoming imperious, so it is with Anarchism; Anarchism cannot come but little by little – slowly, but surely, growing in intensity and extension.

Therefore, the subject is not whether we accomplish Anarchism today, tomorrow, or within ten centuries, but that we walk towards Anarchism today, tomorrow, and always.

– Errico Malatesta

I think that there is value in engaging with these hypotheticals and thought experiments, but that it's in measuring the evolution and expansion of our own internal power. In noticing the minute shifts in regards to what we're capable of coming up with. In noticing how those shifts reshape the ways we interact with the world, and how the world interacts with us in turn. It's really more

of like a progress bar, that we can mine for insight & dopamine by testing against previous markers - watching it fill up, within & throughout our lifetimes. We're not capable of true anarchy, yet, but we're capable of practicing anarchism in ways that genuinely increase our capacity, that better equip ourselves, the people around us, and the people that come after us for anarchy. So not knowing isn't a cop-out. It's an acknowledgment of fact and a very deliberate refusal to fall into the trap of confusing Means for Ends.

“We anarchists do not want to emancipate the people; we want the people to emancipate themselves.”

— Errico Malatesta

My project is not making An Anarchy, it's making anarchists. Partly because anarchists are a prerequisite to capital A-Anarchy, yes, but mostly because anarchists are awesome. Joyful, passionate, empathetic, collaborative problem solvers with a shared vision and the ability to execute are exactly the types of people that I want to surround myself with. Nothing beats being in community with folks who ask interesting questions and chase after interesting answers, who see the limitations of 'what is' as a challenge rather than a rule. These are the communities that I want to build and collaborate with. In this case, more is more and more is better.

PART 2.5 OK BUT HOW?

Portal is a first person puzzle platformer where you run around from room to room, using your handy-dandy portal gun to navigate various obstacles! You got your lil' blue portal and your lil' orange portal and they somehow connect space-time via lil' wormholes while preserving momentum. Neat!

(wait no come back i promise this is relevant)

That explanation was redundant because chances are you already know how portal guns work, even if you've never played Portal. Not only is it an incredibly popular, award winning game it's also generated a metric butt-load of memes including one of my all time favourites - Now You're Thinking With Portals. This is not a gaming analysis channel so I'm not gonna get into it too much, but what's really cool about the portal gameplay mechanic is that as you play the game, as the challenges get more and more complex, it kind of rewires your interpretation of spacetime and allows one to imagine entirely new ways to navigate what otherwise be another run of the mill platformer where you jump around and time keystroke combos and shit. And as the popularity of the portal franchise exploded, we got more and more of these memes. These delightful examples of people taking their newly developed portal brains and exploring creative ways to apply that mechanic **in real life**. Now, to my knowledge, we're a very long ways from anyone actually acquiring a real portal gun. And yet, there's a sizable community of people who may not understand the why or how behind portal guns, nor the science or theory required to turn that idea into a reality, but they *get* how portals work. They've internalized an almost instinctual visualization of the ways that space-time might be altered to achieve various ends. They're *thinking* with portals. And if they were mystically transported to a world with burgeoning portal gun technology, they'd have some pretty cool ideas.

Now could these newly transported denizens keep up with the locals of Portal Land? Not a chance. Being introduced to a mechanic, grasping it on a bare bones theoretical level,

beginning to weave it into your worldview, these are requisites for successfully integrating that mechanic into a functional skill set. But so is having the opportunity to actually develop that skill set in a tangible, meaningful way. You need adequate exposure to the mechanic, you need a tutorial, and you need experience points to level up. Imagine a skill tree where as life progresses and you make decisions about where to allocate your experience points, certain builds become possible and others become locked off - because lifetimes, and therefore XP points, are in limited supply to the average mortal.

In order for a group of people to be able to meaningfully participate in a society designed around portal gun capabilities, they'd need to be transported there from a society that's already integrated portal gun technology to such an extent that they'd have had a chance to develop a Portal Build. And it's not enough for Portal Builds to simply exist on the skill tree - a hidden option that goes totally ignored, or even undiscovered because there are cooler, funner, and more immediately relevant Builds available. It must also be genuinely desirable. And like, I'm just gonna shoehorn this in here, but Portal Builds are diverse. We'd need Portal Engineers & Architects & Artists & Bakers. It's not like a single linear option that you just kinda chase after until you get hit with the designation at level 50 or whatever, but rather one that can be unlocked by collecting certain combinations of common skills. Portal Build is a class. Or a party maybe? A guild? Is this analogy holding up? I wanted to use Portal because of its perfectly illustrative memes, but maybe the prefigurative nature of dungeons & dragons or stardew valley would have translated better.

It's too late now, I'm not redoing this.

