

## Tolerated Individuality

I survived father hate in a typically male way, I had the privilege of pretending to be one of them, I knew it wasn't logical. I was told I wasn't one of them, I had my mother's face, I was a Mullin through and through, I was stubborn because I wouldn't bend to his commands, wouldn't flinch as he lay down the law, wouldn't be swayed by his superior adult male logic.

I will never be able to let go of these feelings of being an outsider, they are who I am, I can only attempt to stem the survivor guilt in me. When I remember hugging my dad after he'd finished brutalizing or demeaning my mother or brother I feel ashamed. I feel a wrongness that I was oblivious to interpret, a wrong emotional response rather than a vengeful active approach.

Now I know how lucky I was, that I knew on some level I wasn't ready to full on forward attack my dad, at the time I didn't know there was any other option but loving your dad.

One of my earliest memories is sitting by a river bend after school just sitting and thinking, being, remembering family togetherness building dams on the river, playing poo sticks. I wanted that deeply, I was aware I couldn't be seen directly, playing with the other kids, but I liked the idea that the adults would have to take time and think to know where I was.

With this came an identity, I heard a pride in my mum's voice when she told the other mums where she found me, a deep nature boy that one.

I knew she would because whenever there was bedlam at home I would always take myself off outside. I knew how important it was that I didn't see her cry because I saw it once, or get upset or argue but more than anything, she didn't want me involved in the drama; to become something I didn't understand.

Joshua was a resistance fighter, in the trenches telling both parents what they were doing wrong, living the trauma, with two sunburn creased lines between his eyebrows to prove it.

I was a dreamer I liked this new state of being, I distrusted and held onto my words because I saw them used by other people like daggers or simply to pull on heart strings. I must have thought a lot about how words are only used to hurt each other and get one over each other because by the time I was in secondary school I'd been given another personality story to hold onto.

I was like my great granddad I told people, he was a quite honourable man, would say hardly a word, but he always knew when something was at odds, so when he did speak his words had a profound impact on people. I became the listener and solver.

I thought about how small I was in this incomprehensible beautiful universe that I read in stories, I didn't try much to understand it just admire it. I wanted to mimic its uniqueness, I wanted to be compassionate. I probably started labelling a lot of things, good and bad, normal and extraordinary. I went vegan with this people gave me the identity pacifist.

It wasn't till the army came to school that I had a chance to practice what I'd learnt. Reading back over my diary at the time I felt a huge responsibility to my friends that they wouldn't go off and get killed for no good reason.

I've tried to stay as real to the 15 year old kid who's newly forming ideas were shaped through the experience of what follows.

I spread my ideas militantly, if they were going to advertise the killing of innocents in my school me and my young cronies were going to disrupt it. I wrote up a petition, confronted every kid in school with this reality. I made a ruckus because I was doing something radical that had never been tried before in the school's history.

I must have got three quarters of the whole school to sign my little clip board chart, not least because of the rumours that were spread, some of the kids straight out of primary learning about conscription in history class cued up to sign it, expressing a tangible fear.

My betrayal came suddenly, the teacher who invited the army to school flipped out at me, saying I was trying to limit other<sup>2</sup>

student's access to knowledge about the army. I walked away furious, even more committed to stopping them, I schemed with friends how we could lock doors and sit on stage. I thought how an institution committed to educating, expanding minds could let someone go off and kill others half way across the world.

I stubbornly asked all the head of staff each day when the army would be coming to school, all of them told me it hadn't been scheduled but they'd tell me when they knew, not for a while...

When I walked into the school the next day to find everyone at assembly with teachers keeping a close eye on their forms in rows, I was pissed. I walked in from one side of the hall and surveyed the scene with contemptuous hilarity, down the hall, past the class sitting quietly transfixed on me, ignoring my form teacher's calls to come sit down, and out the other end.

I sat outside with 4 girls fuming, a teacher came round to ask us back in, I glared back but 3 of us slinked back in. So this was the great resistance effort the 2 of us crumpled down to the floor.

We started talking about how depressing it all was, how powerless the teachers had made everyone feel, people had been scratching their name off the petition for fear of getting punished. We hated everything that was in that room and we threw in a few choice words of our conversation into the hall. BULLSHIT!

