Dear colloquium,

As I sat working on this draft, word came of the death of Aaron Swartz through Harvard connections. Since then, world media has commented, positioned, and historicized his life and his actions. Aaron is the brilliant and kind 26 year old who was committed to the ideals of openly accessible, technological common goods – whether that be in liberating essays from JSTOR's controlled model or in freeing – literally, as in making free from cost and from obligation - government documents that ostensibly always should have been freely available. Both these acts resulted in aggressive responses from the authorities, including the FBI, the police, the prosecutor's office, and the academic beacon MIT.

As you read this paper, I ask that you keep Aaron in mind. Authority in our contemporary situation is wrapped up in the demands of our particularly contorted variations of capitalist ideology. This is certainly true in obvious ways, but it is also true in the sometimes less considered realms of learning, academia, and knowledge. There is some irony in that JSTOR, a couple days before Aaron's death, announced that they were expanding free access to the archives of more than 1200 journals in their collection. By that, I should clarify, they mean that JSTOR will allow registered users to access without charge up to three articles every two weeks. A couple days after Aaron's death, scholars paid tribute to his memory by tweeting free access to their writings (#pdftribute). His death and the desire to honor his memory authorized a large scale refusal to play by paywall rules. Death authorized a moment of freedom for an anarchic practice. Death should not be needed.

This draft is part of an ongoing constructive theological work. As such, parts of the paper are likely to be foreign to the historical approaches that largely characterize this colloquium. For instance, it would be difficult to sidestep the fact that the paper is Christian and avowedly anarchic and liberationist in its thesis and language. I welcome discussion of the descriptive elements as well as the normative claims - both implicit and explicit - included herein. I also welcome discussion of the inclusion of this project in our colloquium. And finally, I want to suggest directly that a more broadly stated argument for anarchism as an academic attitude is relevant for consideration by all of us, whatever our disciplinary allegiances and training, whatever our academic status, rank, or goals.

In closing, I offer elements of the memorial that Anonymous posted as MIT's homepage on the evening of Sunday, January 13.

Sincerely,
Hannah

In Memoriam, Aaron Swartz, November 8, 1986 – January 11, 2013, Requiescat in pace.
A brief message from Anonymous.

Whether or not the government contributed to his suicide, the government's prosecution of Swartz was a grotesque miscarriage of justice, a distorted and perverse shadow of the justice that Aaron died fighting for — freeing the publicly-funded scientific literature from a publishing system that makes it inaccessible to most of those who paid for it — enabling the collective betterment of the world through the facilitation of sharing — an ideal that we should all support. Moreover, the situation Aaron found himself in highlights the injustice of U.S. computer crime laws, particularly their punishment regimes, and the highly-questionable justice of pre-trial bargaining. Aaron's act was undoubtedly political activism; it had tragic consequences.

Our wishes:

- We call for this tragedy to be a basis for reform of computer crime laws, and the overzealous prosecutors who use them.
- We call for this tragedy to be a basis for reform of copyright and intellectual property law, returning it to the proper principles of common good to the many, rather than private gain to the few.
- We call for this tragedy to be a basis for greater recognition of the oppression and injustices heaped daily by certain persons and institutions of authority upon anyone who dares to stand up and be counted for their beliefs, and for greater solidarity and mutual aid in response.
- We call for this tragedy to be a basis for a renewed and unwavering commitment to a free and unfettered internet, spared from censorship with equality of access and franchise for all.

For in the end, we will not be judged according to what we give, but according to what we keep to ourselves. Aaron, we will sorely miss your friendship, and your help in building a better world. May you read in peace.

You were the best of us; may you yet bring out the best in us.
-Anonymous, Jan 13, 2013.

Revolutionary Praxis
Hannah Hofheinz
January 17, 2013

In October 2011, not long after the occupation of Zuccotti Park in New York City, and at the beginning of the occupation of Dewey Square in Boston, I convened a workshop to identify what form Occupy theology can or ought to take. All of us were theologians, most liberationists, and many occupiers. We asked each other: What is the relationship of theology to Occupy? What is our task as theologians? Where is God? Does theology stand in solidarity with this human roar or are we in the midst of it? Are we the roar?

