

Abstract

This paper examines the bicycle's role in the oppositional cultures of four British social movements; feminism and socialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and anarchism and environmentalism from the 1960s until today. It argues that the bicycle powerfully enabled the expansion in the geographical, social and political horizons of both feminists and socialists at the turn of the twentieth century. In contrast, within environmentalism and anarchism since the 1960s, the bicycle both symbolises and produces a desired compression of everyday life, fitting an expressive politics concerned with authenticity, community, and elevation of 'the local'. The changing role of the bicycle in these movements points to the shifting landscape of political resistance, and to differences and continuities between so-called 'old' and 'new' social movements. The case of the bicycle also demonstrates the importance of 'ordinary' materialities to the production and reproduction of cultural and political identities.

Keywords: social movements, bicycle, feminism, socialism, anarchism, environmentalism, materiality

Introduction

This paper details the bicycle's role in each of four social movements: feminism and socialism through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and anarchism and environmentalism of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The bicycle has been important in two ways to each of these movements. First, as an object of ideological discourse, it has been mobilised into the articulation of political visions; and second, as an object actually ridden in the everyday lives of political activists, it has mobilised those activists' distinctive lifestyles. The bicycle is both symbolic, an iconic object of political discourse, and practical, an object in daily use, and one which, furthermore, lends distinctive form to the lives of political activists. Thus, from the late nineteenth century, through the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first century, the bicycle is a vehicle mobilised in the construction of various political ways of life. Table 1 summarises the bicycle's role in British social movements.

Insert Table 1 here (at end of document)

Feminism and the Bicycle

In its early years and forms, up until the 1870s, the bicycle was mainly the preserve of rich men of leisure in affluent societies such as Britain, France and the United States (for histories of the bicycle, see Alderson 1972; Herlihy 2004; McGurn 1999). Machines were widely perceived to be uncomfortable and dangerous. The high-wheeler, which became popular during the 1870s, required the rider to sit far above the ground, and was considered inappropriate to both the dress and physical anatomy of 'ladies' (Holt 1989: 121-4).

Male domination of early cycling ended with the emergence of the safety bicycle in the 1880s. With its smaller wheels, lower seating position, diamond frame and - before long - pneumatic tyres, the safety bicycle made cycling not only - as its name suggested - safer, but also much more comfortable. Cycling became an attractive proposition for anyone able to afford a machine, and was quickly embraced by affluent women of leisure. In Britain, by 1890 the Cyclists' Touring Club had 60,000 members, of whom over 20,000 were women (Lloyd-Jones and Lewis 2000: 9). With the possible exception of horse-riding, cycling became the activity with the most notable female presence (Walvin 1978: 93). The mid 1890s witnessed a 'bicycle craze' to which women were key.

To appreciate its significance, the sudden phenomenon of affluent and fashionable women jumping onto bicycles needs placing in historical context. Already in 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* had critiqued women's status as mere appendages of men and their confinement to the private sphere. The industrialisation of Britain saw the home increasingly constructed as women's proper place (Iskin 2003). Abram de Swaan (1981: 362) notes the 'gradual disappearance of women from the streets during the first half of the nineteenth century'. But later in the nineteenth century women were striving for equality, and challenging their spatial confinement.

So the bicycle entered a period when women's appropriate place was highly contested. Women's cycling was therefore a contestatory spatial and social practice. Of course, not all women recognised the political character of their novel cycling practice. Many were not consciously confronting and challenging dominant expectations. To the contrary, many women at the end of the nineteenth century apparently cycled in order to extend Victorian bourgeois moral and aesthetic tastes and sentiments from the domestic to the public sphere. Their cycling was about feminising, domesticating and civilising public space often perceived as masculine, raucous and rowdy (Mackintosh and Norcliffe forthcoming). No doubt for many, the allure of cycling was its fashionable status. But however conformist the views of women riding bicycles, their cycling broke women's spatial confinement, and provided new, expanded experiences of the world.

Women's movement into the public sphere provoked masculine anxieties, which surfaced in ridicule, labelling and masculinised joking. The following verse is set down in Flora Thompson's classic autobiographical account of English rural working-class life, the trilogy *Lark Rise, Over to Candleford* and *Candleford Green*:

Mother's out upon her bike, enjoying of the fun,
Sister and her beau have gone to take a little run.

The housemaid and the cook are both a-riding on their wheels;
And Daddy's in the kitchen a-cooking of the meals.

(Thompson 1957: 547; cited in Oakley 2002: 20)

Advertising contributed to the feminist challenge, reproducing a dominant association of the bicycle with new freedoms. Ruth Iskin (2003: 339) notes how 'many of the posters that advertised bicycles to women tapped into late-nineteenth-century discourses on women's new freedoms and quest for mobility', and how such posters depicting 'urban women with agency participated in reshaping women's identities in the 1890s and early 1900s' (ibid.: 337). These posters, Iskin (ibid.: 340-1) continues 'must have had an impact on the contested zone of the street by injecting a modern icon of women into the public imagination. They invited the identification of women who wished to be independently mobile'. Advertising posters at this time sometimes portrayed bicycles and their women riders with wings and in flight, thus emphasising the sensations of freedom and flying which this new mobile technology supposedly produced. Cycling was a practice which seemed to eliminate friction and to result in the effortless conquest of distance.

And for some women, the bicycle clearly was part of a conscious struggle for new political freedoms. Chief among these empowered bicycling women was the so-called 'New Woman', who was politically engaged, physically active beyond the domestic sphere, and searching for new ways to push the developing demands of women. The distinguishing characteristics of the New Woman

were her independent spirit and her athletic zeal. The New Woman played sport, wore her skirts above her ankles, loosened her corsets [hence one meaning of the pejorative term 'loose woman'], wanted a good education, expected to marry and have children, but also wanted a life beyond her home, maybe even a career ... the New Woman stood for political, social, and economic equality.

(Simpson 2001: 54)

Though they represented only a minority of women cyclists, these new women were visibly and deliberately flouting dominant gender codes. They offered a striking alternative to the dominant victorian bourgeois identity of the woman as home-maker. Efforts to stigmatise their transgressive female identities included not only associating them with another group of 'deviant' women already visible in public, prostitutes, but also with a deviant lesbian sexuality. The stereotype of the New Woman in rational dress 'embodied the masculinization of women and threatened contemporary ideas about femininity' (Simpson 2001: 54).

New women pioneered new cycling dress codes. Rational dress for women cyclists comprised divided skirts, bloomers and knickerbockers (Carse 1994; Simpson 2001). Such dress had practical and symbolic significance; it not only facilitated more comfortable riding, but also broke dominant norms of appropriate female dress and behaviour. Clare Simpson (2001: 61) notes how

The bicycle came to play a central role in the concerns of the rational dress movement ... For cyclists, bifurcated clothing allowed all the limbs a greater

range of free movement and addressed concerns about excessive drapery becoming entangled in the machinery. Because of its high visibility in public, the bicycle conveniently acted as a moving advertisement in which all the advantages of rational dress, including bifurcation, were most clearly and readily portrayed.

In 1898 Lady Harberton, a keen cyclist, revived the by-then obsolete Rational Dress Society, which had been concerned about the impracticalities of women's clothing, with the Rational Dress League; the League's chief purpose was to campaign for cycling bloomers.

So by the end of the nineteenth century the bicycle was both enabling privileged women to directly experience new freedoms, and had become symbolic of women's general push for greater freedoms (Holt 1989: 121-4). In her book *Bicycling for Ladies* written in 1896, Maria Ward, a north American advocate of women's cycling, writes: 'No matter what happens, keep it [the bicycle] going, the faster the better, until a taste is acquired for the pastime; *until the going forward forever idea seems to have taken possession of you*' (quoted in Carse, 1994: 109, my emphasis). The bicycle opened up new possibilities for women's participation in the world, expanding geographical, social, economic and political horizons. Feminist intellectuals recognised the liberatory potential of the bicycle. The Austrian philosopher Rosa Mayreder, for example, regarded its invention as a giant step towards the emancipation of women (Lafleur 1978).

