"Anarchists Are More Animal than Human": Rationality, Savagery, and the Violence of Property

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When I first read Chris Hedges' now infamous denunciation of "Black Bloc anarchists" in the Occupy Wall Street movement, I felt as if I had stepped back in time to the turn of the twentieth century. Hedges' charges of senseless aggression motivated by primal passions and bent only on universal destruction would fit seamlessly into an 1894 issue of the *New York Herald-Tribune* or *Los Angeles Times*. However, as Doreen Massey reminds us, such attempts to assign contemporaries to the past denies how we share space in the world and implies belief in a teleological narrative of progress. Invoking tropes of animality to rhetorically construct political opponents as – to use Chandan Reddy's words – "the enemies of modern political society" remains a key persuasive strategy as well as an enduring technology of capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism here in the twenty-first century. Even a cursory look at language of the war on terror and its production of the Islamic terrorist as national bête noire demonstrates this. Though I would like to simply dismiss Hedges' anti-anarchist piece as an anomalous echo of discredited reactionary hyperbole, I instead interpret it as representative of a thriving modern phenomenon. The Occupy Wall Street movement has prompted a proliferation and reemphasis of the preexisting discourse of anarchists as the inhuman and unreasonably violent enemies of humanity.[1]

This essay takes the Hedges article as a point of departure to explore earlier expressions of this discourse specifically through the lens of property. I argue that turn-of-the-twentieth-century anarchists' lucid critique of Western society prompted the frenzied demonization of anarchists as monstrous, irrational savages. Anarchism strikes at the heart of liberal capitalist and settler colonial ideology by identifying private property relations and the state violence that

maintains them as oppressive. Most unforgivably, and in distinction to most critical scholars of our era, anarchists did not content themselves with insightful theory but put the implications of their analysis into practice. When faced with this material and theoretical challenge, many – though certainly not all – supporters of liberal capitalism responded by casting anarchists beyond the pale of reason and civilization. From this perspective, rationality and civility rely on the acceptance of the nation-state's monopoly of the legitimate use of force and bourgeois property rights. Paradoxically but tellingly, the nominal proponents of Enlightenment reason and individual liberty judged these frameworks as inappropriate when dealing with their ideological enemies. Instead, they used psychology to medicalize anarchism as a mental disorder and turned to established colonialist tropes of savagery to depict anarchists as degenerate racial atavists who desired a return barbarism. Within this discourse, animal, savage, and anarchist became associated and at times interchangeable signifiers for irrationality that designated groups for elimination at either the cultural or physical level.[2]

This rhetoric has the aim of foreclosing discussion of the novel social arrangements proposed by anarchists, deflecting attention away from the manifest contradictions of liberal capitalism, and constricting political imagination. As Elun Gabriel writes in a study of nineteenth-century European context, "The construction of the anarchist as monster obliterated the option of understanding anarchist acts as rational or political, substituting dread of the alien and unknown for an analysis of the social context that gave rise to anarchism." Richard Day elaborates on the dynamics of anti-anarchist propaganda by way of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory: "It must inculcate in good citizens a fear of living differently; what we might call a terror of freedom and empowerment. This terror must be visceral, intuitive, unthinking, and deep." This strategy of instilling bodily revulsion toward anarchism is indicative of the insecurity of

private property relations and liberal governance. Rather than relying on consent freely and rationally given, liberal capitalism preserves and reproduces itself via force, fear, and indoctrination. Critical scrutiny threatens to dissolve the unstable foundations and cause the entire edifice to collapse. Without private property as the enshrined norm and the state's ability to enforce it, we walk into a vast world of socio-spatial openness. I write to further this unsettling process.[3]

Connected with my analysis of the construction of anarchists as savages at the turn of the twentieth century, I maintain that anarchism exposes U.S. settler colonialism in stark relief. As analysts ranging from Ward Churchill to Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui have noted, anarchism and indigenous decolonization display considerable theoretical and practical affinity; among other resonances, both emphasize committed opposition to the established power structure, community autonomy, and radically rethinking existing social relationships. Anarchism and decolonization alike identify North American nation-states as illegitimate and call for alternate modes of political organization. The anarchist critique of the state and property deflates claims of U.S. exceptionalism, highlights the horror of Native dispossession, insists on the egalitarian transformation of spatial practices, and suggests dramatically different forms of communal association and belonging. We're now witnessing a remarkable resurgence of anarchist thought, theorizations of indigenous anarchism, and alliances between non-Native anarchists and Native peoples against systems of oppression.[4]

Crucially, the animal precedes either the anarchist or savage as the representative of irrationality and a being designated for exploitation or destruction. “The line of fracture between reason and nature,” ecofeminist Val Plumwood wrote, “runs deeply through the key concepts of western culture.” The discourse of savagery requires the long-established practice of dominating

nonhuman nature and animality as an accepted boundary marker for the human. The systematic capture, conditioning, and slaughter of animals form the conceptual and experiential basis for the treatment to members of the species *Homo sapiens* judged insufficiently or incompletely human – a broad category that has often included women, queers, the young, and the very old in addition to anarchists, savages, and terrorists. As anarcho-primitivist intellectuals such as Layla AbdelRahim and John Zerzan theorize, the framework of discipline and domestication that codes wildness as something to be expunged undergirds modern civilization. Questioning the domination of nature, the human/animal distinction, and the blithe extermination of animals thus emerges as a potential way to undermine the foundation of so much othering rhetoric. I echo Plumwood's call for a decisive break with "mastery story" of hierarchical reason/nature dualism. Without enshrined tropes of the abject and monstrous to draw upon, the project of designating populations for repression and termination should become exponentially more difficult.[5]