Within moments, liberation theology took its place as a natural guide. Liberation theologies seek to transform reality from the underside of history by exposing the effects of deleterious economic ideology. Occupy does the same. Liberation theologies claim a preferential option for the oppressed. Occupy is a movement of the 99%. Liberation theologies insist that extending the possibilities of knowledge is integral to the hopes of any societal transformation. Knowledge, likewise, is at the center of Occupy. But as our conversation continued, dissonance arose. Liberation theology is praxis; so clearly is Occupy – yet the two are not the same. Occupy enacts something different. At that workshop, we were at a loss on how to articulate that difference. Here, I suggest that it is anarchism.

When Gary Dorrien named the genius of Occupy its anarchism in contrast to other leftist protest movements,[1] he put his finger on the point of dissonance: Occupy expands the theological imagination of liberation theology through anarchic praxis. Occupy asks for

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[1] Gary Dorrien, Response to the panel "The Obama Question: A Progressive Prospective by Gary Dorrien" (presented at the American Academy of Religion, Chicago, Il, November 18, 2012).

anarchic liberation theology. This, however, leads directly to an open question: Can liberation theology be anarchic? If so, what will be its contours?

This essay considers these questions in turn. The first part considers whether liberation theology can be anarchistic. What is anarchism? How have theologians responded to anarchism in the past? What are the challenges to writing anarchic theology? Internalizing the ideas and positive answer of the first part, the second section then offers a constructive call for anarchist liberation theology through a telling of Occupy's inception.

Ultimately, what this essay suggests is that: yes, liberation theology can be anarchic, but it will be pivotally transformed in the process. Liberation theologies arise out of cries of suffering wherever and everywhere suffering occurs. The cries disrupt and declaim dominant powers. They call into question harmful structures of authority. They catalyze personal and systemic transformation by materializing alternatives in the negative spaces of their protest. Anarchist liberation theology is the praxis of forming non-authoritarian alternative communities that do not allow cries go unheard or the harms of false authority unchecked. Simply, anarchic praxis is a way of life that answers the chant "Another world is possible!" with the experience of another world is here. This is a theology occupied and an anarchist liberation theology.

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"Why are there so few anarchists in the academy?" Graeber wonders.[2] Anarchist ideas and practices flourish around the globe, and yet there are few anarchist academics willing to be known as such. Indeed, not only does anarchism rarely appear in academia, it

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[2] David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004), *2*.

has been actively evaded. This certainly is true in theology as much as anywhere else. While Christian anarchist communities such as the Jesus Radicals flourish[3] and academic engagements with anarchism have increased over the past decade, scholarly engagement with anarchism remains relatively unusual.

In 2003, William Cavenaugh argued in *Theopolitical Imagination* that the eucharist is an act of ecclesial anarchy in that it liturgically resists the false order of the state.[4] Since 2008 there has been an active off-shoot of the Anarchist Studies Network in the United Kingdom named Academics and Students Interested in Religious Anarchism (ASIRA).[5] Alexandre Christoyannopoulos published his thesis *Christian Anarchism* in 2010[6] and quickly followed it with an anthology titled *Religious Anarchism* in 2011.[7] The former endeavors to set forth an historical account of anarchist currents in Christianity; the latter collects analytic essays on specific religious anarchist thinkers, texts, and ideas. In 2011, Keith Hebden took a decidedly postcolonial approach to explore anarchism in an Indian context in his book *Dalit Theology and Anarchy*.[8] Overall, however, the conversation remains hesitant. It is telling that a common footnote in these works continues to point to Linda Damico's dissertation published in 1987 to suggest a topic that needs further investigation: the relationship between liberation theology and anarchism.

When Damico introduced her thesis on the anarchist dimensions of liberation theology, she began with a note of worry: "With some hesitancy I expose the anarchist

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[3] The Jesus Radicals (www.jesusradicals.com) is one of the largest and most active communities of self-identified Christian anarchists. Other communities form around websites such as the Christian anarchists Facebook Group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/christian.anarchists) or the revived Christian anarchist magazine, *A Pinch of Salt.*

[4] William Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Christian Practices of Space and Time* (London: T&T Clark, 2003).