If the Portal video game was designed with Portal Build prefiguration in mind - then the enjoyment of the game, the cool-ass graphics, the characters, the worldbuilding, the story, the dopamine hit that comes from working out a particularly tricky puzzle, the fandom communities

and the memes that tend to crop up around hits like this... none of these things would be the goal. They'd be the method. The process must be visible, enjoyable, rewarding, and sustainable enough to both draw people in and incentivize continued participation. There would need to be people who chose to pursue Portal Builds, over all other options, long before Portal Land was on the horizon. Otherwise by the time it came, they'd be unprepared. That's the fascinating paradox about revolution, is that for change to occur, change must have already occurred. And that's true not just of revolution, but of any dream, goal, or desire.

Once we've set our ideal, marked X on our map, we must then work backwards to develop the material circumstances in which that ideal becomes not just a possibility, but an inevitability. Those ideal material circumstances become a landmark, the tangible representation of having reached the correct milestone on your roadmap. From here we continue to work backwards, setting more and more milestones, plotting out each set of prefigurative circumstances required, becoming less and less abstract, until we arrive at our current location - a visible landmark in sight and within reach.

In other words, you gotta be bad at a thing in order to get good at the thing. But if you're bad in isolation, you'll be bad at it forever. Improvement comes from participation **and** discourse, it must be dialogical. They say comparison is the thief of joy, and yeah, obviously it totally can be. But comparison can also lead to inspiration and curiosity and innovation. There is, I think, a fundamental distinction to be made when it comes to comparison born of competition rather than community. If you do something 100 times the exact same way, without learning from previous attempts, receiving feedback, seeking out other possibilities or engaging with new techniques or perspectives, you won't actually get much better. Repetition alone is worthless; anything worth anything is born of connection. Realistically, if you wanna get good at a thing then you have to consume variations of the thing in mass quantities, you have to analyse the

thing from every angle you can get your claws on, you have to interact with people who do the thing better than you or differently, and then make your own connections and slowly carve out your own unique wavelength that can be tuned into when others engage with your thing. I'm not just talking about your craft or your art, or your trade or your business. I'm talking about your politics, your relationships, and your very way of being. Excellence is a community effort, it takes a village.

So! Here are 5 Steps to a Cool New Thing™: Propaganda, education, participation, mastery, legacy. Transformative communities are developed by transformed individuals, and for transformation to occur within either every step of the way **must be** desirable, accessible, & rewarding. So going backwards, a new legacy requires individuals with adequate mastery of the skill sets needed to operate within it. This mastery is developed through consistent practice of those skills, which must be informed by adequate education, which must be inspired through repetitive exposure to enticing propaganda, which must be developed by individuals who possess mastery of the previous, prerequisite skill set. It is a continuous cycle that only spins forward through the synthesis of internal & external power.

This is why trading liberation for equality consistently reproduces the hierarchical, hegemonic, world order we've become so accustomed to. If the goal is equality, assimilation will always be the outcome because that is the skill set developed through the process - the propaganda, education, & practice inevitably produces individuals who are seduced by the boot and ultimately seek not to destroy it, but join it.

This is, very basically, the theory behind Prefigurative Politics. This is not how Prefigurative Politics is normally explained.

Usually people talk about very specific types of direct action. Labour movements, protests, tenants unions, food kitchens, that sort of thing. The idea being that by participating in these sorts of horizontally organised movements, getting to build social relations with people who are working towards the same goals, who are invested in building up the collective by looking out for autonomy, practising decision making and conflict resolution through consensus, employing empathy and respect - people develop the skills, and understanding, and social relationships that they need in order to divest from hierarchy in other circumstances. To carry that prefiguration forward, and to participate in, model, grow and construct more and more non-hierarchical communities and organisations. And that as the effectiveness of these methods is proven, as they bring about immediate reforms and improvements to the quality of life of the participants, they also develop within themselves, and any who bear witness, genuine desire to pursue and expand those methods. Like a drop that ripples out into massive waves. I am wholeheartedly on board with this approach, and the more common examples. There are a bunch of content creators that do an excellent job of explaining the historical precedent for these types of movements, and how to develop or participate in these kinds of organizations within a modern context - I'm gonna link a few below.

That said, my schtick is relationships. Up till now this video has been primarily geared towards mapping out some of the basic political theories surrounding anarchy, but this channel is about applying those theories to our relationships with each other, and ourselves, and the world around us as a whole. My obsession is connection for a reason! Empathetic self-direction through abjection & introspection, a rejection of possession in favor of collective insurrection. I believe that relationship anarchy has the potential to be one of the most powerful and directly accessible forms of prefigurative politics out there - if practised with a foundational understanding of anarchist theory. I don't see relationship anarchy as a distinct branch or tendency within anarchism, but a core component that's been overlooked. And I say this with

the knowledge that like, as far as I can tell, most anarchists don't practice relationship anarchy, and most relationship anarchists don't practice anarchism. I have my own theories about why that is, but that's for another video - this one's got enough in it I feel.

A lot of people lump relationship anarchy in with polyamory and that causes a lot of confusion because they are not the same. To clarify, I am just as here for monogamy as I am polyamory - which is to say, not at all. Polyamory is to Relationship Anarchy what mainstream Liberalism is to political Anarchy. Like yes, there is a concerted effort to dispute the value of exclusivity within so-called romantic & sexual relationships, but non-hierarchical relating goes so far beyond that. It's not just an appreciation for, or co-optation of, the aesthetic of freedom. Nor is it a simple statement of intent. It is the process of rewiring our understanding of connection whole cloth, of working to deconstruct all inter & intrapersonal hierarchy in order to rebuild horizontally.

