

A text dump on Darren Allen

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Anarchism at the End of the World by Darren Allen

An Introduction to the Instinct that Won't Go Away

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Source

'And now we'll pull down every single notice, and every single leaf of grass shall be allowed to grow as it likes to.' Snufkin.

Anarchism is the only way of life that has ever worked or ever can. It is the only actual alternative to the pseudo-alternatives of the left and right, of optimism and pessimism, and even of theism and atheism. That being so you would expect it to be widely ignored, ridiculed and misunderstood, even by nominal anarchists.

What is Anarchism?

Anarchism is the rejection of *domination*. In an anarchist society — which means of course in the anarchist herself — nobody is dominated by anyone or anything else. This does not mean, as we shall see, that there is no *authority*.¹ What anarchism rejects is authority with the power to control or coerce the individual against her will.

There are two crucial exceptions. The first is that, in refusing domination, the anarchist necessarily has to restrain those who dominate — force and control — other people. Rapists, murderers, bullies and, less directly, thieves seek to dominate others, and so they must be prevented from doing so.

The second exception is that the anarchist is justified in restraining those who do not have control over themselves. There is no coercion in preventing very young children, sleepwalkers, trippers and drunkards, for example, from walking over a cliff. If someone has control over themselves and *insists* on throwing themselves from a cliff, then an anarchist society would let them do it.

These two exceptions partially answer two of the most common objections to anarchism. The first is, who or what, exactly, is going to stop thieves, rapists and murderers

¹ Which makes the literal or etymological meaning of anarchism — absence of a chief — misleading.

from harming me? and the second is, who or what is going to stop the mad, the sad and the stupid from harming themselves? To which the anarchist ordinarily replies ‘people’. Not the state, not professional experts; *us*. This answer, of course, is incomplete and leads to further objections. To respond to these we need to recognise those elements of the world which control individuals against their will, elements which would need to be removed to create a fully anarchist society. I call these **the seven dominants**. They are, in roughly ascending order of subtlety and pervasiveness:

1. The [autocratic] *monarchy*.
2. The [capitalist-socialist] *state* (which includes its money, law, property, police, etc.).
3. The [totalitarian] *corporation*.
4. The [democratic] *majority*.
5. The [professional-religious] *institution*.
6. The [technocratic] *system*.
7. The [mental-emotional] *ego*.

It is difficult even for anarchists to recognise that these are all *inherently* coercive forces. There are no anarchists who support the monarchy of course, and very few who support corporate control,² but anarchist support for the state and its various techniques and institutions is surprisingly widespread (voting, campaigning, supporting its wars,³) as is anarchist support for democracy (trade-unionism, anarcho-syndicalism and other forms of ‘direct democracy’) and for professionalism (professors Noam Chomsky, David Graeber, Murray Bookchin, et al.). The system and the ego are so subtle and pervasive they often do not figure in anarchist literature at all (with the honourable exceptions of Lao Tzu,⁴ Leo Tolstoy, William Blake, Henry Miller and Ivan Illich⁵). That anarchists ignore or support the coercive power of dominants, or that they — we — are often forced to compromise (too willingly in many cases), does not make such support an anarchist position any more than some vegetarians having a crafty bacon sandwich makes eating pork a vegetarian position.

Despite what anarchists may or may not think, it is indisputable that the seven dominants are coercive; that they control individuals, and nature, against their will. It is indisputable that kings coerce their subjects, that states do the same, and that possession of property, financial wealth, the ability to write or manipulate laws, the strength of the majority, specialised, technical expertise, professional authority and systemic conformity all confer power to dominate — sometimes even *domesticate* — people. It is also indisputable that tools beyond a certain size and complexity enslave

² Largely limited to the preposterous ideology of ‘anarcho-capitalism.’

³ Usually on ‘pragmatic’ grounds. This is why Kropotkin supported the state, and why Chomsky does.

⁴ And, arguably, of Jesus of Nazareth; provided that you discount his rather dubious pronouncements (dubious in the sense that they are unlikely to be his) on the formation of the church and those of the mystifying authoritarian propagandiser, [St.] Paul of Tarsus.

⁵ And the far less honourable exception of Max Stirner, who was, insanely, *for* the ego.

men and women and compel them to think, act and even feel in ways alien to their better nature; for them to serve the car, for example, or transport system, or the farm, or the school, rather than their own, or nature's, instincts. Finally, it is indisputable that the restless mind and emotions take control of conscious experience and cause men and women to do, say, think and feel things they don't really want to; cause them to hate, for example, get angry and depressed, or worry. 'I' may want to stop wanting and worrying, but, if I am honest I can see that 'I' am not in charge here. My stupid self is.

It follows that a philosophy, *the central tenet of which* is that all forms of domination are wrong must — despite inevitable lapses and compromises — set itself against the autonomous power of states, corporations, property, professionalism, money, law, democracy, monarchism, tools and the inherently needy and violent, obsessively wanting, worrying and planning, mental-emotional false-self.

This attitude, to people who have lived in dominating systems, seems strange to say the least. The kind of independence that anarchism describes seems so far from the experience of ordinary people that those proposing it might as well be describing the best way to live on Jupiter; and yet, in fact, anarchism is not just the original state of human society, it is also the way that most of us live already, at least during those times when we are happiest. We are anarchists in our love-affairs, in our friendships, and even occasionally in the very teeth of the system, at work. When the boss is absent and everyone gets together to work out how on earth to sort out the mess he's created, occasionally, for a fleeting moment, we glimpse a collective so simple and effective it slides under our attention. But then the boss returns, and the ordinary world of work returns, or of politics or police or teachers or money, and someone tells us they are an anarchist and we find the idea, if not ludicrous, at best bewildering. Surely, we think, surely...

Objection 1. Anarchism is inhuman

What is the core of human nature, underneath all the systems of domination that compel us? If nobody and nothing is controlling us — including our own emotions and thoughts — what's left? How will we act? Will we tear each other limb from limb? Steal, fight and fuck our way to the top of the pile? Go insane?

Authoritarians — *genuine* authoritarians that is, those who support the seven dominants above — answer 'yes'. Human nature is *ultimately* violent, selfish and stupid, they say, and so we need kings, states, corporations, democracies, laws, experts and the control of the dominating mind or emotions to prevent 'anarchy' — a word they interpret as something close to late medieval hell, in which human-shaped monsters run around eating each other. Libertarians — and again I am talking about *actual* libertarians, those who refuse to be coerced by anything — answer 'no'. Humans cer-

tainly *can* be violent, selfish and stupid, but *ultimately* we are peaceful, generous and intelligent creatures.

Ordinary authoritarian people respond to such an idea by telling us to ‘look around — look at people, look at the news — we are *obviously* violent, selfish and stupid.’ Authoritarian psychologists agree; they point to the many, many experiments which have shown that people are violent, selfish and stupid. Authoritarian philosophers also agree; they say that there is no order, or meaning, or intelligence outside of the seven dominants. They have very complicated theories to hide their basic distrust of nature and human nature but that is what the authoritarian attitude is based on.

The libertarian might then point out that the ‘people’ who surround us, those whom authoritarian people complain about and authoritarian psychologists study, have been raised in a world dominated by force. To say that we need authoritarian forces because people who are dominated by authoritarian forces are violent, selfish and stupid is a tautology. It’s like saying we need to put birds in cages because birds in cages are dangerous.

The anarchist does not base her view of humanity on how the people around her think and act, but on her *own* nature. In this she is no different from the authoritarian; the difference being that when she looks within herself she finds that although she certainly can be a liar, a coward, a fool and a sadist, that *ultimately* she trusts her instincts, that *ultimately* she is peaceful, generous and has good sense. She goes on to reason that others must be the same; a conclusion borne out by her most intimate relations, which demonstrate to her that absence of control and force *is not disorder*.

Objection 2: Anarchism is chaos

One of the most common authoritarian objections to the lifting of all constraint that anarchists seeks, is not just the *fear* that anarchism is synonymous with chaos but, as those who control culture inevitably shape the definition of words, *the written fact*. The word ‘anarchy’ means, in the dictionaries of the system, disorder; despite the fact that actual anarchists, with a few insane exceptions, have never been opposed to order. The question which anarchists seek to ask is what order, or whose. Anarchists believe that the only society worth living in is based on some kind of *natural organisation*, that which naturally or intuitively regulates individual and collective life. For authoritarians this does not exist. They see no evidence of it. What they see in ‘intuition’ is erratic emotionality. What they see in nature is, principally at least, warfare, fear, pain, hierarchical struggle, pecking orders, alpha males and so on. For such people nature, and human nature, may contain organised elements, but the end result is a neverending, chaotic battle of all against all. Nature might be finely ordered, formally beautiful and good eating; but it cannot be trusted. To organise a society therefore must entail suppression and control of our natural instincts. Result; people become resentful, bored, stupid and violent... which is to say *disordered*.

‘But look how neat everything is! Look how well your phone works! Look at how nicely tarmacked the m25 is’. One of the reasons it is hard to perceive the chaos of the system is that it is *formally* ordered. It all looks good — provided you look in the right place. Everything, for example, looks good on paper, because it is has been priority one for the system, since to invention of writing, to ensure that everything in heaven and earth is *legible* — capable of being named, measured, standardised and controlled. Everything also looks good when it is dead. A modern farm is the epitome of order because nothing lives on it but one, hyper-ordered crop bred to depend completely upon equally ordered synthetic inputs (the same applies to the modern city and the modern computer). Finally, everything looks good when you don’t have to pay attention to what isn’t so good. We do not have a direct relationship with our fellow humans, or fellow creatures, and so we are spared from perceiving the bedlam that reigns beyond the office (flat, farm, factory or shop). All important interactions go via the system, and so we do not have to deal with, or even perceive, the *cause* of our formal order (the actual lives of people who build our computers, for example, or the animals which fill our burgerbuns) or its *effects* (where our rubbish and shit actually go when we’re done with it). The people of the affluent West live in an antiseptic sphere of mini coopers, Dyson vacuums and self-service checkouts. Everything seems to us, just as it did to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who had no idea of the horror their comfortable lives were based on, so very nicely arranged. We are confident in ourselves because we are confident in the safety and order of our surroundings; what lies outside the gates is not really worth paying serious attention to. We know that *something* is wrong out there, or we intuitively feel it, a distant rumble of thunder during the picnic, but it terrifies us, and so we turn to the consumption of reassuring neatness to push the anxiety away. Not that there is anything wrong with organising your record collection or cleaning your kitchen or collecting stamps or poring over maps; but that the system must manufacture toys which soothe the anxieties produced by the chaos which is the by-product of toys which soothe the anxieties produced by the chaos... of domination.

Dominate the land with industrial technology, dominate the people with repressive laws, dominate your children with rigid ‘discipline’, dominate women with physical power or intellectual scheming, dominate your life with strict plans, goals and systems, dominate the darkness with 24/7 light; and what happens? On paper it all works out fine. In the real world domination produces unnatural chaos.

