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Creative-Affirmation of Values:  
An Ethnography in and of Slab City

By

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## **Creative-Affirmation of Values: An Ethnography in and of Slab City**

It was Dark Thirty when my partner and I found ourselves walking along a hard-packed sandy desert road in the pitch-black Sonoran Desert. About 150 miles east of San Diego and 45 miles north of the US-Mexico border, we navigated the desert—equipped with a flashlight and aided by the vividly visible stars—toward a weekly community event: Poetry Night. Here in Slab City, Dark Thirty is an ambiguous place-based event-time index. Relative to monochronic 24-hour time, Dark Thirty does not always occur at the same time, every night, nor even in every place in Slab City. But on this night, Dark Thirty would be occurring at the Slab City Library when Poetry Night would begin.

As we crested the far side of a shallow gully, the glowing light of a small bonfire guided us the final 100 meters. As it were, we were late—or at least the sharing of poems had already begun. My monochronic sensibilities had to adjust to the ambiguity that runs through Slab City. Situated around the fire was a circle of couches and chairs, whereupon about fifteen people were seated. We were briefly greeted by the librarian, who appeared to be highly active, facilitating the event and maintaining the fire. As relative outsiders, we did not feel it appropriate to sit down in one of the few open seats while one person was in the middle of speaking. After about ten minutes of awkwardly standing, we were asked if we would like to sit down, to which I answered, “Sure, as long as we’re not taking anyone’s seat.” So, we sat and continued to listen to the poetry (or spoken word).

As we continued to listen to the poems being shared, it became clear that nearly everyone at Poetry Night identified as an anarchist. As one poem went, the speaker expressed how they were confused about themselves, giving up pacifism, no longer knowing who they were, and feeling as if being an anarchist is foreign, thenceforth expressing that they want certainty and

stability. But, continues the poem, “Am I a new person?” At this point, the poems expressed a multiplicity of self while simultaneously yearning to represent a radical affective anarchist—a tension within oneself with oneself. Kierkegaard ([1849] 2013) famously wrote that if we do not accept our self as our self, we will live a life of despair—quite close to what Poetry Night’s spoken word conveyed, that is, resisting one’s self as one’s self, or at least expressing or representing a multiplicity of self instead of accepting one’s self as one’s self and therefore living in despair—indeed, the poets expressed significant despair.

The palpable despair evoked through the poems, however, was linked to systemic and systematic inequities in the US, including poverty and the concrete hardships thereof, restricted or lack of access to healthcare, and the oppressive hegemony of USian<sup>1</sup> values and normativity that limit how one wants to live their life and realize their own social values. The coherency of various social groups within the Slabs accords with their values, and these social groups I refer to as *value-cliques*. The question thus emerges: How does this ideologically diverse Slab population, alienated from mainstream US society to such a degree that they have sought refuge in the middle of the Sonoran Desert, create new lifeways or live in ways effectively disallowed by mainstream US society?

In this essay, I will describe and interpret my two-week immersive ethnographic fieldwork in Slab City, attending to my research question: How has Slab City, an openly non-capitalist and anarchic community, praxeologically maintained its “squat” for decades on a decommissioned military base without having been evicted? In so doing, I argue that Slab City is

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, “USian” is used to index that which is of or from the United States. It is the preferred demonym here because of the ethnoracial baggage associated with “American” when the hegemonic values of the US cross-cut all identity groups to varying degrees. Moreover, it is a more accurate term, as reflected by the Spanish word for American, *estadounidense*, literally “United States’ian, reserving *americano/a* as a demonym for anyone of the Americas.

indeed anarchic, that living anarchically entails a moral economy of collective action, and anarchism is a never-ending creative and creating process constituting a social art. I conclude with an opening of a new way to conceptualize what anarchism<sup>2</sup> is and can be.

### **Arrival and Ambiguous Boundary-Making**

Slab City has been variously described as a “squatters’ paradise” (Bry and Rissolo 2001), an anarcho-republic (Gercke 2024), a trailer park utopia (Perry 2011), “the most dangerous city in the US ... as this place has no formal rules” (History Hub 2023), among countless other descriptions tending to reflect either a utopian or dystopian interpretation. Nevertheless, I reflexively attempted to come into Slab City, as much as possible, without any expectations.

Our journey began in San Diego, renting a van that we would be living out of in the Slabs. After about a two-and-a-half-hour drive, we approached Slab City, at which point my partner and I witnessed three military helicopters flying at an extremely low altitude. It was rather confusing at first since they did not appear to be within the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range, a 20-by-50-mile area where the US Military practices their killing efficiency. Just before driving into Slab City proper, we drove past two Imperial Valley County police SUVs; they waved at us, and we waved back. A further reminder that, despite the anarchic reputation of Slab City, it is situated adjacent to a US military bombing range and remains within the active jurisdiction of the Imperial Valley County police. Yet, the seemingly friendly wave from the police officer conveyed an acceptance of what and how the Slabs are—a sentiment that would be later confirmed. As mentioned, Slab City has been described as an anarcho-republic and as a place without any formal rules (Gercke 2024; History Hub 2023). It was therefore a

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<sup>2</sup> In this article, “anarchist” indexes an identity, while “anarchism” indexes a political philosophy. I use the term “anarchic” to index the overall social organization of Slab City, following Robert H. Lowie (1948).

shock to roll up to the Slabs and be greeted with a friendly conveyance by police officers with military helicopters overhead.

We continued to drive, just past the police officers, and were met by a decorated concrete booth, welcoming us to Slab City with a painted indexical icon evoking the famous “Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas” sign. Continuing, vibrating and jostling in our rented van along the half-chipseal, half-hard-packed sand road, we began to see recreational vehicles (RVs) lined up on both sides of the road. There did not appear to be a pattern: expensive, luxury fifth-wheelers paired with luxury pickup trucks were parked near aged class B RVs. We continued on to our first destined encounter: the Slab City Library. Walking in was like walking into a cave, a descent into darkness—but one that opened up into an oasis of light and books. The library's architecture was such that the outside was in and the inside out, with a roof and walls that only provided partial cover, giving a sense of curiosity about the ambiguous borders even in a sheltered structure. In a way, it evoked the rain scene in Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979), where The Writer, The Professor, and the Stalker sit at the precipice of The Room under the dark cover of ruins when rain begins to fall, revealing reflections of light and inducing temporal dilation.