The teachers guarding the doors peered through the curtains at us, they were afraid of us! Aha so they should be! Our beings and ideas were powerful!

The talk ended, the army officer came out and I felt an anger welling up in me, but I had nothing to say to him, the head of department came next, I had a maths lesson with him next but he'd lied to me only yesterday, I had no interest in hearing what he had to teach me. He encouraged me to move, saying it's finished now, I laughed a laugh that came from the pit of my being, it was just the opposite of how I was feeling, a dramatic change in my being, nothing had come and gone, only feelings inside of me had grown a 1000 fold.

He threatened me with truancy, I learned the best way to get on an adult's nerves was never to rise to them, never give them any ammunition. I just looked at him. None of the politics needed words, we weren't going to get one over on each other, we were simply diametrically opposed and I wished the opposite of wanting to be understood by him by engaging him in conversation. I just watched him walk away.

The rest of the day I sat exactly where I was and made paper cranes for peace and talked to anyone and everyone. I was committed to public resistance. Resistance is emotional, beautiful even and I'd crossed a treasonous line with characteristic style. Action would from now and forever be how I wrote my story.

The next few weeks I was in and out of full time detention where I wasn't even allowed to go to class, I had to be watched carefully to curb my disruptive ways.

I raged against the teachers that had lied to me, but when I was in detention I got my first whiff of privilege, the kids I was in with admired my rage but with a sense of novelty.

I thought they'd understand more than anyone why I was fighting them, but they didn't, they believed in the system more than anyone, they just got angry sometimes and needed to lash out and so were seen as unpredictable.

For most of them a care worker or teacher were the only people that would believe in them, show them the rails. I knew where the rails were but I wanted to derail them and set a new course.

But I began to hate the idea that I could afford to step off and be an example only to later intelligently articulate a political reason to excuse myself.

Even more entitled than that I had a co-conspirator mother who used her knowledge of childcare regulations to stop me from being expelled and afford me an easier sentence than my new friends who earned their detention by setting off alarms by setting fire to bits of paper and smoking in toilets.

I came out of school feeling a strong sense of purpose, that words weren't necessary in finding my-self, which validated my search for a spiritual interconnectedness based on compassion. Also the people telling you what you should or shouldn't do can be the worst amoral shits on the planet.

I grew up as an outside, the scouser adopted into a tiny village in a valley in wales. This moment was the activation of an identity I only knew through the biker friends of my mum and the stories they would tell together that I looked up to.

An identity known only to myself that no one could take away from me, and I felt my internal world growing stronger, I felt a sense of purpose, the more active I felt fighting oppression, the more alive I felt. Now I have the privilege of being able to jump into so many struggles without getting burnt out or losing face.

My only limits are when I am being asked to conform to a situation I don't agree with, in this way I need to stay spontaneous, my inner strength comes from the efficiency by which I can throw myself into a struggle and make gains, I am learning now to transform that into a circular routine of building my bases.

My outer self is a culmination of novelty stories of struggling through hardship and pushing through in pursuit of truth and finding pockets of hope. I need people around me to be open, allow me to tell my story slowly and not restrict my image to something that suits them.

When I'm on the road I'm still that little kid who disassociates, but the game of living with strangers allows me to feel creative. I feel like I need to make connections more strongly; because mutual aid is so important, the entire journey is dependent on other people. When I look at my life I see the journey, my life is about the means by which we make change not the end.

# Pathological Anarchist - A Case Study

by The Anarch ([squee.anarchyplanet.org](http://squee.anarchyplanet.org))

- edited to make it more readable

## Complex of Abuse

Relationship to Selfishness that was prevalent so frequently when I experienced abuse. What I mean by "Selfishness" is not simple egotism, but self-centred reasoning.

A selfish if/then statement would be the teacher telling the child that they should not misbehave because it will make the teacher look bad or have a hard time performing their role as teacher; if you misbehave, then I am burdened by this.

You should not misbehave because you won't be able to learn; the if/then statement is: if you misbehave, then you are burdened by this.

The difference between these two forms of if/then statements is one of "if you, then I" as opposed to "if you, then you". The former presumes the child (in the example) to be a means to an end and it is fundamentally self-centred reasoning.

The latter presumes that the child has her own goals, emotions, thoughts, and experiences that can be related to and presumes the child to be an end in and of them.

