

## The Anarchist Revelation: Being What We're Meant to Be

Paul Cudenec

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Could the twin urges in my life – to know myself deeper and, in the face of ecocidal capitalism, an increasingly radical sensibility – actually have their roots in the same impulse? Paul Cudenec's passionately argued book, *The Anarchist Revelation, Being What We're Meant to Be*, persuades me that they do.

Drawing on an impressive range of sources, Cudenec begins by showing how much the status quo relies on our not knowing ourselves. Our educational system, the media, TV, scientific materialism and established religion all play their part, so that: "Being just what we are... is the greatest challenge any of us face in a civilisation where our compliance, our obedience, depends on us not knowing who we are."

Of course, individual development originally unfolded in interconnection with the natural world, and was embedded within the anarchist 'organic society', based on natural laws, co-operation and the self-organising capacity of ecosystems. But having lost our ancient rites of passage and with little awareness of the natural world, in which clues to the meaning of life can be found, our modern alienation from Nature contributes to our collective dysfunction and madness, moving us yet further from our own authenticity.

Fortunately, because we have in fact been shaped through evolution and don't actually come into the world as "helplessly amoral blank sheets of paper", on which the state puts its stamp, but as "an integral part of the collective existence", we can still access our natural sense of 'love and rage' as we witness injustice and oppression on a global scale. Cudenec believes this "builds up in our spirits – individually and en masse, consciously and unconsciously – and becomes the force behind the need for revolution"; but it also sustains us by offering a "spiritual pool", from which we can draw.

In proclaiming 'No Gods, No Masters', many anarchists have, of course, notoriously rejected religion, in particular the authoritarianism of the church. Emma Goldman nevertheless saw anarchist revolution as "the mental and spiritual regenerator", while Cudenec skilfully demonstrates how the roots of anarchism and the universal spirituality posited by Aldous Huxley and Carl Jung, amongst others, are deeply intertwined.

Ultimately, the author's heartening message is not only that the spirituality inherent in anarchism can sustain us against the deadening effects of capitalism, but also that by transforming ourselves – surrendering to the alchemical processes that dissolve the 'base metals' of our superficial ego-selves – we can serve the greater whole, becoming "a conscious manifestation of [the] greater unity, as a temporary representative-on-earth of the life force." Mind-expanding and well-written, *The Anarchist Revelation* will appeal to a wide range of readers.

Helen Moore is an eco poet based in Somerset. Her debut collection, *Hedge Fund, And Other Living Margins*, was published in 2012 by Shearsman Books.