Within the library anyone could be, as one welcoming sign informed, scientists, artists, or explorers. Not trying to startle anyone, we approached carefully. Another sign informed us, “Welcome! Librarian off duty! Reference books and others marked as such to be returned! (if possible).” The librarian did, however, walk in and appeared rather exhausted after a day of activity under the incessant sun. The sign thus implied, “don't expect much in the way of interaction.” They welcomed us, suggesting we look around, check-out any book we wanted, and return it—or not. One is unlikely to hear a librarian, at just about any other library, to check-out a book, return it—or not. One is more likely to be given a timeframe at the end of which one must

return the book or face penalties. And, just going by the number of books within the Slab City Library, it is safe to assume people generally return books. Apparently, here, library penalties are not needed.

As the library's "Welcome!" sign indicated they are "funded solely by donations," we said we had some donations for them, returned to our vehicle, and brought them in. The librarian was grateful and offered us a cold beer, which we gratefully accepted. The librarian, continually active, quipped that people come here looking for freedom since its iconic index is "the last free place," but they said, "There's no freedom for me," expressing, in an ambiguous sense, how much energy they had to expend to maintain the beautiful library. As they had more pressing things to do than interact with a couple who likely appeared as tourists, I asked what the most popular book in the library is, to get a superficial sense of what literature Slabbers are interested in. After some thought, they said *Into the Wild*, authored by Jon Krakauer (1996), or anything written by Hunter S. Thompson, the author of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1972). We explained that we would be staying in Slab City for about two weeks, asking where might be a good place to post up. They recommended we stay at one of the more "established" places, probably because it had a bar and lounge and regular events like "chili nights" and "movie nights." They continued their activities; we took their advice and drove to the campsite. Our unknown vehicle certainly captured the gaze of residents and the fervor of dogs, so I stopped, spoke with the matriarch, relayed the librarian's reference (I suspect we didn't really need it), and was told "of course" it would be okay if we stayed. We sent the campsite's matriarch the \$15 per night fee via PayPal, then backed our rental van into what was effectively a hard-packed, sandy parking spot. We could have interacted with residents of other sites and gotten a free stay, but the reputation of the Slab Library and librarian, in addition to being informed to go to the Library

first by people who had previously been to Slab City, situated us in obeisance to their recommendation. While I attempted to come without any expectations, the sensationalist popular media coverage (Linge 2022; History Hub 2023; Gauger 2021; Abou-Diwan 2014) lurked in the back of my mind. However, any apprehension I had felt prior to our arrival quickly melted away by the extremely warm welcome from these first residents. So, we had found our “home,” so to speak, for the time we would be giving to Slab City.

### ***Boundary-Making***

Ambiguity is a thread that runs through all of Slab City, especially in terms of social boundaries and spatiotemporal borders. As mentioned above, Dark Thirty is an index of place-based event-times, which is to say that it indexes when, where, and, with insider knowledge, what events would be taking place. This was the first form of ambiguity that I was introduced to. In contradistinction with monochronic 24-hour time, which establishes rigid temporal borders, time in Slab City is multi-dimensional. First, Dark Thirty indexes the time at which an event begins, which usually is when night falls. It also indexes the place at which an event is to occur and what event is to occur. As previously mentioned, Dark Thirty does not occur every day or in every place within Slab City. For instance, “Meat in your Mouth” at Community Coz’s place occurs every Monday at Dark Thirty. Dark Thirty thus does not occur at Community Coz’s on the other days of the week, unless another event is hosted. Meat in your Mouth is a community event where one can get a free hot meal. Time in Slab City is thus a loose reflection of Evans-Pritchard’s concept of “oecological time,” whereby “time is identified essentially with time-reckoning concepts that convey ‘social activities’ or a ‘relation between activities’” (Munn 1992, 96). Second, time in Slab City is distinctly seasonal. Insofar as it occurs when night falls, Dark Thirty accords with seasonal time. Furthermore, Slabbers tend to wake up early, when the sun

rises. And it is difficult not to wake up when the sun rises as the intense Sonoran Desert sunlight strikes one out of bed. The temporal borders of monochronic 24-hour time are thus dissolved relative to event-time and seasonal time.

Seasonality is also critical in the making of social boundaries. There are three “social categories,” so to speak, that are most apparent in the underpinning of a Slab City ideology.<sup>3</sup> To be sure, while there is no one unified ideology in Slab City, the three social categories—Slabber, snowbird, and tourist—were known and referenced by nearly everyone I spoke to. Slabbers are those who live in Slab City year-round. According to John,<sup>4</sup> one of my interlocutors, approximately 250 people live in Slab City during the summer, and one is not considered a Slabber unless one has lived through a summer. Surviving summers is difficult within such a hostile ecological environment where temperatures can reach 130° Fahrenheit and rainfall is effectively nil. During summer, water is a communal resource, and the Skaters, especially, work to provide water for those in the community who cannot afford to buy water at the going rate of 30 cents per gallon, rationing two gallons of water per person per day. There are also other communal water tanks, and some are shared between the camps of different value-cliques.

By the tone of voice and word choice I could sense a hierarchical relation among Slabbers, snowbirds, and tourists. For instance, a key informant told me, in reference to an outspoken performer at the open mic stage called The Range, that they were “just” a snowbird. However, snowbirds make up the majority of the population for most of the year. As John informed me of the summer population, he estimated the winter population to be about 2000. One attraction of Slab City as a snowbird destination is that one does not necessarily have to pay

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<sup>3</sup> This is speaking extremely broadly since there is no one ideology that unifies Slab City, except for the “value of life as such,” which should be understood here as the concrete realization of “value-in-itself.”

<sup>4</sup> All of my interlocutors in this article are given pseudonyms to protect their privacy.



rent, bills, or taxes to stay there. While my partner and I stayed at a place that charges money by the night, most people live without having to pay rent. However, saving money is not the only attraction; I spoke to some who even owned land elsewhere but were nevertheless attracted to Slab City due to the weather and, of course, the freedom from hegemonic USian values. Here, one can openly be oneself and become anew. After all, Slab City is “the last free place” according to Slabbers.