The bicycle enabled movement into new spaces, literally and figuratively. The woman of the nineteenth century who had little opportunity to cultivate or express her autonomy now had a vehicle with which she could not only develop autonomous power, but do so while leaving behind the old reliance upon men for travel. In the *New York World* of February 2nd 1896, the women's rights advocate Susan B. Anthony claimed that 'the bicycle has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world. I stand and rejoice every time I see a woman on a wheel. It gives a woman a feeling of freedom and self-reliance' (in Willard 1991 [1895]: 90).

Thus the bicycle contributed to the feminist urge towards emancipation (Henderson et al 1989), forming part of general cultural and political shifts changing the conditions, conventions and expectations of women forever. He may have been presenting a by-then established caricature, but in his novel trilogy *The Forsyte Saga*, chronicling this period of English social history and first published in full in 1922, John Galsworthy provides an indication of the changes brought by cycling:

Under its influence, wholly or in part, have wilted chaperons, long and narrow skirts, tight corsets, hair that would have come down, black stockings, thick ankles, large hats, prudery and fear of the dark; under its influence, wholly or in part, have bloomed week-ends, strong nerves, strong legs, strong language, knickers, knowledge of make and shape, knowledge of woods and pastures, equality of sex, good digestion and professional occupation - in four words, the emancipation of woman.

(Galsworthy 1930: 203-4)

Socialism and the Bicycle

Pioneering women cyclists were wealthy. But the late Victorian age saw the beginnings of the bicycle's gradual transition from a high status vehicle of the rich and leisured classes to one increasingly affordable to 'ordinary' people. By the mid 1890s new methods of mass production and fierce international competition led to falling prices. More people became able to afford bicycles, which became significant to another social movement, socialism (McGurn 1999: 138-47). In Britain, cycling formed an important part of the Clarion movement which 'provided cultural support for socialists', and which 'was very much part of the socialist offensive in the Edwardian period' (Jones 1988: 31; 34).

Robert Blatchford's socialist paper, *The Clarion*, was launched in 1891. Its propagation of an ethical and religious socialism, indebted to thinkers such as John Ruskin and William Morris, generated a popular Clarion movement which espoused a prefigurative socialist politics of the everyday, 'a way of life to be enjoyed here and now' (Pye 2004: 8). The Clarion movement comprised various activities, including Cinderella Clubs providing meals and entertainment for poor children, and societies catering for singing, rambling and camping (Jones 1988: 31). It also included horse-drawn Clarion vans, which - in a convergence of feminism and socialism - saw women travelling around Britain, preaching the principles of a socialist society (Pye 2004: 36-41). The involvement of Clarion cyclists was indispensable to the efforts of the Clarion vans. Across the country, members of local Clarion clubs left their cities to ride alongside, support and contribute to the vans' mobilisation attempts.

Clarion cycling clubs also undertook other political work. The first club was founded in Birmingham in 1894. The National Clarion Cycling Club was established in 1895, and had eighty affiliated clubs by the end of that year; its object was to organise 'Cyclists for Mutual Aid, Good Fellowship and the Propagation of the Principles of Socialism, along with the social pleasures of Cycling' (Jones 1988: 108; Holt 1989: 195). In his history of the Clarion Cycling Club, Denis Pye comments how 'the bicycle seemed admirably suited to the beliefs of people dedicated to the spreading of what was to them a new religion of freedom and equality' (2004: 3). Pye notes how 'in the twenty years before the First World War a Clarion cyclist, almost by definition, was someone riding a machine with saddlebag crammed or carrier piled high with copies of [*The Clarion*], all of which would eventually be sold or given away' (ibid.: 9). Pye notes that 'most of the growing number of local clubs in the 1890s regularly cycled to open-air meetings and distributed masses of literature. This required courage as well as energy, for they encountered much opposition and harassment, not least from the police' (ibid.: 33). The *Song of the Clarion Scout*, appearing in the May 1895 issue of *The Scout - A Journal for Socialist Workers*, includes the following lines:

What tho' the weather be cold as an icicle,
Bravely he clings to his Clarion bicycle
Scattering leaflets, sticking up labels,
Filling a breach at old hostelry tables.
Such is the being I'll sing you about.
Three hearty cheers for the Clarion Scout!
(in Pye 2004: 29)

Prior to the First World War the bicycle was still not a vehicle of the working classes. Its political importance at the beginning of the twentieth century lies instead with

predominantly middle class Clarion cyclists seeking to convert 'the masses' to socialism. John Hargreaves (1986: 80) argues their 'anti-urban, romantic, back-to-nature outlook seems to have appealed more to middle-class socialists than working-class people', a point borne out by a reading of Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, set in the Mugsborough (Hastings) of 1906.

It is not Tressell's 'ragged trousered philanthropists' who ride bicycles; these workers are too poor to be able to afford enough food, never mind such a machine. Indeed, it is the plight of such people which first inspired Robert Blatchford to launch *The Clarion* as a contribution to the socialist struggle, in 1891. It is instead the worker's despicable overseer, Mr Hunter (known to the men he tyrannises as 'Misery'), who rides a bicycle. Misery is not wealthy, but unlike the builders, painters and decorators under his control he earns enough to afford a bicycle, and it symbolises the economic and social distance separating them.

Tressell describes the arrival of a group of Clarion cyclists in Mugsborough.

One Sunday morning towards the end of July, a band of about twenty-five men and women on bicycles invaded the town ... As they rode along they gave leaflets to the people in the streets, and whenever they came to a place where there were many people they dismounted and walked about ... The strangers distributed leaflets to all those who would take them, and they went through a lot of the side streets, putting leaflets under the doors and in the letter-boxes. When they had exhausted their stock they remounted and rode back the way they came.

(1993: 429)

Tressell's account importantly emphasises the violence confronted by the bicycle riding socialists, a violence symptomatic of the general contempt for socialism - despite their oppression under capitalism - among the workers whose lives Tressell's novel so grimly describes. This terrible irony is not lost on the author of course, hence the book's narrative of despair at the workers' collusion in their condition, and its title. Tristram Hunt (2004: 22) sees the book as full of 'cold anger towards a working class refusing to appreciate its revolutionary duty'. Mike Savage (2005: 940) notes how, among the working-classes, the existence of class inequalities - and with it the inevitability and acceptability of 'oppression' - becomes 'naturalised' as an exogenous force beyond their control. For 'upstarts' to upset this 'natural' order is experienced as threatening and it is such social rebels, not established elites, whom the poor typically most resent. Tressell describes the scene as the townsfolk confront, attack and see off the socialists:

'We'll give the b----rs Socialism!' shouted Crass, who was literally foaming at the mouth.

'We'll teach 'em to come 'ere trying to undermined [sic] our bloody morality', howled Dick Wantley as he hurled a lump of granite that he had torn up from the macadamized road at one of the cyclists.

(1993: 432)

The bicycle was a vehicle enabling the enactment of a middle class socialist politics. With the increase in flexible and independent mobility it provided, it was an ideal

means of spreading the message of socialism to far-flung places. And the bicycle contributed to an expansion in the geographical and political horizons of both the middle class socialist cycling preachers and the working classes who would later embrace cycling. For socialists cycling was also prefigurative, producing fellowship through a wholesome practice at once political and recreational.

Socialist converts to cycling also considered it a morally elevating practice suitable for the working class. Phil Macnaghten and John Urry (2001: 5) note how cities at the time 'were thought to be unnaturally smelly, with overwhelming odours of death, madness and poverty'. Cycling afforded escape from the smelly, unhealthy cities of industrial Britain. The socialists pioneered a rhetoric of fresh air and countryside, of escaping the city as a purifying practice. Tom Groom, founder of the first Clarion Cycling Club in Birmingham and leading Clarionette, claimed that 'the frequent contrasts a cyclist gets between the beauties of nature and the dirty squalor of towns makes him more anxious than ever to abolish the present system' (in Pye 2004: 16). It was the 1930s before cycling enabled the masses to escape cities for pleasure, but the socialists contributed to its eventual appeal. Socialists who were also temperance advocates considered cycling, moreover, the kind of wholesome activity able to 'wean workers away from the dreaded intoxicant' (Jones 1988: 29). The promotion of such pastimes also tied into socialism's fight for a shorter working day and week.