"You cannot buy the revolution. You cannot make the revolution. You can only be the revolution. It is in your spirit, or it is nowhere." – Ursula K. Le Guin

Listen. We all have relationships. Familial, romantic, platonic, mentors, acquaintances, colleagues, strangers, bosses - the entirety of our society is made up of dyadic relationships. These are the bonds between atoms which make up the molecules of the world we live in. We are all part of something much much bigger than ourselves, even when we can't see that. Ergo, learning to practise anarchism within our interpersonal relationships not only primes us to be able to internalize those more liberatory worldviews and carry those ideas and skill sets into more explicitly revolutionary movements and organisations, but is a necessity for them to succeed.

How often do we hear about progressive movements and initiatives that fall apart, not only because of pressure from external forces but also because the people within them lack a holistic & intersectional framework for navigating interpersonal conflict, differentiation, burnout, and power imbalances? How often do we hear about progressive, liberatory movements that end up slowly drifting away from their ideals over time until they become an abandoned memory? Prioritizing the organization, the perception of power, the container itself, above the wellbeing and actualized power of the people within it. How often does this result in marginalized & radical perspectives being repeatedly dismissed if not silenced, until they're forced to either submit or abscond? It takes like, **one person** wielding hierarchy over another, even inadvertently, for these groups to begin fracturing beyond repair. And then they dissolve on their own due to irreconcilable harm, become so far removed from their radical roots that they're functionally a hegemonic reproduction of hierarchy, or crumble apart at even the lightest tap of pressure from external forces.

How often do we see exact replicas of these dynamics & consequential fractures paralleled within social relationships of all kinds?

Lovers, friendships, family, colleagues, teammates, strangers. In households, schools, churches, offices, parties, and on twitter.com...it's relationships all the way down.

None are free until all are free isn't a catch phrase, it's a representation of reality. We all have different pieces of the puzzle. Non-hierarchical relating requires understanding that we are all unique individuals, with a unique set of life experiences that we carry into every moment. That no one is more inherently valuable than you are, and that you are not more inherently valuable than anyone else. That we are all deserving of respect and compassion and empathy, and of having all of our needs met, and that every moment of disrespect, of dehumanisation, of unmet

needs is a tragic failing brought about by systems that produce and reproduce hierarchy. It is the process of developing the skills to anticipate what may be on another person's spreadsheet: how they got there, what they may need, and to what extent you have the capacity to collaborate with them.

This is why when analysing hierarchy and power dynamics within any & all interpersonal relationships, we need to focus on equity rather than equality. We may all have the same base needs but we have different means of meeting them. A painter and a sculpture are both working towards creative self expression, but one needs paint and the other clay. They don't need to be given an equal allotment of identical supplies, they need equitable access to the supply room. They need different spaces and different mentors. They need more and less of different things. If we cannot yet anticipate & meet those needs outright, then we must collaborate, and if we cannot yet collaborate, then we must learn to anticipate which circumstances may be required to build the capacity for collaboration and work towards them.

If to be in a committed relationship is to commit oneself to emotional availability, mutual growth, interdependence, and flexibility in the face of changing circumstances - then my aim is to be committed to every person I cross paths with, no matter what context and no matter how briefly. This is not within reach. I am limited in my capacity and will be until the day I die, but that is an end to which I aspire, an ideal that informs the way I live my life so that I might inch ever closer. I will never have perfect relationships, but cultivating more and more of those moments, these glimpses of authentic, vulnerable and free connection is just....*chefs kiss*. Makes being alive worth the trouble.

PART III - THE UNITY

Alrighty! We have some Means, we have some Ends, and we have arrived at the crux of the matter, they do not play nicely together! Not out of some inherent incompatibility, but as a result of our current conditions and how far we have to go.

“It is not enough to desire something; if one really wants it adequate means must be used to secure it. And these means are not arbitrary, but instead cannot but be conditioned by the ends we aspire to and by the circumstances in which the struggle takes place, for if we ignore the choice of means we would achieve other ends, possibly diametrically opposed to those we aspire to, and this would be the obvious and inevitable consequence of our choice of means. Whoever sets out on the highroad and takes a wrong turning does not go where he intends to go but where the road leads him.”

– Ericco Malatesta

If we cannot project ourselves into the future, then how can we tell if we're going the right way? What if, despite our best efforts, things don't get better or-or get even worse?!

This will sound glib, but elaboration is mere minutes away: If things stay the same or get worse, you're doing it wrong. Therefore, when you're on the right track, circumstances must continually be improving.