Tourists generally had the lowest status. For the most part, people in Slab City do not want to be bothered by tourists who mostly come to see a “spectacle.” Indeed, I witnessed many people in luxury vehicles drive through, never getting out of their cars and using expensive cameras to capture or film the inhabitants without consent. However, the lower status of tourists was not universal. Mary, for instance, encourages tourists because she derives much of her income from them. She collects and creates many pieces of artwork that she sells and is undoubtedly a positive Slab City attractant. What is more, my partner and I were most likely considered to be tourists. Further, I was not just a tourist but also a prying researcher from a corporate institution. Yet we never experienced any hostility—quite the opposite, in fact. The welcoming was extremely warm, hospitable, and generous wherever we went. Unlike many other tourists, though, my partner and I actually stayed for some time and interacted with the inhabitants. We were valued as life with the will to potentiate or create more possibilities of life (Nietzsche 1968; 2000). Likewise, for us, the Slabs were not a spectacle; Slabbers were artists, “inventors of new possibilities of life” (Deleuze [1962] 1983, 103).

In addition to the ambiguity of temporal borders, spatial borders are also ambiguous. As Mary commented, “Borders here [in Slab City] are weird.” Tires are used to delimit roads, but the openness of the desert makes it so one can, in theory, walk a beeline between places. Yet,

people and their value-cliques tend to distribute themselves in space according to their power of action. Space is not distributed into territorial plots; instead, people and their value-cliques distribute themselves in space. Deleuze describes these two ways of spatialization as the contour-limit and the dynamic limit, respectively. To explain it, he metaphorizes with cows:

cows don't create small squares in the meadow, saying this is my square, that one's yours. ... Instead of distributing space, they distribute themselves in space. What does this mean? It doesn't exclude hierarchical relations. Notice, there is the chief cow; there is the more prestigious cow, the one that [reserves] ... the best zone, a cow zone. What will the cow zone be? ... This is a funny limit. There is no barrier there. The appetite limit of a cow, you cannot say that it starts with one particular blade of grass and ends with another particular blade of grass. It's a limit of power of action (*puissance*). And somehow, the cows manage to get along. ... What's an animal's territory? It is up to where its power of action reaches. And what is it that's called ethology, ethology, which is just a synonym for ethics? It's the science of powers of action and limits in the second sense. And what is the ethical cry? "What can a body do?" (Deleuze 1981, 18)

In this way, value-cliques spatially distribute themselves in Slab City according to their force differentials, which is a creative and creating hierarchical (i.e., differential) process relating to the will to power, that is, the potential to act, when acted creating values through the evaluation of force differentials (Nietzsche 1968; 2000; Deleuze [1962] 1983). For example, Slab City consists of a relatively large queer community and value-clique, coalescing at the Flamingo camp, that coexists with more masculinist value-cliques such as the Pirate camp. These very different value orientations are dynamic force differentials,<sup>5</sup> interacting and intersecting, and when evaluated, new meanings and values emerge. It is essentially a creative process of interaction. These interacting wills to power do not desire domination—quite the opposite. "*The will to power is essentially creative and giving*: it does not aspire, it does not seek, it does not

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<sup>5</sup> Nietzschean force differentials can just as easily be thought of in terms of Foucault's conceptualization of power relations: "Every power relationship implies, at least *in potentia*, a strategy of struggle, in which the two forces are not superimposed, do not lose their specific nature, or do not finally become confused. Each constitutes for the other a kind of permanent limit" (Foucault 1982, 794). Also, in an interview Foucault states, "I am simply a Nietzschean, and I try as far as possible, on a certain number of issues, to see with the help of Nietzsche's texts—but also with anti-Nietzschean theses (which are nevertheless Nietzschean!)—what can be done in this or that domain. I attempt nothing else, but that I try to do well" (Foucault 1989, 471).

desire, above all it does not desire power. It *gives*” (Deleuze [1962] 1983, 85). This giving is revealed more overtly in the economic base of Slab City.

### **Toilet Vaults and Security: The Slab Economy**

The State of California takes a hands-off approach to Slab City, from law enforcement to infrastructural support. California does not provide running water, electricity, or a sewage system. When the US military decommissioned the military base—Camp Dunlap—in 1946, they removed everything, even capping the sewage system (Hailey 2018), thus making it inaccessible to Slabbers today. All that was left by the military were the concrete slabs (upon which military structures were built), hence the name “Slab City.” Although the State has blocked access to the sewage system, and without infrastructural support from the State of California, Slabbers create their own infrastructure. As Mary commented, “For forty bucks you can get somebody to dig a 4-by-4-by-4-foot [sewage vault].”<sup>6</sup> Those with RVs, says Mary, connect their black water, and sometimes gray water, tanks to the sewage vault and dump there. Impressively, the site where my partner and I stayed had a vault toilet approximately 30-by-30-by-30 feet in dimension. Mary said that after a few feet of digging, the soil becomes clay and extremely difficult to dig. The 30-foot-deep toilet vault must have been dug with construction machinery, indicating a degree of access to industrial machinery.

Digging these vault toilets is one “job” in Slab City; another job is “security,” as John informed us in the Oasis Club, an internet café. However, these are not jobs in the capitalistic sense of labor. As Moishe Postone (1993) argued, labor *in* capitalism is not a transhistorical phenomenon, but rather a specific sociohistorical organization of labor power that increases the normative productivity of labor in a given constant unit of abstract time, that is, clock time. In

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<sup>6</sup> Analogous to a vault toilet at a national or state park, only on a smaller scale.

other words, the worker in capitalism is dominated by time insofar as the amount one must produce in a given constant unit of time increases, a phenomenon Postone calls the “treadmill effect,” whereby the value produced remains constant inasmuch as the increase in labor productivity becomes generalized, i.e., normative (289). These Slab jobs are not determined by time but are valued as will to potentiate more life. In other words, these jobs increase the possibilities for diverse lifeways to be actualized and are carried out by and for people of very different value orientations. Moreover, Slab jobs do not have supervisors to enforce Key Performance Indicators, prevent fun, enforce break time, count bathroom breaks, or count the minutes of a lunch break. What motivates these jobs, besides the obvious—cash buys things—is the will to power and the adjustment and responsivity that makes Slab City a place where a multiplicity of lifeways can live in close proximity without judgment and crystallization of structure, and with a general ethic of “live and let live.”<sup>7</sup> A Slabber described this live and let live ethic in different words, but the effect was the same. For the most part, Slabbers do not care if one is different or quirky. In fact, many have come to Slab City precisely because their differences are not tolerated—or at least intensely marginalized—in hegemonic USian society.

