

Anarludichism – an ideology based on free play June 2008

This paper sets out to briefly describe how the ideology of Anarludichism has evolved and set the foundation for future papers and articles to elaborate on this developing ideology. To begin with, it is worth clarifying what is meant by an ideology. Vincent (1992) states an ideology:

“Denote the ideas of a political party, a total metaphysical world-view or human consciousness in general, encompassing all beliefs, including art and science.” (p16).

I am going to add to Vincent’s art and science the concept of ‘free play’¹. It has been argued that the term ‘free play’ should be a redundant term and that *“play itself be commonly understood”* (Melville 2007: p7). However I believe free play is its own concept that runs in conjunction with the concept of play, which is considered to be a biological drive (Hughes 2001) (Sturrock & Else 1998) and what Bruce (1994) defines as ‘free flow play’². The interplay between the child’s play (biological drive) and free play (the six factors of organization, goals, time, freedom, spontaneity and choice) results in Bruce’s free flow play and is shown in the equation below:

$$\text{Play} + \text{Free Play} = \text{Free Flow Play}$$

(King 2005)

Bruce explains that during free flow play the child *“can take the responsibility... is in control, adults do not need to control”* (1994: p191). The notion of the child taking control of their play, without the need of a controlling adult, has a strong affinity to the concept of the adult taking control of their life without the controlling force of any government – Anarchism.

Anarchism can be divided into seven schools of thought, which includes: Individual Anarchism (Stirner); Mutualistic Anarchism (Proudhon); Collectivism (Bakunin) and Anarchist Communism (Kropotkin) (Woodstock 1962: p17-19). Definitions of Anarchism vary depending on the school of thought and whose definition you are reading. Within the various definitions of Anarchism six factors have been identified (King 2005). These themes are spontaneity, time, goals, choice, freedom and organisation. These are the same six factors that have been identified that make up free play.

Links between Anarchism and children’s play have been made in the past. In his work on ‘Ideas of Social Organization’ (1876) James Guillaume stated that up to twelve years of age *“children will be completely free, they themselves will organise their games, their get-togethers and will establish a panel to oversee their work and arbitrators to resolve squabbles”* (Guérin 1998: p222). More recently, Ward stated that the adventure playground movement that arose in the fifties and sixties *“were a kind of parable of anarchy, a free society in miniature”* (Ward: 1961, 1973: p92). The values and beliefs that make up the ideology of Anarchism (six factors) where adults are taking control of their lives are the same principles that children have in controlling their free play (children controlling their six factors). In turn, children controlling their free play are thus controlling their lives. Therefore it can be inferred that within an ideology the ‘human consciousness encompassing all beliefs’ that exist in Anarchism are linked to those of free play in childhood, i.e. the six factors of free play.

I offer an ideology of children controlling their lives through their free play which I have termed ‘Anarludichism’ based on ‘ludic,’ a Latin term which translates as ‘I Play’ (Sturrock 2001) and on Kropotkin’s definition of Anarchism³.

¹ “Pure free play is where the individual person (child, young person or adult) through the interplay of all their powers (body and mind) has complete internal and external control of the organisation, goals, time, freedom, spontaneity and choice of their play” (King, 2005, 2007)

² Free Flow Play is the *“wallowing in past experiences + technical prowess, competence, mastery + control acquired”* (Bruce: 1997)

³Kropotkin’s definition of Anarchism is “A name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government-harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilised being” (Shatz 1971: pxi)

Anarludichism:

The theory of a person controlling their free play not by submission to other people, organisations or society but by the free agreements concluded between the individual and other persons that is freely constituted for the sake of satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of the playing person

Anarludichist:

A person playing who is in complete control of their free play and thus controlling their life through free play

Vincent stated that the ideology of anarchism is around “*lives (mistakenly) in a world of principled ideological dreams, which cannot be put into practice*” (1992 pp18-19). This could also apply to the proposed ideology of Anarludichism where children’s control of their six factors of free play, and thus their lives, is in a power struggle with Adults, Organizations and Society (King 2007). However, observing children playing, often against the pressure of over-controlling adults, demonstrates that the instinct to play and control their ‘intent of their play’ is an ideological reality, which can be, and is often put into practice. Pressure from society and their aims of children as ‘economic packages for later life’, and the role organizations and adults play in supporting societal aims makes the need for Anarludichism to be an ideology that starts during childhood and continues right through adulthood.

A clear example of Anarludichism from childhood through to adulthood can be found in Harpo Marx’s autobiography ‘Harpo Speaks’ (1961). Harpo reflects on his humble beginnings to becoming a member in one of America’s influential social circles during the 1920’s:

“Basically, the only way I had changed in twenty years was to move down the East Side from 93rd Street to 57th Street. I still lived from day to day, and had fun wherever I could find it. I made no bones about the fact that I’d rather play games than work. Now, at last, I had enough time to play, and enough money. I had begun to pay myself back with interest for everything I’d missed out on when I was a kid. I wasn’t having a second childhood. It was my first real childhood. The crazy part of it was, I was spending it as a member of the Woollcott gang, hanging out with the brightest and most famous delinquents of the 1920”.

(Harpo Marx 1961: pp178-179)

How children control their free play and the spaces they utilize will be discussed in future papers with reference to concepts such as the Temporary Autonomous Zone (Bey 1995), Individual Anarchism, Individual Psychology, Environmental Psychology, Health Psychology. Hopefully this brief paper has provided a basis to develop the ideology of Anarludichism.

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