Here are the problems with this, right: 1) people measure improvement with different metrics and rubrics 2) revolution may bloom in the individual, but ultimately requires cooperation with other people 3) it does not matter how far we go if we are constantly dragged back

The only way to make progress is to understand that the roadmap & the skilltree are one and the same, merely perceived in different dimensions. The path we've sketched out is a 2D drawing of a 3D plane that renders in real time. Yes, we've plotted out a path from start to end, but this guide becomes increasingly obsolete the further we progress - we don't actually know what lies ahead. There will be unanticipated roadblocks, there will be dangerously unfamiliar terrain, there will be loot boxes and secret underground tunnels. Landmarks will need to be moved, removed, or replaced, skill sets will need to evolve, even the very ends to which we aspire will likely change over time. The map must be updated constantly. But unlike google maps, there is no omnipresent satellite to pre-emptively predict a change of plans, or re-direct you if you make a wrong turn. So, learning how to navigate **is** the way forward. And because everyone starts off in a different location every path forward is unique. The ends to which we aspire may or may not come into alignment with others, but our means can never be identical. There may be times where those paths intersect, for brief encounters or long stretches, but we ultimately live different lives. This diversity of tactics inherent to anarchism is not an accident, it's the point.

I think a lot of anarchists might disagree with what I'm about to say, but I am of the opinion that direct action is whatever actually moves us closer. Protesting, unionizing, organizing, volunteering...these are all actions or activities that have the potential to bring us closer to our desired ends if performed effectively, and pull us further away if performed ineffectively. Art, Rest, Play, even Debate, also have the potential to both bring us closer or hold us back.

Direct action is whatever works.

Genuinely works, not just "whatever's easiest", "whatever you want", or "whatever seems like it should work".

If we trade in liberation for complacency, equality, or domination we will not move towards a new world order, but a recreation of the existing world order. In some ways I think the direct quality of action is most effectively measured retroactively, because until we can access omniscience we can't know what **will** have worked, and so these are all just patterns to learn from. Direct Action is taking matters into your own hands, accurately selecting whichever Means move us along the path towards our Ends. It's becoming an active participant instead of giving up, or waiting for someone else to change the world. It is the Unity of Means & Ends

But like, look, theory is often dense & niche & complicated & boring & jargony. Much of the language and methodology used by radicals is inevitably filtered down through the lenses of mainstream liberalism to such an extent that they're functionally a reproduction of hegemonic ideas tinged with the aesthetics of liberation. Mutual aid becomes synonymous with charity, abolition gets mistaken as advocating for The Purge, and don't even get me started on Allyship. It's easy to get caught up in optics & accessibility but here's the thing. Which words & phrases we use doesn't matter, because they're semantic shortcuts developed for a particular context in which their complexity is assumed. The moment they're removed from that context their meaning is inevitably altered in order to be understood, they take on mainstream coloring, and they go from being shortcuts to detours. In order to get that intended meaning back we'd have to explain all of that dense theory, to go the long scenic route which many people find boring & complicated & irrelevant. It's a self perpetuating problem with no easy answer.

So. Given that we are permanently transformed by the hierarchy we've endured, it is inevitable that we will choose poor landmarks or engage in Means which prefigure us away from better ones - no matter how pure or abstract our stated Ends. It is precisely because veering off track

IS an inevitability, that we have to learn to recognize when that's happened as early on as possible, and course correct.

There are a bunch of false dichotomies that permeate basically every single space, and every single conversation that I've ever been a part of throughout all of the time I've spent engaging with political & personal discourse. And when I say that these dichotomies are false I don't mean that there aren't people, ideologies, or communities that value or align themselves with one side over the other. I'm saying **that** there are is perfectly emblematic of the problem, because what makes them false dichotomies is that they are true dialectics. And as far as I can tell, they're all basically different manifestations of the same perceived dissonance between *what we have to lose* and *what we want to have*.

Familiarity & Novelty. Reliability & Exploration. Comfort & Growth. Peace & Lucidity. Collectivism & Individualism. Materialism & Idealism. Reform & Revolution. Social anarchism & Insurrectionary anarchism. Solidarity & Autonomy. Safety & Freedom. These are not one or the other but halves of a whole. They inform one another, to neglect one weakens both. This is the danger of hegemonic thought and counter-thought, each serving to reproduce hierarchy. No matter which end of these binaries you choose, by engaging with these values as though they exist on a binary spectrum, a Zero sum game Where one comes at the expense of the other, you end up further disempowering the disempowered - yourself included. Marginalized perspectives get shafted and hierarchy is re-enforced.

If we prioritize our ideals over the immediate material reality, the perspectives of those who do not have the power to opt out are dismissed. And if we prioritize our immediate material needs over the ideal reality, the perspectives of those who do not have the power to conform are dismissed.

Both of these positions are born of privilege. I hate using the word privilege because the common semantic understanding implies benefit and an overabundance of resources, when what I'm gesturing towards right now is actually a lack of resource. The experience of privilege comes with a specific kind of ignorance, a distinct scarcity of insight. We're all missing something, but the kinds of ignorance developed through the experience of marginalization don't come from a lack of exposure to hierarchical ideals, but from a societally built-in lack of support for alternative perspectives. It's repetitive, nonstop, day-in and day-out. To be against the grain is exhausting and without adequate support or access to resources, some degree of internalization is functionally inevitable. Whereas ignorance developed through the experience of privilege comes from constant support of hierarchical ideals, and an altogether lack of exposure to alternative perspectives.

