

the way we use language is important. we communicate through words and as such, we should make sure that the words we are using mean the same things. so i'm going to define my anarchist understanding of two words: anarchy and hierarchy.

an- without

hier- ranked

-archy rule by a governing body: state, authority figure, parent, commander, boss, that controls a population: citizens, students, children, military actors, employees, (and this is the important part) through the **coercive threat** of force, violence, or loss of liberty, or life.

- **anarchy** a society without rule by a governing body, that controls a population, through the coercive threat of force, violence, or loss of liberty, or life
- **hierarchy** rule by a ranked governing body that controls a population through the coercive threats of force, violence, or loss of liberty, or life

look at how srs this
prince of communism is.



i could call myself the prince of communism tomorrow and hold a crowning ceremony. i could wear a sash and a crown and carry a scepter and make proclamations. absolutely no one would give a fuck. now if i were to do that with an army of communists at my back that violently subjugates anyone who tries to oppose my claim, my attempts at control are backed with a coercive threat and people might take me more seriously.

When chomsky said that hierarchies exist that can be justified he wasn't talking about rule through coercive threat, he was talking about grabbing the arm of his grandchildren to keep them from running into the street and getting hit by a car. at no point in this interaction does chomsky create a situation wherein his

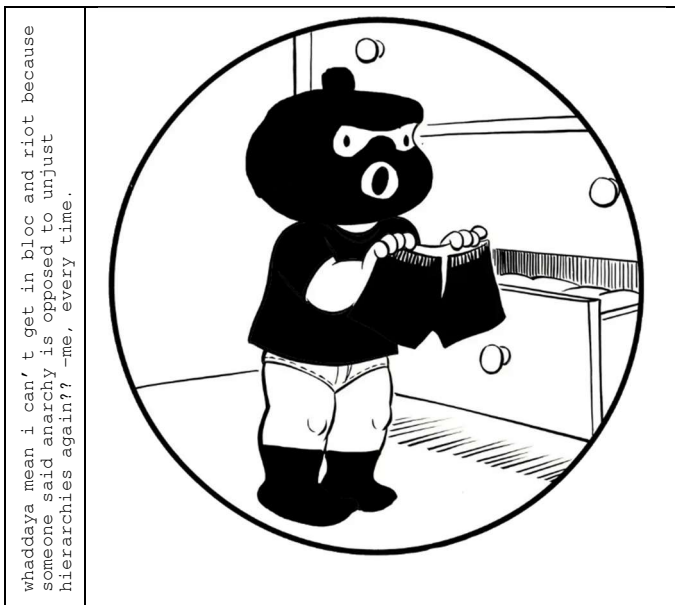
grandchildren are being ruled by the coercive threat leveraged by his authority. but to quote levar burton “you don’t have to take my word for it.”

I think it only makes sense to seek out and identify structures of authority, hierarchy, and domination in every aspect of life, and to challenge them; unless a justification for them can be given, they are illegitimate, and should be dismantled, to increase the scope of human freedom. That includes political power, ownership and management, relations among men and women, parents and children, our control over the fate of future generations (the basic moral imperative behind the environmental movement, in my view), and much else.



Naturally this means a challenge to the huge institutions of coercion and control: the state, the unaccountable private tyrannies that control most of the domestic and international economy, and so on. But not only these. That is what I have always understood to be the essence of anarchism: the conviction that the burden of proof has to be placed on authority, and that it should be dismantled if that burden cannot be met. Sometimes the burden can be met. If I'm taking a walk with my grandchildren and they dart out into a busy street, I will use not only authority but also physical coercion to stop them. The act should be challenged, but I think it can readily meet the challenge. – Noam Chomsky interviewed by Red and Black Revolution in 1995

for chomsky’s example situation to be a hierarchical interaction chomsky would have had to tell his grandkids that they cannot cross the street or he will force them to comply through coercive threats. that isn’t what happened there though!



Outside of the coercive nature of the state and capitalism no parent has to control their children through threats of force or violence or loss of liberty (and i would say that there are very few things we ought to use coercive threats for with regards to our children now, but i'm not a parent so i don't really get to tell parents what they ought or ought not to do). we can treat children as whole humans with full autonomy while still guiding them through life. the job of parents isn't to control, it's to help and to guide. we don't need to levy punishments for behaviors we find disagreeable. we don't need to restrict a child's liberty because we disapprove of their progress in maths. we don't need to threaten a child with violence... you know... ever. right?

we would never try to use coercive control like that over another adult (i would hope), in that way it’s equally distasteful to try to use coercive threats to control a child. so no, there is no hierarchy that is inherent to parenting.

If you run into the street like that again I will let you get hit by that truck, then I will beat your ass and ground you with no screens for the rest of the summer. Am I understood?



*fuck you mom,
I'm an anarchist!
Anarchy means
I do what I want!!*

I'm sorry I used force to pull you out of the street. I fully recognize your bodily autonomy, but you were almost hit by a car!