[5] http://anarchist-studies-network.org.uk/ASIRA

[6] Christoyannopoulos, Alexandre, *Christian Anarchism: A Political Commentary on the Gospel* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2010)

[7] Christoyannopoulos, Alexandre, *Religious Anarchism: New Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011)

[8] Hebden, Keith, *Dalit Theology and Christian Anarchism* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011)

dimensions of liberation theology" she admitted. "If theologians in Latin America have been censured for their Marxist sympathies, what action might be brought against them for their anarchist views?"[9] Her worries are well founded. There are few words that cause discomfort as certainly as anarchism. Whether calling to mind assassination, bombs, masks, or a general chaotic nihilism, the word causes shudders.

Theodore Roosevelt's regularly referenced condemnation of anarchists and anarchism allows little confusion: "Anarchism is a crime against the whole human race; and all mankind should band against anarchists."[10] A century later, Chris Hedge's rendition of black bloc anarchism as a cancerous virus reads no less viciously: "It permits an inchoate rage to be unleashed on any target. Pity, compassion and tenderness are banished for the intoxication of power….It turns human beings into beasts."[11] Anarchism: a tonic of monsters. Anarchism: a fuel of violence. Anarchism: a destruction of what is good and right. Both of these men were responding to violence committed in the name of anarchism. Both men allow a singular caricature to demonize a complex constellation of political thinking and acting.

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[9] Linda Damico, *The Anarchist Dimension of Liberation Theology* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1987), xi.
[10] Theodore Roosevelt, "First Annual Message." December 3, 1901. Online by Gerhard Peters and John Woolley, *The American Presidency Project.* http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29542. Roosevelt was responding to the anarchist commitments of President McKinley's assassinator. The speech proceeds to detail the evils of anarchism and the importance of the United States' government doing all in its power to destroy anarchist sentiments amongst the population through prohibition, immigration policy, and policing.
[11] Chris Hedges, "The Cancer in Occupy" *Truthdig*, February 6, 2012. http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/the_cancer_of_occupy_20120206. Hedges was responding to the violence that shadowed Occupy Oakland. The piece instigated vigorous debate and disagreement. Anarchists pointed out the blatant misinformation concerning black bloc tactics in the article and the destructive, internally violent effects of his rhetoric toward anarchists in Occupy. Others sighed in welcome relief at someone finally naming the harm and frustration of violence being committed by some in Occupy – often enough, property violence committed by groups of men and women wearing masks and black sweatshirts.

Wherever the anarchist looks, she sees the dead hand of power strangling the potentialities of life and she is impelled to reject it.

The term anarchism names a range of political and social projects that confront and deny the oppressions of power instituted as authority. Though commonly articulated straightforwardly as a stance against the state, anarchism is better considered in terms of an attitude towards power. Across myriad forms, anarchism recognizes that not only are laws unjust but that the assumption of authority to inscribe law is unjust. As an attitude, anarchism's sustained refusal of authority extends into all aspects of life. Indeed, an anarchistic commitment to subverting authority gives rise to *a way of life* that directly contrasts the way of life that characterizes lives ordered hierarchically. Common aspects of an anarchistic way of life include mutual aid, direct participatory democracy, collaborative knowledge, and a deep commitment to non-authoritarian relationality.

Sebastien Faure's *Encyclopédie Anarchiste* offers a classic definition:

> That which exists and constitutes what one might call the anarchist doctrine is a cluster of general principles, fundamental conceptions and practical applications regarding which a consensus has been established among individuals whose thought is inimical to Authority and who struggle, collectively or in isolation, against all disciplines and constraints, whether political, economic, intellectual or moral.[12]

This definition can accurately pertain to a wide range anarchic forms, and a wide range of forms there indeed are.