## Self and Others

Throughout my development, Selfishness of this sort affected me so deeply because of its association with abuse, that I learned to respond to advice, instruction, and other forms of consideration with distrust.

In every area in my life that I had found it difficult to develop healthy habits of living, beneficial behaviours, a recognition of the implicit rewards in doing something, and value for certain things in general there is a direct relationship with attempts made to teach me them through

selfish if/then statements (and manipulative rewards or punishments justified with those statements).

This Selfishness of others became a personal selfishness: not through the internalization of their logic, but through an ironic response to it. I grew to lack any real concept of trust in others to think of me as an end in myself and came to expect that when I related to someone (for the first time or consistently), this would be the most common way in which I would be related to.

What these expectations lead to was an ambivalent temperament, loneliness from distancing myself from those who I recognized this Selfishness at work within, fears that I could not rely on anyone else, and contempt for objectification. In this way, I developed my own sort of selfishness that was solitary, generous without expectations of mutual generosity, emotionally distanced, guarded, and defensive.

## Authority/Care

For me, Selfishness epitomized what "Authority" meant to me. Those in an authoritative or authoritarian role relied on this logic that I had come to despise. The antithesis of this was care (or love). Those who could express their motivations for trying to teach me something, correct me, or otherwise help me with if/then statements that were what I felt to be considerate (if you/then you statements) were not Authority: they were mentors, instructors, scientific thinkers, admirers, and most importantly their logic caused me to feel loved (or, cared for).

So, I developed a deep loathing for Authority and a deep enthusiasm for those who "cared". Unfortunately, people are not that simple: someone who deeply cares about me may express that care with if you/then I statements, someone who doesn't care about me but instead wants to take advantage of me may know how to appeal to this complex, and abuse (or, domination) was what I wanted to avoid the most: not mere "selfishness".

## Introversion/Extroversion

The sort of selfishness that I developed also pulled me towards an introverted way of being-in-the-world. Since I had a hard time trusting others, loathed being objectified, and all the rest detailed above, I formed a complicated relationship with myself and very few deep and meaningful relationships with others.

This isn't to say that I was or am always introverted or that I don't have many relationships with others, but I do approach social life with an inward-facing perspective: putting feelers out for indications of Selfishness, inspecting my own thoughts and feelings (and the way I am affected by others), restraining my expressions of emotion (for related fears of vulnerability), and wearing a mask of superficial and easily displayed outward behaviours to mediate between the vulnerable life of my interior and the selfish world of my exterior.

## Interdependency

While my Abuse lead to; a solitary, somewhat detached, introverted, and anti-authoritarian character, it has taught me how to become self-reliant in many ways.

In rejecting Dependency, my embrace of being Independent was less significant, instead rejecting the dichotomy in favour of a interdependency that I find amongst open communities with an internationalist agenda.

This opens up the possibilities for me to have relationships with others that are grounded in being part of a mutually, co-creative community: not because of ideology, but because of how I learnt to survive growing up.

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## Anarchism

The fundamental values that I aspire to can be found at the root of my psychological complexes before I came to learn about



## Anarchist Ideology:

Nature, Mutuality, Art, Regularity, Autonomy, Co-Creation, Security, Flexible Structures, Community

Anarchism has played an interesting role in my Life History as a way to link these complexes to the social fabric. It has also played an interesting role in relation to my World of Desire as a justification for my desires and a history of others who have come to desire similar things. In this way, I identify as an Anarchist.

Anarchist social theory has also opened me up to a vast range of topics, logics, behaviours, and desires that - although connected to the above complexes - go beyond them. What is important here is how anarchism as a framework so readily coincides with values I have already developed for very personal reasons.

In this way, in being unable to practically separate the values that arise from my characteristic complexes, from the values that are elaborated on by anarchist thought; fighting to live an anarchist life (and to co-create an anarchist commune and revolution) and living my personal life are the same thing. Therefore, I am pathologically anarchist...



I Love Struggling Artist films;

- Frances Ha, Llewelyn Davis, Withnail & I, Into the Wild, Vagabond, Humboldt County,

and Authentic Kids;

- The Architecture of Reassurance, Following Sean, The Red Balloon, Mud, Sugar Cane Alley, Sleepers, Brick, The Client, To Kill a Mockingbird, Teenage,

Drifters, queering heterosexuality, not fitting into a time schedule and learning to be authentic, daydreaming more important than reality, trying on new identities, and throwing off old subjectivities, being caught out for overacting stereotypes of people they meet to fit in.