Domination, however, is not the same as *power* or even *authority*. The ocean is powerful, but anarchists do not protest the tides. Likewise old people sometimes have, by virtue of their experience, immense authority; but only a fruitcake would oppose age on principle, or refuse to listen to its wisdom. There is a crucial difference — reflected in our language — between being *in* authority and being *an* authority. In the first place your power comes from *holding* a position, which is, by definition, an inflexible role or rank, and in the second your power comes from *being in* a position to use your knowledge, experience or sensitivity; then, when the circumstance changes, the power evaporates, as of course it should.

Fixing power into roles and ranks⁶ has the same effect as fixing names into titles, meanings into definitions and guidelines into laws; they become unable to respond to what is actually happening. Result: fabulous inefficiency and, once again, unmanageable chaos, as everyone knows who has worked in an organisation bound by titles, definitions, laws and fixed power. Those at the bottom facing the actual situation find they are unable to deal with it, while those at the top not only have no idea what the situation is, they are terrified by the power of those who can see what needs to be done, and fanatically suppress any attempts to use it.

In an anarchist group whoever has more ability or sensitivity than the others naturally ‘takes the lead.’ Nobody with any intelligence, anarchist or otherwise, would refuse to *unthinkingly obey* an experienced sailor in a storm.⁷ Indeed the hallmark of ability and sensitivity is that neither compel. One word from a true leader and everyone does as they please. Once we remove compulsion, then ability and sensitivity naturally take over as sources of authority. Thus anarchist society is, actually, *full* of leaders.⁸

Just as anarchism is not antithetical to authority, power and order, so it is not incompatible with what *appear* to be laws. A common complaint on anarchist discussion boards is ‘this isn’t really an anarchist forum! look, you’ve got rules!’ The question is not the existence of rules, but their *fluidity* (how much they allow for contextual exceptions), their *boundary* (the freedom one has if one disregards them) and their *purpose* (to what end this or that regulation). Anarchist ‘laws’, unlike those of the system, adapt to the intelligence of the individual, and the multitude of exceptional situations she finds herself in, allow dissenters to do what they like beyond their boundaries of application and, crucially, serve the non-egoic truth.

That’s all well and good, you might be thinking, but what will we do about the lazy people, those who will not work, the thieves and the criminals, those who steal what others have or produce? The anarchist answer is that we’ve been supporting such people for millennia. We call them the elites. When people work for themselves and with their fellows, without coercion or control and under reasonably promising circumstances, they do not tend to leach and steal from each other. Of course there will always be some who do, but when they are not in power — as they are now — they can be easily dealt with.

⁶ States have a long tradition of forcing egalitarian and ‘horizontal’ peoples to appoint leaders.

⁷ Although there are few people capable of discerning real authority in a system which brutalises sensitivity. That we all drown at the behest of the various cretins who are popularly exalted as philosophical, artistic, or moral authorities is less of a worry to systemacrats than that someone who knows what they are doing finds the helm.

⁸ ‘*In any one tribe there may be a hunting chief, work chief, dance chief, women’s chief, age grade chief, and fishing chief. These leaders function only in specific contexts and for limited periods of time; usually, their primacy is based on capacity in the particular activity. It does not carry over into the round of daily life; and, almost everyone in the society is, at one time or another, in a ‘chieftly’ position.*’ In Search of the Primitive: Stanley Diamond. Similar observations about fluid ‘omnarchical’ leadership have been made by Bakunin, Comerford and Ruskin

The fear that we cannot take care of ourselves without the police⁹ or that we cannot heal ourselves without doctors is identical to the fear that we cannot feed ourselves without Lidl. Take schools. How, the authoritarian asks, will we educate our children without them?¹⁰ The objection, like all objections to anarchism, isolates the institution in question from context and consciousness. It says; given that reality is as it is (a collection of scarce things), that society is as it is (enemy territory) and that people are as they are (selfish apes or sinful gods), if we remove institutions which protect us from reality, which organise society and which regulate people, then everything will go to the dogs. And, given *those* assumptions, everything would.¹¹

A world without schools demands an educational society; in which nature, and the activities of adults within it, are freely available to children. Opportunities to learn — meaning opportunities to work and to play — are, like everything else in nature, *abundant* (see myth 3). When children can join adults in their orchestras, garages, workshops, libraries, laboratories, clinics, theatres, farms and football pitches; they learn. The reason that children are not allowed to learn their culture in this way, through direct contact with reality, without the ministrations of a credentialised middle-man, is because that reality is wild.¹² It can be influenced, understood and used — not to mention adored — but it cannot be dominated. It is this — and not the prospect of millions of children vegetating in front of their playstations — that horrifies those who are addicted to institutional control.

Likewise when work is pleasurable (or at the very least meaningful), when rest is available, when the wilderness is close at hand, when ordinary people have access to the tools and techniques of health, when they can self-diagnose and self-medicate, when they can learn to deal with pain on their own, when they can die on their own; when, in short, society is healthy, there is no need for professional doctors. There is a need for people who naturally specialise in complex procedures and risky techniques, just as there is a need for people who naturally specialise in intensely funky drumming, but in an anarchic society everyone has rhythm.

⁹ The police were invented to track down slaves, control large, defiant, crowds and protect shops; which, combined with more modern functions of surveillance, intimidation, making life unpleasant for unemployed people on the street and filling in forms, remain the principle tasks of the police. Coming round to your house after it has been burgled and being nice is really just a pr exercise.

¹⁰ Meaning without syllabuses, state-compulsion, credentialism and so on. No need to get rid of the buildings, some of them are rather nice. They could even be used, of all things, for instruction and study.

¹¹ At least initially they would. Weeds initially ravage all fields from which artificial controls are lifted.

¹² Or chaotic — although I prefer not to use this word as the chaos of nature is more like the ‘chaos’ of chaos theory, a paradoxical state between unpredictable chaos and intuitively appreciated and generated (rather than merely mind-made) order. For the educational and organisational power of wild chaos see Richard Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*. See also Innes H. Pearse and Lucy H. Crocker, *The Peckham Experiment; A Study of the Living Structure of Society*.

Objection 3. Anarchism is Violent

If the first thought, on hearing the word ‘anarchism’ is ‘chaos,’ the second is likely to be ‘violence’. Both associations have been relentlessly promoted since anarchism became a force to be reckoned with — as it was for large parts of the nineteenth century — but the idea of the moustachioed fiend creeping through the shadows was first disseminated and sensationalised after a bomb was thrown at the 1886 Haymarket Square riot in Chicago and, over the course of the next decade or so, several heads of state were assassinated by anarchists. The trope has evolved over the years — today the cartoon bomb is usually carried by some dude wearing a *V for Vendetta* mask or a Palestinian Keffiyeh — but it continues to be defined by indiscriminate, juvenile violence.

The essence of the problem was first identified by [the socialist] George Orwell, who complained to his anarchist friend, George Woodcock, that there is nothing to stop groupthink from dominating anarchist societies with the same coercive force as the state does; and indeed this is just what tends to happen. A certain kind of idiot is drawn to anarchism, just as a certain kind of idiot is drawn to classical music, team sports or Hello Kitty. Their idiocy simultaneously reinforces itself (through stigmatising outsiders and glorifying insiders) and degrades itself (through stereotyping and stereotypical behaviour) leading to the ready-made cliché easily sensationalised and spurned by opponents. Violent young atheists wearing anarcho-acceptable attire, reading Chuck Palahniuk, playing hardcore music in violent demos, living in filthy squats¹³ and sharing dank memes fantasising about exterminating pigs, are not hard to come by, but they no more represent anarchism than Cliff Richards represents Christianity or Helen Lewis represents women. In fact a large proportion of anarchists are pacifists, some of them rather extreme (Ghandi, for example, self-identified as an anarchist.¹⁴) Not that pacifism is necessarily anarchistic either, or that violence¹⁵ is not sometimes necessary (it certainly is — particularly against property). Total and complete pacifism is, actually, an impotent, immoral and very often racist absurdity (even Ghandi, like Martin Luther King Jr., wasn’t against armed insurrection when pacifism could not work)¹⁶. Even those who suggest Native Americans, Jews and Laotians should have sat around holding candles, ‘bearing witness’ and positively thinking their way out of genocide would violently defend a four year old daughter from attack.

Blanket characterisation of anarchism as ‘violent’ on the basis of the restless, cliquy child-minds it attracts, or on the occasional use or recommendation of violence, is not just a caricature, it is also a *tad* hypocritical coming from a king, a capitalist, a socialist

¹³ Not that there is anything wrong with squats. I’ve lived in a few I’d be happy to take my nan to.

¹⁴ According to Woodcock in *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*.

¹⁵ A word, incidentally, which is notoriously difficult to define.

¹⁶ See Peter Gelderloos, *How Nonviolence Protects the State*, for a flawed but thorough and convincing critique of totalising pacifism, and argument for the use of violence *in certain situations*.

or any other representative of the system. A more violent way of life than we have now, or have ever had within the system, which has spent thousands of years violently obliterating all that is good on earth, plundering defenceless people, exterminating them or forcibly assimilating them, is nearly impossible to imagine.

Objection 4: Anarchism is parochial

Another doubt which people commonly have about anarchism is its capacity to work beyond small groups of a few hundred. Critics point out that, okay, tiny groups of pre-agricultural folk and minute radical outfits on the fringe might be able to handle life without coercive laws and the like, but how on earth are we to organise a global post-industrial society informally?

We aren't. It is impossible. A world *such as we have* cannot be run from the bottom up. What kind of world *can* emerge from anarchist principles is, however, an open question. Large-scale anarchist co-operation and free international exchange are perfectly feasible and would lead to an extraordinarily complex world; just not one overruled by czars and commissars. Anarchism, in fact, is no more antithetical to complex federations, than it is to leadership, authority and law. What it opposes, once again, is hierarchical *control*. Anarchist federations are, in fact, hierarchical¹⁷; just extremely flat ones in which the power of the level above is zero; with those at the peak able to do little more than recommend and relay. This doesn't mean they are ineffective (as advisory bodies are in the system) any more than your grandmother is. As the influential anarchist Colin Ward has pointed out, the international postal service and railways are both massive anarchist structures, with no central control whatsoever, as were a great number of pre-civilised societies which, as James C. Scott outlines, were enormous. And we have even glimpsed — alas only for a few moments — a scaled-up anarchist society in modern times, in revolutionary Spain. This lasted a short time, was riddled with compromise, violent (fascist) opposition from the right, equally violent reformist (communist) pressures from the left and all the chicanery one might expect from such a radically permissive experiment; but there were many astonishing examples of spontaneous, peaceful, organisation and generosity — again, on an extraordinary scale — in anarchist Spain.¹⁸

But, hold on, what's to stop a powerful state overwhelming a weak informal anarchist federation? Almost nothing. Does it mean that our immune system is wrong or

¹⁷ Some hunter-gatherer cultures are also hierarchical. The word 'hierarchy' is normally used in an entirely negative sense; hierarchical processes are always said to be predicated on force. For this reason the word is probably best not applied to anarchist federations.