Clarion cyclists continued spreading socialist messages until the outbreak of the First World War (Jones 1988: 33). By 1913 there were 230 Clarion cycling clubs with 8,000 members. But both the Clarion movement in general and the Clarion cycling clubs in particular lost momentum after the War. The Club did not disappear; indeed, it contributed to an internationalist socialist push for 'peace through sport' (Pye 2004: 66-75), with 'Peace through Sport' becoming the Club motto (Jones 1988: 175), and the Club continues today (see www.clarioncc.org). But as the bicycle's popularity grew its practical and symbolic significance to British socialism diminished. Elsewhere, connections between cycling and socialism have not disappeared. For example, a member of the Chilean Government of Salvador Allende claimed that 'El socialismo puede llegar solo en bicicleta' (in Illich 1974: 11), socialism can only arrive by bicycle. More recently, Enrique Peñalosa, as mayor of Bogota, Colombia, espoused and enacted a politics of social justice which placed the bicycle at the heart of the city. Across the world, the potential relationships between cycling and social class are strikingly clear. But we will see that more recently in Britain, cycling has become more clearly connected to still other social movements.

The 'Golden Age' of Cycling

The years following the First World War saw the bicycle adopted across British society and the practice of cycling become normal. Cycling became the means by which vast numbers of 'ordinary' people conducted their 'ordinary' lives. 'Bicycles became general utility vehicles. They crowded the racks outside factories and, at lunchtimes and the ends of shifts, sudden bell-ringing torrents of cloth-capped workers came cycling out of factory gates' (McGurn 1999: 155). By the 1930s, exploring the countryside by bicycle had become a highly popular leisure pursuit (Easton et al 1988: 96). During this 'golden age' for cycling, the bicycle, not the car, was 'king of the road' (Lloyd-Jones and Lewis 2000: 104). By the mid 1930s 'well

over a million and a half bikes were being sold annually (Hargreaves 1986: 87). By 1936 there were around ten million regular cyclists, up from six million only seven years previously (Lloyd-Jones and Lewis 2000: 104; 113). This compared to 2.5 million regular drivers (McGurn 1999: 158). The bicycle lost any connotations of resistance, and obvious interconnections between it and movements for social and political change disappeared.

This is not to say there was no politics of cycling during this period. Indeed, the bicycle's 'golden age' developed an increasingly dark side. Already by the 1930s, cycling's future was threatened by looming mass motorisation. As more people took to cars, conditions for non-motorists deteriorated, with cyclists and pedestrians each year 'massacred' in their thousands (Dean 1947). The bicycle was becoming less about new freedoms and more about danger, marginality and stigma. Cyclists resisted. For example, in 1935 the government's proposed construction of discontinuous cycle paths saw cyclists across the country gather and organise in protest (Peel 2002). In general, the political voice of cyclists was maintained by the Cyclists' Touring Club (today's CTC). Indeed, remarkably independent of any social movement, CTC has been a constant and vigilant political voice seeking to defend and extend cyclists' rights. But although under increasing threat, cycling was for now a mainstream, indeed majority, mode of mobility.

The Death and Political Resuscitation of Cycling

The decades following the Second World War brought a particularly dramatic downturn in the bicycle's fortunes, in Britain as elsewhere in the industrialised world. The massive popular embrace of automobility saw huge falls in cycling and the future of both the industry and the practice seemed in jeopardy (Daniels and Warnes 1980: 76, 176; Lloyd-Jones and Lewis 2000: 218; McClintock 1992a: 19). The car monopolised the imaginations and projects of almost everyone, including significantly the transport worlds of government, planning and policy-making.¹ Bicycles were relegated to the fringe, increasingly perceived as an inferior or secondary mode of mobility properly restricted to the poor, women and children (Rosen 2002).

Yet this period also witnessed growing frustration with and alienation from the comfort, complacency, conformity and endless consumption of prosperous post-war societies. Numerous intellectuals elaborated critiques which were to contribute to the political dissent of the 1960s and beyond (Jamison and Eyerman 1994). These critiques emphasised the negative effects of modernisation processes. Affluence, it was argued, came at spiritual, ecological, psychological and social costs, both to the affluent and those left behind in the rush to affluence. The car was here highly symbolic. The negative effects of its ascendancy were increasingly apparent, and its status was correspondingly contested. This countercultural criticism of the car also set the foundations for the bicycle's eventual political resuscitation.

Many thinkers challenged automobility's increasing domination of everyday life. The Situationists abhorred the private car. For Guy Debord it is the 'supreme good of an alienated life', and we 'should reckon on gradually phasing it out' (1959: theses 1, 5 and 6). Raoul Vaneigem (2000: 14c) considered the car an 'alienating gadget' which 'enables us to get to work and consume, pollute, destroy the countryside, and save

some empty time and kill ourselves'. Elsewhere, perhaps the greatest concern of the critic of technology, Lewis Mumford, was 'the dominance of the automobile over post-war American life' (Jamison and Eyerman 1994: 88).

The ecological problems created by the car were becoming obvious. In his hugely influential *Small is Beautiful*, published in 1963, the economist E. F. Schumacher had written of three contemporary crises:

First, human nature revolts against inhuman technological, organisational, and political patterns, which it experiences as suffocating and debilitating; second, the living environment which supports human life aches and groans and gives signs of partial breakdown; and, third ... the inroads being made into the world's non-renewable resources, particularly those of fossil fuels, are such that serious bottlenecks and virtual exhaustion loom ahead in the quite foreseeable future.

(1974: 123)

The crisis, Schumacher continues:

will not go away if we simply carry on as before. It will become worse and end in disaster, until or unless we develop a new life-style which is compatible with the real needs of human nature, with the health of living nature around us, and with the resource endowment of the world.

(1974: 127)

Schumacher's analyses became established within the counterculture, re-emerging regularly in other key texts (for example, *The Ecologist* 1972). By the early 1970s, oil crises contributed to growing awareness of the problems associated with dominant transport trends and to a surge in environmental concern (McClintock 1992a). As had the Situationists, writers such as André Gorz and Ivan Illich identified the car as central to materialist complacency, and as antithetical to progressive political projects. Gorz claimed that:

Mass motoring effects an absolute triumph of bourgeois ideology on the level of daily life. It gives and supports in everyone the illusion that each individual can seek his or her own benefit at the expense of everyone else. Take the cruel and aggressive selfishness of the driver who at any moment is figuratively killing the 'others', who appear merely as physical obstacles to his or her own speed. This aggressive and competitive selfishness marks the arrival of universally bourgeois behaviour, and has come into being since driving has become commonplace.

(1973: 1)

Perhaps most influentially, Illich both condemns the car *and* advocates the bicycle. He is most concerned with the social inequalities generated through automobility. In *Tools for Conviviality*, Illich claims that 'The present world is divided into ... those who are pushed off the road by cars and those who drive them' (1973: 15), and 'Cars are machines that call for highways, and highways pretend to be public utilities while in fact they are discriminatory devices' (ibid.: 32). In *Energy and Equity*, he notes how:

Beyond a certain speed, motorized vehicles create remoteness which they alone can shrink. They create distances for all and shrink them for only a few. A new dirt road through the wilderness brings the city within view, but not within reach, of most Brazilian subsistence farmers. The new expressway expands Chicago, but it sucks those who are well-wheeled away from a downtown that decays into a ghetto.

(Illich 1974: 42-3)

Illich challenges the car's hegemony across the world's richest societies, and calls for widespread uptake of the bicycle, perhaps perceived as a slow mode of transport in some car dominated countries, but one which is nonetheless radically faster than the main mode of the majority of the world's population, foot. He does not argue for the maintenance of geographical isolation which communities without transport typically confront. 'It would be a scandal if the natural mobility of a people were forced to stagnate on a pre-bicycle level against its will' (Illich 1974: 86). Illich supports the break with isolation the bicycle enables, but urges considerable caution beyond the dispersal enabled by the speed and range of the bicycle (ibid.: 88). His ideal world of 'technological maturity' is 'the world of those who have tripled the extent of their daily horizon by lifting themselves onto their bicycles' (ibid.: 86); 'To expand life beyond the radius of tradition without scattering it to the winds of acceleration' (ibid.: 88). Illich thus influentially reproduces notions of appropriate community size and appropriate technology important to both contemporary anarchism and environmentalism.