This picture was snapped just before I entered a timed race down a steep ski run zigzagging slaloms on the last day of holiday, having done no practice beforehand.

Instead I'd been in my own world all week abandoning my ski school and using my innocent face and ski pass credentials to sneak out at lunchtime and join other groups to the bemusement of teachers who hadn't realised I'd joined their group till they realised they had one more kid to keep an eye on till the end of the day.

I had the best week of my life, joining some troops of kids that were from Newcastle more to my liking, making funny faces at other kids with no shared language, and generally making it up as I went along, wondering all over the mountain, safe in the knowledge that I could blend into any mass of little people pizzaing down the ski runs in lines like joining a conga.

Going from one house to another, to heading off to the French alpes on a whim, there wasn't much time to understand and process being alive; 'to be or not to be' didn't really feel like an option.

When you're growing up status quos are so difficult to topple because everyone else around you is competing to best understand the consensus of the world and culture dynamics, so

subcultural new ideas are optimized in the naive kid 'going through a phase', saying he has a better idea than this shit.

Growing up not knowing any other option but to love the Dear Leader, then later repulsed at the memories, you quickly learn to doubt every instinct you have, and always be ready to see things from the other person's point of view.

Sometimes this led me to doubt my own convictions and be indecisive.

I could never get on the end of opinions, like what is anarchism. An idea you could pick up or put down. I felt you had to live it, when I was still a kid first living on site, I went to events and joined in activist workshops, I had some funny ideas at the time like the police were just the top gang on the street. In reality I was just regurgitating stories I'd heard about police in Liverpool walking round with automatics as a show of force, and the legions of police drumming on riot shields during the Toxteth riots.

I've seen the flourishing of idiosyncratic conspiracies at one end of the anti-hierarchy spectrum to people who don't often get the chance to brat out in daily life going around events venting at everyone because no one's been delegated to have the exact information on hand to deal with them, so because they're not satisfied that must mean nothing can be organised horizontally.

Ultimately I do it because I enjoy working with a diversity of people. When I was a kid, I never really wanted to be part of any cliques, because the self-respect you have to hand in at the door to be accepted can take a lifetime to gain back.

I was lucky I guess I had time to contemplate the world as best I could, part of that was having a protective older brother, and maternal guiding force around me and the privileged knowledge that I would later grow up to be a tall, handsome man, hopefully with my Liverpool family's lyrical wit, less rough man with scars to prove it, more pretty boy I knew people would objectively appreciate. Not that I'd pretend I cared of course but a superficial safety net I could fall back on all the same.

Growing up, Tomboys seemed to mimic all the spiritually good aspects of both genders. They were out to have a good time but they didn't take any shit. I never got hooked on images of women hanging off men as decoration, of needing to be kept in line or cared for like a puppy, but neither did tomboys.

I always wanted to grow up to be like the tomboys, this might seem counter intuitive. I'm a man who doesn't have to work to be seen as anything but masculine. I also don't want to be female bodied. I tie my maleness to being tall, lanky and sporty (no matter how imaginative that link is) and I like the confidence I've got out of being able to reach for a branch, swing around a tree, hit a tennis serve at 90mph, and I appreciate the physical aspects of having a sexual appendage that's mainly on the outside of my body.

### Desiring a permanent state of change

Childhood for me was bedding in the back of cars, cornflakes in pint glasses, licking the hot chocolate residue from the bottom of service station cups, an old arcade station, the smell of chlorine that filled sports centres, board games and ski runs you had to risk life and limb to build up as much speed as you could to ride out the flat.

This always being on the move was crazy delirious, but from a kids perspective it was exciting, going back to a broken home was the problem. So my desire for permanence came in the image of a hippie bus or trekking bike that I could fix with my own skills, so that I could stay on the road forever and not have to worry about being locked down into violent structures like bailiffs knocking on the door.

I seek out foreign adventures as playgrounds for my consciousness, I centre my life around those exciting experiences outside the norm that are rare to come across in most people's lives so that I can know that feeling of being alive for as long as possible and teach other's to do the same.

