



In 1915 Arp began to develop a method of making collages by dropping pieces of torn paper on the floor and arranging them on a piece of paper more or less the way they had fallen. **The incorporation of chance operations was a way of removing the artist's will from the creative act.**

Jean (Hans) Arp. *Collage Arranged According to the Laws of Chance*. 1916-17.

Anarchist epistemology is essential to progress

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anarchism is the rejection of all forms of domination

Progress is...
What do you think it is?

An anarchist epistemology means...
ANYTHING GOES

As both political philosophy and personal lifestyle, social anarchism promotes community self-reliance, direct participation in political decision-making, respect for nature, and nonviolent paths to peace and justice.

sandra.mathison@ubc.ca

Sandra Mathison
University of British Columbia
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Science is an essentially anarchic enterprise: theoretical anarchism is more humanitarian and more likely to encourage progress than its law-and-order alternatives.

Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*

Substitute evaluation for science in the Feyerabend quote and then consider the contemporary practice of evaluation. As practice and as theory, evaluation embodies an anarchist epistemology and additionally some evaluators employ an anarchist epistemology. It is this anarchist epistemology that makes evaluation a powerful means to progress.¹ If one looks at the explosion of theoretical ideas in evaluation, methods used (evaluation borrows liberally not just from psychology and sociology but from all the social sciences, the arts, philosophy, and indeed wherever something pragmatically useful can be found), forms of human interaction, and ways of representing knowledge one would conclude that indeed as a discipline evaluation already embodies an anarchist epistemology. Below, to the left, is a list of signs of the anarchist epistemology in evaluation.

In addition there are particular evaluators that assume an anarchist epistemology. In other words, in doing an evaluation some evaluators adopt this view, preferring an open-ended stance to what the issues are, what will count as evidence, how that evidence will be created, and so on. There are also approaches to evaluation that are likely to build from an anarchist epistemology, approaches that are inductive, that do not use pre-ordinate designs, that are responsive, that build community, that eschew elitist knowledge and skills, and that are opportunistic. Below to the right is a list of evaluation approaches that often reflect an anarchist epistemology.

Anarchism is the rejection of all forms of domination. And so, an anarchist epistemology in evaluation is a rejection of domination of one method over any or all others; of any single ideology; of any single idea of progress; of scientific chauvinism; of the propriety of intellectuals; of evaluators over service recipients and providers; of academic text over oral and other written traditions; of certainty.

The domain of evaluation is vast, including all human endeavor as well as the physical world and the objects, natural or constructed, of that physical world. This is a complex, large and unknown domain and if evaluation is a means to progress then keeping our options open, imagining possibilities rather than being constricted by a singular notion of science, method or inquiry is necessary. The adoption of any single epistemology perspective narrows the potential for progress, constrains the humanitarian project of betterment through fostering well-developed human beings and communities.

Signs of an anarchist epistemology in evaluation:

Quantitative/qualitative debate
Political endorsement of RCT as a gold standard
And the resistance to it
Pragmatism
Opportunism
Knowledge representation

Anarchist epistemology as typical in particular approaches to evaluation:

Empowerment evaluation
Fourth generation evaluation
Transformative evaluation
Feminist evaluation
Responsive evaluation
Appreciative inquiry

¹ Elsewhere I have described the notions of progress entailed in evaluation. All approaches to evaluation presuppose an ameliorative assumption and although this "making things better" occurs through different means, evaluation is fundamentally a helping practice. How that "making things better" is conceptualized is dependent on particular conceptions of knowledge and, in particular, how knowledge contributes to or is part of social change. Much of evaluation assumes either a social engineering model and instrumental assumptions about knowledge for social action OR an action research model and constructivist assumptions about knowledge. The critical point here is not whether one or the other is right or better, but that these multiple perspectives thrive and co-exist within evaluation, and regardless of knowledge perspective, share the progress or "making things better" project. Feyerabend contends that progress should be understood in "any one of the senses one cares to choose:" the point is not about which sense of progress is better and that all senses of progress are necessary for progress.

Methods for an anarchist epistemology

- any social science method
- rational argument
- counter induction
- autonomous learning
- egalitarian groups
- grassroots organizing
- derive
- detournement
- non sequiturs
- absurdity

TRADITIONS THAT CONNECT TO ANARCHIST EPISTEMOLOGY

DADAISM

- bankruptcy of existing style, not the promotion of a particular style itself
- unconventional forms produced by unconventional methods

Marcel Duchamp's
Mona Lisa

As if the addition of mustache and beard weren't enough, the letters -- L.H.O.O.Q. -- at the bottom are meaningless in themselves, but when read aloud in French, make the sound of "Elle a chaud au cul," meaning, "She has a hot ass."



THE SITUATIONISTS

- reinvent everyday life, here and now
- construct situations that disrupt the ordinary and normal in order to jolt people out of their customary ways of thinking and acting
- theft of aesthetic artifacts from their contexts and their diversion into contexts of one's own devise
Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces*

Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*

Googlism for: evaluation

evaluation is the key to learning
evaluation is key to business
evaluation is franchising for you
evaluation is not necessarily the solution
evaluation is the first step
evaluation is vital to continued success
evaluation is alive and well
evaluation is a subset of research
evaluation is a vital part
evaluation is essential
evaluation is continuous process
evaluation is provided for advisement
evaluation is a structured
evaluation is a valuable tool
evaluation is comparative
evaluation is motivated
evaluation is used to measure
evaluation is needed
evaluation is proven
evaluation is conducted by a team
evaluation is not intended to be an official
evaluation is continuous

Googlism for: anarchism

anarchism is not a form of capitalism
anarchism is evil
anarchism is not enough
anarchism is the only alternative
anarchism is good
anarchism is not a form of capitalism
anarchism is a form of collectivism
anarchism is no government
anarchism is international
anarchism is chaos
anarchism is not enough
anarchism is indispensable to understanding
anarchism is dead
anarchism is most definitely not utopian
anarchism is really a synonym for socialism
anarchism is not pacifist
anarchism is logical end to liberal thought
anarchism is a political theory
anarchism is society without rulers
anarchism is not normative
anarchism is no government
anarchism is not merely one solution

Go to googlism.com and enter
a key idea from the project
you are currently evaluating.
Explore the possibilities.

I'm interested in the evaluation of
achievement in schools...

achievement is the bottom line
achievement is spectacular
achievement is passionate people
achievement is to live our life
achievement is victory over oneself
achievement is a team effort
achievement is not the top priority
achievement is student progress
achievement is not always success

Oh the things you can think up if only you try.

Dr. Seuss