Some modes of anarchism, for instance, center on acts of refusal. For instance, there are insurrectionist anarchists that seek to vandalize or destroy the physical apparatuses of hegemonic authority.[13] There are those who through situationist détournement undermine

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[12] Sebastien Faure, "Anarchy-Anarchist" in the *Encyclopédie Anarchiste* as quoted by *The Anarchist Reader* edited by George Woodcock (Atlantic Highlands, NY: The Harvester Press Limited, 1977), 62.
[13] For example: The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009)

and subvert the rhetoric of power.[14] And there are those who embrace piracy as an actively productive refusal of intellectual property as a structure for knowledge.[15] Alternatively, some modes of anarchism focus on creating, then fostering, alternative models of relationality and community. Consensus based collectives experiment with communal processes of living into non-authoritarian economies.[16] There are anarchists who seek through beauty or performance to show that imagination can prefigure the possible.[17] And some blend and mix all the above into neon or into pastel variations. Anarchic multiplicity reveals a dialectic of refusal and possibility in a unique formulation.

Though the dialectic of destruction and creation lies at the heart of most approaches to the struggle against oppression, in anarchism this dialectic manifests as a radical commitment to a diversity of tactics. There are few cohesive agreements other than a fundamental commitment to refuse authority as a source of harm and a shared respect for the work of refusal, however that work takes shape. Often, however, anarchism is reduced to a singular caricature, and often that caricature is essentially destructive. Damico feared the backlash anarchism would cause for liberation theology because of the demonized image. For her, however, the interconnections were too essential to elide, and the risk therefore warranted.

Liberationist José Porfirio Miranda named liberation theology "radical anarchism."[18] Damico demonstrates that when he did so, he made explicit what has more often remained unspoken. A number of early liberationists were influenced by anarchist ideas and practices, and there are significant elements of agreement. Damico's text works to make some of

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[14] For example: "Détournement as Negation and Prelude" in *Internationale Situationniste*.
#3 (1959). Translated by Ken Knabb. http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/315
[15] For example: Aaron Swartz, "Gorilla Open Access Manifesto" July, 2008. http://pastebin.com/cefxMVAy
[16] For example: The Wingnut Collective, Richmond, VA. http://wingnutrva.org/
[17] For example: The Mime Troupe and Artists Liberation Front, born of the San Francisco Diggers. http://www.diggers.org/alf.htm
[18] José Porfirio Miranda, *Communism in the Bible*, translated by Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1982), 73.

these unspoken points of theological and ideological convergence clear. In doing so she expresses a life-affirming liberationist articulation of anarchism. Her dissertation, however, remains a lonely sustained engagement of the topic. However radical liberation theologies have been, Damico raises the tangible question as to whether the idea of anarchism remains too radical, too dangerous.

Interestingly, the question also gets reversed. Is alliance with liberationism too demanding of this-worldly transformation for those who take up Christian Anarchy? Vernard Eller epitomizes this point of contention in the seventh element of his definition of "Christian Anarky." Eller writes: "It is no part of Christian Anarchy to want to attack, subvert, unseat, or try to bring down any of the world's arkys."[19] To do so, he continues, is to establish a counterarkys, a worldly authority no more godly than any other worldly power and no more deserving of respect. According to Eller, Christian Anarky entails a refusal to acknowledge any and all worldly powers and a radical submission to the only transformative potentiality, God's grace. The desire for worldly transformation–such as that which liberation theologies demand–is ultimately incompatible with Christian Anarchy.

Eller's argument is mistaken, dangerous, and all too common. He confuses anarchic praxis of refusing authority with a refusal to engage authority. The former is active, the latter passive. Eller's sort of quietism is foreign to my understanding of anarchism, just as it is foreign to my understanding of Christianity. Catholic Workers, Quakers, and Mennonites provide ample examples of Christian anarchists working on the underside of history to transform the world for the better. The argument is important to note, however, because it illuminates the mirroring challenge to an attempt to sketch an anarchic liberation theology.

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[19] Vernard Eller, *Christian Anarchy: Jesus' Primacy Over the Powers* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman Publishing Co, 1987), chapter 1. Available online at: http://www.hccentral.com/eller12/.

Just as Damico worried that "anarchism" might endanger liberation theology, the radical impetus for this-worldly transformation at the heart of "liberation" is also not necessarily welcome amongst those who consider themselves Christian anarchists.

