The "Market Anarchy" series was created to republish and showcase historical and contemporary articles that highlight our relation to the revolutionary left and explain Market Anarchist theory in general terms.

...what we always meant by socialism wasn't something you forced on people, it was people organizing themselves as they pleased into co-ops, collectives, communes, unions.... And if socialism really is better, more efficient than capitalism, then it can bloody well compete with capitalism. So we decided, forget all the statist shit and the violence: the best place for socialism is the closest to a free market you can get!

Mutualists believe that most of the present inequalities come not from the results of market forces but from the perversion of these forces. A market is, after all, only a system of voluntary exchange. The state has stepped in and granted preferential treatment to certain individuals and groups. This created the vast inequalities we see. Even if the market were to give rise to certain problems, these could be offset by voluntary associations such as guilds, trade unions, community groups and co-operatives.

Agorism is revolutionary market anarchism. In a market anarchist society, the positive functions of law and security will be provided by market institutions, not political institutions. Agorists recognize, therefore, that those institutions can not develop through political reform. Instead, they will come about as a result of market processes. As government is banditry, revolution culminates in the suppression of government by market providers of security and law. Market demand for such service providers is what will lead to their emergence. Development of that demand will come from economic growth in the sector of the economy that explicitly shuns state involvement (and therefore can not turn to the state in its role as monopoly provider of security and law). That sector of the economy is the counter-economy — black and grey markets.

Women and the Invisible Fist

How Violence Against Women Enforces the Unwritten Law of Patriarchy

by Charles Johnson
This pamphlet is distributed by the
Southern Nevada Alliance of the Libertarian Left

**We are** individualists, agorists, market anarchists, mutualists, voluntary socialists, and others on the libertarian left. **We oppose** statism, militarism, sexism, racism, and the prevailing state capitalism fraudulently labeled “the free market.” **We are for** peace, individual freedom, truly freed markets, solidarity, voluntary cooperation, and mutual aid. **We fight for liberation in Las Vegas through** education, nonviolent direct action, and cooperative counter-institutions—not petitions, symbolic protests or electoral politics. **We are working to build** a new society within the shell of the old.

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“Women and the Invisible Fist” was originally published in the *Rad Geek People's Daily* on 16 May 2008 (<http://radgeek.com/gt/2008/05/16/women_and/>).

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**Southern Nevada Alliance of the Libertarian Left**

**MA7: INTERNATIONAL APARTHEID**

Charles Johnson (2007, 2008) • $1.25

Two essays by the individualist anarchist writer Charles Johnson on the brutal consequences of government border laws and the need for uncompromising urgency in the struggle to abolish them.

“According to the ruling elite of the United States, as well as the rank-and-file of the Know-Nothing bellowing blowhard busbody brigade, all the people of the world must be segregated according to their nationality. If they won’t stay in ‘their’ place voluntarily, then the government had better make them stay there through paramilitary lockdowns at national borders and rigid enforcement of a state-imposed passbook (‘visa,’ ‘passport’) system to control where people can live and work, which is to say a system of government permission slips for existing.”

“And all for what? To avoid the voluntary co-mingling of people from different countries? To ensure that the people of the world hear only one language, live and work with people of only one nationality, remain segregated, either by penning them up in their government-appointed place or else by making sure you can monitor all their movements according to a government-created system of passbooks and minders? The idea would be laughable if not for all the ghosts—the ghosts of millions upon millions of real, living, irreplaceable and unique individual people, who were turned back, ruined, persecuted, mutilated, tortured, starved, and murdered for the sake of that idea. There is another way....”

**WOMAN VS. THE NATION STATE: A MANIFESTO**

Carol Moore (1991, 2006) • $1.25

“So long as it remains legitimate for men to dream of gaining and maintaining centralized power through revolutionary or state violence, violence against individual women will remain a small matter. Therefore anti-authoritarian women are not merely estranged from male-dominated nation states; they reject their legitimacy and defiantly seek their abolition. ... Anti-authoritarian women know that putting an end to male personal, political and military violence will mean the rapid dissolution of the nation state system. The threat or use of police and military violence created and maintains almost all nation states.