For critics of post-war societies, then, the bicycle becomes an ideal alternative and solution to socially and environmentally destructive mass automobility. As figured in the post-war countercultural imaginary, it causes little if any pollution and congestion, and no more expansion, dispersal and acceleration of daily life. It is a democratic technology of appropriate speed and scale. In striking contrast to its use by earlier social movements, the bicycle now implies rejection, not celebration, of the technological optimism and ever expanding horizons inherent within modernity. As a practice, cycling becomes part of a moral critique of technological society, specifically the car, and the search for and performance of a more authentic, less alienated everyday life.

The production and reproduction of a coherent ideological critique of systems of automobility, and the problematisation of the car in particular, ensures that, alongside walking, cycling forms part of both anarchist and ecological visions prioritising local communities and the face-to-face social relations which sustain them, visions which attempt to pull the various facets of everyday life back into close physical proximity (see Dobson 2000; Pepper 1996). In his article against the car, Gorz elaborates a green anarchist vision:

The neighbourhood or community must once again become a microcosm shaped by and for all human activities, where people can work, live, relax, learn, communicate, and knock about, and which they manage together as the place of their life in common.

(1973: 5)

Ilich demonstrates the privileged place of cycling within such an ecotopia when he states, 'Participatory democracy demands low energy technology, and free people must travel the road to productive social relations at the speed of a bicycle' (1974: 24).

Earlier feminists and socialists had, through their use of the bicycle, critiqued excessive social, political, economic and geographical *immobility*; their inability to escape the clutches of patriarchal control and urban industrialism respectively. But after the 1960s, within a context of massively increasing automobility, both anarchism and environmentalism enrol the by now anachronistic and relatively immobile bicycle into a critique of excessive *mobility*; people are moving around too much and too quickly, and cycling is a mobility which brings back together, and restores meaning to, everyday life. So the bicycle is again enrolled into progressive politics, but somewhat ironically, for precisely contrary reasons to its original appeal to feminists and socialists. The bicycle and cycling now embody a critique of the speed, spread and rhythm of post-war affluent lifestyles. Within contemporary oppositional politics, in other words, riding a bicycle becomes less a continuation of the search for modern freedoms, and more a critique of the negative social and environmental effects of too much 'freedom' in mobility.

Pedalling into the Present

A range of thinkers contributed to cultural critiques of an age of unprecedented affluence in the 1950s, '60s and '70s, and helped politicise systems of automobility in general and the car specifically. The bicycle emerges out of this period of cultural conflict as a beacon for another, a new modernity, and is enrolled into contemporary anarchism and environmentalism. Below, in demonstrating the bicycle's importance to these social movements, I analytically separate what is almost everywhere empirically fused.ⁱⁱ

Contemporary anarchism and environmentalism are complexly interconnected, and perhaps nowhere more than in the politics of transport. Both political ideologies have been informed, if in subtly different ways, by the kinds of countercultural critique sketched above. Contemporary anarchism, for example, clearly owes more to the Situationists, and contemporary environmentalism more to Schumacher.

Both anarchism and environmentalism have, since the 1960s, generally opposed the car and embraced the bicycle. Both reproduce the car as the problem and the bicycle as the solution. And both contributed to, and became blurred within, the high profile British anti-road and anti-car protests of the 1990s (Wall 1999; Welsh and McLeish 1996). But my contention is that the bicycle as an object tends to be configured differently in anarchist and environmentalist talk and practice.

Anarchism has incorporated the bicycle into a contestatory politics of the city, constructing it as a tool of protest and opposition. The bicycle enables the symbolic and practical taking of space from the car and a prefigurative performative politics of urban space (Bey 1991). Anarchist elevation of the bicycle is most obvious in the road protests of the 1990s, in attempts to reclaim urban space from the car via street parties and Critical Mass bike rides, and in recent initiatives such as Bicycology. But if the

bicycle is important to contemporary anarchist protest, it is less central to anarchist everyday life. Some activists with anarchist leanings search out bicycles to borrow in order to participate in events such as Critical Mass, underlining the absence of the bicycle from their everyday lives alongside the centrality of protest to their political identities.

If anarchism gets on its bike predominantly to protest, environmentalism utilises the bicycle throughout everyday life. Post-1960s environmentalism has constructed the bicycle as in and of itself prefigurative of the desired, ecologically sustainable society. In other words, where the bicycle enables the articulation of an anarchist vision, a cycling society is in itself an environmentalist vision. By cycling, environmentalists are pedalling their specific version of a sustainable society. Cycling therefore plays an important part in the embodied everyday ecological praxis which is the hallmark of contemporary environmentalism (Horton 2006).

But to stress the point, the bicycle is much more messily caught up in the worlds of environmentalism and anarchism than is implied by this analytical separation. It is no accident, for example, that the anti-roads protests of the 1990s and the anarchic celebration of cycling that is Critical Mass have both been common meeting grounds of British anarchist and environmentalist activists over the past decade or so; such transport related events represent a point where green and black politics routinely collide and mingle. Nevertheless, I want now to extend discussion of the bicycle's role in contemporary social movements, by briefly exploring first anarchism and then environmentalism.

Anarchism and the Bicycle

The late 1980s saw a big rise in environmental concern across Europe. The membership and public profile of organisations such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth rose dramatically, and the Green Party achieved notable electoral success. But the consequent institutionalisation and deradicalisation of environmentalism, evident by the time of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, contributed to a new wave of direct action. In particular, groups such as Earth First! and Reclaim the Streets organised against still accelerating automobility. The early 1990s saw a succession of direct action protests against the UK government's transport plans, which its supporters argued would see 'the greatest programme of road building since the Romans' (Wall 1999: 35).

Earth First! and Reclaim the Streets are equally rooted in an anarchist politics of direct action, and activists from both were central to the anti-road protests (McKay 1996; 1998). Reclaim the Streets came out of Earth First!'s 'ban the car' campaign (Wall 2004: 85), and both groups continued to focus their protest activities on the car across much of the 1990s. Symbolic smashing of cars and disruption to motor shows was accompanied by the painting of bike lanes onto roads (Wall 2004). Both groups also converged during the campaign against the M11 in London. Protestors occupying the proposed route engaged in bike art, and also used bicycles to move up and down Claremont Road, the principal line of resistance to the motorway. The bicycle thus became integral to the protestors' quotidian reproduction of their temporary community, and symbolic of their resistance to the car.

In the mid 1990s, following the campaign against the M11, Reclaim the Streets shifted tactics. Its street parties emerged from and built on the wave of high profile protests against road-building, and contributed further to countercultural hostility towards automobility. Street parties sought to liberate urban space from motorised traffic, and to temporarily transform it into a peopled place of festivity and pleasure; comprising sound systems, sofas in the road, distribution of free food, street theatre, stilt-walkers, jugglers and fire-eaters, drink and drugs. Derek Wall (2004: 86) recounts how ‘In 1996 around 7,000 people occupied the M41, holding a massive party. Under the curve of the skirt of a giant dancing figure, jackhammers were used to dig holes in the tarmac and plant a tree’.

A more overtly pro-bicycle protest event is Critical Mass. Like Reclaim the Street parties, by disrupting the automobilised rhythms which ordinarily dominate and contaminate everyday life, Critical Mass performs a politics of prefiguration, a temporary demonstration of how urban space might be otherwise. It is no accident that Critical Mass started in 1992 in San Francisco, the birth place of the mountain bike. The late 1980s and early 1990s had seen a mountain bike boom (Rosen 1993). Compared to the lightweight racing-style bicycles which had been popular prior to its arrival, the mountain bike was a more rugged machine offering a solid and comfortable ride; it appealed to people seeking a vehicle to tackle mean, car-dominated city streets. The mountain bike made cycling symbolically and practically more appealing to the new social movements. The design change combined with growing social and environmental concerns and the rise of the internet to facilitate the bicycle’s re-emergence as a prominent political tool. Critical Mass sees cyclists gather and take to peak-hour city centre streets in a bid to claim space and safety for the bicycle (Carlsson 2002). A flyer promoting San Francisco’s first Critical Mass, in September 1992, hailed cyclists with a series of questions:

Aren’t you sick and tired of having to fight for your life on city streets? Why are we treated like cars by the law, but like obnoxious and unwelcome obstructions by people in cars? Where are we supposed to go? Aren’t we doing ourselves and humanity a favour by commuting on bicycle?