Both sides evidence fear of the radical activity of the other, but the fear is misplaced. Most liberationists and anarchists agree that the structures of the world are harming people and our environments. Most liberationists and anarchists agree that corrupt instantiations of power perpetrate these harms. Most liberationists and anarchists agree that these harms cause great suffering, especially the suffering of those and that which are most susceptible to the machinations of power. Most liberationists and anarchists reject the necessity of this suffering and believe deeply in the attainable promise of better world. Most liberationists and anarchists are committed to living into that better world.

But even if the fear of radicalism is overcome, there is another, more fundamental, challenge to writing an anarchic liberation theology. Anarchism as an attitude toward authority challenges the basic academic conventions that shape most written theology. David Graeber names one manifestation of this in response to his opening question: Why are there so few anarchist academics? He notes that anarchism takes its name from a constellation of ideas and practices – not from a founding figure(s). This basic difference makes it uniquely challenging to academia.[20]

Academic engagement of anarchism stumbles over a basic task: how can or ought anarchism be distilled into a conceptual structure suitable for academic application? It is often presented as the project of certain 19th century founding figures (Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, and so on), but this is contradicted by the figures themselves. Kropotkin's definition of anarchism in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* states the contradiction clearly: "The

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[20] Graeber, *Fragments*, 3.

conception of society just sketched and the tendency which is its dynamic expression have always existed in mankind, in opposition to the governing hierarchic conception and tendency."[21] Anarchism is present in the writings and ideas of Lao-tsze, Kropotkin continues, and notably surfaces in Aristippus and Zeno. These ancient thinkers are not, however, creators of the thought any more than Proudhon was, when in 1840 he used the word "anarchy" to name a no-government conception of society.[22] Indeed, any suggestion that "anarchism" continues as Proudhon's intellectual property must resolutely ignore his most trenchant argument that "property is theft."

Anarchism always already has been, just as hierarchical attitudes have also always already been.[23] Anarchism is a constellation of ideas without founding or authorizing figures, but with historically persistent committed communities. Anarchism is not a school of thought. Anarchism is an attitude toward power that forms a shared way of life.

The refusal of a founding figure is itself performatively anarchic. An attitude that resists rulers likewise resists authorizing intellectual figures. Marxism, on the other hand, offers an easy contrast. Consider schools of Marxist thought: Graeber lists the Leninists, Maoists, Trotksyites, Gramscians, Althusserians, and so on; the list of schools doubles as a list of great men who originated theoretical variations.[24] –However snide, Graeber's side note marking the smooth transition from heads of state to academics in this list is worth reflection.– Flavors of anarchism, on the other hand, tend to be named according to characteristic practices. The insurrectionists insurrect; the cooperatists cooperate, and so on. In Graeber's words, while Marxism has tended to organize itself as streams of

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[21] Kropotkin, "Anarchism" first published in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1910), 914. Available online: http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/kropotkin-peter/1910/britannica.htm

[22] Proudhon, Pierre Joseph. *What Is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government.* Translated by Benjamin Tucker (New York: Dover, 1970)

[23] Kropotkin, "Anarchism", 914.

[24] Graeber, *Fragments,* 3.

theoretical or analytical discourse about revolutionary strategy, "anarchism has tended to be an ethical discourse about revolutionary practice."[25]

Anarchism in discursive, intellectual, or academic forms – just like anarchism in activist or collectivist forms – names a commitment to an attitude that will shape academic engagement just as surely as it shapes the rest of life. Anarchism challenges the hierarchies of the university, but also how knowledge comes to be and what knowledge includes or excludes. Anarchism calls into question the basic structures, methods, and goals of the academic project, and it offers alternatives.

Take for example the resistance to naming a founding figure discussed above. Not only is this resistance to naming an originary voice of anarchism per se, but it is resistance to original authorship in general. What matters in writing is not who wrote the text, but how the text contributes to a larger conversation. While the complex relationships between writer and text are important, a writer does not have unique authority over the text, including its ideas, duplication, or alteration. Rather, the text, its ideas and its effects exist for (and *as*) an open community, a community that includes the writer but also all the others who engage with the text. Plagiarism makes no sense in this context. The purposes of citation and notes change dramatically. Rather than being overvalued, analytical work can be brought back into an equal and collaborative relationship with the many ways to create, engage and apply ideas. Status conferred on the basis of texts published to a name disappears. Pseudonymity and anonymity resurface, not as self-effacing radical alternatives, but as two rhetorical possibilities among many others. No longer essential is the question: "what texts have you published?"