“Anti-authoritarian women offer as an alternative to the nation state decentralized, non-violent communities joined only in a variety of voluntary regional, continental, and worldwide confederations. ... To prevent communities from becoming mere patriarchal mini-despotisms, anti-authoritarian women promote consensual decision making and nonviolent sanctions.... Non-violent sanctions such as peer pressure, publicity, boycott, and protest could be equally effective and less open to abuse. These new forms of controls would eliminate the warrior ethic and weapons of war....”

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Women and the Invisible Fist
How Violence Against Women Enforces the Unwritten Law of Patriarchy

A lot of libertarian analysis makes use of the concept of “spontaneous order” – patterns of social behavior where individual people’s spontaneous actions naturally tend to play off of each other in a way that produces social coordination and accomplishes large-scale social goals, without any of the people involved having to follow some single plan handed down by the authorities. As well it should; it’s an important concept, and especially important for understanding how many problems of social coordination can be solved in a free society without any government intervention or institutionalized central planning. But I think there are a couple complications involved in the concept which need to be noted, but often fail to be.

First, the concept of “spontaneous order,” as it is employed in libertarian writing, is systematically ambiguous, depending on whether one is using “spontaneous” to mean “not planned ahead of time,” or whether one is using it to mean “voluntary.” Thus, the term “spontaneous order” may be used to refer strictly to voluntary orders — that is, forms of social coordination which emerge from the free actions of many different people, as opposed to coordination that arises from some people

The term “spontaneous order,” as employed in libertarian writing, is systematically ambiguous, depending on whether one is using “spontaneous” to mean “not planned ahead of time,” or to mean “voluntary.”
being forced to do what other people tell them to do. Or it may be used to refer to undesigned orders — that is, forms of social coordination which emerges from the actions of many different people, who are not acting from a conscious desire to bring about that form of social coordination, as opposed to coordination that people consciously act to bring about. It’s important to see that these two meanings are distinct: a voluntary order may be designed (if everyone is freely choosing to follow a set plan), and an undesigned order may be involuntary (if it emerges as an unintended consequence of coercive actions that were committed in order to achieve a different goal). While Hayek himself was fairly consistent and explicit in using “spontaneous order” to refer to undesigned orders, many libertarian writers since Hayek have used it to mean voluntary orders, or orders that are both voluntary and undesigned, or have simply equivocated between the two different meanings of the term from one statement to the next. It’s important to be clear about the difference between the two, because if you equivocate you are likely to expose yourself to certain confusions, and to find yourself wearing certain kinds of conceptual blinders.

The second point, which is related to the first, is that not all spontaneous orders are necessarily benign. Libertarians tend to write as if they were, probably because most of the examples of spontaneous order that libertarians are most interested in are examples where the process is benign — especially cases where a benign spontaneous order (say, the adjustment of prices to reflect changes in relative scarcity of goods in a market economy) provides an alternative to central planning, and does something important and worthwhile that State planners cannot do at all, or cannot do as well. But if widely distributed forms of intelligence, knowledge, virtue, or prudence can add up, through many individual self-interested actions, into a benign undesigned order, then there’s no reason why widely distributed forms of stupidity, ignorance, prejudice, vice, or folly might not add up, through many individual self-interested actions, something that merits exposure and resistance through conscious activism, must therefore be simply ignorant, or in denial, about the ways in which social outcomes can emerge, undesigned, from spontaneous order processes. But this is only the result of failing to pay attention to, or failing to charitably understand, what your interlocutors are saying. Libertarians have no reason to believe that all voluntary orders, much less all undesigned orders (which aren’t even guaranteed to be non-coercive), will be benign. And radical feminists, far from being “socioeconomic creationists,” are actually well practiced in using the concept of a spontaneous order — indeed, make significant use of it themselves in their own analysis of the differences between men and women’s socioeconomic status.

They happen to be right about that, and those of us who believe that freedom is for all human beings, and who work for an end to all forms of systematic political violence, have to fight, at the very least, a two-front war: against the violence of the State, and against the violence of patriarchy. But in order to fight back effectively we will have to see it for what it is, and to take it on on its own ground. It may very well be the case that the best methods for resisting the planned order of State coercion are not the same as the best methods for resisting the unplanned order of Patriarchal coercion. At the very least, a clear understanding of the dynamics of patriarchy — of the way in which an account like Susan Brownmiller’s is best understood, and the way it fits in with our understanding of spontaneous order — will be necessary to get a firm grip on what needs to be exposed and resisted.