And despite my earlier spiel on false dichotomies I still feel the need to clarify that marginalized & privileged are not two categories of people. They are descriptions of positionality that apply to each of us within various contexts & dynamics. Not shorthand for good & evil, but morally neutral halves of a system called hierarchy, each part required for the system to persist. Social justice is not an issue of morality, altruism or kindness, it's one of function. It is only through the synthesis of resources & insight, external & internal power, that an alternative materializes: Freedom. Empowerment. Anarchy. Magic.

Whenever I find myself clinging to a dichotomy, especially when it's in alignment with something I've always believed, that signals an immediate red flag for me. Dichotomies, binaries, rigidity, control, certainty - these tools belong to hierarchy. So if I'm unable to synthesize the dialectic I have to ask, not just what am I missing, but what's been kept from me...and why? What is it

about this dichotomy that triggers a pavlovian sense of safety or superiority in me, and which hierarchies am I being driven to reproduce or re-enforce because of it?

For example: You wanna be a rugged individualist? Great. I agree. I think you should live your best life. But to do it effectively you'd need to synthesize the dialectic. Notice that your capacity is fundamentally tied to others, and that therefore it is in your best interest to do what you can to ensure that all of their needs are met - which requires an acknowledgment & respect of their material reality.

You're a card carrying collectivist? Dope. I agree, people should give a shit about each other. But do it effectively. Surely you can see that continuously pouring from an empty cup does not fill the communal well, comrade? That the capacity of the collective is fundamentally tied to the individual, so it's in their best interest to ensure utmost autonomy & subjectivity - which requires an acknowledgement & respect of those wack-ass metaphysical ideals.

It's diabolical as fuck, but even calling it diabolical anthropomorphizes the phenomena of hierarchy, assigning intent & ingenuity where there isn't any! A virus doesn't become less lethal over time because it's clever, but because the viruses that don't simply self-destruct alongside their hosts. It's not survival of the fittest, it's just survival. Reproduction based on the existing circumstances. If a virus could multiply and spread through dead hosts then it would evolve to disregard lethality. In different survival circumstances, the qualities that determine fitness are also different.

It works like this because it works like this, so if we want things to work differently it's gotta go. What comes next isn't set in stone, but whatever it is, definitionally, cannot be what works today.

Means & Ends is yet another such false dichotomy. We gotta wrangle them together.

We need to be realistic in order to work effectively towards achieving our ideals. Yet “being realistic” is so often used as a diversion tactic, in order to get people to settle for less or veer entirely off track. Being genuinely realistic is the opposite of settling. we need to take one step at a time, but an effective step forward has to be a step closer, not sideways. There is a fundamental difference between a stepping stone and a sinking stone. Staying in place doesn't move us closer, going the wrong way doesn't move us closer, going backwards doesn't move us closer. A continuous cycle of taking 3 steps forward and 3 steps back doesn't move us closer. If it looks like settling, it probably is. If it looks like you're laying stones in the wrong direction, you probably are! Course correct.

Or don't. I'm not a cop! But don't be all surprised pikachu when we spin our wheels into eternity. Or into an apocalypse, whichever comes first.

If we allow idealism to inform our materialism, and vice versa, the embodiment of that dialectic fundamentally shifts the ways we interact with the world. It's transformative. In our conscious actions and decisions, yes, but also in the ways we move. In our tones, our body language, in the moments where we pause instinctually before realizing why. The only way out is to stop trying to pick one or waffle between them and instead encapsulate both. Not sometimes one & sometimes the other. Not a balance, blend or midpoint, but the entirety of the relationships between them and their context. Not compromise, nor a means to an end, but the Unity of Means & Ends. Understanding how the pieces fit together and inform one another, so that we can effectively self-determine the best available options through endlessly changing circumstances. Not switching from being governed by one set of hierarchies to another, but becoming truly self-governed. Ungovernable.

This isn't some banana-ass enlightened centrism, it's anarchism baby. This is as far left as it gets, and then some.

I can already hear someone typing in the comments about the authoritarian left. Listen. I see the appeal of employing familiar tools and I get the desire for simple rules & prescriptions. I understand their value and the extent of their necessity, I really do. But I don't wanna lie to you. The opposition to authoritarian or statist leftis strategies is not one of morality or ~vibes~, but of function. It's all about function.

Lies-to-Children is a concept developed by scientist Jack Cohen and mathematician Ian Stewart. It was first discussed in the 1994 book *The Collapse of Chaos: Discovering Simplicity in a Complex World* and then later popularised when the duo collaborated with author Terry Pratchett, yes that one, spotlighting "lies-to-children" in the book *"The Science of Discworld"*. Sawyer describes lies-to-children as '*—the necessarily simplified stories we tell children and students as a foundation for understanding so that eventually they can discover that they are not, in fact, true.*' I've been alluding this concept throughout the entirety of this video, and now we're gonna tie it all together. Hopefully.