Instead of building my life up like an island, struggling away to cement in peoples mind a steady reputation, I prefer to maintain what I have and rely on an ever changing notoriety to foster new relationships.

## Lifestyle Anarchists

Having detailed the good reasons Anarchism helps survivors of Abuse find their place in the social fabric. It is important to say the opposite. I have seen friends who seem to thrive in Anarchist communities, until they leave and feel betrayed by the false consensus effect, then for example totally reject volunteering time to help someone without being rewarded explicitly, or happily spend all their time thinking about what clothes sell a certain image of conformity.

There is little comfort in being ahead of the curve in communication skills and movement organising, if you have to watch the rest of the world burn around you.

But if you can take solace in the little difference you do make and the relationships you foster then you can admit to yourself that the world isn't going to change overnight just because you can point out the power dynamics at play.

If your whole life is struggling for a better world, what does it mean if you actually achieve that world or never achieve it, sure you can show people a better way to live but if all your goals in life are reaching that utopia, would you really be content if it was realised, or are you so much wrapped up in the martyrdom of doing this for the next generation of less damaged souls to grow up and be happy, that you wouldn't mind conveniently being killed off during the revolution, like the end of a bad movie?

For me, the point is not to convert people to the subversive lifestyle agenda, the struggling artist or activist life is not something to be admired, but their unique position outside the status quo to be an example of how to move towards a better world.

Sure you could say everyone will always have their own idealistic dreams, and it's about aligning them with Libertarian values, but I want my goals to be grounded in the real now.

Anarchism for me is just about being honest about the violence that lies under the surface of every country; new countries aren't born overnight, and political crisis that affect countries, when the hope of the downtrodden masses outweighs the fear subjugated by a few.

We grow up reading those detective mystery books that keep us safe in the knowledge that with enough time every murder mystery can be gotten to the bottom of. But it says nothing of the structural violence that is all legal in the world in order to preserve the capitalist system.

I look at the tragic case of Zionists instigating a polarization of a land and people by starting a religious war, carrying out the same attacks that the army would do later as occupiers, to terrorize a people. 16

One side believes their superior logic will win out in the end, and convince the other side that their colonial religious agenda is misplaced. While the latter feels safe in the laws of international war to claim another countries land, giving free rein to the nutters goading on the apocalypse.

Whilst the history is fresh like an open wound, this most recent of self-perpetuating logical fallacies will be rehashed over and over.

But not until every other government plutocracy on earth has stopped acting like a singular competing empire, do I believe the STATE of Israel will fall, because it is propped up by a people most reliant on it existing, who have been close to being wiped out because they've never before had a legitimate state and army protecting their interests on the world stage.

As for Identity politics I'll leave it to the great orator Hitchens to sum up (a man who happened to be a sexist, old world communist pig, but not what he dedicated his life's work to in advancing critical thinking and libertarian values):

I think one of the reasons for the disappointment amongst audiences, who've seen the film, and for the absence of any lasting effect, that some might have hoped... (Spike Lee) could have extended his remarks and said, family values, abstinence from alcohol and drugs, sexual continence, small business was another one.

I have read countless articles in the conservative press, saying as a role model, people might do well to emulate him, why aren't more people like Malcolm X? Well if his points were as easily assimilable as that, then I don't think one can count him as a revolutionary.

What does Malcolm X mean to me? Everywhere you look in the world today whether it might be Bosnia or Haiti or the former Soviet Union or West Germany. You can see there are always basically two kinds of people, there are those who think that the tribe into which they were born is the main thing about themselves and nothing can change that.

If they could only like that part of themselves more, congratulate themselves more, they would only be too happy.

Then there are people who think Internationalism is not just a desirable thing, it is actually the only way the world can be organised in practical terms, and is the only way it can be, and there are people who have had the experience of crossing that gulf.

Malcolm X who had had everything the white racists could throw at him, refused to let the racists be his teacher and that is why his example in the moral and exemplary sense is undimmed and that I think would be an excellent way in which to remember him as an example of a man along a road of which a lot of people have still got a lot of travelling to do.