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[25] Ibid., 6.

Alternatively, consider anarchism's commitment to diversity of tactics. It challenges common academic practices by running counter to the competitive attitude that often characterizes academic work. Academic diversity of tactics accepts that two essays can and will offer opposing arguments and sees this diversity as a good thing. It fosters the productivity of arguing vehemently for or against one of these arguments without seeking to silence or negate the other. It ensures that the focus remains why the idea matters, how it can or needs to be made better, and what effects our engagement will have, rather than slipping into a contest for the authority of one over the other.

Diversity of tactics also reminds that writing is local and autonomous. Any writing, like any action, expresses just one contextualized and human attempt to achieve its goals. Many others are possible; indeed many others are needed. Theologically, this claim is familiar: all human words are finite; all theological writing is partial. In welcoming the resulting diversity rather than struggling in spite of it, a commitment to diversity of tactics insists that transparent contextualization does not entail isolated fragmentation. Instead, transparent contextualization enables meaningful collaboration across deep differences.

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Given the above: what might be contours of anarchist liberation theology? What follows will not be more than a glimpse, but hopefully it will be a glimpse nonetheless. Please do not mistake this text as attempting a sufficient statement on anarchism, anarchistic liberationism, or Occupy. Indeed, do not mistake this text as an encapsulated statement at all. It is only the equivalent of one suggestive sentence in an ongoing conversation. It represents neither the beginning of an idea nor its summation. It does not stand alone. Just

below the surface run currents of exegetical engagement with classical and contemporary anarchist and liberationist conversations in tandem with dreams of future ones. These conversations neither authorize what follows nor prohibit it, and they are referenced only when and as immediately helpful. I clarify this both as an invitation to participate and as a word of warning. I happened to join a particular moment of these conversations in September of 2011. Because of this, I know this moment better than others, and the story of Occupy's inception will here provide an opportunity to imagine a call for anarchist liberation theology.

I say unto you: one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star.

On July 13, 2011, Adbusters published a call on their blog titled: "#OCCUPYWALLSTREET A shift in revolutionary tactics." This post opened with a quote attributed to Raimundo Viejo and placed in Barcelona, Spain:

> The antiglobalization movement was the first to step on the road. Back then our model was to attack the system like a pack of wolves. There was an alpha male, a wolf who led the pack, and those who followed behind. Now the model has evolved. Today we are one big swarm of people.[26]

There is a change of tactic in the air, Adbusters proclaimed: a marvelously simple and marvelously pragmatic change of tactic. Let's "talk to each other in various physical gatherings and virtual people's assemblies...[Let's] zero in on what our one demand will be, a demand that awakens the imagination and, if achieved, would propel us toward the radical democracy of the future..."[27]

According to Adbusters, this tactic fuses Tahrir Square with the *acampadas* of Spain. It is a strategem that ought to be deployed "against the greatest corrupter of our

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[26] Raimundo Viejo, as quoted by Adbusters. "#OCCUPYWALLSTREET | Adbusters Culturejammer Headquarters." *Adbusters*, July 13, 2011. http://www.adbusters.org/blogs/adbusters-blog/occupywallstreet.html.
[27] Ibid.

democracy: Wall Street, the financial Gomorrah of America."[28] What Adbusters fails to mention is that just a few weeks earlier there had already been a protest occupation of the financial district in New York City. Starting in mid-June, Bloombergville, as it was called, respected sidewalk-sleeping laws, cooperated with the police, and was endorsed by the Green Party and the International Socialist Organization, amongst others. Within about three weeks, Bloombergville faded quietly with little attention and minor impact. A few days later Adbusters posted their call.