In relation to violence and terrorism studies, I argue the bulk of scholarship in this vein uncritically naturalizes the violence of everyday state operations. As a recent edited collection on the subject notes, the majority of research on violence "assumes that it is disruptive of the social order" while the "less understood view" categorizes violence "as endemic to the social order." I take the latter position. As Reddy argues in *Freedom with Violence*, U.S. claims of liberty and equality go hand in hand with campaigns of annihilation waged against those who deny the authority of the U.S. state. Though conventionally ignored, obscured, and apologized for because of liberal hegemony, violence and coercion define modern democratic nations in general and the United States in particular. Segregating ideologically motivated bombing from government programs of incarceration has deleterious effects at both the political and intellectual level. Politically, it supports the statist status quo. Intellectually, this framework conceals intriguing

similarities between terrorists and police officers. The theme of coercion unites criminal justice systems and radicals who throw bombs into cafes or parliament chambers; both employ physical force to condition behavior through fear. As Robert Cover recognized, law itself constitutes terrorism in this sense, though he expressed support for "the balance of terror" as it operated the U.S. legal system.[6]

In our contemporary context, the distinctions drawn between terrorism, war, and policing confuse more than clarify. Such divisions first and foremost further the hegemonic ideological project of statism writ large and liberal capitalism in specific. As an alternative, I propose conceptualizing these various activities along the continuum of coercion. I concur with the following observation from Louis E. Wolcher: "the difference between the law's readiness to enforce legal relations and the gunman's demand 'Give me your money or your life' is one of degree rather than of kind." This approach entails disrespect for established conventions governing the use of physical compulsion. Like Walter Benjamin, I take no form of violence as natural and automatically or inherently justified. Under this definition, the contentious debate about whether terrorism works becomes absurd: the existence of states across the global attest to efficacy of coercion. If the threat of force inevitably failed to produce behavioral change, modern society would be impossible or at least radically different. For from being aberrant or deviant, techniques to instill terror form the basis of social relations within actually existing civilization.[7]

As a member of (un)Occupy Albuquerque, I experienced firsthand the truth of Cover's observation that "most prisoners walk into prison because they know they will be dragged or beaten into prison if they do not walk." I went limp as police officers arrested me for being at the encampment site of Yale Park; they dragged me all over the place, including into solidarity confinement when I refused to undergo a medical examination. I only refrained from resisting

actively out of fear; those who respond to arrest as they would to any other kidnapping attempt commonly suffer serious injury or death at the hands of the cops. Before booking inside the Metropolitan Detention Center, University of New Mexico police officer Guadalupe Guevara threatened to find me out of uniform and show me what violence really is. Men with guns captured and imprisoned me, like so many others involved in radical social movements, because I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. If nothing else, movements like Occupy Wall Street call attention to the social construction and viscerally brutal enforcement of property and space. Thanks to numbers and various kinds of privilege, police aggression against Occupy movement participants attracted media coverage that the routine harassment, beatings, incarceration, and torture in defense of property and spatial norms do not. Critical geographers such as David Delaney and Nicholas Blomley have written extensively on the central role of violence in producing space and controlling access to resources. While some of us may pass obliviously through the social and physical landscape except in extraordinary moments, the everyday negotiation of space involves the continual presence of force for groups such as undocumented immigrants, colonized peoples, and the houseless.[8]

Anarchists have explicitly recognized and theorized these dynamics since the middle of the nineteenth century. Delaney notes how projects of world-making depend significantly on "access to violence or the credible threat of violence." Far from being irrational, the turn-of-the-century anarchist program of violent revolution came out of a straightforward and pragmatic materialist analysis. In *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, Mahmood Mamdani adeptly exposes the hypocrisy of the colonialist discourse of violence as premodern: "The modern sensibility is not horrified by pervasive violence. The world wars are proof enough of this. What horrifies our modern sensibilities is violence that appears senseless, that cannot be justified by progress."

Mamdani stresses the rationality and historicity of forms of violence – such as the Holocaust – too often mystified in the Western imagination. Like the colonized African and Arab subjects described by Frantz Fanon in *Wretched of the Earth*, anarchists who conducted or encouraged propaganda of the deed and armed insurrection understood force as the language of dominant society and responded in kind. As Louis Lingg said after being sentenced to death for his involvement in the 1886 Haymarket affair, "[A]t every attempt to wield the ballot, at every endeavor to combine the efforts of workingmen, you have displayed the brutal violence of the police club, and this is why I have recommended rude force, to combat the ruder force of the police."[9]

For opponents of anarchism, private property and the state occupied a place beyond criticism. An 1896 *Los Angeles Times* editorial asserts that Chicago anarchists had made their platform "a war against wealth, against property rights, against the established order, and therefore against society." The editorial continues as follows: "Upon the sacredness of property rights depends the stability of governments, the security of the individual and the maintenance of civilization itself." Under this logic, acceptance of property determines, to follow Reddy, "the limit of the human who exists within political society and conducts himself or herself freely within its domain." As Reddy describes, "any violence not sanctioned by the state" appears as "nonpolitical or antipolitical 'hate'" in statist hegemonic discourse. As an example, the *New York Times* wrote the following about anarchists: "They are simply filled with a crazy hatred of people who are better off than themselves, and with a furious desire to see such people suffer." Because of their investment in private property – both theoretical and material – liberal journalists dismissed anarchism as a vicious blasphemy against civilization that could only achieve regression into savagery.[10]

This brings us back to Hedges and the black bloc. Though a self-described leftist, participant in the Occupy movement, and critic of the contemporary status quo, Hedges nonetheless harnesses stereotypical narratives of indiscriminate hostility and animality to condemn his anarchist adversaries. Hedges' claim that "Black Bloc adherents detest those of us on the organized left" mirrors how opponents of anarchism a century earlier alleged that anarchists "despise labor of any kind and apparently look upon men who work or who employ labor as enemies of the human race." His description of black bloc anarchists as simply "criminal" echoes Theodore Roosevelt, who in 1901 decried the anarchist "is merely one type of criminal, more dangerous than any other because he represents the same depravity in a greater degree." Such charges, whether from Roosevelt or Hedges, rhetorically create anarchists as irrational and apolitical.[11]Hedges makes the allegation of animality evident in the following passage:

> The Black Bloc movement is infected with a deeply disturbing hypermasculinity. This hypermasculinity, I expect, is its primary appeal. It taps into the lust that lurks within us to destroy, not only things but human beings. It offers the godlike power that comes with mob violence. Marching as a uniformed mass, all dressed in black to become part of an anonymous bloc, faces covered, temporarily overcomes alienation, feelings of inadequacy, powerlessness and loneliness. It imparts to those in the mob a sense of comradeship. It permits an inchoate rage to be unleashed on any target. Pity, compassion and tenderness are banished for the intoxication of power. It is the same sickness that fuels the swarms of police who pepper-spray and beat peaceful demonstrators. It is the sickness of soldiers in war. It turns human beings into beasts.[12]

In this paragraph, Hedges performs a number of remarkable conceptual moves. The notion of the beast within a person and the need for self-repression constitute key currents of Enlightenment thought. Delaney details how psychologists such as a Sigmund Freud and Norbert Elias emphasized internal constraint as precondition for civilization. Nature as elemental chaos opposed to rational order forms one of the main ways of distinguishing it from the properly

human. Modern society rests on the project of domesticating nature both within and outside of the human body. By succumbing to or embracing the savage lust for blood that allegedly lies just beneath the surface of the universal human psyche, anarchists become animals. However, unlike many earlier writers who categorized anarchists as mad dogs, rattlesnakes, scorpions, and so on, Hedges extends this critique to the police and military. Violence in general stems out of simultaneously pathological and innate masculine urges. Rather than being a political matter, Hedges here frames violence in psychoanalytical and medical terms. Mass violence results from the aggregate of individual desires rather than social processes. Anarchists and cops alike fall into violence through a failure of self-discipline.[13]

The parallels with Roosevelt continue: he said that the cause of the anarchist's "criminality is to be found in his own evil passions and in the evil conduct of those who urge him on." The accusation of exaggerated masculinity coupled with bestiality calls to mind Jasbir Puar's discussions of how the failed heterosexuality attributed to the figure of the Muslim terrorist other suggests repressed homosexuality. As the title of the article Jasbir Puar coauthored with Amit Rai implies, constructions of monstrosity, atrocity, and faggotry run together. At the turn of the twentieth century, constructions of anarchist sexual deviancy centered on free love as a threat to the nuclear family and a mark of ghastly sexual excess, though the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso described anarchist assassins Sante Geronimo Caserio and Luigi Lucheni as homosexual in temperament. As with today's figure of the Islamic terrorist, the specter of queerness hung over nineteenth-century European anarchist terrorists. The media fixated on anarchist women such as Emma Goldman who criticized marriage and advocated free love, invoking tropes of fallen feminine virtue and gender transgression to simultaneously titillate and disgust readers.[14]

Tellingly, though Hedges presents both cops and anarchists as stricken by primeval malice, he sees the former and not the latter as potentially susceptible to persuasion. He considers it essential to convince the police to join the Occupy movement: "This is a struggle to win the hearts and minds of the wider public and those within the structures of power (including the police) who are possessed of a conscience." By contrast and in a stunning display of the psychological phenomenon known as projection, Hedges concludes the piece by asserting that black bloc anarchists "dismiss and ignore competing points of view as infantile and irrelevant" and "believe only their own clichés," which "this makes them not only deeply intolerant but stupid." Thus cops inhabit a position of potential rationality while anarchists are just urban savages. While Hedges stops his polemic here, David Graeber adroitly unpacks its implications: "this is precisely the sort of language and argument that, historically, has been invoked by those encouraging one group of people to physically attack, ethnically cleanse, or exterminate another—in fact, the sort of language and argument that is almost never invoked in any other circumstance. After all, if a group is made up exclusively of violent fanatics who cannot be reasoned with, intent on our destruction, what else can we really do?" Attacks on Occupy participants judged to be violent by other protesters give substance to Graeber's concerns.[15]

At the turn-of-the-century, liberals unambiguously invoked animality, irrationality, and savagery to advocate the deportation, incarceration, and execution of anarchists. Often implicitly but sometimes explicitly, opponents associated anarchists with the indigenous peoples of the Americas and other groups conceived of as savages in the colonial imaginary. Invoking animality, many described anarchists as mad dogs, venomous reptiles, and wild beasts. Thus the anarchist represented nature in its negative aspect, primal chaos contrasted with the settled order of law and government. Indigenous peoples played the role of the initial threat to the nation, and

U.S. identity developed with the symbolic cannibalism of the Native as a key trope. The defiant Native and undomesticated animal functioned as icons of irrationality; making anarchists analogous to these figures neatly justified calls for their suppression or extermination. The discourse of savagery, so central to settler colonialism, employs property as a key measure of progress along the continuum of civilization. The lack of knowledge of, or respect for, private property serves as a constitutive feature of savagery.[16]

The nuclear family functioned as another pole of civilization. Opponents presented both Native peoples and immigrant anarchists as deviant and dangerous in their familial relations. As Andrea Smith and Mark Rifkin argue, the imposition of heteropatriarchy stands out as a key settler-colonial technique. Rifkin details how U.S. government officials and Christian missionaries sought to compel Native community to abandon broad kinship structures and adopt the bourgeois family in their place. In similar fashion, turn-of-the-century authors described anarchists as a foreign threat because of their customary critique of marriage and promotion of free love. In order to distinguish Christian socialism from anarchism, the likely pseudonymous Esperance wrote the following: "Anarchists believe in a system of society without governmental or moral restraint, no God, no personal holiness, abolition of the marriage relation, a system of free love, in short, an impossible organization of civic polity based upon an ideal civilization and having infidelity for its cornerstone." Improper sexual and familial arrangement discredited anarchism in this narrative. This negative assessment echoes Colonel J. L. Greene, who argued at the 1887 General Christian Conference in Washington, D.C. that anarchists preached "[f]ree love, abolition of marriage, separation at will of either – these be their doctrines of the foundations of society." In accord with the othering of Native peoples, anarchists appeared as aberrant in their sexual and familiar standards as well as ideas about property and the state.[17]