The idea is a nod to Wittgenstein's ladder, a metaphor for learning. Translated from the original German, Ludwig Wittgenstein can be quoted as stating:

My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used

them—as steps—to climb beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)

He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world alright.

– Ludwig Wittgenstein

As described in The Science of Discworld:

"A lie-to-children is a statement that is false, but which nevertheless leads the child's mind towards a more accurate explanation, one that the child will only be able to appreciate if it has been primed with the lie". It's the reason social constructs exist, these Spooky blueprints that dictate our lives, the ones we're all too familiar with.

At the end of the day, reality is far too complicated for us to grasp. All expertise is inherently limited by the subjectivity of human perspective and if it were necessary for us to understand how every component of our daily lives works in order to function, we simply would not. There is not enough lifetime available to become an expert in all things. [All models are wrong, but some are useful](#). Lies-to-children are useful, they are necessary, and they're supposed to change over time. They're not malicious, they're clumsy approximations, which have in many cases overstayed their welcome. They're costumes, cool at parties and conventions, but very, very different from the characters existing in fictional worlds being emulated.

We tell children that sky is blue and grass is green because that's true enough for their purposes. If it becomes relevant, they may one day discover the intricacies of that lie and replace it with a more holistic understanding of how colour is perceived and that would be fine and dandy. But here's where we've gone wrong, as a society: the lies-to-children approach to education is performed without disclosure, and this has produced adults who steadfastly carry

these lies as absolute truths. Not metaphors or analogies in place to construct their world into something more easily navigated, but truths onto themselves. They're supposed to be temporary & fluid, evolving as we grow as individuals and as a society, but by clinging to them we have made a mess. In a 1999 interview, Pratchett commented upon the phrase:

I like the lies-to-children motif, because it underlies the way we run our society and resonates nicely with Discworld...But it's like that in "real Science", too....You arrive with your sparkling A-levels all agleam, and the first job of the tutors is to reveal that what you thought was true is only true for a given value of "truth". Pratchett cautioned: "Most of us need just 'enough' knowledge of the sciences, and it's delivered to us in metaphors and analogies that bite us in the bum if we think they're the same as the truth."

– Terry Pratchett

Now the name Lies-to-Children feels a little infantilizing. We do, societally, tend to imagine children, students & amateurs as stupid nonsense people that need to be talked down to for their own good. But I think that highlights the problem I'm wanting to address with the way we conceptualize education & learning, especially in regards to anarchism, leftism, and revolutionary strategies. We are after all, always learning & growing as individuals. There is no point in time where a person crosses the threshold from student or newbie into omniscient being worthy of being taken seriously. Even the concept itself, this idea of a ladder that one must climb, is a faulty oversimplification intended to demonstrate a basic idea. Education isn't linear, and people aren't standing on different rungs of a ladder to enlightenment. Rather, the nature of subjective human experience leads people to reaching various conclusions & understandings via an insanely complicated web, a unique matrix of materials that can never be truly replicated.

One of the most challenging aspects of standardized education is that there's no way to independently assess what someone knows & understands in order to effectively connect the next "dot" outside of a collaborative one-on-one setting, to make sure a concept actually "clicks" in a way that carries across different contexts - so by necessity we end up teaching the test. Remember this, do it like that, here is the rubric, follow these rules.

But children don't need to be treated like they're stupid, we can tell them when they're being shown a useful metaphor. We don't because then they ask more questions. People describe this as being incredibly annoying, which is true. Adults are tired and grumpy sometimes, life under capitalism demands more of us than we have to give and our relationships bear the brunt of it. Now if you've predicated your authority over a child as being contingent on your status as "benevolent all knowing Being who must be obeyed", then these questions run the risk of revealing very quickly that you are actually a human, just like them, who uses lies and metaphors as patches for gaps in knowledge.

And then they turn into teenagers. And adults **hate** teenagers because that benevolent all-knowing being myth has been shattered and replaced. We rip curiosity, collaboration & critical analysis from their clenched fists and then blame them for their ineptitude. They've discovered your fallibility and in doing so have beaten you, taking over the throne in their own mind. Teenagers turn into little godlings, and they're *unbearable* because they know they're right about some things, they can tell that they've been lied to, and yet they're simultaneously so confidently wrong about other things. They double down because to be wrong about anything is to risk being dethroned, and by now they've had quite enough of being dismissed & lorded over by a Being they know to be just as fallible as themselves. Sometimes this is temporary, and through certain engagements with the world around them a sense of curiosity and collaboration

is re-ignited, but not always. Often enough they become adults who then turn around and condescend to children, and anyone else in regards to whom they can craft some justification for the validity of their own perspective, no matter how tenuous.