(reproduced in Blickstein and Hanson 2001: 334)

These questions are followed by a set of commands, inviting participation: ‘Reduce Invisibility! Join the New Monthly Ride Home Together! Make Our Presence Felt!’ (ibid.: 334; for a range of other flyers, from Critical Mass rides around the world, see Carlsson 2002). With its public visibility, its political contentiousness and its reinvigoration of political discourses around cycling, Critical Mass provides a clear demonstration of the significance of the bicycle to contemporary social movements.

Critical Mass is part protest against car culture and capitalism, part resistance to everyday intimidation of cyclists and systemic discrimination against cycling, and - like the Clarion socialists a century before - part creation, performance and affirmation of usually invisible political communities, identities and unities. From San Francisco, monthly Critical Mass rides of various sizes have become a feature of the radical political landscapes of towns and cities throughout Europe, north America and Australia in particular, but also elsewhere (see Carlsson 2002).

Although Critical Mass appeals as much to environmentalism, it has successfully established and built on the bicycle's relevance to contemporary anarchism. Anarchist academic Jeff Ferrell (2001: Ch. 3) makes the case for Critical Mass as anarchist, and his work is clearly indebted to post-war anti-car critiques. He states that 'it's difficult to imagine a feature of contemporary society that both embodies and reproduces [social] atomization more effectively than the private automobile' (ibid.: 100). Yet 'beneath the streets and beyond the automobile: buried communities ready to be resurrected, alternative lives waiting to be invented' (ibid.: 96). 'Critical Mass is fueled', says Ferrell (ibid.:131), 'by a passion for inventing a calmer and more humane world inside the automotive hell of the present one'.

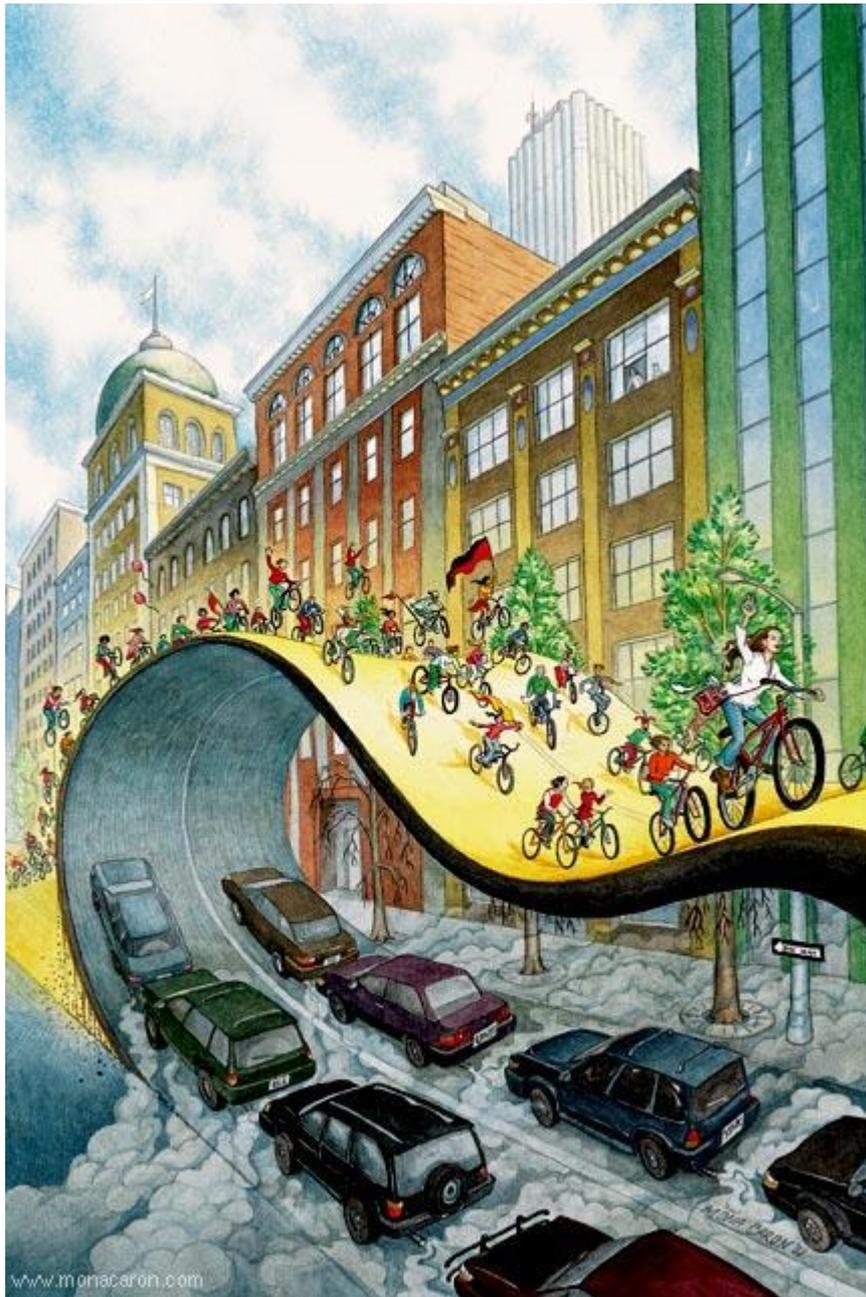
Many participants in Critical Mass describe what they are doing in anarchist terms. Typically there are no leaders. Rather, everyone is equally responsible for the ride, and its route unfolds organically. One rider in a recent London Critical Mass notes:

CM is beautifully anarchic: it is really true that the person at the front is leading the ride, and at the top of Park Lane I rode through a breaking green light to the front of the ride, and enjoying the CM-induced silence of the Marble Arch roundabout rode full speed, arms aloft like a Tour stage winner down the slight incline and across four empty lanes to head the ride back along Oxford Street. It was a popular decision, and a beautiful moment.

(Carnall n.d.)

On the cover of the book published to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Critical Mass, *Critical Mass: Bicycling's Defiant Celebration* (Carlsson 2002), artist Mona Caron beautifully captures the different worlds occupied by cars and bicycles in the anarchist imagination. Car culture results in the grey, grim, polluted urban present. The world of automobility is dark, oppressive, bad. In contrast, pedalling bicycles produces an ecological city, full of fresh air, trees and sunshine. The world of the bicycle is light, airy, good. The contrast is not merely between vehicles, but between the types of society they produce.

Insert image here (reproduced with the kind permission of Mona Caron; see www.monacaron.com)



Anarchist celebration of the bicycle is evident elsewhere. Recent years have seen anarchist organised bike rides to G8 summits (for example www.g8bikeride.org.uk, accessed 14/7/05). And a new initiative, Bicycology, aims to link the bicycle and ecology through anarchist modes of organising. The collective's website lists as its mission, 'using creative methods to encourage environmental responsibility; promoting cycling as a healthy, practical and enjoyable alternative to high-carbon lifestyles; educating, liberating and involving communities in direct democracy' (www.bicycology.org.uk; accessed 16/5/06). A roadshow tour of Britain - recalling the proselytising efforts of Clarion socialists a century ago - is planned for summer 2006.

Environmentalism and the Bicycle

Of contemporary political formations, the bicycle is most symbolically and practically central within environmentalism; indeed, it is 'the form of transport generally welcomed without reserve by all environmentalists' (Barker 1988: 164). Hugh McClintock (1992b: 15) notes how

With the rise of the environmental movement the bike has come to be seen by many as a symbol of environmental purity and righteousness, whereas the car has increasingly been portrayed as an environmental monster. Just as some people like to drive a large and powerful car as a statement of their status and attitudes, a growing minority of other people do so by riding a bicycle!

I have provided a fuller exploration of the bicycle's significance to contemporary environmentalism elsewhere (Horton 2006; see also Batterbury 2003). Briefly, the bicycle is a central materiality within both environmentalist discourse and the actual everyday lives of environmentalists.