Various newspapers in the 1880s and 1890s compared anarchists to “Indians” and yearned for the eradication of both. In his book against anarchism, Chicago police officer Michael Schaack described anarchist women as hideous “'squaws'” who proved even more bloodthirsty than the men and exalted in anarchist “'war dances.'” In September 1894, Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs Frank C. Armstrong identified anarchists as superseding Natives as a threat to the nation: “There is more danger from anarchists in Chicago than from all the Indians in the West.” The association of anarchism with the indigenous people of the Americas appears most vividly and comprehensively in the 1894 piece “The Methods of the Rioting Striker an Evidence of Degeneration” by psychologist James Weir. In this letter, he describes all radicals—including socialists—as degenerate atavists seeking to reverse the human progress of civilization that has exalted the individual and return to primitive collectivism. While the supposedly few native-born American Anglo-Saxons who participated in strikes did so out of higher motivations such as pride, the majority of foreigners rioted because of their inferior biology according to Weir. Degeneration meant regression in the racial hierarchy and on the related continuum of human progress. Like many of his contemporaries, Weir racialized European immigrants as distinct from the Anglo-Saxon ideal: “The Russian and Bohemian laborers who immigrate to America are, and always have been, semi-civilized, but the Italians, Germans, Huns, Poles, Frenchmen, and Austrians who are to be found among rioting laborers are clearly a degenerate class of human beings.”[18] About such immigrant radicals, Weir wrote the following:

> These people are savages, and should not be treated as civilized beings. They are not amenable to those arguments which would undoubtedly prevail were they civilized men and women; consequently it is folly to argue with them. Their ideas of social economics are totally different from those of the civilized world, and the sooner the world recognizes this fact the better will it be for civilization. When the Indians out West go on

> the war-path, we know how to control them. The psychologist considers the anarchist as being no better than the Indian.[19]

In his own curious fashion, Weir articulated the conflict that pitted anarchists against the liberal nation-state and bourgeoisie as a material dispute over property and space. In this narrative, collectivist economic beliefs serve to exclude anarchists from the club of reason and civilization. By starting the continuum of human progress with communism and ending it with individualism, Weir left no place whatsoever for the radical social thought of his day; they were simply primitivists out of phase the grand trajectory of history. The natural, embodied aspect of anarchists' savagery additionally makes even the prospect of reforming them untenable; only force can influence the anarchist or Native on the warpath. Yet despite all this scientific posturing and promotion of violence, Weir admitted that inimical ideas about property comprise the essence of the contest between savagery and civilization.

On both sides of the Atlantic, adversaries of anarchism consistently evoked tropes of the dangerous animal, wild savage, congenital criminal, and degenerate lunatic to portray anarchists as categorically other at the bodily level. Weir's letter offers succinct summary of the extreme end of anti-radical propaganda. He enthusiastically professed Anglo-Saxon supremacy, settler colonialism, eugenics, and capitalism; he unequivocally recommended the extension to anarchists of the designation "savage" and the horrific colonial violence it entailed. Although Weir stands out as especially elitist, the various oppressive ideologies and epistemologies he wielded had widespread purchase among the formally educated in the turn-of-the-century United States. Excepting perhaps Anglo-Saxon supremacy, all permeated European thought as well.[20]

In a May 1886 *New York Times* column, the unattributed author responded directly to the Haymarket affair by explaining why the vast majority in the United States had no sympathy for anarchism. The piece makes a point of characterizing—with no regard for accuracy—the

anarchist as a strictly foreign creature. The argument focuses on repudiating the anarchist analysis of property as theft through appeal to the North American continent as a virgin land prior to European settlement. The ideology of John Locke, above all his notion of appropriation, pervades this piece:

> Their central idea, that, historically, property is robbery, will not be accepted in the United States. It is almost within the memory of men now living that the millions of square miles of rich farming land beyond the Alleghany Mountains have been reclaimed from the wilderness by the labor of these who now own and till them, or who have transmitted them to the present owners. . . It is the fruit of conquest, not of men, but of nature, and stands the perpetual and invincible proof of the beneficence of the principle of property. From the products of the land, from their exchange, consumption, manufacture, have sprung all other forms of capital, industry, and property. It is not to the men who own this property, who have made it, or seen their fathers make it, that the doctrine that property is robbery can be preached.[21]

The above passage underscores the importance of the myth of emptiness and the human-nature dualism as basis for the purportedly exceptional state of U.S. class relations. In this narrative, America appears a vast level playing field where labor alone determines success. Thanks to abundant unappropriated land, every American could at least plausibility to become a property owner via thrift and hard work. The discourses of American exceptionalism and the unworthy immigrant infuse the column. While the anarchist doctrine of property as theft might catch on in the tyrannical and aristocratic world of Europe, such an idea becomes downright unintelligible in the democratic and egalitarian U.S. context. Through the settler colonial ideology that codes Native peoples as natural obstacles to progress akin to wolves and tornadoes if it records them at all, a process of decidedly human conquest and structural genocide—the westward expansion of the United States—serves as evidence against the anarchist doctrine of property as robbery. The only the erasure of the humanity of America's indigenous inhabitants makes property's legitimacy possible. Within the column's own logic, anarchism becomes potentially viable via the negation the settler-colonial myth and attendant recognition of colonial

property as the product of a particularly bloody and large-scale robbery. Thus settler colonialism and the omission or outright rejection of Native land claims act as the ideological glue that binds the nation together and suppresses class conflict among settlers through the distribution of stolen land. Far from rebutting the anarchist claim that property is robbery in America, this *New York Times* column actually confirms it if we discard the settler-colonial fantasy of emptiness.[22]