The call itself is not particularly noteworthy. It is a typical example of Adbusters' situationist culture jamming techniques: the post picks up what had quickly become a commodified spectacle (namely, the tactic of the Arab Spring) in order to remix and repackage it into an anti-capitalist brand. What is worth noting is how the call functions. First, Adbusters presents the occupation of Wall Street prefiguratively, not strategically. That is, the call itself prefigures Occupy; it does not strategize for the occupation. Second, Viejo's quote establishes the shape of the protest community as a "big swarm" in contrast to a wolf pack. In this preliminary metaphor, authority always already denied. Third, the action called for is talking to each other in various gatherings and people's assemblies. Adbusters simply calls for us to be in community, to let community be our radical foundation. Fourth, the goal is not to achieve a predefined change or political outcome. The primary goal is to awaken imaginations so that together we can come to know what we should demand. This is a call to conscientization. These elements foreshadow the quintessentially anarchist underpinnings of what would become Occupy: horizontal organization; insistence not only on the transformative effects of imagining that "another

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[28] Ibid.

world is possible" but that another world is prefiguratively already here; and the radical politics of non-authoritarian cooperative community.

Hardt and Negri unpack the metaphor of a swarm to illustrate the organization of non-hierarchical multitudes. Essentially, swarms do not have a head. Because they are comprised of multiple autonomous actors who organize themselves into horizontal networks, swarms function as a diverse multiplicity without authoritarian structure. Their intelligence is collective and collaborative; it is the product of the free participation of many creative thinkers.[29] This is an apt model for anarchist collectivism that denies the temptations of authority through horizontal models of organization; it offers an image by which to rearticulate liberationist base communities that is not foreign to the tradition, but perhaps also is not typical.

'Liberation theologies' is a generalized name for the discernment and articulation of the transformative theological insights of radical communities, who are united by their shared experiences on the undersides of history. Anarchist liberation theology embraces the multiplicity of its communities as swarm-like. The community, with all of its autonomous diversity, flourishes when it opens space in this broken world to experience the loving commitment of consensual relationships that are based on cooperation and mutuality, rather than competition and authority. Theologically, this is not only a hoped for promise, but a present reality. These transformed communities do exist, however fleeting and momentary. When anarchist praxis takes up space with manifesting life-giving alternatives for our relationships (with each other, with our environment, and with our governing systems and ideologies), anarchic praxis reveals the activity of the Spirit with, amongst, and also far beyond us. Adbusters called for the gathering of a transforming community formed

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[29] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 98.

and guided by collaborative relationality. We are called by the Spirit to make our bodies

present, one with another, and to not be conformed to this world. Hearing the calls

together hints at the contours of anarchist liberation theology.

Shortly after Adbusters published its blog post, activists that occupied

Bloombergville distributed an invitation to a "people's general assembly" to plan for the

September 17th occupation of Wall Street. The text of the event notice reads:

> The students, union activists, and others who organized "Bloombergville" – the
> three-week anti-austerity occupation on Wall Street's doorstep – have called for an
> August 2 General Assembly Speakout on Wall Street...to protest the ongoing pro-
> bank, anti-people cutbacks and gather into working groups to plan for the
> September 17 occupation of Wall Street.[30]

Note that, in this text, the two word phrase "general assembly" is an isolated

moment of coherence with the Adbusters call. In its formulation, the event notice reveals an

underlying commitment to vertical organization and Marxist strategy that characterize its

organizers. For instance, the event will be a "speakout" where we will protest and plan for

the occupation. The event is the next step of a historical trajectory: it will be a continuation

from the Bloombergville campaign.

Prefigurative communities transform the world through their way of life, not

strategic action. Indeed, any seeds of revolution that prefigurative communities sow take the

form of contagious relationality, not strategic maneuvering. Rather than a revolution of

change in the structures of power (however subtle or extensive) for which varieties of

Marxism struggle, anarchic liberationism embraces revolution as what happens when

relationships irrupt that by their holiness transform reality and manifest reality transformed.

This clarifies a point of distinction between common articulations of liberation

theology and anarchist liberation theology. Rather than prioritizing Marxist structuring

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[30] www.facebook.com/events/174935459243842

assumptions around the goal of liberation struggles and the dynamics of history that will get us to the revolution, anarchist liberation theology prioritizes living into an alternative way of life, an anarchist praxis, that is itself the revolution. Another way to say this is that anarchist liberation theology does not prioritize fostering the tools for the *fight*; anarchist liberation theology prioritizes an active *prefiguration of justice*. This is a liberation theology that orients itself as a theological praxis of fostering surprising and momentary instantiations of justice through mutual aid, collaboration, and participatory politics. As David Graeber notes, anarchic praxis can only ultimately rest on a type of faith.[31] This is the faith to trust that prefigurative irruptions of God's realm transform reality heterotopically, but systemically, because they change our knowledge of one another and creation as a whole.