¹⁸ You wouldn't call the slums of India, Brazil or Pakistan 'successful' in the sense of allowing people to live well, but in that they have allowed them to live at all, under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, has not been down to any kind of central planning, or socialistic intervention. They often exhibit some of the finest examples of anarchy in action.

faulty because a bullet can kill us? Genuine anarchism prevents authoritarian hierarchies from forming. It is also extraordinary resilient and in many cases better able to fluidly defend itself than centralised states; but it can no more protect us against the vast militaristic power of modern states, that have spent millennia organising themselves (and domesticating their subjects) than an ant's nest can defend itself against a nuke. That doesn't make anarchism powerless though, as we shall see.

Objection 5: Anarchism is uncivilised

Correct. Anarchism, insofar as it is effective and consistent, rejects the entire dominating machinery of what we normally call 'civilisation'. For most of human history such societies were the norm and, until recently, there were innumerable remnants from that time which displayed, in varying degrees, the consequences of living in a genuinely anarchistic manner; societies in which egalitarian social and sexual relations were the norm, as was enjoyable work, absence of scarcity, no money, no warfare and very little suffering, at least as we experience it today. Certainly nothing like clinical depression, schizophrenia, psychopathy and so on. That humans were long-lived, healthy and happy is *the consensus position* amongst those who study ancient or primal people. There were problems of course, tensions, disagreements, even murders — and of course the wild is a brutally unsentimental companion — but in the absence of property, specialised power and whatnot, interpersonal problems could be dealt with. Likewise there were disagreements and doubts about what should be done, but these were not resolved by means of a vote which a minority was compelled to submit to; indeed very often they were not resolved *explicitly* at all.¹⁹ Problems were resolved in a way which is almost unimaginable today; by looking, together, for the *right* thing to do.

The idea that the most successful social organisation in history should serve as some kind of model for what we should collectively aspire to, goes by the name of anarcho-primitivism; the *general* rejection of civilised forms of organisation, such as centrally controlled cereal cultivation, industrial technology, institutional hegemony and so on. Despite the caricatures which critics invent (*'using a phone! what a hypocrite!'*), anarcho-primitivism does not entail the ludicrous refusal of *all* technology (such as fire, pottery or even agriculture, which, incidentally predates the horrors of

¹⁹ 'Those who have lived among savage or barbarous peoples in several parts of the world have related how they have attended native councils, where matters in which they were interested were being discussed. When, after a time, the English observer found that the people were discussing some wholly different topic, and inquired when they were going to decide the question in which he was interested, he was told that it had already been decided and they had passed on to other business... The members of the council had become aware, at a certain point, that they were in agreement, and it was not necessary to bring the agreement explicitly to notice.' W.H.Rivers

state-run farms²⁰) or demand anarcho-primitivists take off all their clothes and go and live in a tree; and it certainly doesn't entail, as some critics like to believe, a recommendation for the extermination of mankind. It simply recognises that coercion and control run deeper than kings, parliaments and corporations pushing people around; that we are domesticated as much, if not more, by our tools²¹ as we are by those who have power over them, and that a functioning society *must* be based on the non-democratic egalitarianism, sensitivity and wildness of our ancestors. As such anarcho-primitivism is anarchism.

Quibbles over terminology aside, primal societies are not the only ones which demonstrate that we do not need money, usurious systems of debt peonage, hyper-specialisation, entrenched networks of professional power, bureaucracy, law and similar civilised techniques to live well together. People around the world, from the middle-ages up to the present day, have functioned on informal, decentralised, systems of decision-making, taking care of their lives, working, playing, educating themselves and dealing with conflict without the interference of dominants. Money supplies have dried up, police have vanished, governments have broken down and people have found that life has not just gone on as before, but has been far easier and more pleasant. Ordinarily this happens during a crisis, such as when the banks shut down in Ireland in 1970, or in the early days of the British, French, Russian, Chinese and Hungarian revolutions, in the spring days in Prague in 1968 and in the breakdown of communism in the former USSR, not to mention in the middle of natural catastrophes, when people have found, in spite of all the horrors that attended these events, collective intelligence, resourcefulness and conviviality. This has surprised them, just as it does us, who are used to seeing the breakdown of 'society' portrayed as brutal chaos. Such chaos does exist of course, but *only when dominants still exist*. It is not the absence of civilisation that causes riots and violence during times of social crises, but its presence.

Peasant societies the world over, some of which are extremely complex and widespread, also demonstrate that the various machines of civilised coercion are not necessary to organise life. Groups living on the periphery of civilised states — the barbarians and the backward folk — have successfully conducted their lives along broadly anarchist lines, while resisting centralised control, for millennia.²² Again, they haven't been without their decidedly non-anarchistic internal problems, but to those

²⁰ James C. Scott, *Against the Grain*. There have been, in Peter Gelderloo's words, '*resolutely anti-authoritarian and ecocentric agricultural societies*'.

²¹ Particularly our high tech tools but also the hyper-complex 'tools' of social organisation that build pyramids and feed Pharaohs.

²² James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*. Some large-scale radical movements of the middle ages — such as the ranters and the brethren of the free spirit — were also broadly anarchist. Indeed the so-called 'dark ages' — the period before the stereotyped late medieval period of starvation, servitude, intolerance, poverty and plagues — were only dark to states, who were unable to control them. Many medieval towns were not exactly anarchist, but, after having thrown off their lords, were independent and egalitarian to a level unimaginable today.

who wish to look, they are also evidence of the genius and harmony that is possible among people working together outside systems of control.

Anarchism works, and there is important evidence to demonstrate that it works. Ultimately, however, evidence is secondary, even tertiary. You don't need evidence to reason that theft is impossible in a society in which nobody owns anything, police are unnecessary when there are no laws to uphold or borders to defend, a teaching establishment is redundant when society itself (not to mention nature) is educational, and medical professionals have nothing to do when the causes of sickness and madness are removed. More than that, and most important of all, you don't need evidence to know that *you* do not need governments and institutions to tell you what to do and that, ultimately, *you* are no different from *them*.

Objection 6: Anarchism is unrealistic

If we accept if anarchism is a viable approach to our lives, and that it is not best represented by the Sex Pistols, there is another — and for many decisive — objection to realising a genuinely anarchist way of life. Given that we are about as far away from an anarchist world as it is possible to be, how on Earth are we to get there? Given that the whole world would have to be anarchist or concentrated technological power would soon overcome everywhere else; how are we to create an international anarchist paradise?

Once again, we aren't. In the first place, on the foundational recognition that nature, including conscious human nature, is inherently intelligent — a *living* intelligence moreover, that is responsive to a phenomenally complex and ever-changing context — anarchist strategies for organising society are *necessarily* extremely weak. People will, when unconstrained, create their own unique federations, associations, cultures, traditions, fluid guidelines for living, styles of working and so on. To be sure we can speak of certain attributes a free, functioning anarchist town or farm or theatre is almost sure to have; ego-dissolving rituals, small groups federated into weaker large ones, tools that ordinary people can fix and use, presence of the wild, love of craft, freedom of women and children, leaders taking the hindmost, etc. Finally though, we don't know how innumerable people in innumerable situations are going to set about organising their lives. And thank God we don't.

On top of this, we face the titanic world-system as it is. Bringing that down and allowing anarchism to grow is obviously impossible for us. As it stands it would take centuries to change our institutions (by some estimates around 400 years to change our energy systems). Add to this the power and extent, not to mention the invasiveness, of the state-corporate technological system and its professional, political and military organs of control, then perhaps multiply by the domesticated passivity, sickness and fear of the masses and lay that against how polluted the planet is, how little tree-cover is left, how much co2 is in the atmosphere, how rapidly the ice-caps and the permafrost

are melting and the oceans heating up, how much time we have left before we run out of oil, rare-earth metals, fresh water, fish and top-soil... then heap on top of all that, if you are capable of perceiving it — and few are — the basic abomination of the world, the depths of dissolution and darkness we now live in, so far from collective intelligence or joy that they appear as dreams within dreams within dreams; if they appear at all. And then, finally, consider what it means to situate all this as a *process*, consider the phenomenal *relentlessness* of the system; how it grows continually, picking up the pieces of failed civilisations and institutions, improving on previous techniques, pushing inexorably onwards, spreading indefatigably outwards, colonising, rationalising, fixing, defining and controlling more and more, and more and more. We are on the edge of doom and the system is not merely growing, it is, like the compound interest that drives it, growing *exponentially*. It never stops, never sleeps and never, ever, gives up — it is the evil, inhuman supermind *par excellence*. It is so complete that just as it makes the most radical of us guilty hypocrites (‘hohoho, look at this radical wearing shoes made in a sweatshop!’), so, as it disintegrates, it suffocates and scatters not just its supporters, but its opponents. The radical, forced like everyone else to suckle from the satanic tit, is not strengthened by the weakness of the system, but weakens with it.

Now, after all this, consider what readjustment can achieve, what reform and change and petitions and marches and newspaper articles can do to stop this leviathan for good, so that it *never* picks up its tools again. *Nothing*. Consider how absurd, how blind, it is to suppose that we can legislate our way out of this, or, even more ridiculously, technologically steer growth down ‘eco-friendly’ channels; indeed that anyone can ever rationally control society. Consider what actually needs to be done to prevent the short-term annihilation of the natural world and, with it, our so-called civilisation which we’ve built upon it; immediate and massive negative growth, re-distribution of wealth and power, colossal scaling back on energy usage and a radical dismantling of the state-corporate system (both capitalist and socialist) — and all of this everywhere, pretty much *immediately*. What needs to be done? The system needs to end. For good. And who is going to do it? We, those of us who understand the problem, or even want to, are laughably, stupendously, weak. A few scattered oddbods set against a mechanism, ten-thousand years in the making, which has invaded every last recess of the natural world and the human mind. It is everywhere at all times, in all people. It is the polluted body, the restless emotion and all thought based thereon. We don’t stand a chance.

We don’t — but I know someone who does!

We have an ally in our long struggle against the Zone of Evil, an ally which is to the system, as the system is to us; unimaginably more powerful. Powerful on an epic, universal scale. This ally goes by a few names, but we’ll use here the least controversial, the one closest to common usage; nature. Nature is a more effective activist than man; and she, unlike us, is not one for discussion. Nature does not vote, or protest, or write

petitions, or form unions, or write stern letters, or launch social media campaigns. She prefers to effortlessly sweep the world away.