I'm talking about politics. Paulo Freire describes this as the "Banking Model of Education" in his most notable text "Pedagogy of the Oppressed". He describes in vivid detail the patterns of educatory communication that are introduced to us as youths through formal structures like schools and family, which persist and are reproduced through adulthood - very effectively decimating any & all attempts at revolution through categorical division. *Of course* if what's at stake is personhood, then admitting ignorance is unacceptable. The lack of collaboration means that adversaries don't have to be wrong about everything, being wrong about anything is sufficient enough grounds for complete dismissal. In this way the oppressed absorb the mindset of the oppressor, using their tools to try and dismantle a system built by & for them. We learn the test, teach the test, and then we blame people for their ineptitude. Ourselves included. [Shame]

The book was published around 60 years ago, it's a short read, and it's one of those that's so prophetic it makes you a little nauseous. Truly, there is nothing new under the sun. The state of political discourse, for as long as I've engaged with it, is so immensely run through with this sort of one-sided "I know what's best, so shut up and listen" mentality. I've experienced the effects of this first hand, you've witnessed it a thousand times over.

There was a time, not that long ago, when I wholeheartedly believed that every moment of suffering on this goddamn planet was at least in part my responsibility, and that every moment of joy I indulged in was being selfishly syphoned away from someone more deserving. Now, those aren't words that I would have used to describe what was happening at the time, and had I been handed those words they would have been swiftly rejected. But that is what it was. I

could see the problems and all I wanted was a way out, but all I could think to do was double down. I thought I could fix it if I just tried a little harder, worked a little longer. I have since raised my standards.

The pandemic was a catalyst for some intense radicalization but BOY HOWDY was I ready for it. I went in a miserable little socdem ghoul and came out with a level of unhinged optimism that I hadn't experienced since... ever. I also came out in other ways.

Oversimplifications make life worse and I'm sick of 'em. The lies that deal in politics & people are repetitive, an unending barrage to contend with daily, and they have become mind-numbingly tedious. Even for the best possible reasons, even knowing it might be valuable to you, I don't...wanna. Not outta some sense of righteousness or morality, but out of self-preservation and a healthy respect for efficacy. Other people can do it, there are loads of leftist & leftist adjacent creators who will gladly walk folks through simplified prescriptions and some of them are doing beautiful, valuable work - but that's not what I'm here for. Here is where you come to trade lies for stories.

Videos like this are blended propaganda & education, they exist to stoke the flame of internal power. They do nothing for you on the external end, right? In order to keep the wheel turning you gotta do the work of determining how to leverage your existing capacities, including any potential expansion of internal power, to practice anarchism in ways that increase your capacity and the capacity of your communities. That's the underlying risk factor everyone's been picking at when it comes to edutainment & parasociality. We have a relationship, but our relationship isn't collaborative, it's transactional (mostly). Like there's a difference between an audience, and a community. I can't offer you individualized advice, because the right answers are only discovered through meaningful dialogue. The kind that's only possible between people who get

each other, a semantic alignment that's forged through that beautiful formula of positionality + time & effort. I do not know you, you are not a part of my life, and we are not in mutually developing community. There's little to no opportunity to apply these theories & practice these skills in order to further develop them **here**. And I can't be in mutually developing community with the overwhelming majority of you. The attempt would make my life worse, and that would make me worse.

I don't have access to absolute truth, I am not The Answer™. But I can tell you better stories, if you like. Intricate and carefully woven, true-er than most made true-er still through the art of disclosure. There is no universal spreadsheet. There's no instruction manual or troubleshooting guide for life, and if you try to follow one you'll always get it wrong because you have to BECOME the mechanic! And god help us all, you've gotta be good at it. There are as many correct answers as there are people occupying each and every individual position in space time - space & time. There is a right answer. But the right answer here, today is the wrong answer there, tomorrow because it's Dependent. On. Context. On the sum of every moment that's passed, and every moment that may come to pass. That's all this is. The revolution has already begun - join me.

OUTRO:

Good god, that was a lot. I have a whole second document full of content I had to cut to try and hold on to something vaguely resembling like the essence of a through-line. I just really wanted to lay down and connect the foundational pieces in one place because they can, and have been, built upon into more theory & applications & branches than a person could ever hope to

absorb within a single lifetime. And, at least from where I'm standing, nothing about anarchism or relationship anarchy is coherent or useful without the unity of means and ends. It's been said that if you don't understand the unity of means & ends, you don't understand anarchism. Well, that and hierarchy, but I already did that video. And then once those pieces click into place, you really can start to apply them to anything and everything.

Anarchism does have a rich and storied history, but Anarchism is also a semantic shortcut or an umbrella term for a collection of specific patterns, ideologies, & systems that have been, and continue to be, smattered across space time. Ye anarchists of olde didn't invent anarchism any more than Isaac Newton invented gravity. They may have collected bits and pieces, drawn connections between them, and then extrapolated on & propagandized them in certain ways according to their context, but the patterns themselves have always existed. You can find threads of anarchist ideology almost anywhere, though in varying levels of cohesion and efficiency.