Furthermore, *there is no labor in Slab City* insofar as labor only becomes “discernable from the moment an apparatus of capture [the State] forced the people to bring a surplus labor into being. It is surplus labor that is primary in relation to labor” (Deleuze 1979a, 8-9). The ontological status of labor emerges with the sociohistorically specific organization of labor power under capital (Postone 1993). Unlike Anna Tsing’s (2015) interlocutors picking matsutake mushrooms, whose non-capitalist mode of production is translated by commodity chains into

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<sup>7</sup> This “live and let live” ethic was described by a Slabber in different words but the effect was the same. For the most part, Slabbers do not care if you are different or quirky so long as you do not project your lifeway onto others. In a Nietzschean sense, live and let live indexes the potentiation of life as opposed to ascetizing life, which would index a diminishment of life-possibilities.

capitalist forms of value, activity in Slab City is not translated to inventory or capital. And besides, one of my interlocutors, Michael, a bartender at the Slabs, informed me that he does not think of his bartending as a job or as labor. If anyone in the Slabs would think of their activity as labor it would be Michael since he works the bar nearly every evening.

### *The Slab Cash Economy*

It was at the camp where my partner and I were calling home for our two weeks, and in which hospitality was gratefully extended, that the peculiar Slab use of money was revealed to us. At the bar where Michael worked, alcoholic beverages cost \$1; in fact, all beverages cost \$1. Most cocktails sold for \$1 unless one wanted something special, and in that case, one might cost \$2 or \$3. It is crucial to remember that this camp charged money for overnight stays, which provided a stream of revenue that permitted the bar and other amenities to be (re)stocked. Moreover, if one shot of tequila, for instance, costs \$1, a 750-milliliter bottle would generate approximately \$17 in revenue. The profit margin is low, especially considering a cocktail also costs \$1. In any case, this camp was the most economically viable as a going concern. It should also be noted that cigarettes and cannabis are also media of exchange, however, cannabis tends to be more communally shared.

At the Oasis Club, an internet café and morning social gathering space, coffee also costs \$1. It thus appeared that conventional pricing in Slab City limited prices for most products to \$1. Additionally, speaking with Michael, I learned that two “water guys” sell water at 30 cents per gallon. Competition between the water guys is not based on prices but is waged via gossip, and indeed, there is much gossip on Slab City Facebook groups. For those who can afford water, many have 100-gallon tanks attached to their RV or housing structure and can fill them for \$30. A “wholesale” discount can be applied to purchases of 250 gallons at 18 cents per gallon for a

total of \$45. Michael tells me that the price of water never changes relative to abundance or scarcity; even if it is 130° Fahrenheit and water is scarce, the price remains the same. This is consistent with the findings of Radcliffe-Brown (1957) and Louis Dumont (1986) of the invalidity of the “law” of supply and demand.<sup>8</sup> The significance of this finding is that it is occurring within the United States, where abstract labor developed its deepest roots (Marx 1973, 37) and remains the symbolic bastion of the domination of capital in the “new order” (Veblen 1924).

Despite much food being communal, Slab City is not wholly self-sufficient; it must rely on nearby towns—the closest of which is Niland—for additional necessities such as gasoline for generators and propane for heating and cooking. While cash buys things, it does not buy much in Niland—not that Niland sells much. Mary commented that she spends \$10 more on propane if she buys in Niland instead of driving to Calipatria which, according to Google Maps, is 8.3 miles away from Niland and 12 miles away from Slab City. Moreover, gasoline at the pump in Niland costs well over \$6 per gallon, a full \$2 per gallon more than one would pay in Calipatria. This price differential cannot be explained by the Niland gas station being the last one within a significant distance since there are gas stations 8.3 miles to the south and 43 miles to the north (which is admittedly far, but not so far to justify that price differential). With this tremendous price differential over a relatively short distance, one cannot help but conclude that the “investor-state nexus” (Peña 2017, 14) is waging a battle against Slabbers—to evict them, not by forced removal, but by leaving them without the necessary resources to survive, that is, eviction without eviction. In my and my partner’s experience, gas stations regularly refuse to provide free water

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<sup>8</sup> See also Sahlins ([1974] 2017) and Graeber (2001; 2014) for more on various economic organizations found in the anthropological literature that do not conform to orthodox economic models. The “law” of supply and demand in price formation has also been empirically invalidated by Uzzi and Lancaster (2004) and Velthuis (2003), among others.

even in the coldest, wettest season of the year. In 1999, California passed a law requiring gas stations to provide free access to a tire pressure gauge, compressed air, and water if one purchases fuel (Sams 1999). In my experience, it was rare for gas stations to provide free water after purchasing fuel. Mentioning this to one of my interlocutors, he told me it is because water is so valuable—but the water being withheld at gas stations is not for value of life but for value of capital. Aligned with this is the fact that California grows 75% of the world's walnuts and 80% of the world's almonds, which consume 26.7 gallons and 28.7 gallons of water, respectively, per ounce of nut production (State of California 2017; National Peanut Board 2023).

Despite the investor-state nexus making resource provisioning more difficult, Slabbers find a way. Slabbers are resourceful, using what bourgeois society would consider trash as material for the building of housing structures and artwork. In times of desperation, water may be siphoned from the Coachella Canal, an agricultural irrigation canal that abuts Slab City. Mary informed me, however, that it is wise to wait until the workday is over before accessing the canal for fear of reprisals by the Coachella Valley Water District.

### *The Slab Moral Economy*

In reference to the eighteenth century, E.P. Thompson (1993) argued that the moral economy is a set of social norms and obligations that legitimize pushback against those in control of stocks of necessary resources who transgress such norms and obligations. He states:

By the notion of legitimation I mean that the men and women in the crowd were informed of the belief that they were defending traditional rights or customs; and, in general, that they were supported by the wider consensus of the community. On occasion this popular consensus was endorsed and by some measure of license afforded by the authorities. (Thompson 1993, 188)

Furthermore,

there may have been a time, within a smaller and more integrated community, when it appeared to be “unnatural” that any man should profit from the necessities of others, and when it was assumed that, in time of dearth, prices of “necessities” should remain at a customary level, even though there might be less all around. (Thompson 1993, 253)

Critically, he also suggests that women were often the instigators of such pushback (233).

Indeed, the most established camps in Slab City are matriarchal insofar as their conventionally agreed upon “owners” are women.

As alluded to above, the moral economy orients the cash economy such that conventional pricing remains low, and the extraction of surplus value is viewed as transgressing the expected provisioning of goods and services. While the campsite where my partner and I stayed doubtless derived profit, conventional pricing was adhered to, and surplus value was, at least in part, returned to the community via various Dark Thirty events, including but not limited to chili nights and movie nights. Crucially, the majority of surplus value accrued by this establishment was derived from tourists, to a lesser extent from snowbirds, and not from Slabbers.