The system thinks it understands nature because it can measure and describe every measurable and describable aspect of her; the so-called ‘objective’ world of things and events (external form) and the so-called ‘subjective’ world of thoughts and emotions (internal form). Because it appears, to the system, that everything is form, philosophers of system regularly claim that everything is natural. The word ‘unnatural’ has no meaning for them because they are incapable of experiencing the *principle* of nature, which precedes and comprises form. ‘Natural’ — the natural organisation that anarchists strive to base society upon — describes the consciousness which *precedes* internal form, and the context which *comprises* external form. It is this natural principle which produces the natural wren and guides it to naturally respond to the earwig. Lack of consciousness, and separation from the context, produces the unnatural crop-duster and guides it to respond unnaturally to the earwig.

Natural organisation is impossible for the self-informed mind to grasp. The mind is an *either-or* mechanism. It perceives *either* wave *or* particle, *either* here *or* there, *either* order *or* chaos. Nature, like consciousness, is *both-and*. It is *both* wave *and* particle, *both* here *and* there, *both* ordered *and* chaotic. When the anarchist asserts (*without either-or evidence*) that nature should reign over scientific method, artistic genius, transport, education, farming, city planning or anything else in life, mind — to the extent it is informed by mind (or by the mind-made system) — *objects*. It creates an object of nature; a *thing* over there, dis-ordered, out of control, wild and *chaotic*, which must be tamed, isolated, dominated, *ordered* before we bring it over here. The idea that nature can organise society with the same intelligence and beauty as it organises tree crowns and mycelium networks is *unthinkable*.

The nature that is coming to blow the world away is not, then, merely the formal hurricanes, floods, draught, diseases and freezes that, even as you read, are waiting in the wings, not merely the waves upon waves of displaced people sweeping across the earth or the unimaginable civil warfare soon to come, it is also, and ultimately, the super-intimate natural principle behind this cataclysm. Just bringing down the power lines and blowing away the government is not enough to free the mind. The system penetrates the deepest recesses of the psyche. From the moment it is born, the self is gradually moulded into a system-compliant form; through the corrupting (if well-meaning) influence of family — the erratic, emotional pain, and continual (if unconscious) repression of one’s finer, subtler instincts — through the continual pressures of socialisation to obey, accept, conform and submit, to the requirements of the school, the office, the court, the parliament and the artificial hyperworld they are slowly being absorbed into; through habituation to the totalising simulacrum of the spectacle, continual exposure to its relentless propagandising and surrender to its addictive enticements, all tailored (again, unconsciously) to the particular anxieties and manias of the individual; through a life lived continually in mediated environments, in which no wild nature, no direct truth, no aesthetic profundity and, increasingly, no

reality at all is allowed to penetrate; through total dependency on the system for all its needs, the self slowly turns into an emotionally over-involved, highly abstracted, highly distracted ghost creature, a bland, half-dead, entirely predictable, desensitized, appendage to the system with no way, whatsoever, of discerning that which is not self. Self, in other words, becomes ego, a *self-informed* mental-emotional mechanism which accepts completely the system's determinants of reality. It may rebel against narrow conceptions of 'the system,' it may fantasize about all kinds of artistic and creative freedom, it may invent all manner of fantastic conspiracies to account for its misery and confinement, it may — indeed must — break down or drop out completely, but while the system-ego reigns over conscious experience, the ordinary world forever appears to *be* the ordinary world and not, as it is, every second, a standing invitation to gut-ruptured astonishment and self-shattering psychological liberation.

This profound conditioning not, it is vital to grasp, just an intellectual belief, a question of 'accepting official / social narratives,' (although it is that). Nor are we just talking of the anxiety and craving associated with emotionally-potent sociological conditioning and groupthink (although it is that too). The system-conditioned ego does not just reflexively spout the absurd scientific or religious nonsense of whatever cult, profession or state it belongs to, does not just think, feel or even act as the system does, but *sees and feels* systematically. The *entire self* is colonised. This is how the system — the discrete world of institutions and the diffuse hyperworld of the world brain — appears to merge with nature, with the passing of time. 'It becomes necessity and fate, and is lived through as such;²³ an oppressive, all-consuming, normality. Unlike the normality of nature though, it is alien to us, beyond our capacity to meaningfully experience, influence or understand. In dreams it appears as a monstrous, intangible, dread and yet, upon waking, we defend it with our lives. This is why genuine moments of liberation feel like a kind of dying; because we are not merely overcoming the world out there, but the entire self that creates and sustains it, in here. It is also why, paradoxically, genuinely liberating experiences do not merely amaze the mind and excite the heart, but baffle, delight and stun the natural *body*. Genuinely revolutionary realisations reveal the heartbreaking, radical truth of forms, colours, flavours; of the pressure of the ground under the feet, the taste of sugar on the tongue, the phenomenal, incarnate fact that there is anything at all.

Your sanity certainly depends on your capacity to live, as far as possible, independently from the world-machine, and every step we can take to disrupt its operation or spread understanding of what it is and how it works represents *genuine* progress, the return of the good thing. Debilitating strikes (without reformist demands — simply refusing to clean, for example, wealthy houses, or take their rubbish away), electronic activism which wipes out records (the first and most important act of peasant revolts throughout history), collective refusal to pay rents or loans, disruption of the mechanisms of definition and control, establishing communes (and avoiding activist groups

²³ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

and especially ‘democratic general assemblies’), disseminating the sweet truth and, most effective of all, finding and snapping, or jamming, the weak points that every overextended system creates (while avoiding direct confrontation); these are all meaningful and effective acts, as is learning bicycle maintenance, planting parsnips, distilling whiskey, building a bomb-shelter, making charcoal, learning the bassoon and painting beautiful graffiti on the Thameslink. A committed and intelligent group might even, eventually, at the right moment, be able to deliver a death-blow to the system.²⁴ Engaging in genuinely subversive and system-destructive acts is not an option for the kind and the conscious, merely living in the unworld compels them; but the most widespread revolt and the most meticulous preparation don’t currently stand a peanut’s chance in the monkeyhouse of completely overthrowing the system or responding intelligently to its imminent collapse. Only nature can do that, the self-shattering principle of your *own* nature.

Ultimately this is the only way to overthrow the self-informed system; to overthrow the self-informed self, or ego, which created and sustains it. As more people realise, learn to experience and express their own nature — an event inevitably interpreted as ‘narcissistic’ by the the egoids plugged into the monolith — so the unimaginable power of natural people working freely together — a chaotic, informal, undemocratic, non-centralised, collection of radically natural folk — will inevitably pull the system apart, as it has so many times in the past.

What this radical internal revolution actually means however — while being, in the end, astonishingly simple — is, to the ordinary, systemic mind, an extraordinary odyssey. It is bizarre, ferocious and wonderful. But it requires another book to do justice to. I cover this — ultimate anarchism — in *33 Myths of the Ego*.

Objection 7: Anarchism is insane

Many people refuse politics entirely, never read the news, and believe that, on every subject that comes under the rubric of ‘politics’ — such as immigration, government, money, social class or work — there is very little to say, as it is all complete and utter bullshit. This is pretty much an anarchist position.

²⁴ Kaczynski’s, *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How* provides a good overview of how such a group would need to be constituted and what it would have to do. His criticisms of half-arsed reformism are, as elsewhere, particularly useful. And funny. *But*, as discussed in the notes to myth 32 of *33 Myths of the System*, Kaczynski has close to zero understanding or appreciation of conscious being, or of the role that ego played in forming the system, or plays in maintaining it, or would play in screwing up the potency of a genuinely revolutionary group. Such a group, along the lines that Kaczynski outlines, may be able provide a service to the earth. Who knows? But I wouldn’t endorse it. The kind of group that could really do what needs to be done, and with style, would be far gentler and more playful than Kaczynski seems to think. This doesn’t mean they would be opposed to violence, or be wishy-washy. It means they would be *human*.

There have also been many people in history, indeed for most of history if we look back to the beginning of human experience, who have not had to deal with anything like what we would call politics; with a state, for example, or with professional authority, or with war and taxation and news and technology and whatnot. Among such people are primal hunter-and-gathers, children, animals, plants and every other non-human thing in the universe. They are also anarchists.

Finally there have been people, numerically few, but influential far, far beyond the ambit of their immediate reach, who have refused the moral, intellectual or social authority of their peers and have freely fathomed the depths of their own conscious experience. Such people we call great artists and scientists. These might not be politically anarchist, and their work might be extremely sober and ordered, but in their *approach* to what they do, they were, as Paul Feyerabend has demonstrated, radically libertarian. We sometimes call their work anarchic too; the comedies of Monty Python, for example, the films of Emir Kusturica, the thought of Jiddu Krishnamurti, the Moomin stories, the music of Can, the drawings of Tomi Ungerer; any radical refusal of authority which excites our original, natural instincts greets us as form of anarchism. This is why so many great people are attracted to it. Georges Brassens, Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Blake, Mark Rothko, J.R.R. Tolkien, Lao Tzu, Jesus of Nazareth, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Leo Tolstoy, Albert Einstein and Ghandi all realised, in their own lives, that refusal of all constraint is the only way to further knowledge, experience harmony, live with any integrity or have fun.

This refusal is usually understood as a kind of negativity or as a kind of madness and, *strictly* speaking, that is the case. Anarchism, like that other widely misunderstood idea, nihilism, is largely *defined* by what it is not. But life, the life that anarchists and nihilists revere, is not a definition. Reality, as everyone realises from time to time, is far stranger, subtler and more flexible than what can be said of it.

Anarchism, in the finest sense of the word, resists definition because it claims that the only intelligence, like the only wealth, is life itself — the conscious life of each of us. The reason men and women do not need kings, princes, states, professionals, institutions and systems to rule over them is because the life within them is more intelligent, more apt, more sensitive, more forgiving and more creative than anything else — certainly any human authority. But this life cannot be rationally fixed. It can be expressed, artistically, indirectly, poetically, musically or with tone and glance and such ordinary arts of human interaction, but it cannot be rigidly stated. This is why the ‘beliefs’ of anarchism, as far as direct statements go, are so often negative, why anarchism, like nihilism, is so often dismissed as ‘just being against everything’.

Another reason that people accuse anarchism of nihilism is that anarchism is not a socialist or a capitalist approach to collective problems. The idea is this: ‘You are criticising *our team* (communism, socialism, feminism, the nation, the market, whatever) — therefore *you believe in nothing!*’ The system-state (like the system-institution or the system-corp), and socialist-reformist plans for organising it, is all there is, or can possibly be, forever and ever. Anything else is ‘nihilistic’ (because the system is the

universe) or, alternatively, ‘insane’ (because the system is sanity) or, perhaps, ‘unrealistic’ (because ‘reality’ is the Way Things Are and The Way People Are). Domesticated automatons unconsciously serving a technocratic state (or corporate, or feudal) system forever; *that* is reality. Oppose that, and you are by definition an unrealistic, insane, nihilist.