Which is why I tend to start spiraling whenever people ask me for like a reading list or additional resources. There is no universal curriculum, and what matters isn't how much theory you read or who wrote it, but how much of it resonates. Speaking from first hand experience, a person can understand every sentence being communicated without **getting it** for years. And that's not a matter of intellectual capacity or effort, but the extent to which your experiences in life have created adequate purchase for what's being communicated to connect with and latch onto. It's the right material and methods meeting the right person within the right container. That's not something that I can predict. And yet, it makes sense that you would want more in between y'know, admittedly infrequent uploads. And it's very exciting actually, because it tells me that something I communicated did resonate on some level. Even if that resonance is the itch of

disagreement, if it's sparking curiosity and a desire to dig deeper then I feel like I've done what I set out to. So if that's the case for you I have two pieces of good news!

First, Welcome to Related & Recommended! I'm gonna start doing this at the end of every video. Again, these are not necessarily resources or endorsements, they are invitations down some rabbit holes that might catch your fancy depending on which ideas in this video made you tingly... or itchy.

If you do wanna know more about the historical precedent & application of The Unity of Means and Ends principle within anarchism, [Zoe Baker's](#) got you covered. She's an anarchist historian & scholar, literally has a PhD on the history of Anarchism. The Unity of Means comes up a lot in her videos, but I'm gonna recommend

▶ Means and Ends: The Anarchist Critique of Seizing State Power because that does a perfect job of defining it and historical anarchists' relationship to it. I'm also going to recommend her conversation with Vaush titled ▶ Vaush vs Zoe Baker (anarchopac) on electoral politics as a really fascinating look at the sort of back & forth argumentation around this principle that continually comes up within leftist political spaces.

If you're interested in the psychologically traumatic effects of hierarchy, [Andrewism](#) has a video called ▶ Why Revolution Needs Therapy and it is excellent. It's succinct, it's sharp, it covers everything it needs to - and then it ends. Which is a quality I'm starting to envy. I'm also gonna shout out his most recent video ▶ We Need A Library Economy which was done in collaboration with the folks over at the Srly Wrong Podcast, as a fucking delightful example of the wonderful kinds of alternative prescriptions that become accessible through anarchism.

If you're intrigued about time as a nonlinear entity and how that affects our supposed free will, [CJ The X](#) does a beautiful job diving into those ideas in the video  Arrival: Time Is An Illusion . And honestly if this was an enjoyable viewing experience for you, if you *like* dense philosophical videos that go fast, I mean that's....that's their whole beat, and there are gems in every single video on that channel.

And lastly for today, if the Lies-to-Children concept made you feel some type of way check out  What Physicists Don't Want You to Know About Quantum Mechanics | a Dr. Fatima Video ... by [Dr. Fatima](#), an exploration of objectivity & positionality in science by a feminist scientist of color. Newer channel, just launched in August and I am very fucking stoked to finally access this perspective, especially here on Youtube because it's felt **missing** for entirely too long.

Okay I know I said that was the last one, but [this](#) came out while I was editing this video and it's too perfect not to include. It's too perfect. It's a video from [Vihart](#), Mathematician and it's actually a sort of response to a [different video](#) from [Hank Green](#), both of which are about this math question/test thing that went viral on twitter.

Because it's y'know one of those where people have a knee-jerk reaction about what the right answer is and also what having a different answer means about someone and what the fact that people have different answers to a question that seems obvious says about the human condition more broadly? And if you wanna see someone who is, as far as I know, not an anarchist truly rip a question to shreds and then put it back together in a way that embodies The Unity of Means & Ends look no further. I want this video on a t-shirt. I want it on a billboard. I want it carved into skin. Like if I could just have a little screen implanted on my belly like a Teletubby, or just like every single frame tattooed onto my body, that would be good. Which is a feeling I get a lot and the reason I don't actually have any tattoos yet...

As always, Links are in the doubly-doo!

As for the second piece of good news - I'm going to be around more often, in a different format. At time of recording this channel isn't monetized at all, which is exceedingly unsustainable given what goes into this. And that's a bummer because I have a lot more to say and I'd love to keep making videos. So, I've set up a Patreon. Perks include an exclusive monthly livestream for patrons, as well as a public monthly livestream available to anyone who shows up - the length of which is determined by the number of people who sign up for that tier on Patron. I'm not planning to leave them up for more than a few hours after they've ended, so make sure to subscribe if you haven't already and hit the notification bell so you don't miss them. Perks will probably change over time and I do have some other ideas for patreon stuff on the backburner, but I'm still kinda ironing out the details so that they're, y'know, valuable for patrons while still being healthy & sustainable for me. But yeah if you like what I do, consider giving me money so I can pay myself to do it & hopefully one day even pay other people to make this project better & different. And if you'd like to support this project another way, I would highly appreciate it if you would like & share this video. This is a baby, baby channel...and spreading the content around so that it can find the people it's meant to helps more than anything else.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for watching this monstrosity of a video all the way to the end. That people are invested enough in what I have to say to listen to me talk for this long really does mean the world to me. And I'll see you next time, bye!