Graeber tells the story of what happened at the event on August 2: After a friend at the art collective 16 Beaver Group informed him that there would be a "general assembly" about Occupy Wall Street, he decided on a whim to attend. When they arrived, he was dismayed to find everything set for a speak-out. With banners and megaphones abounding, a series of individuals came forward in procession to give speeches. Through one of these speeches, Graeber learned that the organizing Workers World Party, a vertically structured veteran activist group, planned to lead the 80 person assembly on a march past the Stock Exchange following the speeches. The event notice had told the truth: this was not a general assembly; it was a speakout. A speakout is not participatory and certainly is not Graeber-styled anarchist-friendly.

As he paced, Graeber came to notice that he and the friend who invited him were not alone. A number of attendees were "mostly pretty obviously horizontals: people more sympathetic with anarchist principles of organization, non-hierarchical forms of direct

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[31] Graeber, *Fragments*, 4.

democracy, and direct action."[32] The gathered group included a number of his friends and acquaintances. Indeed, Graeber names them: the Greek friend, the Food Not Bombs acquaintance, the "Japanese activist intellectual [he'd] known for years," and so on. Others he recognized by affinity symbols, for instance their Zapatista paraphernalia. This should be noted as a particular joy of an anarchist way of life that is rooted in friendship: at this rally, the anarchist community was not yet; yet it already was. The community of friends that recognized each other would open a door to a different type of interaction. Relationships transform possibilities across time and space.

As the community started to recognize itself, the swarm began to self-organize. In Graeber's words: "My Greek friend looked at me and I looked at her and we both instantly realized the other was thinking the same thing: "'Why are we so complacent? Why is it that every time we see something like this happening, we just mutter things and go home?' -- though I think the way we put it was more like, 'You know something? Fuck this shit. They advertised a general assembly. Let's hold one.'" It took two attempts and some contestation, but the horizontal community convened a participatory general assembly with modified consensus as its basis. Soon "the verticals" joined them, and a diverse assembly of friends, new and old, birthed the anarchist dance of Occupy, which surprised everyone with the strength of its light.

Anarchists tend to enjoy meditating on Nietzche's reminder that in order to birth a dancing star, one must have chaos within oneself. This is the chaos of the deep; the chaos of creation; the *dunamis* of unformed potentiality out of which God brings light, earth, animals, humans, love, and hope. Preceding form, chaos cannot be known by us. Preceding shape, chaos cannot be grasped by us. If, as an anarchist liberationist, I embrace chaos, I do so only

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[32] David Graeber, "On Playing By The Rules—The Strange Success Of #OccupyWallStreet," *Naked Capitalist* October 19, 2011. http://www.nakedcapitalism.com/2011/10/david-graeber-on-playing-by-the-rules-%E2%80%93-the-strange-success-of-occupy-wall-street.html

with faith that, what God creates out of chaos, God creates as good. "Fuck it, let's live into possibility" Graeber writes. There are few other ways to move into the chaos of unknown creation than with a "fuck it, I have faith" attitude. Worldly structures cannot justify that, which law cannot comprehend. Reason cannot justify what cannot be known. We must trust, but this is not a blind trust into nothingness. The transformed community is always already, prefiguratively, there.

What do we have to gain from living into possibility? The promise of a transformed world. We cannot escape power or its effects, but we can strive to deny its instantiations and the corrupting demands it makes of our lives and work. Indeed, the best that we can do is to live into a way of life that manifests that another world is possible through radical communities that never ignore the cries of suffering or accept their necessity in the midst of our broken world. Remodulating Simon Crichtley's words, "this is an anarchism of infinite responsibility."[33] In the attitude we take toward power's harms lies the hope and promise of anarchist liberation theology.

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[33] Simon Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance* (London ; New York: Verso, 2007), 93.