NOTES
(1) On other misinterpretations of Brownmiller, see <http://radgeek.com/gt/2004/03/she_said/>.
(2) On gynocide in Basra, see <http://radgeek.com/gt/2007/12/gynocide_mass/>.
(3) See <http://radgeek.com/gt/2008/03/10/rapists_on/>.
(5) For an example, see <http://distributedrepublic.net/archives/2008/05/06/socioeconomic-creationism>.
system of violent political oppression older, no less invasive, and no less powerful, than the violence of the police state or the warfare state. But unlike the kinds of State violence to which male anarchists and libertarians are accustomed to discuss — violent restrictions of freedom handed down according to explicit State policies, ratified through political processes, promulgated from the top down and consciously carried out by officially appointed or deputized agents of the State — patriarchy expresses itself in attitudes, behaviors, and coercive restrictions that are largely produced by bottom-up, decentralized forms of violence, committed by many different men, who wouldn’t know each other from Adam, freelance terrorists who commit violence of their own accord, out of a desire to control but without any grand unified social plan, without conscious collaboration or conspiracy, sometimes in conflict with the explicit provisions of the law (though rarely investigated and ineffectively prosecuted in the male-dominated legal system). This is part of what I take Catharine MacKinnon to mean when she writes that:

Unlike the ways in which men systematically enslave, violate, dehumanize, and exterminate other men, expressing political inequalities among men, men’s forms of dominance over women have been accomplished socially as well as economically, prior to the operation of the law, without express state acts, often in intimate contexts, as everyday life. (Toward a Feminist Theory of the State, 161)

It’s important to recognize that the coercive social order that arises from this kind of diffuse gender violence, both as a direct consequence and as social, psychological, or economic ripple effects from the direct consequences — is no less real, no less effective, no less important, and no less evil, for being undesigned, for battering women into the social position they currently occupy as if by an invisible fist.

Far too many libertarian men still write as if “the misogynistic oppression of women” and “spontaneous order” were two radically different, and incompatible, explanations for differences in the socioeconomic status of men and women (5); as if anyone who sees anything systematically wrong here, into an unintended but malign undesigned order. Moreover, if you consider that spontaneous orders can emerge as unintended consequences of certain widespread forms of violence, then it ought to be especially clear that not all undesigned orders can be considered benign from a libertarian point of view.

Here’s a concrete example: Susan Brownmiller’s “Myrmidon theory” of stranger rape, which she explains in Chapter 6 of Against Our Will (“The Police-Blotter Rapist”). Brownmiller famously wrote, near the end of the first chapter of Against Our Will:

Man’s discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times, along with the use of fire and the first crude stone axe. From prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear.


Critics of Brownmiller have often misunderstood this passage, mainly in ways which seem to come from not having read any further in the book than that paragraph. I’ve discussed some of those misunderstandings elsewhere (1) — for example, if you think that Brownmiller is claiming “all men are rapists,” you need to re-read the final sentence more carefully, and pay particular attention to what the verb in that sentence is. But my point in bringing it up here is that one way to get clearer on Brownmiller’s meaning is to look at how it connects with the “Myrmidon theory,” as presented in Chapter 6, and to think about both of them in light of the concept of a malign spontaneous order:

As described by Warden [Clinton] Duffy [of San Quentin] or as defined by the statistical profiles of the sociologists and the FBI, America’s police-blotter rapists are dreary and banal. To those who know them, no magic, no mystery, no Robin Hood bravura, infuses their style. Rape is a dull, blunt, ugly act committed by punk kids, their cousins and older brothers, not by charming, witty, unscrupulous, heroic, sensual rakes,
or by timid souls deprived of a “normal” sexual outlet, or by super-menschen possessed of uncontrollable lust. And yet, on the shoulders of these unthinking, predictable, insensitive, violence-prone young men there rests an age-old burden that amounts to an historic mission: the perpetuation of male domination over women by force.