An 1893 piece from the British magazine *The Spectator* provides a frank view of the colonial project that equates it with the subdual of anarchism and unequivocally endorses dispossession. In regards to war against the Matabele in what would become Rhodesia, the unattributed authors wrote the following: "We are not able to believe. . . that conquest is a wrong weapon for extending civilisation. We cannot think that savages own, in any rightful meaning of ownership, the vast territories they occupy, and have no more scruple in putting them under tutelage than we should have in imprisoning any other Anarchists." While republican compunctions prevented many in the United States from so cheerily embracing conquest and colonization, related discourses on savagery and property circulated widely. Literature about Native peoples asserted that they lacked any understanding of private property and recommended property as a means of domestication. "The civilized man gets to keep," Joseph Griffis wrote, describing the difference of mindsets. "The savage gets to give." Indian policy sought to change this. After decrying the "savage communism" of "barbarous reservation life" in an 1896 address, Merrill Gates, president of the board of Indian commissioners, advocated property as method civilizing the Native: "We have, to begin with, the absolute need of awakening in the savage Indian broader desires and ampler wants. To bring him out of savagery into citizenship we must make the Indian more intelligently selfish before we can make him unselfishly intelligent."[23]

The paragraph below from General Lewis Merrill articulates a common period perspective on traditional Native property relations:

> The idea of property, of the right of the individual to personal ownership of something that he and others value, is at the very root of civilization. This idea has had hardly any healthy growth among the Indians. The soil belonged, in their view, to the whole tribe, and no individual rights to particular parts of it were recognized. The product of the soil was the gift of the Great Spirit and belonged to any taker of it. Game belonged to the successful slayer of it, and even he claimed small right in it over any other who wished to share in it. Domestic animals had a qualified recognized ownership, but no great wrong was done by one who found and appropriated to his use what recognized as the property of another.[24]

In other words, communism prevented advance on the continuum of civilization. Merrill gave the following policy advice for dealing with the Native: "Teach the savage to recognize property rights and to base this recognition of them on the belief that property is the reward of labor, and the first step toward civilization is taken." While describing the history of Anglo-American and Native interaction as brutal conquest and shameful abuse of power, Merrill simultaneously endorsed the settler-colonial project: "It is true that the superior race will always dispossess and drive out or practically extinguish by absorption the inferior. It is true that human progress toward the highest and best that may be attained is not to be allowed to be blocked and stopped by that part of the human race which cannot or obstinately refuses to join the advance." Merrill wanted a kinder, gentler setter colonialism that would conclude with the Native disappearing "as an Indian" and becoming "one of the many units which go to make up this wonderful mixture and conglomeration of blood which is called the American people." The more tolerant U.S. nationalists like Merrill called for the same remedy to the problems of Native autonomy and European immigrant anarchism: assimilation. Rather than coding Native and immigrant bodies as inherently and irredeemably other, this narrative presented their inferiority as primarily cultural. Once immigrant radicals lost their foreignness and renounced their politics,

and once Natives abandoned communal identity and sovereignty, each could contribute useful material to the national gene pool.[25]

The above examples illustrate how anarchist and savage operated as mutually reinforcing signifiers of irrationality that marked bodies for incarceration or termination: We hang anarchists because they are savages and colonize savages because they are anarchists. In this discourse, the abjection of each rests on their rejection of private property and the law that enables it. Because civilization results from private property, this rejection constitutes opposition to progress itself and an embrace of the irrational animality coded as its antithesis. Settler-colonial statists quarreled over whether anarchists and savages needed to die as communities or bodily, but concurred on their complete abolition.

The rhetoric around brutality and savagery of the anarchist brings to light U.S. liberalism's fraught relationship with violence and the intense instability of the moral high ground it claimed. Even including Spain, anarchist assassination and bombing campaigns killed relatively few. Richard Jensen recounts the casualties as 150 killed and over 460 wounded from 1880 to 1914 – between four and five deaths per year. The mainstream bourgeois press expressed shock and horror, trumpeting the deaths as supposedly unprecedented atrocities and simultaneously pushing for the merciless extermination of anarchists. Echoing innumerable similar charges, the editor of *The Chautauquan* averred that the "series of anarchist outbreaks which culminated in the assassination of President Carnot have seldom between equaled in the history of modern civilization." The subsequent assassination of William McKinley brought such hyperbole to a fever pitch. Like countless others and consistent with the media portrayal of assassinated European officials, Theodore Roosevelt asserted McKinley's overwhelming innocence and benevolence: "There could be no personal hatred of him, for he never acted with

aught but consideration for the welfare of others. No one could fail to respect him who knew him in public or private life." When one contemplates that McKinley presided over the genocidal conflict in the Philippines that left some hundred thousands dead—in additional to the more routine suppression of domestic dissent and perpetual property terror—this becomes a truly extraordinary claim.[26]

Jensen perpetuates the liberal exaggeration of anarchist bombing and assassination campaigns by writing that the figures given above "may seem low by our horrifying present-day standards" but "at the time terrorism on this scale was still unheard of." This assertion only becomes intelligible by defining "terrorism" as violence against privileged classes such as European monarchs and opera patrons. French soldiers killed thousands of Communards in the destruction of the Paris Commune in 1871. At the 1890 massacre by Wounded Knee Creek, U.S. soldiers extinguished more than twice as many lives in a single day as Jensen's anarchist terrorists took over the course of thirty-five years. And, as Daniel Gaido writes, this was no isolated event but "the final armed chapter in a three-centuries-long policy of genocide." Mobs, commonly with support from local government officials, lynched 155 black people in the United States in 1893 alone. Colonized peoples, workers, and the poor had ample experience with terrorism, both in form of direct killings and the structural violence French anarchist Émile Henry referenced to justify his 1894 bomb attack on a cafe. The unprecedented aspect of the bloodshed Jensen describes was how it affected the ruling class, not the number of incidents, innocence of the victims, or outstanding brutality of the assaults. In this fashion, Jensen's narrow conceptual framework for terrorism facilitates the erasure of the violence of imperialism, colonialism, and property.[27]