At the level of discourse, green texts routinely denigrate the car and acclaim the bicycle as a sustainable alternative. Websites, newsletters, campaign materials, protest flyers, magazine articles and books produce and reproduce the green common sense of 'two wheels good, four wheels bad', to coin a slogan popular during the 1990s. Criticism of the car and elevation of the bike forms part of eco-fiction. In Edward Abbey's *Hayduke Lives!*, for example, Doctor Sarvis, pedalling ahead of a long line of impatient motorised traffic, grunts 'Fuck 'em. Let 'em wait. Let 'em fester. Let 'em walk. Let 'em ride a bike like me, would do me and them and everybody a world of good' (1990: 107).

Policy-oriented texts routinely call for bicycle-friendly cities for the sake of planetary, urban and bodily health (for example, Brown et al 2003: 156; 171-2). In the USA, the Earth Policy Institute uses global bicycle production as one of twelve eco-economy indicators. The Institute's Lester R. Brown claims, 'the bicycle's attractions are many. It alleviates congestion, lowers pollution, reduces obesity, increases physical fitness, does not emit climate-disrupting carbon dioxide, and is affordable for billions of people who cannot buy an automobile' (2001: 199). John Ryan (1999) considers the bicycle one of 'seven sustainable wonders of the world' (the other six being the condom, ceiling fan, clothes-line, public library, ladybird and pad thai). The title of a Worldwatch Institute report sums up environmentalism's general attitude, *The Bicycle: Vehicle for a Small Planet* (Lowe 1989).

The bicycle is prominent in the discourses of British environmental organisations. The Green Party's *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society* states it 'will be given the highest priority in transport planning', and the party's policy aims 'to make it possible for walking and cycling to account for most short distance journeys made' (2003, policy TR150). Friends of the Earth has always strongly supported cycling (Wall 1999: 30), and see it as key to 'unlocking the gridlock' (Friends of the Earth 1997). The website of 'Europe's leading eco-centre', the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales, urges the reader to 'Use your bicycle. As much as you can!' in its list of '25 ways to save the planet' (www.cat.org.uk, last accessed 14/2/05).

The bicycle is so significant to contemporary environmentalism because it has become a symbolic and practical materiality of sustainability. Cycling today clearly embodies and performs environmental concern, and as such is privileged not just in green discourse, but also green practice. With much current cycling policy and promotion emphasising its environmentally-friendly character, and with cycling being so visible a practice, it has become an especially important way of demonstrating and displaying green credentials. Among environmentalists, then, it has become the green mode of mobility *par excellence*.

Among most environmentalists, cycling is a key means of intra-urban mobility. This does not mean environmentalists are cycling enthusiasts. The bicycle and cycling form only part of an alternative green lifestyle, so that environmentalists' elective identities are not defined by cycling. Rather, activists are 'environmentalists' who cycle as one part of their green practice. Nevertheless, as a practice constitutive of an environmentalist identity, cycling is a key way in which an activist's green credentials, and so standing as an 'authentic environmentalist' are announced, paraded and maintained. Conversely of course, car use sabotages such authentic identities (Horton 2003).

Discussion: Speeding Up and Stretching Out vs Slowing Down and Squeezing In

As argued above, the importance of the bicycle to anarchism and environmentalism has to do with its relevance to questions of pace and scale. Most significantly, bicycle use keeps everyday life within 'cycling time and distance'. Thinking back to our discussion of the bicycle's role in feminism and socialism a century ago, the irony is that the bicycle historically led to an expansion in the geographical range of people's everyday lives (on, for example, the increased distances between the homes of marriage partners enabled by the bicycle after 1887, see Perry 1969). But, as Gorz and Illich recognised, growing car ownership and use accelerated the stretched out, sprawling character of different parts of daily life initiated by the bicycle. Distances between homes, schools, workplaces, shops, friends and sites of leisure have grown. Automobility has produced a whole series of new and more dispersed socialities, which are now routinised parts of ordinary life for many people in societies such as the UK. The world has changed around the car, and its chief spatial and temporal characteristics are dispersal, stretching and acceleration.

So if once cycling extended people's everyday geographies, today it constricts them, and - because it is therefore implicated in the reassertion of local communities of face-to-face interaction - this has become its appeal to oppositional politics. Where the car symbolises and encourages sprawl, the bicycle tends to symbolise and achieve the opposite effect, 'squeezing' different aspects of daily life into a more compact geographical area. In other words, the bicycle as a mode of intra-urban mobility is centrally implicated in the symbolising and very making of a spatially tight 'local'. Reliance on the bicycle as an ordinary mode of mobility contributes to reproduction of the socially dense, physically proximate face-to-face interactions so important to the post-war countercultural political imaginary of 'community life'.

This leads to a broader question. It seems that feminists and socialists were using the bicycle to extend participation in the new times, spaces and rhythms of modernity;

they were seeking inclusion in the modern project. In contrast, today's anarchists and environmentalists use the bicycle to exclude themselves from, and to promote wider rejection of, participation in such times and spaces; pro-cycling texts and practices embody critique of and retreat from the dominant rhythms of contemporary capitalist societies, and prefigure an authentic, ecological and socially liberated alternative. Because a century of change results in a radically different context, 'the same' mobile technology is used to achieve directly contrary ends. The car changes everything, and the bicycle's relevance shifts from it being a vehicle opposed to slowness, to one opposed to speed.

There is a more practical aspect to this. Physically, feminists and socialists used the bicycle to 'escape', to leave behind oppressive conditions at home and go someplace else. They might have ridden through local streets full of local people to get there, but their imaginations extended beyond the local. But when the car came along, the bicycle was left in the shed as feminists and socialists leapt behind the steering wheel. The car extended the range of everyday life further than could the bicycle, and for much of the twentieth century its freedoms seduced almost all who could afford one. In recent times, the same processes can be observed with air travel - the movement from velomobility to automobility to aeromobility feels almost seamless, notwithstanding growing concerns about climate change.

In contrast, today's social movements use the bicycle to know the local, to become more familiar with the immediate vicinity. If they are escaping from anything, it is the restless hypermobile lives - attached to no place in particular - which many people seem to be leading. So anarchism and environmentalism have reclaimed the bicycle from its perilous status, as fit for the transportation scrapheap and merely a 'toy'. Under the influence of these movements, the bicycle is today again being seen as a central mode of mobility, especially for urban utility journeys. Claiming it is not the bicycle but the car which ought to die, contemporary contentious politics has helped make cycling look again like a viable mode of mobility, one compatible with high quality of life, local vitality, conviviality, and of course sustainability.

Of course, most activists are today routinely able to escape the local, both virtually and physically. And earlier feminists and socialists might only have ridden away from the conditions dominating their lives during summertime weekends. But where once the bicycle enabled lines of flight, departures from the local and mundane, the bicycle has today become a kind of glue, helping fix activists into the settings where for the most part they continue to live out their lives (for more on the locally-binding quality of cycling in environmentalist's everyday lives, see Horton 2006).ⁱⁱⁱ

Conclusions

Across these social movements, cycling forms part of broader projects, variously committed to greater rights for women, the working class, an authentic life free from commodification, and the planet itself. The bicycle is a vehicle for all four movements for social change, and the actual experience of cycling contributes to the formation of strong political identities - whether feminists in rational dress facing public ridicule, proselytising socialists getting stoned by hostile audiences, media demonisation and police crackdowns of Critical Mass activists, or pedalling environmentalists being

driven off the road by ever more, ever bigger and ever more aggressively driven motorised vehicles. Cycling participants in all four movements risk harassment and violence as they challenge dominant codes. By cycling, activists issue cultural and political challenges and generate conflicts at the level of the everyday (Melucci 1996), and thus reproduce progressive political identities. The bicycle is not the object, but the vehicle on which these social movements travel in pursuit of their objectives.