The Greek warrior Achilles used a swarm of men descended from ants, the Myrmidons, to do his bidding as hired henchmen in battle. Loyal and unquestioning, the Myrmidons served their master well, functioning in anonymity as effective agents of terror. Police-blotter rapists in a very real sense perform a myrmidon function for all men in our society. Cloaked in myths that obscure their identity, they, too, function as anonymous agents of terror. Although they are the ones who do the dirty work, the actual attentat, to other men, their superiors in class and station, the lasting benefits of their simple-minded evil have always accrued.

A world without rapists would be a world in which women moved freely without fear of men. That some men rape provides a sufficient threat to keep all women in a constant state of intimidation, forever conscious of the knowledge that the biological tool must be held in awe for it may turn into a weapon with sudden swiftness borne of harmful intent. Myrmidons to the cause of male dominance, police-blotter rapists have performed their duty well, so well in fact that the true meaning of their act has largely gone unnoticed. Rather than society’s aberrants or “spoilers of purity,” men who commit rape have served in effect as front-line masculine shock troops, terrorist guerrillas in the longest sustained battle the world has ever known.

—Susan Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape. 208–209.

One extremely common, rather coarse way of misunderstanding Brownmiller (or, mutatis mutandis, other radical feminists, when they say things like this) is to treat this kind of analysis as if it were some kind of conspiracy theory about rape — as if Brownmiller were claiming that, say, every first Monday of the month, all the men got together in a big meeting at the Patriarchy’s underground headquarters and decided to have some men commit stranger

nobody involved intends quite that, exactly, is quite irrelevant, because they serve their function in an violent undesigned order well enough whether anyone intended that or not.

I’ve been talking about “stranger rape” all this time because that’s what Brownmiller’s theory is about, and Brownmiller’s theory is a good case study in the point I’m trying to make. But similar remarks, with different but importantly related consequences, could be made for forms of violence against women which feminist activists and researchers have, over the past 30 years, demonstrated to be even more prevalent and even harder to escape than the threat of stranger rape — date rape, rape in marriage, battery, and so on. Because these forms of violence are committed by different men, in different circumstances, from stranger rape, and because they are widely experienced by women — about 1 in 4 women in the United States will be sexually or physically assaulted by an intimate partner (4) — but far less widely and insistently discussed as an everyday threat to women’s safety than stranger rape is, there was comparatively little public knowledge about them at the time Brownmiller first published her book, and what we now know is that they have different functions in a violent undesigned order that exploits women, hurts women, and circumscribes their behavior to a limited “sphere” under the control and for the benefit of men. But those roles are more easily seen, and more fruitfully discussed, when they are seen as other expressions of a similar underlying phenomenon. Because of the central role that the pervasive danger of violence against women plays in sustaining it, and the way in which that pervasive, diffuse threat of violence constrains the liberty of women in everyday life to move and act and live as they want, libertarians and anarchists must recognize patriarchy as a

Libertarians and anarchists must recognize patriarchy as a system of violent political oppression older, no less invasive, and no less powerful, than the violence of the police state or the warfare state.
minority of men choose to commit widespread, intense, random acts of violence against a large enough number of women. And it can happen quite naturally without the raping men, or the “protecting” men, or the women in the society ever intending for any particular large-scale social outcome to come about. But what will come about, quite naturally, is that women’s social being — how women appear and act, as women, in public — will be systematically and profoundly circumscribed by a diffuse, decentralized threat of violence. And, as a natural but unintended consequence of many small, self-interested actions, some vicious and violent (as in the case of men who rape women), some worthwhile in their origins but easily and quickly corrupted (as in the case of men who try to protect women from rape), and some entirely rational responses to an irrational and dangerous situation (as in the case of women who limit their action and seek protection from men), the existence and activities of the “police-blotter rapist” serve to constrain women’s behavior and to intimidate women into becoming dependent on some men — and thus dependent on keeping those men pleased and serving those men’s priorities — for physical protection from other men. That kind of dependence can just as easily become frustrating and confining for the woman, and that kind of power can just as easily become corrupting and exploitative for the man, as any other form of dependence and power. (Libertarians and anarchists who easily see this dynamic when it comes to government police and military “protection” of a disarmed populace, shouldn’t have any trouble seeing it, if they are willing to see it, when it comes to male “protection” of women.)