The egoic mind made the world that dominates us and so to say that we do not really need it quite naturally seems, to the mind, nuts. When pressed on what we *do* need, the answers that anarchists give seem equally absurd; because the egoic mind cannot quite grasp them. This ‘ideological elusiveness’ is, finally, why many people who are anarchists in so much of their lives, refuse to define themselves as such. When they start to *think* about their politics or their culture they find the thinkable; capitalism, socialism, Christianity, humanism, feminism or some other ideology of the system. And when they *think* about anarchism, they find the thoughts that the system has placed there; it seems inhuman, or chaotic, or violent, or parochial, or unrealistic, or uncivilised, or mad.

And yet life is anarchic, and all good things within it; including you. Take a look at your friendships, at your love life, at your attitude to nature, at your creative life (if you have one), at your play. How do you behave, in other words, independently from coercive systems of centralised power and control? Do you base your closest relationships on authoritarian rule? Do you vote when you are out with your friends? Do you write and rigidly enforce laws with your family? Do you refrain from engaging in loving activities until you are properly accredited? Is there *anything* socialist about your natural life? Do you create and jam and play and collaborate together democratically? I don’t think so. There might be the odd ‘show of hands,’ but by far the most generous, the most intelligent and the most enjoyable reality of collective and personal life is without any kind of domination; it lives mysteriously, naturally and spontaneously. Free.

This is why anarchism is the instinct *that won’t go away*. Nature is anarchic, children are anarchic, the free, creative mind is anarchic, all of humanity’s beloved ancestors were somehow anarchic and all of human society, beyond the microscopic bubble of the [corp]state, is and has always been anarchic; hunter-gatherers, friends, lovers and most effective working groups. We are anarchists.

The Choice You Have is between Anarchism and Anarchism

What might a free anarchist society look like today? Imagine if we removed the state and all its laws, dismantled our institutions and corporations, made attendance at school voluntary, opened the prisons, abolished educational qualifications and all professional accreditation, allowed everyone access to all professionally-guarded re-

sources, cancelled all debts, abolished the police, the army, modern industrial technology, money, banks and private property. Imagine, in short, that we lived, now, 'as if the day had come'. It seems to us, considering such a prospect, that the result would be unbelievable chaos and suffering. But, even putting aside the fact that, outside a few comfortable bubbles, the world is *already* unbelievable chaos and suffering, it is still an irrelevant objection; because very soon there will be a crash that will do all this *anyway*. We have the choice between that kind of crash and one we organise ourselves. In either case it will be grim; but I know which one I prefer.

This is an excerpt from *33 Myths of the System*, a hyper-radical guide to the unworld; free to download at <http://expressiveegg.org/portfolio/33-myths-of-the-system/>

Meet Author Darren Allen

Source

Shine: I'm here today with my guest, Darren, who's going to introduce himself to you.

Allen: My name is Darren Allen and I'm an author. My probably my most popular book is 33 myth of the system, but I've written a few others and I guess my thing is well my non fiction thing is annoying as many people as possible. They've got anything to do with the system. But I write novels that kind of stuff.

Shine: I don't quite know where to start, but I'm going to just start with something that's quite recent thing. Yesterday I went. To see Chris Whitty you speak, speak at. Some kind of, I don't know, some kind of college or university. He's a part of about. Diseases, infectious diseases. But there was nothing to do with COVID. It was about. It was a kind of it was a it was a nice low level lecture on diseases, infectious diseases as part of some series of lectures about different types of diseases and how they are, how they are transmitted and how you. Deal with them. And there were probably about 150 people in the room, but there were also have those 20 or so that were with Piers Corbyn and a mob. Yeah. Yeah. Who'd gone to give him a hard time? And I sat there. I was sort of considering before I came in. I was. I was considering saying something in the middle. But I instead just sat there and observed and spent quite a lot of time looking at Wikipedia and online, looking at his information, his history, and to find out as much as I. Could about him writing. About what? Yeah, and observing him and just thinking about him. And there were and. And you know, they kicked off towards the end and people getting really angry, shouting at him. You're killing everyone. you're a murderer. You should go on trial and. And then they started, like chanting. Stop the clot shot. Stop the clot shot. They were just like chanting this. And it was like. I didn't know. You know, I kind of I think. I'd sort of. When I see that kind of thing, I think I'd rather be with the. Camp of the. You know of those who believe in this whole thing and be in the opposition, so to speak, it was like it was quite. Every time I think about someone like Piers Corbyn, it seems like he's he's the perfect opposition, yeah. So yeah. But what I what? What I want to do to share with you is my is my impression of him and I wanted to ask you about. How this can like kind of lead into some of the ideas that you share in your book? 33 myths. So Chris Whitty was. His father was a, I think some kind of diplomat, I think. And he was in.

He was at one stage in Greece. And when Chris Whitty was 17, his father was killed by Palestinian terrorists, which is interesting. I don't think it necessarily means that much, but those that I'm just going to share with you the things that I read that's the cow. Yeah, he there. He went to medical school. He became he was a doctor. He was a practicing Dr. He was an epidemiologist. He got lots of different degrees. Yeah, he's got a huge amount of. He's obviously a very bright and intelligent guy, but. He hasn't got a wife or children. Which you know which is not, is not of its own, is not necessarily a bad thing you know, lots of people will struggle with the wife and children. And there's good things about. I don't. I don't have anything against him, but I think. I think from what I what I saw from him. You know, I wonder whether the reason why he hasn't got a wife and children is because he doesn't know how to. Basically, doesn't really know how to relate to people he's not socially he he's kind of he. He came over as on some kind of spectrum, yeah. Which I think is very interesting. And we'll come back to that in a moment because I think that relates that does relate to some of the fundamentals in your book. And interestingly enough, he has a degree. He has degrees in medical law, he has a degree or some kind of thing in, in, in, in economics. In in the epidemiology and a few other disciplines in in medicine. The other interesting couple of interesting details is that are that he was involved in a project that was funded to the tune of \$30 million. By who else that's called called Bill and Melinda Gates. Plus, he's been in. Working together with Neil Ferguson, who, if you know for anyone not aware of listening to this. Was chosen. I don't know how and I don't know by who. And he was chosen. Even though he's got a record of bad predictions, he was chosen to be the person to rely on with his predictions, which were far, far greater. Then actually happened and because of those predictions. You know Boris Johnson? Well, I don't know because of those predictions, the country was locked down. And so. And he has a relationship with that guy. so I went to see him. And with these guys were in the room and they started shouting and screaming and everything and it was. And he just stood there. He was, you know. He was quite cool about it, right? He stood there and eventually after the second bout of this screaming, he just sort of said I'm going. To stop now. And I'm gonna, I guess when I, you know my first impression and my first thoughts were. He seems like he really seems like a perfectly reasonable guy. He doesn't seem like a psychopath. He seems like a good man. He's he was working out in the COVID. You know, during his bank holidays and Sundays whilst he was the Chief Medical officer. And so. And so how does that? How does he fit in to what I see going on in the world, which is basically an insane? An insane, totalitarian, technocratic. Dystopia and being controlled by. People I don't know who they are. People behind the scenes. You've got all these countries having different versions of their insanity and and yet we've got this guy here who seems very different, for example from Fauci. And he is. I don't know. Is he making the decisions? He's he is seems to be making the decisions. That are. You know locking down everybody, etc. And I just wanted to ask you what your thoughts are on that, how it relates perhaps to your book and your thoughts in general about what's going on?

Allen: First of all, I would I'm not sure I would agree that he seems like a nice, decent, ordinary human being. He looks pretty ghoulish to me and I'm into physiognomy. I'm into a manifestation of character as it appears in in a. Anything you do in your style in your face, those kind of things, the in a sense, the world. World is the physiognomic representation of something that's much deeper and subtler and more interesting, and you can read that through its appearance. And when I look at when I look at that, it's already his name slipped out of my mind. What's his? What's his name again?

Shine: Switchy yeah.

Allen: Now look at Whitey's face. I don't see humanity, flexibility, sensitivity, anything really humanly recognizable. But to the extent that he is a normal guy, I don't know if you've ever seen the documentary fog of war about McNamara. You ever seen that one? Well, he. He's one of the most evil people in history. You know, he's responsible for the death of. Millions of people. In Southeast Asia. And he comes across in that documentary as a pretty normal guy, regular fella. And The thing is, people have a tendency to. Because they know at least people like me and you, we know how evil the system is, how profoundly dark it is. And there's a tendency to kind of anthropomorphize that to, to project it onto people and to assume that there must be these diabolical, fiendish monsters in charge of it, or rubbing their hands with, like, blood red eyes. And serpent tongues and stuff. But that's not how it works. The system itself, as you said, technocratic is basically a machine, and it rewards and can only reward machine like people. People who serve the machine. So it actually. Vivid characters, kind of vivid evil types are not wanted, and they're ridiculed, and they're generally expelled by a mechanistic system. Because they're unpredictable, because they've got character. Kirkegaard once said that there's more good in the demonic man than the trivial man, and that's what he's referring to. It's the trivial man that is who is without qualities that. That feeds this enormous worldly eating machine that we live in, and so people like witty rise to the top through their absence of quality. Through this subservience, basically, and their obedience and their inability to step outside of the frameworks that they're presented. Within those frameworks they've often got. Intelligence, and they're often nice people and friendly and good and sensitive and whatever adjectives you want to add there within those limits, but they never step outside and that's why they can't step outside of it because they don't have the character to do so. That's what character does, it steps outside. And so that's how they rise. And that's how we end up with a world full of mediocrities leading us the further up you go, the more predictably mediocre everybody is until they just become this this homogeneous soup. That's why successful artists successful. Architects, successful politicians, they all sound the same. For that very reason.

Shine: I could imagine him being so convinced. That he knows what he's talking about. Because he's got all these degrees and because he probably is quite, he's got quite a good. It's probably got quite good recall, able to assimilate lots of information. Yeah, because of all that I could imagine him thinking that he actually knows what

he's talking about and he actually in what he's doing and really believing that what he's doing is is right. I don't know.

Allen: what is character like? I say it's stepping out of limits and you can't do that if you are. It the people that are awarded in the system are unable to do that. That's why they're rewarded, genius or character or or creativity or whatever it is, is unpredictable somehow. And those kind of people, those kind of people who succeed are never unpredictable. It's not even an option for them because they're so bound by themselves. They're mechanistic selves. That's how they get up.

Shine: OK. But there are also other types of characters. If you watch this particular show, the COVID show. Yeah, right there. You've got people like Fauci. Who's he? Very different, isn't he?

Allen: No, I don't think so. No, he's a he's a pretty. How is he different?

Shine: I don't know. He just comes over as really he firstly lots of people. I've got a lot of bad things to say about him who've worked with him and you know, and a lot of secondly, a lot of the stuff that he's done. Hey, guys again, there are some really. Big stories about some of the real nasty stuff he's done looking at him personally, personally. Well, look at him. I just see a really shifty, dodgy guy and he's got billions and billions of pounds behind him and he's connected all this money. Whereas Chris, which he doesn't. Have that. So he seems like a very different character than to Chris Whitty.