Feminists and socialists utilised a relatively novel technology to change their everyday lives and construct wider demands, for release from patriarchal constraints for women, and for a socialist society to liberate the working class. The bicycle was used in the pursuit of freedom in mobility, the expansion of horizons. But before long another vehicle emerged, more able to satisfy yearnings for freedom and movement. The car eclipsed the bike and pushed it into the gutter. But by the 1960s, as its social and ecological effects grew more apparent, accelerating automobility came under sustained critique. The counterculture reversed key axioms of modernity, privileging slowness over speed, the close over the distant, the calm over the harried. For post-1960s anarchism and environmentalism, increasing speed, distance and dispersal are related to the erosion of local community, conviviality and 'nature'. These social movements thus oppose automobility and instead celebrate the slower mobilities of foot and bike. They want not more, but less mobility.

This radical shift in orientation between the earlier and later social movements fits a commonly noted difference between so-called 'old' and 'new' movements. Where feminists and socialists held faith in 'progress' and wanted to broaden participation in the modern project, anarchism and environmentalism challenge dominant conceptions of progress, and construct and prefigure alternatives. Thus a key characteristic of post-1960s social movements is their production of conflicts centred less on the unequal distribution of what is taken-for-granted as good, and more on fundamental questioning and critique of dominant conceptions of 'the good'.

In contrast to earlier feminist and socialist orientations, post-1960s antagonistic political identities are built not simply on affirmation of the bicycle, but also on hostility to the bicycle's increasingly powerful 'other', the car. The car is not only the vehicle emerging victorious over the bicycle in social and political struggles for space and other resources, but also the object best exemplifying, and coming progressively to symbolise, triumphant and relentlessly advancing post-war consumerism.

Undoubtedly, the bicycle's centrality to the movement cultures of contemporary anarchism and especially environmentalism results from the importance attached to lifestyle changes in the pursuit of political visions. This kind of personalised politics has been taken by some theorists to exemplify a post-traditional politics (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991). Certainly, anarchism and environmentalism as practised today tend to be remarkably embodied politics and cycling clearly communicates concerns with the environment, the local and the importance of one's own actions in processes of social and political change. But such a personalised politics is also evident a century ago, in the ways feminists and socialists incorporated the bicycle into their lifestyles as an embodied articulation of their political concerns with greater mobility; they too saw cycling as constitutive of the kind of society they were striving to create.

At least three other continuities exist between feminism and socialism of a century ago, and anarchist and environmentalist politics today. First, the bicycle is always implicated in a politics of space, enabling each of the movements to contest the existing domination and use of space and to put forward new spatial claims. Second, the dominant class location of each of the social movements is similar. Those utilising the bicycle both practically and symbolically tend to be drawn from the middle classes, with only the socialists being 'for a class', the oppressed workers. Third, and perhaps surprisingly, none of these movements has advanced a politics of either bicycle design or production. Particularly given the decentralising orientations of anarchism and environmentalism, there is perhaps a need to challenge the current globally dispersed bicycle industry (Rosen 2002), and ultimately to contribute to sustainable, local modes of production.^{iv}

What this analysis of social movements and the bicycle demonstrates is how material objects construct not only individual and cultural (Miller 1987), but also political worlds. Objects can have both symbolic and practical value to social movement struggles, and this is the case with the bicycle in each of the movements discussed here. The bicycle symbolises the society for which these different movements search as the practice of cycling - whether perceived as a predominantly leisure, political or utilitarian practice - contributes to political ways of life. Thus the bicycle remains for anarchism and environmentalism today as it was for feminism and socialism of the past, both a symbol of and vehicle for liberatory struggle.

Participants in different movement cultures have used the bicycle to prefigure and pedal their desired futures, whether of an enlarged public sphere including women, a countryside accessible to all, an urban environment characterised by strong local communities, or a less dispersed world where people move around sustainably. The use of material objects in the performance of political visions is neither a conscious nor recent strategy, but something which all social movements invariably do.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks for their help to Noel Cass, Sue Holden, Nicholas Oddy and Paul Rosen. I am indebted to previous historical research by, among others, John Forester, Howard Peel and Denis Pye. A previous version of this paper was presented to the conference, *Alternative Futures and Popular Protest* at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, in April 2006. Thanks to participants there, and especially Lynn Owens, for their useful comments and suggestions.

References

- Abbey, E. (1990): *Hayduke Lives!*, Boston, Ma.: Little, Brown and Company.
- Alderson, F. (1972): *Bicycling: A History*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles.
- Barker, T. C. (1988): 'Urban Transport', in M. J. Freeman and D. H. Aldcroft (eds), *Transport in Victorian Britain*, pp. 134-70, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- Batterbury, S. (2003): 'Environmental Activism and Social Networks: Campaigning for Bicycles and Alternative Transport in West London', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 590(1): 150-69.
- Beck, U. (1992): *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. M. Ritter, London: Sage.
- Bey, H. (1991) *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*, New York: Autonomedia.
- Blickstein, S. and Hanson, S. (2001): 'Critical Mass: Forging a Politics of Sustainable Mobility in the Information Age', *Transportation*, 28(4): 347-62.
- Brown, L. R. (2001): *Eco-Economy: Building an Economy for the Earth*, London: Earthscan.
- Brown, L. R., Larsen, J. and Fischlowitz-Roberts, B. (2003): *The Earth Policy Reader*, London: Earthscan.
- Carlsson, C. (ed.) (2002): *Critical Mass: Bicycling's Defiant Celebration*, Oakland, CA: AK Press.
- Carnall, D. (n.d.): 10th anniversary Critical Mass, dougie's blog, http://navarino.org.uk:8080/blog/1083399561/index_html, accessed 3/11/05.
- Carse, K. (1994): 'Bicycling for Ladies', in *Cycle History: Proceedings of the 4th International Cycle History Conference*, pp. 107-12, Mill Valley, CA: Bicycle Books.
- Daniels, P. W. and Warnes, A. M. (1980): *Movement in Cities: Spatial Perspectives on Urban Transport and Travel*, London and New York: Methuen.
- Dean, J. S. (1947): *Murder Most Foul: A Study of the Road Deaths Problem*, London: George Allen and Unwin (available on-line at <http://www.motorcarnage.org.uk/motorcarnage/murdermostfoul.pdf>, accessed 7/6/04).
- Debord, G. (1959): 'Situationist Theses on Traffic', first published in *Internationale Situationiste*, No. 3, trans. K. Knabb (found at <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/316>, accessed 13/5/04).
- de Swaan, A. (1981): 'The Politics of Agoraphobia: On Changes in Emotional and Relational Management', *Theory and Society*, 10: 359-85.
- Dobson, A. (2000): *Green Political Thought*, 3rd edn, London: Routledge.
- Easton, S., Howkins, A., Laing, S., Merricks, L. and Walker, H. (1988): *Disorder and Discipline: Popular Culture from 1550 to the Present*, Aldershot: Temple Smith.
- The Ecologist (1972): *A Blueprint for Survival*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- European Commission (2005): *Energy and Transport in Figures 2005*, Directorate-General for Energy and Transport: Brussels (available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/energy_transport/figures/pocketbook/doc/2005/etif_2005_transport_en.pdf, accessed 31/3/06).
- Ferrell, J. (2001): *Tearing Down the Streets: Adventures in Urban Anarchy*, New York and Houndmills: Palgrave.

- Friends of the Earth (1997), *Unlocking the Gridlock: The Key to a New Transport Policy*, London: Friends of the Earth.
- Galsworthy, J. (1930 [1922]): *On Forsyte Change, Four-in-hand Forsyte*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Giddens, A. (1991): *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Gorz, A. (1973): The Social Ideology of the Motorcar, in *Le Sauvage*, September/October (at <http://www.bokeh.net/BikeReader/contributors/misc/gorz/html>, accessed 7/6/04).
- Green Party of England and Wales (2003), *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*, London: Green Party (accessed at <http://policy.greenparty.org.uk/mfss/transport.html>, 12/3/04).
- Hargreaves, J. (1986): *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Henderson, K. A., Bialeschki, M. D., Shaw, S. M. and Freysinger, V. J. (1989): *A Leisure of One's Own: A Feminist Perspective on Women's Leisure*, State College PA: Venture Publishing.
- Herlihy, D. (2004): *Bicycle: The History*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Holt, R. (1989): *Sport and the British: A Modern History*, Oxford: Clarendon.
- Horton, D. (2003): 'Green Distinctions: the Performance of Identity Among Environmental Activists', in Szerszynski, B., Heim, W. and Waterton, C. (eds), *Nature Performed: Environment, Culture and Performance*, pp. 63-77, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Horton, D. (2006): 'Environmentalism and the Bicycle' *Environmental Politics*, 15(1): 41-58.
- Hunt, T. (2004): 'A Ragged Trousered Elite Who Preached Secular Salvation', *The Guardian*, Saturday 7th August, p. 22.
- Illich, I. (1973): *Tools for Conviviality*, London: Calder and Boyars.
- Illich, I. (1974): *Energy and Equity*, London: Calder and Boyars.
- Iskin, R. (2003): 'The Pan-European Flâneuse in Fin-de-Siècle Posters: Advertising Modern Women in the City', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 25(4): 333-56.
- Jamison, A. and Eyerman, R. (1994): *Seeds of the Sixties*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Jones, S. G. (1988): *Sport, Politics and the Working Class*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Lafleur, I. (1978): 'Five Socialist Women: Traditionalist Conflicts and Socialist Visions in Austria, 1893 - 1934', in M. J. Boxer and J. H. Quataert (eds), *Socialist Women: European Socialist Feminism in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, pp. 215-48, New York: Elsevier.