Thus stranger rapists become the Myrmidons — the anonymous shock troops — of male supremacy, and the fact that rape as a way to keep women down. Or, to be more charitable to uncharitable critics, as if Brownmiller were claiming that “police-blotter rapists” and other men who do not commit rape are consciously collaborating with one another, in some kind of social plan, promulgated from the top down, to intimidate women and bring about and sustain male supremacy.

The truth is that there are historical cases where groups or movements of men have consciously collaborated with one another to keep women down. (What else, for example, would you call the gynocide in Basra (2), or the psychiatric analysis and treatment of “hysteria” in Europe and America, or the Taliban, or 19th century American family laws, under which white husbands posted advertisements about “fugitive wives” — almost as frequently as they posted advertisements about “fugitive slaves” — and used the law and bounty-hunters to forcibly recapture wives who chose to leave home?) So that happens, but Brownmiller’s analysis of stranger rape doesn’t claim that that’s what’s happening when rapists reinforce the system of male supremacy. What she claims is that the pervasive fact of rape, and the threat that its pervasiveness inflicts on all women, produces a spontaneous (undesigned) order, so that the actions of rapists serve the role of promoting, sustaining, and reinforcing male supremacy.

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The threat of rape imposes constraints on women’s behavior:
Don’t go out at night alone.
Don’t dress like that.
Don’t go to that party.
And: you better find the Right Man and enlist him to protect you from other men.
male supremacy.

It’s not controversial, or it shouldn’t be by now, that the threat of rape imposes constraints on women’s behavior: Don’t go out at night alone. Don’t make yourself noticeable on the subway. Don’t dress like that. Don’t act “overtly sexual” (3). Don’t go to that party. Don’t drink at that party. Or, if you do, then you better like whatever happens to you and you better not complain, because baby, you were asking for it.

And also: you better find the Right Man and enlist him to protect you from other men. (By walking you home at night. By slipping into a situation to block off the Wrong Men who are hassling you. By becoming your boyfriend or fiance or husband and looking out for you.)

The natural consequence of these restrictions is that women in our society are systematically constrained in their action by the fear of men. Women are not free because they must figure out how to live with the fact of widespread, intense, random violence against women. That fact has profound ripple effects on where women feel they can safely go. When they feel they can safely go there. What women feel they can safely do or say—especially what they can safely do or say in the presence of men. How they dress, how they take up space, how they react to social interactions that are wanted or unwanted. Some of this is conscious adjustment to fears and explicit warnings; a lot of it is the sort of small-scale, subconscious acts of vigilance and self-protection that we all carry out, as a daily routine, or as an expression of felt anxiety.

Another natural consequence is that men who don’t commit stranger rape, and who are genuinely concerned for the safety of women who are their daughters, their sisters, their friends, their lovers, or what have you, are in a material and emotional position where it is very tempting to see themselves as needing to protect the women they care about from the threat of male violence. The desire to protect an innocent person from violence is, in and of itself, a good thing, not a bad thing. But the danger here is that it’s an unethical and corrupting, but a very tempting and easy, psychological step for these men to come to see themselves as the sole protector, as a woman’s only safe option. To see women as uniquely frail and in need of protection by nature (rather than uniquely threatened due to the choices of other men). And to try to make sure that women seek and depend on and stay within the scope of a man’s protection, whether or not they really want it, by use of those intimidating and restrictive warnings, by harassing women (seen as foolish or bad) who step outside of the stiflingly close boundaries of those “safety tips,” in order to try to intimidate them into staying in the boundaries, and ultimately by blaming the woman, rather than her attacker, and writing off her suffering as nonexistent or unimportant, if some other man should choose to rape her after she has ignored those “safety tips.”

And many women will naturally look to men who act like that — that is, as Protectors — because they are realistically afraid of other men’s sexual aggression, and afraid of stranger rape, and they may like this particular guy, for other reasons, anyway, and so it is worth seeking out his help.

All of this can happen quite naturally when a large enough