Allen: OK. So there is. It's not just simply that there are automatons, exactly identical automatons in every. Stationed there are people that are more malicious, but I would put fouchy and witty on the same kind of level. I mean vouchers, snugger and nastier and but they're both mediocrities, I would say, which is why they're up there, OK.

Shine: Is there anything? You would like to talk about or ask.

Allen: Related to COVID and the coronavirus and. All that kind of thing.

Shine: It could be or anything else, yeah.

Allen: Well, you mentioned Piers Corbyn there and the fact that he's like the perfect opposition. And that's something that I spend a fair amount of time thinking about and criticising is the so-called opposition. I've written a thing and wasn't entirely satisfied with it, but anyway I wrote a thing called against conspiracy theories, and I've written a lot of attacks against. the left, the so-called left and the socialist left, and those kind of things, because that's another. It's another, UM, illusion that people easily fall into the idea that, OK, there are these Machiavellian satans in charge, and somehow there's like a good a goody, a goodies team that if we join together with them we can we can. You know, beat Darth Vader and whatever, however else he's imagined they're image. But it's an illusion. It's all part of the same thing I would say you've got the right. Who are the owner? Class who own the machine and then you've got the left. Who are the management class who manage the machine? You've got the owner class. Who are capitalists? That's what capital is, ownership. And then you've got the right. Who are socialists. the sorry, the left through socialists who are more interested in the

Society of the Machine. If you like the collective running of the machine. But it's the same thing. The people ordinary people sway between the two. They're easily that I'm pretty stupid. Let's face it, often. And so they're easily convinced that the Socialists are after my money. And you know they're going to take away my pronouns or what have you on one side. Or on the other, that the Donald Trump's gonna come and take everything away from me. Take away my land and destroy the forest rainforest. And what have you. And so depending on what filter you look through, you see ordinary people as basically right wing idiots or basically left wingers. But I don't think they're either. They're just swayed by these two. Kind of a good cop, bad cop of the system. So when someone like, I mean David Aiken and Piers Corbyn. Are pretty wacky far out leftists, if you can call it that.

Shine: He left this.

Allen: Well, are they? Yeah, exactly. But they're, they're still within the framework of, I would say, within the framework of the of the system. Or rather or no. Maybe I tell you what is a better way to look would be that I can and Corbyn serve as a as exemplars of what isn't the system. They are outside it and look what you get when you're outside. You get these absolute nut cases who believe in the devil and wibble. Bible and you know, they got wild hair. There's a lot of talk about controlled opposition. The idea that these people, I don't think that's true at all. It's just that they're naturally promoted, as you know, because people like you and I, we are kind of in the same category as officially in the same category as I can Corbyn, right? So that.

Shine: But I but like I you know, I wouldn't wanna be. I mean, home will be known. I wouldn't be anywhere near them. I find them. I just don't wanna. Ohh, it's terrible.

Allen: Yeah, yeah.

Shine: Absolutely terrible and embarrassment.

Allen: But that's exactly why they why they are given airtime.

Shine: Right.

Allen: You know what?

Shine: That's why the system. That's why the system is another example, it's another. Example of the system. Attracting and rewarding that kind of thing.

Allen: Yeah, exactly. In this case, they're rewarding a caricature of rebellion or of criticism. So when you get someone like Ian Brown who's criticised the coronavirus narrative, you know when you get him doing something silly on. On Twitter, suddenly he's at the top of the pile and it's. When MPs, what's that ****, Morgan? when he's looking for someone to represent the anti coronavirus crowd. Who do they pick to come onto this morning? Well, of course they pick Corbyn because he looks like such a fool, which is what you know. They've done so much harm. To any decent criticism, these these fellows. Yeah, yeah.

Shine: What about like? I mean, what? What about just very briefly? So it doesn't. Doesn't really. I don't think so much about it, but. But you know, George Soros does have. This open society foundation, which supports all sorts of.

Allen: Ohh yeah.

Shine: Supposedly, you know. Like Big Brother Watch, for example, which is a little organization that goes around complaining about.

Allen: Like Soros?

Shine: Well, he's one of the funders. Yeah, yeah.

Allen: Ohh really? I didn't know that. Yeah. Well, where else is he? Fun then. Oh.

Shine: Loads of like human rights type things, but I know from from sources that are are you know that have been at the wrong end of George Soros, that he he's. I don't know. He's just the really dark character and he's not really interested in human rights. That's not really his thing.

Allen: Right.

Shine: So there. So it does seem to be some kind of. You know, controlled opposition in some ways, I think there may be a. Mixture of you know, some of the opposition's controlled and some of it you know. So it's paid. For and some of it like Corbyn doesn't even need to be. Paid for, it comes for free.

Allen: Yeah, absolutely, yeah. And but this makes me think actually when you say that about Soros, of course he is dark, isn't he? There are when I was saying that thing, the stuff earlier on about UM devilish types. It's it it. Perhaps you could see it as a continuum between. Devils and machines, basically. That's what the machine you got the devils at the top, and then you got the machines underneath them. So you've got witty as a kind of a machine type fella and fouché and Soros as a as a as a more calculating. I hesitate to say reptile because you know immediately. Think of David. Icke, but as you know, as one of these really alien. Yeah, vicious people. But yeah, I didn't know that about. So I mean, what do you think is his he what? Why do you think he funds all those, all that stuff then, but in order to control them and to create a false opposition.

Shine: I mean. I don't. I don't know. I don't know how these people's minds work, but I mean, if I was like if I was, if I was right at the top of the ladder and I was trying to peddle my ideas. Yeah. Yeah. I would definitely want to ensure that any opposition there is to any of my ideas that I was funding that opposition to make sure that they didn't do anything that actually got in the way. What I was of what I was doing and that instead they were paid to complain about it. You know which is what a lot of these things do. They just complain or whatever. They're just a voice. So, like, Big Brother Watch done. Nothing to stop anything that's going. So I guess I would, yeah. Or I if I if I wanted my ideas to be implemented. Yeah, I think I would. but I don't think that would be. Again, I don't think some people don't need to be. They don't need to be financed, you know.

Allen: Right.

Shine: So yeah.

Allen: I'd agree, yeah, mostly. It's just they just let them let them speak those that they know are not fundamentally going to change anything. But most of this thing, the important thing to understand, I think is most of this thing happens. Semi

automatically, and certainly unconsciously. You know people like Soros. There are people with some intelligence making intelligent plans and putting things in place, but that kind of the reason why I wrote that against conspiracy theories thing is that is not that they don't exist because they do and it's important to. Expose them where possible and to you know to think about them. But it's much more important to understand how it works automatically and to understand how the technocrat system functions autonomy. Rather than to focus on all these figureheads, because what happens if you get rid of these figureheads? Nothing at all whatsoever. Nothing will happen. If you got. Rid of every single billionaire in the world. It would change nothing. At all, because the system. That's why Marxism can't possibly work because it doesn't have a sensible critique of the technocratic system itself. How are you going to freely and generously and spontaneously, run? IKEA factories and you know, container ships and the whole machinery of the system. How are you going to? Run that. Freely by ordinary people, the system itself is organized structurally so that a management of bureaucratic, technocratic management. Us run it. That's the only way it can work. It doesn't matter what figureheads you change, who you vote in, none of that matters, of course. I feel some despair that good, decent people who are alive to this. Horror that we're rapidly plummeting, plummeting into are so focused on you know the baddies and on capitalism and on you know, these figureheads. Fair enough. Yeah, they are. They do exist, but until you start seriously thinking about. How are we going to sort out this system? We'll get nowhere.

Shine: Well, when you. Say I was surprised you just said about capitalism. Isn't it capitalism that you're talking about? Being the problem.

Allen: No, absolutely not. Capitalism is just the ideology of the owner club. Us we are in a capitalist system more than we are in a socialist system, but the management class and the management of the system and the state is fundamentally socialist. It's basically a socialist organisation existing within capitalism. The two work together. So you know when people say they want a socialist revolution or communist revolution, they just want the state to engulf capital. But there is already a state and it does already have socialist elements. There's an enormous number of socialists and communists in positions of power. Loosely, we could just say leftists. You know in in the in education, in academia, in medicine, in it's kind of colonised in many respects by leftists, by vaguely socialist people. So it's a mistake to attack capitalism. The whole thing. The whole system needs to. Needs to be targeted.

Shine: Yeah, I find this difficult to understand because I've spent so much of my time and my life, not so much. But I've got a fair amount of energy. But before I got into my latest. Mishigas, as we call it in Yiddish, my latest nonsense of antinatalism, which I've now called something else. But that's another matter. We'll get back that, perhaps. But you know, I spent a lot of my time making fun of capitalism, and about maybe, I don't know enough about really what really capitalism is and what really. Socialism is I've never really read a lot about it, so I maybe I don't know what they are, but I guess I've been making fun of the. Critiquing the whole idea of. The whole

idea of ownership, even really the whole idea of ownership, the idea of and the idea on all the violence, that's inherent in the system and in capitalism. You know, or the waste, the wastefulness of it all. It's just incredibly wasteful. All the all, all the. All the damage that it encourages the damage to. Our well-being. You know, so many people spend their lives. Doing creating things that are to the detriment of the of the health of people just so that it can make money. Questioning and questioning the whole idea of money itself, ownership and then money. And the OR what you know, and the illusion of money. So that. Yeah, and that's so that's why I kind of find it difficult to get my head around exactly what you're saying.

Allen: But you're you're. That's all fair enough. So have I. but have you also been criticising or I should say, why have you not been criticising at the same time the power of doctors, lawyers, the professional? Class manage the management class, their power to steal ordinary human beings experience away from them. Their power to manipulate information, to control information, to control the flow of information between people, to reduce them to the status of clients, to remove the tools that they need to live, to exclude them from their own culture. All of these things, and many, many more. That's not they're not really capitalist problems. They've got nothing to do with ownership. They're all problems connected to the management class, the technical class. That are in control of the machine through understanding how it works and tinkering with it and repairing it and fixing it up and. All that kind of stuff, what you're focusing on is great. It's all horror and it's and it's it encompasses the world. But the socialist side, the lefty side, the leftist side, is part of it as well. And if you only focus on one side, you're just going to let the other side take over. Nothing's going to change. I would say.

Shine: OK. I mean, there's a lot to. Think about there. Can you take me a bit more through what you meant by? By the power, I mean doctors for sure. I mean the power doctors have, especially with this, this situation is just. It's beyond belief. It's in absolute insanity. Yeah, so that's I can see that that's not really anything to do with. Capitalism well, though there are, there are a lot of issues with within capitalism. I mean they're big Pharma and the money being made is. Is a huge problem in medicine. Yeah, but leaving that outside for the moment, these doctors do have this crazy amount of power, which is madness to what? Because they've. And a few years. Studying the body and few years studying medicine, they many of them to have any idea about what real health is all about. so can you explain? How that is? I don't really understand that.