- Lloyd-Jones, R. and Lewis, M. J. with the assistance of Eason, M. (2000): *Raleigh and the British Bicycle Industry: An Economic and Business History, 1870-1960*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Lowe, M. D. (1989): *The Bicycle: Vehicle for a Small Planet*, Worldwatch Paper 90, Washington D.C.: Worldwatch Institute.
- Mackintosh, P. G. and Norcliffe, G. (forthcoming): 'Men, Women and the Bicycle: Gender and Social Geography of Cycling in the Late Nineteenth Century', in D. Horton, P. Rosen and P. Cox (eds), *Cycling and Society*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Macnaghten, P. and Urry, J. (2001): 'Bodies of Nature: Introduction', in P. Macnaghten and J. Urry (eds), *Bodies of Nature*, pp.1-11, London: Sage.
- McClintock, H. (1992a): 'The Significance of the Bicycle in Urban Transport', in H. McClintock (ed.), *The Bicycle and City Traffic: Principles and Practice*, pp. 3-18, London: Belhaven.
- McClintock, H. (1992b): 'Post-War Traffic Planning and Special Provision for the Bicycle', in H. McClintock (ed.), *The Bicycle and City Traffic: Principles and Practice*, pp. 19-39, London: Belhaven.
- McGurn, J. (1999): *On Your Bicycle: The Illustrated Story of Cycling*, 2nd edn, York: Open Road.
- McKay, G. (1996): *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance Since the Sixties*, London: Verso.
- McKay, G. (ed.) (1998): *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain*, London: Verso.
- Melucci, A. (1996): *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Miller, D. (1987): *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Oakley, A. (2002): *Gender on Planet Earth*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Peel, H. (2002): *Notes from History and the Hull Mass Cyclist Demonstration of 1935*, at <http://www.thebikezone.org.uk/thebikezone/thinkingcyclist/1935.html>, accessed 7/6/04.
- Pepper, D. (1996): *Modern Environmentalism: An Introduction*, London: Routledge.
- Perry, P. J. (1969): 'Working Class Isolation and Mobility in Rural Dorset, 1837-1936: A Study of Marriage Distances', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 46: 121-41.
- Pye, D. (2004): *Fellowship is Life: The Story of the Clarion Cycling Club*, 2nd edn, Bolton: Clarion Publishing.
- Rosen, P. (1993): 'The Social Construction of Mountain Bikes: Technology and Postmodernity in the Cycle Industry', *Social Studies of Science*, 23: 479-513.
- Rosen, P. (2002): *Framing Production: Technology, Culture, and Change in the British Bicycle Industry*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press.

- Ryan, J. C. (1999): *Seven Wonders: Everyday Things for a Healthier Planet*, San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Savage, M. (2005): 'Working-Class Identities in the 1960s: Revisiting the Affluent Worker Study', *Sociology*, 39(5): 929-946.
- Schumacher, E. F. (1974 [1963]): *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*, London: Abacus.
- Simpson, C. (2001): 'Respectable Identities: New Zealand Nineteenth-Century 'New Women' - On Bicycles!', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 18 (2): 54-77.
- Thompson, F. (1957, originally published as *Lark Rise* (1939), *Over to Candleford* (1941) and *Candleford Green* (1943)) *Lark Rise to Candleford*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tressell, R. (1993[1914]): *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, London: Flamingo.
- Vaneigem, R. (2000): *Contributions to The Revolutionary Struggle, Intended to be Discussed, Corrected, and Principally, Put into Practice without Delay*, trans. P. Sharkey Ratzeb (at http://library.nothingness.org./articles/SI/en/pub_contents15, accessed 13/5/04).
- Wall, D. (1999): *Earth First! and the Anti-Roads Movement: Radical Environmentalism and Comparative Social Movements*, London: Routledge.
- Wall, D. (2004): 'Bakhtin and the Carnival Against Capitalism', in J. Carter and D. Morland (eds), *Anti-Capitalist Britain*, pp. 82-94, Cheltenham: New Clarion Press.
- Walvin, J. (1978): *Leisure and Society, 1830-1950*, London: Longman.
- Welsh, I. and McLeish, P. (1996): 'The European Road to Nowhere: Anarchism and Direct Action against the UK Roads Programme', *Anarchist Studies*, 4(1): 27-44.
- Willard, F. E. (1991 [1895]): *How I Learned to Ride The Bicycle*, Sunnyvale: Fair Oaks Publishing.

Social movements and the bicycle

Social movement	Use of bicycle facilitated by	Primary significance of bicycle	Orientation to mobility	Role of bicycle in identity	Bicycle affording opposition to	Primary class location
Feminism (1880 - 1910)	advent of 'safety-bicycle' rise of 'leisure class' growing impatience with patriarchy	pastime enabling freedom from patriarchal control	seeking more independent mobility	promoting freedom in movement and dress	patriarchal control	upper middle class
Socialism (1895 - 1914)	falling price of bikes rising pay and leisure time increasingly urban lifestyles	means of escaping city for pleasure and politics	seeking cheap, independent mobility	promoting class consciousness, solidarity and health	industrial capitalism	middle class
Anarchism (1960s - present)	dominance of car marginalisation of bicycle critiques of consumer capitalism	symbol of alternative vision, tool of political activism	against automobility; seeking humane, authentic mobility	embodying critique of the car; promoting prefigurative politics of the city	consumer capitalism	new middle class
Environmentalism (1960s - present)	mountain bike boom oil crises rising environmental concern	symbol of alternative vision, vehicle for intra-urban mobility	against automobility; seeking green, sustainable mobility	embodying critique of the car; demonstrating green lifestyles and sustainable futures	ecological crisis	new middle class

ⁱ These processes of course continue. In the UK, the number of passenger cars per 1000 inhabitants rose from 213 in 1970 to 463 in 2004. The total number of cars on UK roads in 1970 was less than 12 million, while today it is almost 28 million (European Commission 2005).

ⁱⁱ Over the last decade or two local cycle campaigns, with names such as Dynamo, Pedals, Cogs and Spokes, have emerged across Britain. These voluntary groups aim to improve provision for cyclists at a local level. Cycling historian Jim McGurn (1999: 169-79) calls them 'the new cyclists', 'more demonstrative and impatient than older established cyclists' and 'more radical in their outlook' (ibid.: 175). Although their members are often connected to social movements, and although they are clearly relevant to the politics of cycling, these campaigns are not my direct concern here.

ⁱⁱⁱ Remember the specificity of this analysis. Across the world, many people (especially women and the poor) are still not travelling at bicycle speed, are still denied access to such a technology of mobility. Ivan Illich's vision of humanity riding together at the speed of a bicycle is as far as ever from reality now, as more people jump into cars whilst the majority are consequently rendered increasingly - because relatively - immobile.

^{iv} Although recent years have seen the emergence of cycle re-cycle projects in many places. Such projects are often about providing low-cost bicycles to groups who might not otherwise be able to afford them, about training people to repair bikes, and about giving old bicycles - which might otherwise end up on the scrapheap - a new lease of life.