*thank you mom, I'm
glad we're anarchists!
Anarchy means we
support each other
through mutual
aid!!*

Without the recognition of the use of coercive threat to leverage control then the concept of hierarchy becomes too broad and means too many things, a lot of which anarchism isn't talking about. using chomsky's understanding of anarchy and of hierarchy and control we end up in a situation where we are arguing about whether the use of force to save another person's life is justified. we end up trying to answer authorities, hierarchies, and acts of domination can be justified, and by whose reckoning? how many people need to agree with the justification for authority, hierarchy, and domination to be justified? the anarchist says none, because hierarchy cannot be justified. authority cannot be justified. domination cannot be justified.

let's consider what -archy might mean to pierre-joseph proudhon, the first person to call himself an anarchist. in the *general idea of the revolution* proudhon writes:

To be GOVERNED is to be watched, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right nor the wisdom nor the virtue to do so. To be GOVERNED is to be at every operation, at every transaction noted, registered, counted, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, prevented, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be place[d] under contribution,

friendly reminder:

♥kill your idols♥

pj proudhon was a piece of shit
anti-semite, racist, and sexist. he

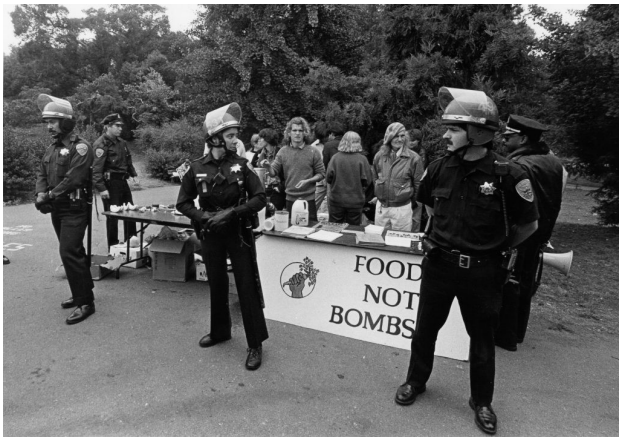
had some good ideas

but the rest of him
goes right in the
basura (garbage).

don't forget to recycle!!



pigs protecting us from the dangers of a giant pot of free soup and some pamphlets.



drilled, fleeced, exploited, monopolized, extorted from, squeezed, hoaxed, robbed; then, at the slightest

resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, vilified, harassed, hunted down, abused, clubbed, disarmed, bound, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, derided, outraged, dishonored. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality.

i don't know about y'all but that's not a relationship that i care to be in, at all, with anyone.

maybe another historical anarchist thinker will have a definition of anarchy that is in line with chomsky's understanding?

i had originally planned on writing something like this exact thing that i found, so since someone else did this work already here is a quote from *what is anarchism*, a piece published in the journal *nomos* in 1978 by anarchist philosopher, activist, and educator:

[I]n his *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on anarchism, Kropotkin defines it as "a principle or theory of life and conduct in which society is conceived without government." Emma Goldman, in her essay, "Anarchism," defines it as "the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary." A well-known contemporary anarchist, Colin Ward (editor of the first series of the journal *Anarchy*), defines anarchy as "the absence of government," and anarchism as "the idea that it is possible and desirable for society to organize itself without government." In some definitions, that which is rejected is identified, not as government, but rather as

the power that controls government. In support of this position, one could cite Proudhon, who defines anarchy as "the absence of a ruler or a sovereign." A number of writers would take the essence of anarchism to be its attack on the state, which is often distinguished from government, as will be discussed in detail later. This can be supported by Bakunin's statement that "the system of Anarchism . . . aims at the abolition of the State," to mention just one of many such statements by major anarchist theorists. Woodcock asserts that "the common element uniting all its forms" is its aim of "the replacement of the authoritarian state by some form of non-governmental cooperation between free individuals." Other writers hold that it is not merely the state or political authority, but in fact authority itself which anarchism opposes. Sebastien Faure proclaims that "whoever denies authority and fights against it is an anarchist." Malatesta accepts the

the horrors of anarchy: a free community garden on an abandoned piece of property.



view that anarchy means "without government" but he expands the definition to mean "without any constituted authority." Recently, Ward has said that anarchists oppose the "principle of authority."



When we look at the **breadth** (👉 lol) of anarchist writing we see a common theme. anarchy is the opposition to rule. anarchism is the action people take in opposition to rule. it is not a power dynamic that can be rationalized or justified. it's not anytime anyone has something that someone else wants, like shoes or a new roof or a lesson in how to drive a stick shift. interpersonal relationships do not require coercive threats for cooperation. interpersonal relationships do not require domination, justified or otherwise (unless you're into that sort of thing, we don't kink shame in this house).

What anarchy does require between interpersonal relationships is the freedom to say no without punitive repercussion, anarchy requires freedom, not justification. I leave you with this from *the world's first anarchist manifesto*

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|--|--|
| <i>Indeed: Who says anarchy, says negation of government; Who says negation of government says affirmation of the people; Who says affirmation of the people, says individual liberty; Who says individual liberty, says sovereignty of each; Who says sovereignty of each, says equality; Who says equality, says solidarity or fraternity; Who says fraternity, says social order;</i> | <i>By contrast: Who says government, says negation of the people; Who says negation of the people, says affirmation of political authority; Who says affirmation of political authority, says individual dependency; Who says individual dependency, says class supremacy; Who says class supremacy, says inequality; Who says inequality, says antagonism; Who says antagonism, says civil war, From which it follows that who says government, says civil war.</i> |
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TL:DR: stop saying anarchy is opposition to unjust hierarchies.
there is no such thing as a justifiable hierarchy.

thanks for reading, i love you! ♡
- tuesday