Allen: Well, socialism is it is it it? It provides people with these kind of slogans that bewitched them, that socialism was all about people taking care of each other and looking after each other and. From each according to his ability to each according to his needs. All that kind of. Stuff which all sounds fine and marks the prototypical socialist would often spout that kind of stuff as well, but that's just the PR really. The fact of socialism is in. Or left. ISM is in what socialists and leftists actually do, who they actually are and what they actually do, including marks himself and his

factory owning mate, Engles. They are all professionals. They are the professional class. They're the management class. They're the highly educated class, they're the technicians of the machine. No socialist would ever describe themselves in the terms that I do. Of course they would go on about class, class war and dialectics and getting rid of Bezos and blah blah blah, which is all fine capitalism. But what they actually do. And who they actually are is. Technicians, managers, the managers and machine, and that's what socialism is. They call what they call society the society part of the social ISM. Is really the machine of society which they just want to organise. And continue organising as they already are really, but just have to have more power. You know, so when there's a genuine rebellion from the people, right? When there's when the people are pushed. To the wall and they revolt. What socialists tend to do is come along at the head of the crowd and say, well, let us organise this. We'll write your newspapers. You need a doctor. You know, people like Lenin come along and basically take the credit for popular movements, popular uprising. Things at the moment what we've seen with this coronavirus thing is that fact exposed very, very clearly because this has been essentially a working class rebellion. Frankly, it's the working class that speaking on you, it's the working class that are refusing. Vaccines and green passes and all the rest of it. Right, basically.

Shine: I don't know. I'm not entirely sure I. Didn't know that.

Allen: Yeah, yeah, more far more than the middle class. And the left. The so-called left have done nothing. Where have they been? They've been nowhere. They've been, they have not been interested in a radical. I mean this has been, should should be on paper, the perfect time for the Communist Socialist Group to stand up and and. OK, great. We can dismantle the system now and let's get something that really might work for ordinary people going. But no, they've all. Gone along with it. They've all supported it. The you know the great anarchist. Except he's not an anarchist socialist. Noam Chomsky. Let's ***** kill these people who don't want to be vaccinated. Let let them starve. And the list is enormous of the of the so-called socialist left, it couldn't be clearer now what I'm saying.

Shine: If I had Chris Witty in a room, one of the many questions I would ask him is how can anybody? Believe that they have enough information. To be able to make a decision like locking millions of people down because surely you'd have to have understanding in virology, epidemiology, medicine, psychology, political science. Yeah, I mean that just to name a few. Yeah you'd have to have a really. You'd have to have a hopefully a really good grasp of kind of complex systems and how they work because you make a decision like that. It affects so many different things, and in so many different ways, and it you know what? How does it affect people in different countries and how does it, you know it's very, very complicated decision. How can you possibly? I was asking how can you possibly think that you. That you that you know the answer to that.

Allen: Well, there there's. There were famously famously no. What do they call those things? The cost benefit analysis or risk analysis? Something like that. Yeah,

there, there were none. Were they? Yeah, there were none, were there? They did. They did none. They didn't. They didn't. There's there's no evidence that they did. Think about it at all. But yeah, you're right. You'd have to be some kind of. God, or at least. You know. You don't have a lot of smart people working out and seriously considering it, and that's certainly that didn't happen did.

Shine: Yeah, the reason why I asked you in particular is because. One of the. Things I got from the book, 33 myths is that. The system. Get the system kind of attracts. More people with more and more specific skill sets, yeah.

Allen: Oh, right.

Shine: That that thing can you just share with us what you what you discovered or what you what you sharing in the book about that kind of thing?

Allen: Well, machines, they don't run on. Spontaneous border fluid elements rolling around in some kind of fractal pattern. That's not how machines work, is it? It's discrete, specialized components, interacting cordially with other discrete specialized components. That's how machines. Work and that's exactly how the machine of society works. So you can only fit into the machine through your specialist power. The more you specialize, the more you are of use to you know, specialize in the direction of whatever component is needed. The more you're of use to the system, the more you cross borders, the more you spontaneously behave in a non predictable manner. The more you are genuinely creative coming up with totally brand new ideas, the more of a generalist you are. The more you apply yourself to the real world, the natural world, which is not a specialised experience, you know an ordinary human being living close to nature has to have a massive variety of skills and sensitivities. The more the more your human being, the less you can fit into the machine. You have to go down one ever narrowing channel until you are. An expert in. You know, nose, throat and with the ear, nose and throat, I think was one of them, isn't it? I mean, Can you imagine it your whole life? Get knowing more and more and more about the ear, the. Nose and the throat. And that's all you. That's all that the system wants you to do in every sphere.

Shine: Yeah, yeah. OK. Is there anything else that you want to talk about? Let's, let's stick with Corona for the moment. Is there anything else you want to say about that or that you think about that before I ask you the next question?

Allen: All right. Well, the last thing I suppose I'd like to say is that I'm thinking about the moment is that the left I mentioned earlier on that the left were they were absent without leave. Exposed to their fundamentally system friendly priorities, that is starting to change and it will change more and more, they'll start creeping back in and start to take up once once it becomes unignorable dystopia, they'll they'll be on their way back, and then we'll start seeing mayor culpas. I doubt. On that. But you know, we'll start to see. Yeah, yeah, it's this. This is this. I'm not sure about this. This is. I don't. I can't hear, you know.

Shine: Well, I mean. You saw what was happening in Austria, right? No, no, not one world leader has seemed to have a problem with it.

Allen: No, no, but not even you know very, very few leftist commentators. That's the extraordinary thing to me like Chomsky or Caitlin Johnston or. Even about Austria. He's grieving with it.

Shine: And Caitlin Johnston is groovy with it.

Allen: As well. Well, she was asked recently on social media whether she I read a comment about her and refusing to join the protests in Australia because it's quite non QA non. I don't know how to say it and never seen it. Written is.

Shine: Extension Qi know.

Allen: It Quan non QA, non yeah. That, yeah, it's just a basic load of Trump, Trump. Trump crowd not getting involved. Yeah, but they'll they'll slowly start to come back and then hopefully enough people have seen through them by now. that's all I can hope. And yeah, that's my final comment there is. Cause which leads.

Shine: Me on to the you know the next question which I think about every single day. What, if anything? Can I do about it? Can you do about it? You know, sometimes I feel really frustrated because I've been able to project or see what's what, what's coming and. I haven't done anything about it, so I don't really know what to do about it. You know what? One of the things all I've done is start carried on making videos, but you know I don't think they do anything really and but. But one of the things that I think about and don't do anything. The only thing about is like moving somewhere. And creating a different type of life with like minded people. My problem with that is that I don't know many like minded people because my ideas are so nuts that yeah, I don't. I don't really feel. At home with a lot of the people who are in the protest movement, I a lot of them, I don't. UM. I feel drawn to them a little bit and sometimes hang out with them, but I don't feel yeah, I don't feel really at home with them I've got all my anti natalist ideas, which is not very popular. So I don't know that many people I do have one friend that I think I could create something with, but yeah, So what are your thoughts about? What we can do about it, you know?

Allen: Well, we can't do anything. I don't think as far as the system goes, it's unreformable that's for certain. As far as giving. People, anyone listening to this who I don't know any advice about what they should do or what their solutions are. I can't do it because I don't know them and I think the only solution that's that's of any value to people generally is something that that inspires them. You know, I think music or just inspiring ideas. In themselves, or even a passionate criticism of the system, negative, positive, whatever it is, something that makes you feel alive. Inspires you to live your life in a way that's freer, and then you know what you can do with that. Whereas if you give somebody a path or a let's do this. Let's get that. Let's organise it. You're already on a path again, which is not gonna lead you off the path. That's where you want to be. It's free, I would say. Not that there aren't tips and advice, and you know if you've got the opportunity, maybe you can do. This you know someone. If someone who's listening to this, for example, was in a. I don't know. Had some power over some central computer system that we all use and they were able to do something superbly disruptive with it. Well, I mean I have too much skin. I'm not a computer expert. I

don't know how they could do it, but you know, if they're listening to what I'm saying, hopefully they'd be inspired to do something pretty superb with their position, right. As far as you and I go, what can we do? We just have to live as, as, as vividly as we can free of it. If that means going somewhere off grid with a small group of people. That has its own problems, as you know. And they're not just ideological problems. I mean, it's who's gonna do the ***** washing up. And who's gonna have a Moody and ohh it turns out that this guy actually is a right weirdo under these circumstances. And you know, human problems which have got nothing to do with what we've been talking about. You know, novels are a much better, more instructive source of information than than anything you can read about in nonfiction. I would say there. But yeah, there's all kinds of problem. Basically you have to live not just among like minded people, but sufficiently. Sensitive, fluid, selfless. You know you need all these other qualities. I think personally, if I had the. Meaning the a sufficient reach and enough power or money to buy land. I think I could probably do it. Personally, I could somehow find enough people for it to work, but I've got ***** all. I'm just, I'm running in reading, mate. I've got no chance. So all I can do is do what I love personally, and I love writing, and I love doing what I do. I don't, I'm not affiliated with anybody. Neither are you. You're able to put. You know when we first met, you said you asked me, you know what, I. Think of your work. And the only value in it really is that it is coming from somewhere that is has got absolutely nothing to do with the system essentially, even though I don't agree with your antinatalism thing so much and even I've got this criticism that criticism it's. You know, even though I could say this thing, that thing, it's basically an expression of freedom. And so whatever you can do to express your freedom if you can't find a castle in Scotland or whatever, that's the only solution that I can think of for ordinary people. But God knows for specifics.

Anarcho-Primitivism

Shine: OK, I'm. I'm going to also. I also know that you have. That you do have an idea which you think could work in a small group, right? And that is primitive...

Allen: Anarcho primitivism. Yeah, well...

Shine: Could you just share briefly about that. Can you? You don't have to.

Allen: No. Of course I can, but it's not a question of... anarcho-primitivism is not a question of taking all your clothes off and going into a rainforest, and hunting peccaries for the rest of your life. It's that's. Enable and archive PRISM is essentially gaining inspiration from the only sane groups of people that they have ever lived. And that means small groups, soft egos or soft selves. Certain kinds of rituals that do soften the self, certain you can't organize these things, they can't be managed, but they have to be. There has to be some kind of culture. Of mockery, for example, has to be an important part. If people can't be mocked, not nastily, but if their selves can't be taken

down when they try and put themselves higher. They can't fit really into a functioning group and many other things besides. I mean as low, lowest level of technology possible. Again, in the people that we are now, we're domestic undomesticated to a large degree. I use technology, I have to. But it's still possible to reduce technology down as low as you possibly can get it so that you're not dominated by it. So you're not enslaved by it, so that you're not abstracted and alienated by it. And various other things are fundamentally an anarcho, primitivist mindset rather than mimicking tribes in the rainforest as impossible is a pre requisite for a functioning community. Undoubtedly, I would say, yeah, that's why I call myself a narco. Primitivist yeah.