Meat in your Mouth at Community Coz’s is one instance of the moral economy in action. Each Monday at Dark Thirty people may go to Community Coz’s for a free hot meal. At the soup kitchen, a free meal is offered every Sunday at 3 pm, and every Friday, an hour before sunset, people may get a free meal at Knight’s Slabbaeraunt. Additionally, on a Monday or Tuesday (depending on the month), “commodities” are distributed once a month. These commodities include non-perishable foodstuffs and fresh food. “Commodities” is shorthand for these distribution events. The Tower of Enlightenment is another camp where people may get free meals at 6 pm and a sack lunch. Another camp variously offers a free dinner plate in addition to a paper sack lunch.

The Skaters, who have a camp by the skatepark, are also critical actors within Slab City. Currently, they are attempting to grow trees by the skatepark to create more shaded refuges,

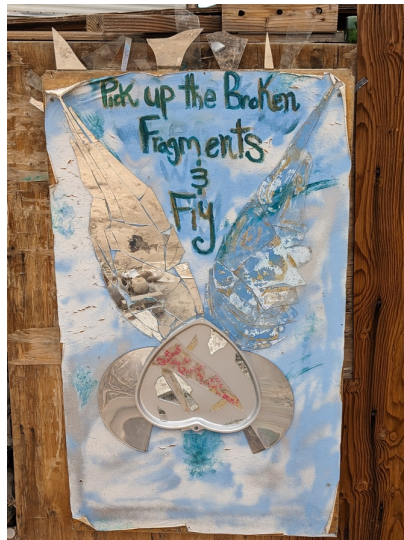


which are invaluable during the summer. They are also extremely resourceful in procuring food and alcohol, a stock from which they distribute leftovers the “morning after.” According to one Slabber, each one of these above-listed places and times will provide each person with food no matter who you are: “Everybody helps with food.” The general anarchic character of Slab City is critical to the equitable distribution of food. Although food storage prior to distribution may be centralized—relative to each camp—centralized food storage does not imply inequitable access (Kuijt 2015). As earlier mentioned, water is a communal resource, and the Skaters, especially, work to provide water for those in the community who cannot afford to buy water at the going rate of 30 cents per gallon, rationing two gallons of water per person per day. There are also other communal water tanks, and some are shared between the camps of different value-cliques. Food and water, as life necessities, are thus collectively procured and distributed without bureaucracy, governance structures, or leaders.

### **Social Art and Art of the Social**

Art in Slab City is critical to its milieu. Art is essentially a creative and creating activity, thereby not limited to “pieces of art.” As such, social activities, insofar as they actualize potential, are creative and therefore art. Nietzsche (1968) best explains this phenomenon, that “creative positing ... [is] willing” and that “‘will to power’ ... [is] a creative drive” (327, 333). The fact that justification of one’s life based on access to capital became most deeply rooted in the US also indicates that those who do not, cannot, or are prevented from conforming to such a value system are heavily rejected by hegemonic USian society. Slabbers, however, have created new values—new lifeways—through the will to potentiate an affirmative revaluation, that is, one that creates more potential for life as value as such without the need for abstract justification. This affirmation of life is revealed most clearly in Slabbers’ artistic sensibilities.

How does Slab City art both make place and reveal Slabber's creative-affirmation of life? What bourgeois society de-values, or unvalues as "trash" or "garbage," Slabbers carefully revalue, or transvaluate, as having both artistic value and value of inhabitation, which is also to say that the transvaluation of bourgeois refuse to art is an expression of the creative will to power. One piece of art in the "East Jesus" section of the Slabs says, "Pick up the Broken Fragments & Fly." So, while bedframes, for instance, would, in hegemonic USian society, be relegated to a landfill, in Slab City, they may be arranged into a beautifully composed fence. But this is an analogy revealing something much bigger.



What Slab City transvaluates from trash to art to life is the same action that creates the character of Slab City. Slabbers affirm life in what hegemonic USian society relegates to trash. Life in Slab City is valued for its own sake—it does not have to be justified by capital, use-, and, therefore, dialectically, exchange-value.<sup>9</sup> Bedframes that hegemonic USian society considers useless, and therefore, without exchange value, Slabbers see augmentations of life. Thus, what dominant USian society needs to justify with capital, Slabbers see life. Accordingly, many who

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<sup>9</sup> Where capital dominates, exchange-value *is* use-value.

go to the Slabs have not been valued by hegemonic USian society—they were not valued nor considered “valuable citizens” because their lives could not be justified via the various ways pre-established moral regimes judge people’s lives—whether that be by capital, paying rent, bills, dressing for the occasion, identifying and expressing oneself normatively, self-discipline (i.e., Foucault [1975] 1995), or working “bullshit jobs” (Graeber 2018) for “bullshit wages,”<sup>10</sup> into which USian society places intrinsic social value. But Nietzsche urges us to ask, “What is the value of obeying, like the camel, pre-established values and moral regimes that presuppose the ‘good’ without question?” And while many in the US can sense a need to create new values, Slabbers act upon it; they do not ask for it—they do not seek salvation through the state. Nor do they identify the hegemonic value-influencers as “the evil enemy” (Nietzsche 2000, 475). Thus, those who go to the Slabs do not resist or react to hegemony but rather positively affirm valuations upon which they act, thereby creating more potential for a valued life according to their own evaluations. Life—natural rights or otherwise are not asked for—is lived through everyday simple acts, which is the place of freedom.

