

THE ABSENCE OF A RULER TELLING ONE WHAT TO DO

„I think it only makes sense to seek out and identify structures of authority, hierarchy, and domination in every aspect of life and to challenge them. Unless a justification for them can be given, they are illegitimate and should be dismantled to increase the scope of human freedom. That includes political power, ownership and management, relations among men and women, parents and children, our control over the fate of future generations (the basic moral imperative behind the environmental movement, in my view), and much else. Naturally this means a challenge to the huge institutions of coercion and control: the state, the unaccountable private tyrannies that control most of the domestic and international economy, and so on. But not only these. That is what I have always understood to be the essence of anarchism: the conviction that the burden of proof has to be placed on authority and that it should be dismantled if that burden cannot be met. Sometimes the burden can be met“
(Chomsky 1995, quoted in Doyle 2001: 435–436).

Anarchism as a political or social theory has received little attention in academic writing. It is mostly related to prejudices, such as infantility, brute violence, and simple chaos within the academia (Graeber 2004). From this point, Graeber (2004) in his „Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology“ argues against the common misunderstanding, that anarchy should not be perceived as a system that is to replace government, but more as a collection of very pragmatic and local approaches of „remaining under the radar“ (ibid.), or staying away from nation state rule. He therefore sees a chance for the development of a „theory of political entities that are not states“ (ibid. 68) by the discipline of anthropology, which in his words has the tradition and the tools to study „the common property of human kind“ (ibid. 94). Anthropologists, who have studied parts of the world in which states have failed in their function or simply left, he argues, have actually documented societies that had to and did organize themselves (ibid. 95). Leaving behind classical historical notions of modernity, Graeber (2004: 47–54)