After enumerating the ways in which industrial capitalism torments and consumes working people, Henry asked his adversaries to take responsibility for the system they created and preserved: "At least have the courage of your crimes, gentlemen of the bourgeoisie, and agree that our reprisals are fully legitimate." To this day, the bourgeoisie decline that request. Uncomfortable with the violence of the liberal state and inequality of the capitalist economy, members of the elite along with apologists vehemently profess their innocence and any deny any complicity in—or the very existence of—this immense network of horrors. Roosevelt and company refused to characterize the conflict between anarchists and the state as a war between competing material visions of the world but instead positioned government officials as saintly victims of an irrational enemy driven by hatred. Liberal populism relies on moralistic hysteria to render alternative arrangements unthinkable as well as to displace its own violence via projection onto the other. Appropriately, this projection of danger mirrors the modern human relationship with the animals invoked to construct anarchists as an implacable threat. Human kill vastly more rattlesnakes, scorpions, sharks, dogs, and so on than vice versa. The displacement of violence onto the other both justifies and obscures the violence enacted against them.[28]

A 1916 piece from the *Charlotte Daily Observer* succinctly shows these dynamics of projection. It reads as follows:

> The American understanding of the savage is obtained from the history of massacres of the pioneers by the Indians. It was the instinct of the savage to slay and this instinct was born out of blood-lust. The savage instinct found vent in the devising of the forms of greatest torture in inflicting death. The Indians were born savages and with the extinction of the bulk of the race and the subjugation of the surviving remnant, it was the reasonable hope that outside the jungles savagery had died in the world.[29]

This discourse of biological bloodthirstiness serves to conceal and mystify the genocidal progression of settler colonialism. Yet even with the unclear agency of the words "extinction" and "subjugation," this paragraph forebodes self-implosion in its own terms. The celebration of

the demise of an entire people seems to reiterate the very savagery the article decries. We have here the animating dream of statism: to end passionate interpersonal violence through the imposition of impartial and overwhelming force. But the moral distinction between civilized and savage, between native and settler, and between human and animal, exists in a constant state of instability. Annihilation campaigns against "savages" conflict with their own professed abhorrence of cruelty as well as with revered liberal values such as liberty and equality.

The October 1901 issue of *The Medical Brief* from St. Louis, Missouri, encapsulates the tension in the U.S. liberal position in relation to its more radical rivals. Editor J. J. Lawrence condemned socialism as tyrannical, writing that "[w]e cannot make men good or strong by force." He concluded as follows: "If altruistic socialism ever be a fact, it will be a spontaneous manifestation, the flower of individualism." Like many liberals, Lawrence elided the coercion involved in private property enforcement, but also proposed something akin to anarchism in the suggestion of individualistic, non-coercive socialism. However, a few dozen pages later he demanded draconian measures against immigrant anarchists in a piece entitled "Stamp Out Anarchy." Here he happily endorsed coercion through recourse to animality: "Animals are tamed and taught by swift punishment for disobedience. Anarchists are more animal than human, and the same policy is the only one which will bear fruit in their case." In reading Lawrence, we see contradictions of liberal capitalism and how anarchism threatens liberalism from within based on its prioritization of freedom and egalitarianism. Lawrence could not help but acknowledge the appeal of free socialism yet expressed extreme disgust at European immigrants who held this ideal. In his liberal imagination, as with the majority of liberalisms, liberty and equality only apply to limited subsection of the human population deemed within the orbit of rationality. Coercion suits the animalistic and inferior beings outside this sphere.[30]

Historical and actually existing liberal capitalism relies on the figure of the senselessly and irredeemably destructive other in order to absolve its failure to fulfill its own stated mission and continuing presence of illiberal techniques of governance. As numerous bourgeois observers recognized at the turn of the twentieth century, the quintessentially American belief in freedom and equality can all too easily mutate into anarchism in people who lack a material stake in propping up dominant property arrangements. Even fierce antagonists of anarchism may note the ideology as a beautiful dream only marred by impracticality. This factor explains the siege mentality often voiced by U.S. elites in contexts ranging from interracial labor organizing to immigration restriction. Bereft of a monstrous enemy and the associated qualifications for entry into humanity, freedom and equality become the order of the day. In the stereotypically cold light of rationality distributed among the populace, justifications for upholding the profoundly unequal regime of private property by force ring progressively hollower. In sum, I argue that the anarchist challenge calls liberalism's bluff—Do you want freedom, or not?—and exposes, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin, the rottenness at the core of the law.

As David Graeber perceptively noted in his response to Christopher Hedges, the construction of unreasonable, inhuman others customarily functions as a prelude to or post-hoc rationalization for incarceration and execution. Even a cursory glance at the record of militarism, colonialism, and imperialism shows how dehumanization enables the worst sorts of butchery. I concur with Val Plumwood that the rationality/nature dualism so central to the western intellectual tradition functions as the conceptual foundation for such demonization campaigns. I examine the connections between the othering of anarchist, Native peoples, and animals not to shut down criticism of anarchism or black bloc tactics but to demonstrate the irrational other as an authoritarian ruse of power that obscures what are commonly grounded and comprehensible

disputes over material resources and social positioning. Instead of crusading against monsters, I recommend political discussion based on interests, desires, and capacities. Assertions of irrationality should be resisted wherever they appear. As Plumwood wrote, we need to remake the story. I don't expect the capitalists to abandon such a successful technology of rule, but I hope its impact will lessen as the knowledge of the history of othering spreads. Shared histories of dehumanization can transform to strengthen ties against the status quo. I write with the aim fostering novel alliances between non-Native anarchists, Native peoples, immigrants, the houseless, and everyone else harmed by the present socio-spatial order.[31]