As variously noted above, Slab City certainly has a general anarchic character. I did not see any libertarian symbolism. However, as one arrives via Slab City’s main road, one sees signs expressing support for the US military servicemen and women, which makes sense considering

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<sup>10</sup> David Graeber is riffing on Thorstein Veblen, who does not identify “bullshit capital,” per se, but does recognize superfluous capital as such: “account may be taken of that sideline of business enterprise that spends work and materials in an effort to increase the work to be done and to increase the cost per unit of the increased work; all for the benefit of the earnings of the concern for whose profit it is arranged. It may be called to mind that there still are half-a-dozen railway passenger stations in such a town as Chicago, especially designed to work as cross purposes and hinder the traffic of competing railway corporations; that on the basis of this ingeniously contrived retardation of traffic there has been erected a highly prosperous monopoly in the transfer of baggage and passengers, employing a large equipment and labor force and costing the traveling public some millions of useless outlay yearly; with nothing better to show for it than delay, confusion, wear and tear, casualties and wrangles, twenty-four hours a day; and that this arrangement is, quite profitably, duplicated throughout the country as often and on as large a scale as there are towns in which to install it” (Veblen [1919] 2016, 2029-2030).



subtly, were the various lone trees that evoked the final scenes in Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice* (1986), wherein Alexander sets fire to the house and, subsequently, Little Man waters the tree he and Alexander had planted. The significance of this in relation to Slab City is thus: the burning of the house indexes a questioning or destruction of hegemonic values. As such, Alexander may be interpreted as Nietzsche's (2003, 54-6) lion who battles the gilded dragon of pre-established values and, thereby, creates the place of freedom. Little Man's watering of the tree indexes the creation of new values, and, indeed, Little Man can be interpreted as Nietzsche's innocent and creative child who has the potential to create new values. Second is the juxtaposition of what appears to be two fallen soldiers. One is a concrete life-sized icon of a soldier who is hunched over, either resting on their weapon or is already dead. The other is a much larger installation made of misshapen tires and what appears to be an RV dumping hose. At first glance it looks like an elephant. However, when viewed together with the fallen soldier, it is as if the larger installation is also a fallen soldier hunched over their weapon, which in this case is represented by the dumping hose.

Why does art in place matter? For the same reason that "hostile architecture" (Chellew 2019) changes thoughts and acts through the deterrence of life, that is, the place-based removal of people without a home, or how a university library may be conducive to staying focused on one's education, art is the technical<sup>12</sup> extension of human thought-act in the world, thereby, potentially, creatively-affirming life through the evaluation of force differentials (Nietzsche 1968; Deleuze [1962] 1983). Indeed, for Nietzsche, "art is the great stimulus to life" (1988, 529). Furthermore, as Ballesteros-Quiez et al. (2022) note about squats in general, this place of art

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<sup>12</sup> I am recognizing here that the Greek root of "technical," "τέχνη," in Ancient Greek indexed art, craft, or skill.

constitutes a place of epistemic deconstruction whereby one may—in a very Nietzschean way—question the value of hegemonic values.



Incidentally, Mary is the person who had created the beautiful abode with a fence composed of bedframes that hegemonic USian society would see no use-value and, therefore, no exchange-value. We learned that Mary gives tours of her creative wonderland, accepts donations of food and clothing, and provides them to those in need in the community or to those passing through who also happen to be in need. Indeed, as we spoke, we were interrupted countless times by people looking for clothing. She says most people are respectful, take what they need, return what they don't, and unlike Macy's customers, for example, Mary's "customers" return clothing to their rack in the bus. As such, she encourages tourists because that is how she acquires income, donations, materials for art, and provisions for the community—not to mention cash for propane or, indeed, anything else cash can buy. To reiterate, social activities, insofar as they

actualize potential, are creative and therefore art. It is in this sense that we can say art is social rather than simply an individual experience.

### **Oasis Club**

The Oasis Club is a Slab City co-op, internet café, and morning coffee social gathering place. To get there, we walked along the dirt roads, past what seemed to be individual residents' RV homes and various collective sites, or value-cliques, with different lifeways and hence different cosmologies or axiological tendencies. After the short 10-minute walk, we were greeted by lively activity and significant attendance. It felt like we were walking into a ritual, a separation from the time-space outside of the Oasis Club. It was lively, loud, and people were conversing with vigor, excited for a new day. Coffee was \$1, and my partner and I each purchased a cup of coffee. We turned around and saw a plethora of park benches, some fully occupied, and some people sitting alone or with one or two other people. As we aimlessly searched for cream and sugar, Kai immediately came to our aid and pointed us to the various amenities including cream and sugar. Having fixed our morning cup of comfort, we sat at an empty bench with a view towards where the action was happening. Interested in conversing, Kai sat across the table from us.

In this space, the communal character of cannabis was most evident and served as a symbol of friendship, generosity, alliance, and inclusion. The liveliness and densely packed Oasis Club, composed of people from very different value orientations, perhaps necessitated such a symbolic action of solidarity. But, in a place where difference is positively affirmed (as opposed to dialectical negation), interactional techniques were used that accommodated force differentials and created a vibrant atmosphere where difference was the norm. The critical interactional techniques were adjustment and responsivity. Whereas judgment and responsibility

imply a crystallization of valuations and morality, adjustment and responsivity are fluid interactional praxes that permit people of very different value orientations and ideologies to maintain amicable relations within close proximity. Further, adjustment implies constant becoming—constant metamorphoses—whereby one evaluates and adjusts in accordance with the force differentials at play. Relatedly, responsivity implies the degrees to which one or a group responds to the needs and wants of the community, value-cliques, and the individuals therein. As such, adjustment does not judge but, instead, fluidically relates to others in terms of differentiating force differentials, while responsivity responds to needs. One Slabber’s statement best represents responsivity in Slab City: “Everybody helps with food.” Adjustment, on the other hand, is best reflected in the Oasis Club, where difference does not imply conflict but is, instead, essential.

After some time conversing with Kai, John showed up, sitting beside Kai, also interested in talking to us, “the new people.” Similar to Kai, he was genuinely interested in conversing with us but was primarily going about his daily routine. Although, he made sure to acknowledge, speak to, and welcome us to the community. He even showed us a few tricks with a lighter and a method of applying contact lenses to one’s eyes if one has difficulty, saying, “If you want to learn *real* things, come to Slab City.” That statement had a continued resonance throughout Slab City, where people take action, not ask for action or seek salvation through the state, building their own homes and building extensions to their RVs and housing structures. After telling us he’d had his fourth cup of coffee, indicating it was his routine, John said he had things to do. But, just before leaving, he invited us to his place, saying we could stop by anytime.

