

A Materialist Look at “Anarcho-Nihilism” - Postliterate - Medium

By Postliterate

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What is so fascinating about “anarcho-nihilism” is that — despite it being a chronological possibility — there does not seem to be a single “anarcho-nihilist” writer past their 20s. Moreover, there is not a single one of them who writes in a serious manner in regards to political philosophy; they are all religious and dogmatic in tone and do not concern themselves with rationality of any sort. However, this essay is not about why only young people are drawn to “anarcho-nihilism” (and by extension, why they all grow out of it later in life), but about why “anarcho-nihilism” even exists and is followed as a political theory despite it being so obviously religious in nature.

The history of anarchism is nearly 200 years old; “anarcho-nihilism” only emerged in the past one or two decades. It emerged as the impending ecological destruction of the foreseeable future became (and still is being) exacerbated. Many core “anarcho-nihilist” texts — Blessed is the Flame, Desert — are explicit in their foundation being that of ecological doom. In fact, texts such as Desert attempt, in part, to discuss in a serious tone the nature of ecological disaster and its urgency.

What “anarcho-nihilism” tells its readers to do, however, is almost pathetic. Blessed is the Flame speaks of the “path of pure negation,” in which all political ideas are negated; it is all so religious even while it pretends to be a break from modern dogmas and a face towards reality. It

behaves identically to the way dominant ideology does in capitalist society today — as the opposite of ideology. It presents itself as a break from ideology, as the true, objective nature of things — and in this act it becomes the most ideological of them all.

“Anarcho-nihilism” is the purest product of capitalist realism: it has come to utterly and faithfully proclaim: “*there is no alternative!*” It is only through its deeply religious language that it can fool impressionable young minds into believing it is something new, something counterculture, something *revolutionary*.

Correan Collar notes, in *The Fetishization of Dystopia* → <https://thedayofthecollar.substack.com/p/the-fetishization-of-dystopia?s=r>, a recent surge of interest in philosophical pessimism (with the works of David Benatar and Thomas Ligotti), specifically as a consequence of capitalist realism. However, at least the pessimists attempted serious proofs of their philosophy, with Benatar’s logical charts and Ligotti’s deep critiques and appraisals of vast libraries of past pessimist and anti-pessimist works. “Anarcho-nihilism” attempts none of these. As such, it compensates its visceral expressions of alienation and hopelessness, being on their own void of any real substance, with dogma and religiously provocative writing.

It is important to emphasize, as Correan Collar did, that these terrible feelings of hopelessness and isolation are not the default mode of human life, and more crucially, that such extreme depressive emotions are largely a consequence of the current state of things. Let us not mistake such emotions for revolutionary theory — or any theory at all, for that matter.