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[1] Reddy, *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the US State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 12; Massey, "Politics and Space/Time," *New Left Review* 1, no. 196 (November-December 1992): 83. On the use of animality and savagery in constructing the Islamic terrorist, see Richard Jackson, *Writing the War on Terror: Language, Politics and Counter-terrorism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

[2] For an example a self-identified "governmentalist" who engaged with anarchist thought and did not simplistically dismiss anarchists as irrational monsters, see "An Explanation of Anarchy*," The Public: A National*

Journal of Fundamental Democracy & a Weekly Narrative of History in the Making, April 3, 1908, 19-20. For an overview of the literature of on the medicalization of anarchism, see Edward J. Erickson, "Punishing the Man Bomber: Questions of Moral Responsibility in the Trials of French Anarchist Terrorists, 1886-1897," *French History 22*, no. 1 (March 2008): 51-4.

[3] Elun Gabriel, "The Anarchist as Monster in Fin-de-Siècle Europe" in Niall Scott, ed., Monsters and the Monstrous: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007) 103; Richard JF Day, "The Man with the Hissing Bomb: Anarchism and Terror in the North American Imagination," in *Engaging Terror: A critical and Interdisciplinary Approach* (Boca Raton, FL: BrownWalker Press, 2009), 414.

[4] Jacqueline Lasky, "Indigenism, Anarchism, Feminism: An Emerging Framework for Exploring Post-Imperial Futures," *Affinities* 5, no. 1 (2011), 3-36; Jeff Shantz, "Building Bridges: Anarchism, Borders, and Resistance," in *Constructive Anarchy: Building Infrastructures of Resistance* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 113-134; Ward Churchill, *Acts of Rebellion: The Ward Churchill Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 249; Harsha Walia, "Moving Beyond a Politics of Solidarity toward a Practice of Decolonization," in Aziz Choudry, Jill Hanley, and Eric Shragge, eds., *Organize!: Building from the Local for Global Justice* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012), 240-253; Benjamín Maldonado Alvarado, *La utopía de Ricardo Flores Magón: revolución, anarquía y comunalidad india* (Oaxaca, Universidad Autónoma "Benito Juárez" de Oaxaca, 1994); Alex, "Towards an Indigenous Egoism," *The Sovereign Self,* no. 5 (February 2012); Andalusia Knoll, "Indigenous Anarchism in Bolivia: An Interview with Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui," *Infoshop News: Anarchist News, Opinion, and Much More*, October 3, 2007, http://news.infoshop.org/article.php?story=2007bolivia-anarchism (accessed May 6, 2012).

[5] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 44, 190; AbdelRahim, "Interview with Layla AbdelRahim," *In the Land of the Living: A Journal of Anarcho-Primitivism and Christianity*, http://www.inthelandoftheliving.org/essays/interview-with-layla-abdelrahim (accessed July 31, 2012); Zerzan, *Twilight of the Machines* (Feral House, 2008).

[6] Dee Wood Harper, Lydia Voigt, William E. Thornton, eds., *Violence: Do We Know It When We See It?: A Reader* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2012), 1; Reddy, *Freedom with Violence*, 12; Robert Cover, "Violence and the Word," *The Yale Law Journal* 95, no. 8 (July 1986): 1608.

[7] Louis E. Wolcher, *The Law's Task: The Tragic Circle of Law, Justice and Human Suffering* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), 31. As many scholars recognize, the word "terrorism" holds a wide range of meanings that shift

with the times. For a succinct summary, see Thomas J. Butko, "Four Perspectives on Terrorism: Where They Stand Depends on Where You Sit," *Political Studies Review* 7 (2009): 185-194. I invoke terrorism here with explicit purpose of delegitimizing the state monopoly on force. For an example of the theorization of nonfatal government coercion as terror, see Rachel Ida Buff, "The Deportation Terror," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (September 2008): 523-551. While almost everyone who studies terrorism mentions state terrorism, this concept rarely includes the supposedly legitimate legal coercion that sustains the regime of private property.

[8] Cover, "Violence," 1607.

[9] Delaney, *The* Spatial*, the Legal and the Pragmatics of World-Making: Nomospheric Investigation* (New York: Routledge/Glasshouse, 2010), Kindle edition, 126; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963); Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004), 4; Lingg, quoted in Albert Richard Parsons, *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis as Defined by Some of Its Apostles* (Chicago: Mrs. A. R. Parsons, 1887), 84. Various scholars have usefully theorized the intersection of rationality and violence in state power. See Michael Taussig, *The Nervous System* (London: Routledge, 1992), and Paul Sant Cassia, "'Better Occasional Murders than Frequent Adulteries': Discoures on Banditry, Violence, and Sacrifice in the Mediterranean" in *States of Violence* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 219-268. I do not intend to suggest that all anarchists of the period in question embraced violence.

[10] "A Senseless Crusade," *Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 1896, 6; Reddy, *Freedom with Violence*, 12; Reddy, *Freedom with Violence*, 12; "Dying Anarchists," *New York Times*, February 7, 1894, 4. This discourse contains the seeds of its own destruction, as one need but squint for "crazy hatred" of the rich to become rational class interest.