### ***Kai’s Mask***



As we continued to converse with Kai, it became apparent that anyone could performatively become anew in Slab City. People come to Slab City for a multiplicity of reasons, but mostly because they do not conform, or are unwilling to conform, to oppressive hegemonic USian values and seek the freedom to act in accordance with their own social value orientations. Consequently, Slab City constitutes a social field wherein the “always already” hegemonic USian values do not apply, that is, they are not always already. Thus, while there are undoubtedly norms in Slab City (elucidated most explicitly in the “Boundary-Making,” “The Slab Cash Economy,” and “The Slab Moral Economy” sections above), the performativity of this anarchic place is less restrained than how Judith Butler theorizes performativity (1988). According to Butler,

Actors are always already on the stage, within the terms of the performance. Just as a script may be enacted in various ways, and just as the play requires both text and interpretation, so the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives. (1988, 526)

However, conversing with Kai made it clear that he was (re)constructing himself through speech and bodily acts. He was remarkably open about the struggles he had experienced throughout his life,<sup>13</sup> but here he could remake himself, separate himself from his “always already” past, and performatively metamorphose into that which he willed. Speaking to us, he could put on any “mask” he wanted, and it would be nothing other than the truth: he could metamorphose as Nietzsche’s camel, lion, or creative child (2003, 54-6).<sup>14</sup>

More than simply putting on metaphorical masks, Kai had a physical mask with him, which he likened to anime. Kai, an indigenous American, explained to us that his mask was not

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<sup>13</sup> To protect Kai’s privacy, I will not go into detail about his past.

<sup>14</sup> For Nietzsche, the camel symbolizes the obedient one, wishing to please the “good” and powerful, whereas the lion battles against the prejudice of established values, creating a place of freedom; but it is the child’s “Yes,” “innocence and forgetfulness” that may will revaluation and affirmation.

about concealing but revealing—a sort of augmentation of who and how he is in the world, or perhaps a recursive becoming new, eternally returning to the eternal moment, being, of becoming (Deleuze [1962] 1983, 24)—or simply metamorphoses. And I must say, it was one of the more note-worthy and elaborate masks I have seen in person, with a mouth or beak that could open and close. Although crafted of different materials, Kai’s mask—to me—evoked the elaborate masks of the Kwakwaka’wakw (Boas and Hunt 1905).

Unlike the poets we met at the beginning of this article, who seemed to be in tension with themselves, Kai did not appear to be in tension with himself. Kai seemed completely comfortable performatively enacting difference—from himself and from others—through speech acts and through simultaneously concealing and revealing masks. On the other hand, the poets yearned to metamorphose as easily as Kai. But the tension within the poets and the creative-affirmation of difference enacted by Kai reveal something more significant about living anarchically. To live anarchically is a never-ending creative and creating process whereby one wears different masks in accordance with the adjustment and responsivity required at any given time. To adjust to the Flamingo value-clique, in relation to the more masculinist Pirate camp, for example, an interactional performative masking of oneself may be required, which begs the question:

What is ‘appearance’ ... now? Certainly not the opposite of some essence: what could I say about any essence except to name the attributes of its appearance! Certainly not a dead mask that one could place on an unknown *x* or remove from it! (Nietzsche 1997, §54)

### **Discussion**

The astute reader may have noticed the conspicuous absence of any discussion of governance structures. The simple answer is that there are effectively none in Slab City. The only governance structure that could be spoken of is the Slab City Community Group, Inc. (SCCGI), and this is almost certainly where Gercke (2024) got the idea that Slab City is an anarcho-

republic. To be a member of the SCCGI, according to the SCCGI's bylaws (SCCGI n.d.), one must pay an annual fee in cash—essentially a tax. There are four types of membership under the category of “regular membership”: resident membership, supporting membership, visiting membership, not-for-profit membership, and business membership. The SCCGI also has a board of directors—a minimum of nine and a maximum of eleven. Only resident members may participate in nominating resident representatives to be elected, and the already-elected board of directors nominates all other representatives to be elected, including visiting member representatives, not-for-profit representatives, and business member representatives. Interestingly, the board of directors “may receive such compensation for their services and such reimbursement of expenses, *as may be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors* to be just and reasonable” (SCCGI n.d., 21-2; emphasis added). In other words, the board of directors decides how much they will be paid. Counterintuitively (or not), the SCCGI refers to itself as “the Corporation.”

If the SCCGI had any effective influence in the community, Gercke (2024) would be wrong to suggest that Slab City is an anarcho-republic. It would be more of an oligarchy. However, from my limited (two weeks) time there, it is not clear what SCCGI actually does, and the Slabbers I spoke to indicated that most people who participate in the SCCGI do not live in Slab City and therefore would be, according to the bylaws, considered visiting members. Moreover, they told me they don't give much thought to the SCCGI and that most Slabbers would not bother paying the annual fees/taxes. After all, most people who live in the Slabs are there in part to avoid such governance structures. It thus seems that it is a theatrical façade, perhaps to create the illusion of a corporate governance structure to ward off any incursions by the state.

As described in “The Slab Moral Economy” section, the provisioning and distribution of food and water is a collective effort without administration, leaders, or governance. Additionally, the various Slab jobs, such as toilet vault digging and security, are not administered by SCCGI but are negotiated directly between the individual and the campsite or value-clique in question. To be sure, there is a need for security—hence the job—and just one week after my partner and I left, a campsite burst into flames. One of my informants told me it was a camp associated with “hard drug” users. Hard drugs in the Slabs include methamphetamine and fentanyl/heroin. Hard drug-using camps are also value-cliques that tend to distribute themselves in space according to their power of action. Nevertheless, the techniques of adjustment and responsivity, in addition to the live and let live ethic—so long as one does not project one’s lifeway onto another—create conditions in which the presence of hard drug-using value-cliques are, for the most part, tolerated.

Moreover, conflict resolution is generally a collective undertaking. Evictions, for instance, not carried out by the state but by Slabbers, indeed occur. Unlike evictions in urban areas, these evictions are more democratic insofar as they are based on community or value-clique consensus. People do not take votes to decide these evictions, but community-based or value-clique-based assemblies do take place. It should also be noted that much of the conflict is hashed out on Slab City Facebook groups.

The coalescence and anarchic coexistence of different value-cliques in the Slab City social field may be understood in terms of Deleuze’s concept of “field of coexistence.” For Deleuze (1979b), a field of coexistence is “where everything truly coexists *simultaneously* from the point of view of social formations; where so-called primitive societies, State apparatuses, war machines, the countryside, towns—all that pre-exists [virtually], in a field of coexistence” (1). In

other words, all of the possibilities of social formations are virtually immanent within the field of coexistence.<sup>15</sup>

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, this ethnographic account has attended and derived three general themes to the question of how Slab City has, as an openly non-capitalist and anarchic community, praxeologically maintained its “squat” for decades on a decommissioned military base without having been evicted. I argue that Slab City is indeed anarchic, that living anarchically entails a moral economy of collective action, and anarchism is a never-ending creative and creating process that constitutes a social art. First, I have suggested through empirical accounts that Slab City is indeed anarchic. This was evidenced by the speech acts expressed by those who populated Poetry Night, the lack of leaders, bureaucracy, and governance structures, in addition to the live and let live ethic described by Slabbers as not caring whether one is different or quirky so long as they do not project their lifeway onto others. The theatrical façade of the SCCGI supports this interpretation. Anarchism is often misunderstood as a state of absolute equality; however, it is difference rather than sameness that is essential in an anarchic society, and it is the positive affirmation of difference rather than a dialectical negation of “the evil enemy” (Nietzsche 2000, 475).