Shine: When you say small group. What do you mean by that?

Allen: Well, there there's a there was a famous anthropologist called Robin Dunbar who came up with the what's now called the Dunbar number or Dunbar groups, which is the optimum size for human society. Which is around 120, something like that. David Graeber. I'm currently writing a long criticism of his last book, kind of mocks that or dismisses it because we're capable, he says of imagining large groups. And we're always going to be part of humanity, which is large, which is true. But as far as the practical facts go. 120. Seems to be about the right.

Shine: OK, I guess and what about and what about if you if you? Have a lot. Less than that, or is or is. That is, that is that optimum because. Because you need, you need to have lots and lots of different skills.

Allen: Yes, but I think it's kind of it's about the limits of human. Psychological imagination. Something like that. You know, I mean, when I think back, for example, when I was at school in university. Maybe it was the same for you. How many people did you know then? Roughly when you were in school? It was probably about that much, even though it was only a very small group of intimate friends. It felt like it feels to me like about 120 was. With this, my sphere of influence, I think that's probably a human limit. Who know? Whether it's possible with a smaller group, well, it kind of has to be, doesn't it?

Shine: Mean I'd I has to start off like that anyway never going to be able to start with 100.

Allen: And 20 people, that's for sure. The other thing is, is, as I've also said recently, is that. That's where we do live. Now we do live in groups of 1234 in our houses at the moment. That is a place where we can, I mean, I do live in an anarchist paradise, an anarcho primitivist paradise to some degree. I live well with my wife and we work together well. And it's a good house. And there's no democracy there. There's no hierarchies. I don't tell her what to do. She doesn't tell me what to do or when we do, there's a playfulness to it. You know she can tell me to *****, but otherwise we can order each other around in that sense. There's a fluid fluidity to it. There is a sense of ohh good. I'm sorry I've been such a knob and an ability to instantly forget that although all those things, human things that you need. You do have a we all have. An environment where those are practicable and you and you can live could always be

better, but you can live well enough. That way I know because I do so if it's possible too, it's possible with 8/18/20.

Shine: OK finally I'm. From my point of view you may have something else to say, but finally I would like to talk to you again about what I describe now as Preventionist M which is instead of calling it antinatalism I call it preventionist M which I personally define as preventing unnecessary suffering, yeah.

Allen: OK.

Shine: and what I like about that is that that leaves some room for everybody to decide. If they if they kind of resonate with the with this these ideas. For them to decide what that what you know how they understand unnecessary and how they understand suffering. But the principle of the matter is, is that. I you know, I would say that at the moment I'm going through a phase of suffering based ethics being speaking to me. Yeah, suffering based ethics is basically the group of I don't know a lot about this, but it's the it's the kind of overall term for anybody that is that whose ethics are focused on suffering. And you know, like utilitarian and antinatalist and various different. Different groups. So for me. That I value that I think philosophically I value it whether I actually practice it in my life. As another matter, I don't. I don't really if I think about it, but I'm guilty. I guess of not really necessarily doing everything in my power to. To reduce unnecessary suffering, but it's certainly in my mind. It's in my thinking. I think it's a very I think it just makes sense to me that you know that I would. That's what I would like. I'd like to prevent unnecessary suffering and. Me creating human life is unnecessary, yeah. and therefore, therefore, the suffering that is will is inevitable is never going to be part of that human life is also unnecessary right now. I know you. You had the wisdom to realize that if, in order to be. To be to have a greater degree of freedom that you couldn't really achieve. That or it would be much, much more difficult to achieve that if you were to procreate and you. Chose not to. Yeah, but. You know, but I what? I still find quite difficult to understand is especially in this time. Why would why would anybody bring more life into existence from the point of view of the of the child being into this? Crazy unknown. Why would anybody do that? I can't understand how that could be permitted even.

Allen: Well, people are. They're eternal optimists, aren't they? A lot of. People, I mean. They certainly don't see it that. Way they just assume that children are great and it's great to be around children and if they have children then the greatness of their life will somehow increase. I think that's in some way how most people think about it, and I don't think that's ever going to change. Unfortunately, personally I agree to the degree. Well, I don't have a child. Yeah, I mean, it's not. I didn't. I didn't reason it out that way. I have other priorities and I couldn't do it with children. Now, I don't think I'd have children because if I had a child, it would suffer for the reasons that you say I'd have to put it through school and it would be horrific. It would be appalling. So I agree with you on in that respect as well. But if I had enough power, I guess, or if I had, if I was independent enough from the system. Then I'd have kids if I was able to have children around in a community. Thought as we just spoke of. I'd

do it because in in an intelligent and free human society. There I don't think there are those kind of problems. Do you?

Shine: Well, you see, I see. What you're saying to some extent brings up some disturbance in me and some sadness in me because, because I kind of, you know. I said earlier on that I have this fantasy of creating some kind of space that's outside as much as the system as possible, but not necessarily completely outside the system and. And now that you say that it's like, I feel like I couldn't. I couldn't include you in those plans because.

Allen: Well, because I might have kids. Yeah. And ruin it? Yeah. Well, I don't think that's gonna happen now, but.

Shine: No, it's like because also because I think what you're what you know what? Whilst I agree with you that the you know that the if you had a child, now you know you'd be bringing it into this crazy dystopia and the school would be awful and just the whole thing would just be completely mad. I think that bringing someone into into a body, into the human body is. It's just not. It's not acceptable because the human body is just. It's just so badly designed.

Allen: No, no, I don't that that's not true. I mean it's life is contains an enormous amount of pain, right. But as the question is posed in the brothers Kasimov, right. Does that mean you accept the ticket or do you refuse the ticket right if you know that there's that amount of pain and suffering and misery. Would you have refused to have lived at all? Would you have given up the whole thing yourself? Would you have nullified everything that you've experienced? For me, no way it's worth it. Even if it got much, much worse. And I've had I'm not. I'm not a martyr. I haven't had a fascinating life, but I've definitely had my fair share. Right? and I don't. I don't begrudge that at all.

Shine: See, I don't know. It's a difficult one. The problem is that I firstly the problem is from my point of view, the problem is that I. I've had a very privileged life. I really haven't had that much to contend with. So that's number one. Having said that. I don't think it's just about me. It's also about what effect I've had in the world. Yeah, now, you could argue that I've had you. Maybe I could argue that I've had a net positive effect in the world because I create in the entertainment business for a long time. A lot of people are really happy. Now that I've done my YouTube things etc. But at the same time I've also been complicit in some in in the abuse of animals, the abuse of humans along the way. So there's that. But there's also there's also. There's also another. I see I have a. Different question, in other words. If I if I look if I was. If you know, let's just I'm. I'm not really into the idea of God and the soul. Right. But let's just assume there's a soul. And let's assume there's. A God, yeah. And that you know. Janet and David Shine right, were like getting a bit *****. Nine months? Yeah, nine months before I was born. And you know, God came to my soul and said, listen, your potential mum and dad are getting a bit ***** tonight. And you know, we always have had a tradition here on Earth that we give you the choice whether you want to come in. Yeah, and my soul would say, well, tell me about tell me what, what am I getting

myself into? Yeah, yeah. And you know, and because my soul is so sophisticated and brilliant, it's sat down in front of this in sat in front of this whole series of screens. and is able to absorb, you know? Yeah it was able to absorb 80 years of experience from hundreds and hundreds of different possibilities. Yeah, and watch them all. And then say, well, yeah, this is what you're in for. You could be a woman, you could be a man, you could be disabled, you could be not you. Be rich, be poor. The the. Yeah, I would certainly have said no way. I'm not. I'm not going for that game. No, thank you. I'm not taking a risk with being disabled or or having a disabled child.

Allen: OK.

Shine: You know, however much you know, I hope that's not offensive to anyone. But I. Just it was hard enough coping with people with my children who were able bodied, you know.

Allen: Well, I've got two things to say about that. Firstly, although this would take us into a long detour which we don't have time for, but your that the whole picture that you've just given there is very rational. And utilitarian, you mentioned that word, which I oppose tooth and nail. That's not what life is. These rational assessments of good and bad and passing them up and adding them up and. And you also great image and everything and it's an interesting thought experiment, but it's interesting that you present the possibility as screens and as discrete rational ideas that a soul would rationally assess, which again is not. I would say not what life is about at all, and certainly not what morality is about, but that's another that's a long, long discussion. There more importantly though. What about your life? I mean, forget all those other options that you could imagine. Would you choose to wink out your own existence now and it for it never to have happened, not only for you to die if I could give you the choice now, would there be no pain involved? You would simply cease to exist. Would you accept that?

Shine: I and you're and. You're saying like and. And let's say you somehow nobody else would be nobody else would be hurt by it. It's a very difficult question. I don't know. I really I'm going to think about that. Because I haven't obviously people all the time say, why don't you commit suicide? I must be probably the person in the world that that most have been. Asked that like. Which is an interesting accolade but and yeah, but I always answer them saying, well, there's I have a good life. And that there's people that rely on me, and I've had these children, so I need to think about them and that. but you're asking like, let's just assume that wasn't the problem. Would I do that? It's a question I definitely want to meditate. Yeah, it's a good question. and it's like and it's like it, it's interesting because. You know, I kind of claim that I that I'm open and I'm open to this to this idea being challenged. And I and you are quite challenging and I'm I find you quite challenging. To this to this particular idea. Because you're. Yeah, because of what you say. And that again, that will be a long discussion where you can have another time. But yeah, I'm definitely going to think about all of the. Points that you've made.

Allen: Well, as I say, 2 aspects of antinatalism what you prevent it? I totally dig. I like it. But the essence of it, I don't. And the other thing that it reminds me of, which is the last thing I guess I'd like to say about it, is that. Do you have you heard of UG Krishnamurti? Yeah, not judo. The other one. the really aggressive anti everything guy. He's very funny, fella. I find. Well, one guy asks him once what's what happens when you die or what's the point of something like that. And he says it's only people that don't live that ask that question. And I would say the same about doubting whether it's worth extinguishing your life. You know, it's not a question of. It's not a question of it's not a rational question, it's how much have you lived and how much can you live can. You live more. And the more you live, what kind of response would you give then? You might now think being a bit despondent and being a bit miserable, and are probably not contributed that much. And my kids are a bit sucked up and what have you, you might think. Ohh yeah. OK, I'll take the ticket out. But what if you're really living? What if you're living in that, that independent situation that we just talked about? What if you're being even more radical than you're being? What if you're really blasting away? Whatever doors that you've got closed in your consciousness, do you think you'd give the same answer then? I don't think so.

Shine: OK, I hear you. It's always great to be left with things to think about. So thank you very much. It's been a great discussion and hopefully we'll have another one sometime.

Allen: Yeah, that was that was that was great. I particularly enjoyed gatecrashing the rehearsal at the Festival Hall. Thanks very much.

A critique of his ideas & actions.



A text dump on Darren Allen

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