[11] Chris Hedges, "The Cancer in Occupy," *truthdig: drilling beneath the headlines*, February 6, 2012, http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/the_cancer_of_occupy_20120206/ (accessed March 15, 2012), 1; Paul Villiers, "Anarchists to Abandon Murder: Destruction of Property to Be Object of Knights of the Red Flag," *Oakland Tribune*, November 27, 1910, 1; Theodore Roosevelt, "The Murder of President McKinley," *The Bankers' Magazine* 63 (July to December, 1901), 1079. For anarchist responses to Hedges, see David Graeber, "Concerning the Violent Peace-Police: An Open Letter to Chris Hedges," *n+1*, February 9, 2012, http://nplusonemag.com/concerning-the-violent-peace-police (access April 24, 2012), and "Colonizer: A

Postcolonial Reading of Chris Hedges," *OLA AntiSocial Media*, http://ola-asm.tumblr.com/post/17189347129/colonizerchrishedges, February 6, 2012 (accessed April 24, 2012).

[12] Hedges, "The Cancer in Occupy," 2.

[13] Delaney, *Law and Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 90-92.

[14] Theodore Roosevelt, "The Murder of President McKinley," *The Bankers' Magazine* 63 (July to December, 1901), 1079; Jasbir K. Puar and Amit S. Rai, "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots," *Social Text* 20, no. 3 (2002): 117-148; Cesare Lombroso, "Anarchistic Crimes and Their Causes," *The Independent*, December 8, 1898, 1671 "Noted Women Anarchists: Not Necessary to Go to Old World to Find Them – Some Are Americans," *Dallas Morning News*, October 27, 1901, 16.

[15] Hedges, "The Cancer in Occupy," 2; Graeber, "Violent Peace-Police."

[16] Lauren L. Basson, *White Enough to Be American?: Race Mixing, Indigenous People, and the Boundaries of State and Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 145-6; Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973); Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985).

[17] Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and the American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005); Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Esperance, "Democracy and Socialism," *Railroad Trainmen's Journal* 19, no. 4 (April, 1902): 301; Colonel J. L. Greene, "The Social Vice," in *Problems of American Civilization: Their Practical Solution the Pressing Christian Duty of To-Day* (New York, The Baker & Taylor Co., 1888), 101-2.

[18] "Anarchists," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 1, 1894, 10; Michael J. Schaack, *Anarchy and Anarchists* (F. J. Schulte & Company, 1889), 207; General Frank C. Armstrong, quoted in "Indian Wars: General Armstrong Declares that Their Recurrence Is Impossible," *Evening News*, September 19, 1894, 1; James Weir, Jr., "The Methods of the Rioting Striker an Evidence of Degeneration," *The Century Magazine* 47, no. 6 (October, 1894), 953.

[19] Weir, "Methods of the Rioting Striker," 954.

[20] Nancy Ordover, *American Eugenics: Race, Queer anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 6-31.

[21] "The Anarchists and Labor," *New York Times*, May 7, 1886, 4.

[22] James Youngblood Henderson, "Postcolonial Ghost Dancing: Diagnosing European Colonialism," in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 57-62.

[23] "Mr. Labouchere's Motion," *The Spectator*, November 11, 1893, 653; Joseph K. Griffis, "Tahan," Pearson's Magazine, October 1915, 380; Merril E. Gates, "Proceedings of the Board of Indian Commissioners at the Fourteenth Mohonk Indian Conference," in *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners*, 1896 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1897), 34-35.

[24] General Lewis Merrill, "Is the Indian Race Doomed?" *Arthur's Home Magazine*, June 1892, 495-96.

[25] Merrill, "Is the Indian Race Doomed?" 494, 507.

[26] Richard Bach Jensen, "The United States, International Policing, and the War against Anarchist Terrorism, 1900-1914," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13, no. 1 (2001), 16; Theodore L. Flood, "Editor's Outlook: Anarchists and Anarchism," The Chautauquan, August 1894, 630; Dylan Rodríguez, "'A Million Deaths?'": Genocide and the 'Filipino American' Condition of Possibility," in *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 145-61; Rodríguez, *Suspended Apocalypse: White Supremacy, Genocide, and the Filipino Condition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 120; Epifanio San Juan, Jr., *Balikbayang Sinta: An E. San Juan Reader* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 139; San Juan, *U.S. Imperialism and Revolution in the Philippines* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 97; Luzviminda Bartolome Francisco and Jonathan Shepard Fast, *Conspiracy for Empire: Big Business, Corruption, and the Politics of Imperialism in America, 1876-1907* (Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1985). Leon Czolgosz voiced displeasure at U.S policy in the Philippines. See Scott Miller, *The President and the Assassin: McKinley, Terror, and Empire at the Dawn of the American Century* (New York: Random House, 2011), 286. Like many U.S. authors, Miller downplays the scale of killing in the Philippines and highlights supposed Filipino atrocities.

[27] Jensen, "International Policing," 16; Isaac Land, *Enemies of Humanity: The Nineteenth-Century War on Terrorism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 1-2; Daniel Gaida, *The Formative Period of American Capitalism: A Materialist Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1; Paula J. Giddings, *Ida: A Sword among Lions; Ida B. Wells and the Campaign against Lynching* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 661.

[28] Émile Henry, quoted in Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (New York: Verso, 2005), 117; Nick Hanna, *The Art of Diving: And Adventure in the Underwater World* (Guilford, Conn.: Lyons Press, 2008), 166; Laurence M. Klauber, *Rattlesnakes: Their Habits, Life Histories, and Influence on Mankind*, 2nd ed., vol. 2, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 838-42; F. Lynne Bachleda, *Dangerous Wildlife in California and Nevada: A Guide to Safe Encounters at Home and in the Wild* (Birmingham, Ala.: Menasha Ridge Press, 2002), 203. Anderson valuably explores the parallels between anarchist and decolonial rhetoric on violence.

[29] "Savagery," *Charlotte Daily Observer*, February 20, 1916, 4. This piece goes on to denounce the Turks as savages based on the Armenian genocide and predicts a gruesome reprisal from the civilized world.

[30] J. J. Lawrence, "Socialism," *The Medical Brief* 29, no. 10 (October 1901): 1517; Lawrence, "Stamp Out Anarchy," *The Medical Brief* 29, no. 10 (October 1901): 1550.