Second, I have argued that living anarchically entails collective action, which in Slab City is undergirded by its moral economy. The Slab City moral economy orients people towards collective action, whereby the price of water does not change relative to supply or demand, becomes a communal resource during the summer, and “everybody helps with food.” Also intrinsic to the moral economy is the Slab practice of flexible adjustment and responsivity as

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<sup>15</sup> This may help explain the practices preventing relations of domination in egalitarian societies and societies against the state that may or may not have had any dealings with a “state” (e.g., Boehm 1993; Clastres 1989).

opposed to the relatively fixed practice of judgment and responsibility. Kai is a perfect example of the practice of adjustment and responsivity; he saw my partner and I—obviously “new” to Slab City—and came to our aid to orient us to the Oasis Club and Slab City in general. The Oasis Club is not a particularly large structure, and it is a daily gathering of the different cliques, with their different value systems, that populate Slab City. It is thus a densely populated place during morning coffee times, where much of Slab City coalesces to socialize. The live and let live ethic is perhaps most palpable here, where adjustment and responsivity are required to maintain the virtual field of coexistence despite its temporarily spatialized collapsed state.

Finally, and most importantly, living anarchically, as I have suggested is a social art. No matter where one is located within Slab City, in any direction one faces, one is confronted with a wide range of artistic symbolism representative of the various value-cliques, and the city is, therefore, an artistic assemblage wherein one can find the symbolism with which one resonates. This artistic assemblage is also a metaphor for the social field of coexistence that constitutes Slab City. While symbolism of anarchism is most prevalent, not everyone in Slab City identifies themselves as anarchists and thus finds themselves living in close proximity—in a field of coexistence—with people of quite diverse value systems or affirmations of difference. The flexibility of the art reflects the widespread Slab practice of transvaluating that which bourgeois society deems refuse into valued and valuable art and the augmentation of life. Crucially, art is essentially a creative and creating activity, thereby not limited to “pieces of art.” As such, social activities, insofar as they actualize potential, are creative and therefore art. The questioning of “always already” regimes of values and morality is a crucial factor characterizing Slab City,

which is precisely why I found Slab City to be distinctly Nietzschean. Slabbers, like Nietzsche, question the value<sup>16</sup> of values, articulating a

*new demand: we need a critique of moral values, the values of these values must first be called in question—and for that there is needed a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which they grew, under which they evolved and changed ... a knowledge of a kind that has never yet existed or even been desired. One has taken the value of these “values” as given, as factual, as beyond all question; one has hitherto never doubted or hesitated in the slightest degree in supposing “the good man” to be of greater value than “the evil man,” of greater value in the sense of furthering the advancement and prosperity of man in general (the future man included). But what if the reverse were true? What if a symptom of regression were inherent in the “good,” likewise a danger, a seduction, a poison, a narcotic, through which the present was possibly living *at the expense of the future*? Perhaps ... morality was the danger of dangers? (Nietzsche 2000, §6, 456)*

While further research is necessary, I tentatively answer the question of how Slab City has maintained its squat: anarchism works there, and the State of California and the Imperial Valley police recognize this.

I will now close with an opening—an opening of what anarchism is and can be, that is to say, a reconceptualization. Anarchism is usually defined by some “lack,” whether that be a lack of hierarchy, leaders, or laws, which is to say it is defined by what it is not. But what is it? Anarchism should be thought of without the -ism and, indeed, as an anarchic becoming. As was described, the anarchic character of Slab City is a field of coexistence—a beautiful and full assemblage, so to speak—of different value-cliques that coexist via adjustment, responsivity, and the evaluation of force differentials leading to the emergence of new values. People go to Slab

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<sup>16</sup> Value in a traditional anthropological sense has been articulated by Terrence Turner as “The values which the members of society struggle to attain and accumulate in their everyday lives are ultimately a symbolic expression of the concrete realization, in their own social system, of their capacity to produce the material and social wherewithal of their own lives, to coordinate these productive activities in such a way that they form interdependent systems and thus acquire determinate values and meanings, and finally to reproduce the forms of this coordination. Although people created values and meanings through the forms of organized interdependence they assume to facilitate their own productive activity, they remain unaware that they do so” (1979, 34-5) and by Graeber “as the way in which actions become meaningful to the actor by being incorporated in some larger, social totality—even if in many cases the totality in question exists primarily in the actor’s imagination” (2001, xii).

City to actively affirm values; it is an anarchic becoming insofar as the gilded dragon of values does not determine Slabbers' values. In this way, anarchic becoming is a social art, for it is always creative and creating. Anarchy is the alliance of the anomalous—from Greek, *an+homalos*, that is, not “even” or not “same”—whereby the anomalous is the affirmation of difference, “the unequal, the coarse, the rough, [and] the cutting edge of deterritorialization” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 244) that may not be reterritorialized into a concretized state. That is to say, anarchism is eternally becoming anomalous, always affirming, creating, differentiating, and metamorphosing. “Anarchic becoming is always not yet and always not already” (Draginja Knezi, pers. comm.), which is also to say it is not path dependent and always creating such that it is always not already.

Moreover, anarchic becoming has a dynamic limit: “it has no other limit than the limit of its power of action” (Deleuze 1981, 13). Thus, the ethics of anarchic becoming are a derivation of one's or one's value-clique's power of action. One does what one can, not what one should—an immanent questioning of any pre-established morality. An example shall suffice: one *could* proclaim themselves monarch of Slab City, but, in fact, one cannot and should not because they would be laughed back to San Diego. People might play along with it for a day or so, but this monarch would have no power to give commands. In this example, therefore, one should not proclaim oneself monarch, unless, that is, if the community is engaging in carnivalesque events. The same principle applies to violent action, and the evaluation of force differentials is always in a state of flux to maintain the field of coexistence. This conclusion, derived from my ethnographic fieldwork in Slab City, is an opening of what anarchism—or anarchic becoming—is and can be, and I urge more scholars to participate in its theorization.



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