

A Lifestyle of Rebellion Will Destroy Freedom - Postliterate - Medium

By Postliterate

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On April 11, 2006, Mark Fisher wrote on his blog *k-punk*:

“What many students most want from college, although they would never admit it, is an authority structure. There is a demand for an authority which they can then reject; they want to be told what to do, so they can disobey. It is a textbook case of bad faith, a flight from freedom. Interpassive nihilism again.” [1]

This is the most extreme example of what Murray Bookchin would call “lifestyle” anarchism (although in this case it is not intentional). Lacking any form of structure, purpose, or principles, their model in life is simply rebellion. It is not, however, organized rebellion, it is not a means to an end; it is simply rebellion for the sake of rebellion. Rebellion as a *lifestyle*.

This is precisely what any serious anarchist should vehemently reject: anarchism as merely a way of life, anarchism as a lifestyle. This philosophy is extremely dangerous for anyone who truly demands liberation because it, in fact, demands authority. In a strange and perverse way, it creates and sustains authority.

The reason for this is quite simple, and Fisher states it. It is because in order to live a life of rebellion one needs something to rebel against. This philosophy demands authority and power so that it can rebel against it, pre-

cisely in the way counter-culture movements need a mainstream culture with which to counter. Most odiously, it can also be compared to the relationship of the master and the slave, the ruler and the ruled. There is no freedom in this relationship, even if one is the dominator, for, “*authority is a relationship between ruler and ruled that binds both and destroys the independence of each.*” [2] As Stirner writes:

“He who, to hold his own, must count on the absence of will in others is a thing made by these others, as the master is a thing made by the servant. If submissiveness ceased, it would be over with all lordship.”
[3]

Lifestyle rebellion, in this sense, is therefore the act of making one’s behaviors dependent on authority, by expecting authority so one can rebel. By basing himself on this relationship, he buys into the system of domination and forgoes his freedom.

What is the solution? In one word, principles. The anarchist must have clear principles which are constantly being reconsidered and updated, expanded, and detailed. The way he applies them should be as David Graeber said, “*acting as if one is already free.*” Objection to authority should not be a lifestyle or for the sake of rebellion itself, but because it contradicts his principles. He should go about his day abiding by his principles, and if he should find an authority who prohibits him from doing so, oppose them.

The anarchist must also always desire a world *without* the authorities he despises, and not one in which he merely rebels. He must oppose the authority not because he enjoys opposing authorities, but because he genuinely wants a world in which they do not exist. He does not want to *rebel*, he wants to *be free*. If anything, the fact that he must rebel is irritating to him, but it is merely a means to an end. What he truly desires is none of the things you see him on the streets for. What he truly desires is a free world built on his principles.

Do not rebel because it is fun, or cool, or anything of the sort. You should hate rebellion, you should find it irritating. Rebel because you desire a free world in which you *don't* have to rebel, in which you can live peacefully without these authorities coercing you. Oppose the authorities not because you enjoy rebellion, but because they get in the way of what you want to do; in other words, because they get in the way of your principles. It should be a travesty that rebellion is necessary and it should not be an act you at all desire. What you desire is the absence of rebellion, a world beyond rebellion, a world in which you are free.

All those who rebel for its own sake, who rebel because it is enjoyable, will forever remain slaves, bound to the system and unable to imagine a world beyond it. You do not want to be a rebel. You want to be a free man.

“If we only protest, we allow the powerful to set the agenda. If all we do is oppose what they are trying to do, then we simply follow in their footsteps.” [4]

[1] Mark Fisher, *Reflexive Impotence*

[2] Sidney Parker, *Individualist-Anarchism*

[3] Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, “My Power”

[4] John Holloway, *Crack Capitalism*, pg. 3