## The Spaniard



Two new migrants had arrived in Calais weary from their long and tragic journey with no place to go. I locked up my bike and walked with them for an hour with all their bags and some bedding we'd picked up at the garage, to a squat we'd opened the night before. It was a Thursday night and even though we'd arranged to meet up late at night when we got there, too many people were hanging around on the street for us to just walk in.

There was a risk we'd get the police called on us, so we walked for another half an hour to the last squat I knew.

When we got there I let them in and showed them the only room that didn't have a missing wall or a river of water flowing through it. We arranged their bedding on the floor and ate some snacks I'd brought along. Sitting down we remembered we were all very tired, so I said my goodbyes and walked back home. On my way I was imagining how great it would be if we had enough funds for one of those little electric cars you don't need a license for.

I get back to the women's house and tell the Spaniard about my long walk. He stares back, his eyes getting bigger as comprehension sinks in.



'Don't tell me you used the space, after I said it's off limits'; he reminded me of the other group of migrants who had said they could make something of the space, and not to tell anyone else about it. As it turned out, they stopped using it as it was a long walk from the car parks where people try for England, and no one was around when we got there.

'The building site, yea I didn't know what else to do, I couldn't tell them to sleep on the street after I'd walked them around for an hour already.'

He shouted at me for a few minutes until he had enough and went down into the basement to sleep. In the days ahead he was inconsolable, telling everyone how bad an activist I was, what a stupid call I'd made. I didn't know how to respond to his anger. So I carried on doing what needed doing, going skipping with the bike trailer, organizing the garage, climbing over walls to scout out new squats, doing morning watch at the jungle. All the time the Spaniard avoided me, telling everyone how I'd dashed his efforts.

Then about a week later after this happened I was in the office and got a personal voice recording through on email, talking through a problem I'd been having with recurring traumas. The bell to the office rang 'twas the Spaniard. So I buzzed him in and just started to crack up giggling, before he even got to the door, because I knew what I wanted, in fact needed to ask him.

I'm going to need that computer soon... What... what is it?

Aha well... you know how I love you right?

\*stern look back\*

I just got this really important audio email, I really need to listen to this, its super important to me, is there any chance you could just go back outside for like 2 minutes while I listen to it?

You're kidding right?

\*me with a Cheshire grin on my face, can barely believe what I'm asking, just laughing at the tension\*

Pleeeeeeaaasee, you'd be my best friend in the whole wide world!

\*leaving with a cigarette in his mouth, huffing and puffing\*

I listen to the recording, full of joy at being listened to and understood.

He comes back in the room and sits down at the computer, and he's trying to hide a smile, because he can't quite be angry at the absurdity of it all.

I'm moving round the room in a little dance because I'm so happy, chatting away to him. Then I make us both coffee, and bring it over to him. He turns around at a fatal moment and the coffee knocks all over the table.

If he'd really been angry I couldn't have pressed more buttons to make him that way if I tried. But in that moment I sensed that the sickly vulnerability of my position was just comedy gold, and I took a risk that we could laugh about this story later.

I realized quite quickly this comedy could turn into a drama before I knew it, so I moved to exit the room picking up my bag like the end of a scene, but silly me thinks I need to do an encore to really drive the message home.

As I'm leaving I'm dramatically pleading with him, 'what crime did I do but to love with all my heart, to deserve such heinous punishment', a la opera style. As I'm shutting the door on myself slowly like I'm being shut out the Garden of Eden, I say 'no! Please don't hate me! I was but a fool!'

After a week of tension, it took just 3 minutes of play acting, and we were good as gold after that. I learnt that when you make even the smallest gains in Calais, not to be flippant if the situation changes and said gains don't seem so relevant anymore. Be delicate with other activists' achievements.

It's hard to hold our heads in these spaces. When a friend is looking for a target to vent their anger, it's good to be able to throw ego to the wind. It's good to be that inoffensive skinny boy who dismantles the image of me as being socially

competitive by dancing around wildly and singing Delaney had a Donkey with pie on my face.

We learnt that day that it's OK to go a bit mad and get our anger out at the situation in Calais; a crazy, surreal place like no other, a time capsule in people's journey, a place that means a different thing to everyone going through it; a joke, a bullet, a game, a kick, a song, a police cell. But like every other war zone, border, hospital or prison in the business of systematizing people's lives, people are able to enter these spaces on the worst days of their lives, because everyone of us is holding on to that hope of better days ahead..

